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No. 1

1st September, 1983

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to introduce the first number of LASALLIANA. You will find a summary of the contents on the back of this page.

The leaflets are divided into five categories:

A) St. John Baptist de La Salle: history and spirituality.
B) The Institute To-day.
C) Reflections on our educative work.
D) Co-operation between lay teachers and the Brothers' Institute.
E) Witness, facts, celebration.
Other categories will be added as the need arises.

CLASSIFICATION

Each leaflet has an index number composed as follows:
01-C-03:

01: refers to the number of LASALLIANA in which the leaflet is published.
-C-: refers to one of the above categories.
03: indicates the order of each leaflet in its proper category. This order will be maintained in each succeeding number.

OUR MAIN CONCERN

We wish to serve our readers: Brothers and friends alike who hope to find food for reflection for their professional and prayer lives. For this reason we shall be pleased to learn your reactions. Please send us your comments so that we may better respond to your interests and adopt a suitable style and level of treatment.

Send your letters to: Brother Yves Mazé
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01-A-01

LIFE AND TIMES OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE SHORT COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY

J.B. DE LA SALLE		CONTEMPORARY EVENTS
1st Stage: FIRST STEPS ON LIFE'S PATH		
Birth in Reims.	1651	Opening of Saint-Sulpice, Paris.
Admission to College des Bons-Enfants.	1660	Pascal's "Conversion."
	1661	Death of St. V. de Paul and Mazarin. Louis XIV begins personal style rule.
De La Salle receives clerical tonsure.	1662	Establishment of Gobelins tapestries.
	1664	Abbé de Rancé reforms the Trappists. Molière stages "Tartuffe." English capture New Amsterdam and rename it New York.
De La Salle becomes canon of the Cathedral of Reims.	1667	Milton's "Paradise Lost."
De La Salle receives minor orders.	1668	La Fontaine: 1st collection of Fables. Birth of François Couperin.
Admission to Saint-Sulpice.	1670	Dom Pérignon invents champagnisation of wine.
Death of Madame de La Salle.	1671	
Death of M. de La Salle.	1672	Dutch 7 years war begins.
	1673	J. Sobieski drives the Turks from Poland. Conflict between Louis XIV and the Pope. Dutch take Martinique. Boileau publishes "The Art of Poetry."
Ordination to the priesthood 9 April	1678	Birth of Vivaldi.
2nd Stage: THE UNKNOWN ROAD		
Meeting with Adrien Nyel	1679	
He invites schoolmasters to dine with him.	1680	Foundation of the Comédie française.
He lodges the schoolmasters in his own house.	1681	
He goes to live with them in the rue Neuve.	1682	Louis XIV moves the palace to Versailles. French occupy Louisiana. Newton discovers Law of Gravity.
He resigns his canonry.	1683	Birth of Jean-Philippe Rameau.
Winter; he gives away his fortune.	1684	Death of Corneille.
Adrien Nyel returns to Rouen.	1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Birth of J.S. Bach and Handel.

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1st Assembly of the principal Brothers.	1686	War of the League of Augsburg. 8 years.
Seminary for country schoolmasters in Reims.	1687	Denis Papin invents the steam engine.
He arrives in Paris with two Brothers.	1688	La Bruyère publishes "Characters." Peter the Great Czar of Russia. Greenwich observatory founded.
Vow of association and union with Brothers Drolin and Vuyard.	1691	Racine produces "Athalie."
Novitiate in Vaugirard.	1692	Christianity permitted in China.
	1693	Famine throughout France.
Assembly of the Brothers. Approval of Rule. Vows of obedience, association and stability with 12 of his principal disciples.	1694	Voltaire born in Paris. Death of Antoine Arnauld, principal Jansenist theologian.
	1696	Gold discovered in Brazil.
Opening of chapel at Vaugirard.	1698	Royal edict making attendance at school obligatory.
2nd seminary for country schoolmasters. Sunday school. School for Irish boys.	1699	
3rd Stage: STORMS		
	1701	War of the Spanish Succession.
Two Brothers sent to Rome.	1702	Beginning of Camisard rebellion.
Beginning of legal actions against de La Salle.	1703	Foundation of St. Petersburg - Leningrad.
Closure of the seminary for country schoolmasters.	1704	Death of Bossuet. English take Gibraltar.
Two Brothers to Rouen. Novitiate.	1705	Tunisia. Founding of Husseinite line.
Parliament of Paris forbids de La Salle to keep schools for the education of the poor.	1706	
Novitiate back in Paris.	1709	In France serious economic crisis following very severe winter.
First journey to Provence.	1711	Vivaldi's "concertos."
4th Stage: NIGHT JOURNEY		
Second journey to Provence. De La Salle lost the law suit against Clément.	1712	Birth of J.J. Rousseau in Geneva.
Grenoble, Grande Chartreuse, Parmenie, "Dark night of the soul."	1713	Bull "Unigenitum" condemns Jansenism. Catholic missionaries expelled from Tonking.
5th Stage: TOWARDS THE LONG AWAITED ENCOUNTER		
Back in Paris.	1714	
Return to Rouen.	1715	Death of Louis XIV, aged 77, reigned 54 years.
Brother Barthélemy Superior General.	1717	In Prussia abolition of slavery. Colombia becomes independent viceroyalty.

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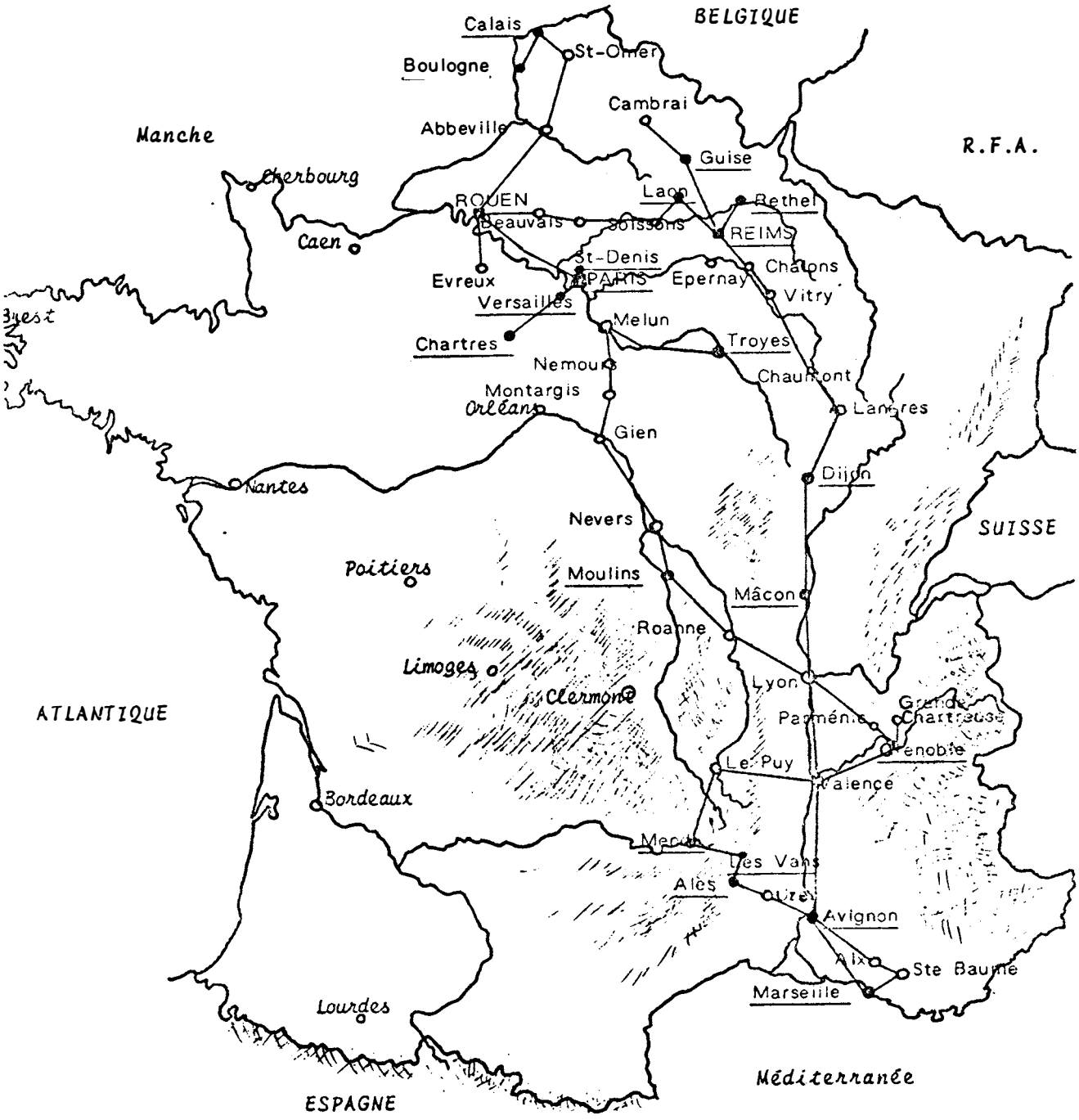
BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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01-A-02

ROADS TRAVELLED BY ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE JOURNEYS AND FOUNDATIONS



★ An aid to reading the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle.
★ FOUNDATIONS: • Stopping Places: o
★ Map prepared by Brothers Géry and Lapierre 51, rue F.-Peissel 69642, Cailure, Cedex France

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Contrary to popular opinion people travelled a lot in 17th Century. Despite strict controls frontiers were crossed. Journeymen still did the "Tour de France" to improve their professional skills. Traders went to Holland and Italy to find customers. News was brought by travellers. Newspapers had just begun but sound waves were still utterly silent.

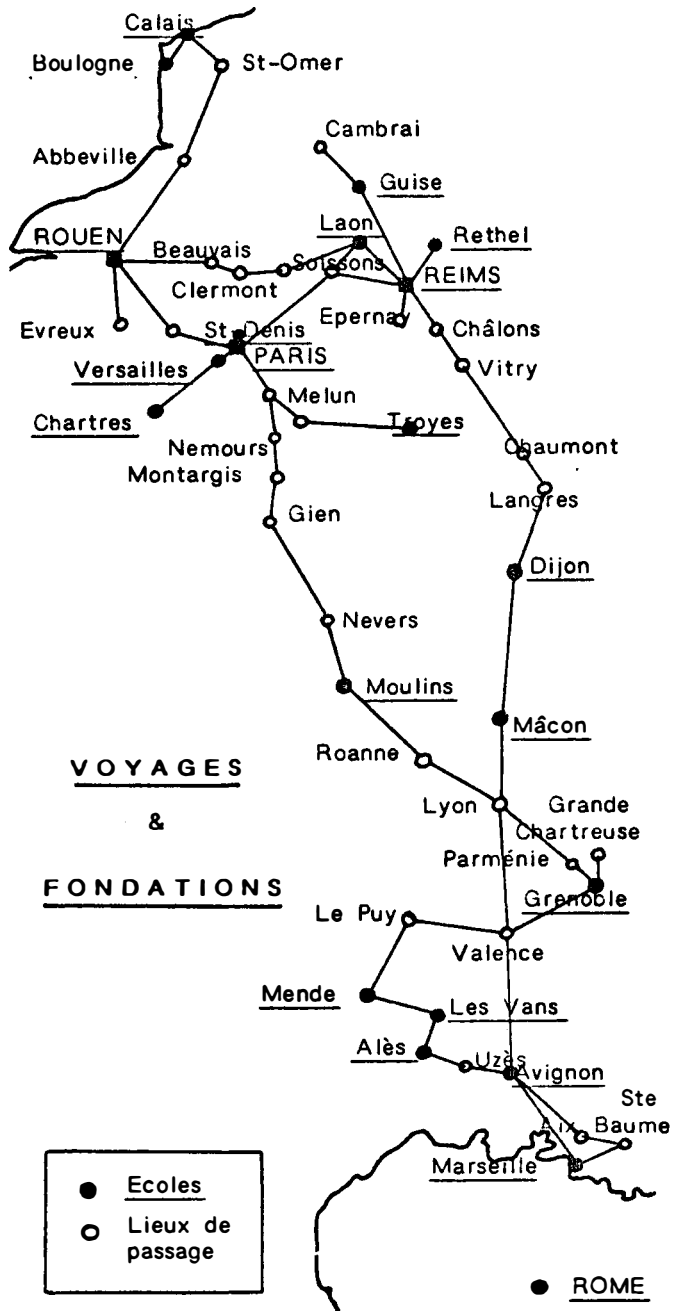
Travellers used the mail coach. Transport of goods was organised by the towns, the universities, by coach and carriage companies. Each system had certain privileges. There was constant rivalry and prices varied widely. In Rheims it cost 25 sols a day to hire a horse.

Horses were changed at every posting house. Public coaches covered about 100 km. a day and charged about 15 livres for the journey. That was the equivalent of a month's salary for a schoolmaster. It was 10 times cheaper to hire a horse.

Between Paris and Rheims horses were changed 18 times; between Paris and Rouen there were only 14 changes but between Paris and Marseille there were no less than 93! Taking into account stops at hostelries, a schoolmaster wanting to travel from Rheims to Paris would have to sacrifice 3 months' salary if he went by coach or one month's salary if he went on horseback.

To avoid jolting, rich people went by "water coach." It was much more comfortable but very much dearer.

It is easy to understand why de La Salle and the early Brothers practically always travelled on foot.



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01-A-03

A NEW BIOGRAPHY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Charles LAPIERRE, Brother of the Christian Schools, *"WALK IN MY PRESENCE"* - John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719), Caluire.

The Book: Format 21/24 — 200 pages. — The first page contains, as well as the title, a fine portrait of de La Salle, attributed to Pierre Léger, and the signature "De La Salle." On the back cover page there is a "portrait from life" of de La Salle by his nephew, François Hély Maillefer. (Life of M. De La Salle, 1740, Ed. 1980)

The Author: Brother Charles Lapierre, 69 years old, at present provincial secretary at Caluire (Rhone). Born in Chambéry, Savoy, Brother Lapierre taught in several schools both primary and secondary. He played an important part in the formation of the Brothers as sub-director of novices and director of scholastics. Charmed by the Founder, he studied his life and writings, absorbing thoroughly his spiritual doctrine and educational ideals.

Documents: The book contains numerous documents which enliven the text. A new map of the postal routes of France, 1738 — an outline map of the journeys of de La Salle showing foundations and stopping places — nineteen pages of documentary illustrations (list of illustrations is given on page 8) — an explanatory list of technical words and an account of people mentioned — a chronological table of the life of de La Salle paralleled by contemporary events. A bibliography is given on pages 199 to 200.

The Text: Printed in clear characters on quality paper, the text is very easy to read. The titles and sub-titles serve to give a sense of space as well as guiding the reader.

The Preface: p. 25, explains the choice of title taken from Genesis, 17,1. Like Abraham, de La Salle was an indefatigable traveller in the literal sense. He was even more so in the spiritual sense for, in obedience to God's call, he covered an immense distance from the Hotel de la Cloche to the final meeting in Saint Yon. The quotation from Genesis, given in full, is eminently applicable to him, "Walk before Me and be perfect."

Since we are talking about a journey it may be more natural to divide it into stages rather than chapters. As stage follows stage the reader discovers the characters encountered on the way, the travelling companions, faithful and unfaithful, friends and enemies.

First Stage: Earliest Steps (1651 to 1679) pp. 29 to 44

The reader makes the acquaintance of the de La Salle family. John Baptist is the eldest of eleven. He sees him living and working. He follows him to the seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris. He sympathises with him on the untimely deaths of his mother and father. He admires his gentle guardianship of his younger brothers and sisters.

After the death of his spiritual director, Nicholas Roland, the young priest, already a canon for several years, of the cathedral of Rheims, takes charge of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. Then begins:

The Second Stage: The Unknown Road

A meeting with Adrien Nyel, lay apostle and founder of schools for the poor, set de La Salle on a road which led him where "he did not wish to go" or rather where he never thought he would go. "One commitment led to another," he writes, "without my having foreseen it from the beginning." In four

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progressive stages, the young canon, well bred and well provided for, finds himself poor among the poor, at the service of the poor and surrounded by schoolmasters whom he had formerly considered as inferior to his valet". 1682. Soon he is a brother among brothers. Even though he is superior, he wants to enforce nothing by authority.

We next follow de La Salle to Paris for his new foundations. 1688. There we share his trials: law suits, illnesses, betrayals. Nothing prevents him from following his path, his eyes fixed on the goal of giving the Brothers control of their "Society" which will be composed only of laymen as it is to this day.

Third Stage: Storms (1700 to 1714) pp. 89 a 124

The author carefully describes the school desired by de La Salle: a useful school; a school where the human person is respected; a school of good manners; a nursery for Christians. Such a school will be conducted by committed religious teachers to whom no development will be forbidden provided it be for the service of youth and particularly the poor. That the wheat may grow the grain must die in the ground. De La Salle is attacked on all sides: parish priest, archbishop, writing masters, schoolmasters, preceptor of Paris, all combat this "priest from the diocese of Rheims who calls himself Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Rheims." To these trials are added the death of his sister and especially the defection of Nicholas Vuyard and several others.

Fourth Stage: Journey through the night

For the holiday makers of to-day it is the road to the sun but for de La Salle it was a nightmare journey through Mende and Avignon to Marseille. The "holy priest" knows the "dark night of the soul": doubts about his mission and abandonment by not a few of those he trusted. He remains steadfast in his faith thanks to prayer in a retreat which he wishes to prolong. The poor drag him from his retreat to teach them himself in Grenoble. He finds peace in Parmenie. From his disciples comes an appeal or rather an order to resume his functions as Superior. "I must obey the Brothers" writes de La Salle, and he returns to Paris.

Fifth Stage: Towards the final meeting (1714 to 1719) pp. 157 to 193

Many more "troubles" arise: from ecclesiastics, his own family, the Brothers. They cause him great suffering but they do not prevent his preparing the election of Brother Barthélemy as Superior General of the Institute he founded and over which he discreetly watches from Saint Yon, near Rouen, where he now lives.

Here he writes the admirable "Meditations for Time of Retreat" and the "Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer." The founder and the man of prayer are here clearly revealed.

On Good Friday, 7 April, 1719, John Baptist de La Salle meets, at last, the God in whose presence he has so faithfully walked.

As a concluding note Brother Lapierre writes "An open letter to de La Salle." In it you can sense the filial love, the respectful admiration and the lively humour of the disciple who can make the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools known and loved.

Appreciation: Written in a lively style, well researched, and clearly presented, this book is intended for all Christian educators whose patron is St. John Baptist de La Salle; for students and their parents and for every Christian anxious to know the life of the Church.

The moderate price (60 FF) should assure a wide readership. For many people this work will form a useful introduction to the writings of de La Salle himself and to the more important works cited.

Father Jaques VIGNON, Vice-rector of St. Bonaventure, Lyon.
Chaplain to the Apostolic Centre, Caluire.

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01-A-04

AN IMAGINATIVE LIFE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

It is difficult to deal, at one and the same time, with the early history of the lasallian family and its present day achievements. Brother Alberto Croce of the District of Argentina succeeds in doing just this in his little book of two hundred pages, entitled, "Nos Tendran Siempre." (Stella Editions, Buenos Aires)

LITERARY FORM

The book is conceived as an exchange of letters between two correspondents, both Brothers of the Christian Schools, but belonging to very different times and social backgrounds. One is Brother Alberto, himself, The other is Jean Partois, Brother Anthony, companion of the Founder and one of the twelve who made the first perpetual vows with him on 6 June, 1694.

In a very vivid manner each describes to the other his experiences of three hundred years ago and those of to-day. This exchange of letters helps to explain certain episodes in the life of the Founder and of the early Brothers while at the same time it allows the writer to present the life of a Brother of the Christian Schools to-day in a clearly defined situation, the District of Argentina - Paraguay.

It is not a book to suit all situations. You would not dream of translating it nor even of presenting it, without changes, to other regions of the Spanish speaking world. As it is, it is marvellously evocative and could help to stimulate similar efforts to make known to a wider public both the life of the Founder and the living tradition which perpetuates his work to-day.

CONTENTS

The historical content shows a deep knowledge of the life, work and thought of the Founder. Brother Alberto has a wide knowledge of the earliest biographers of de La Salle and a close acquaintance with his principal doctrinal writings which he quotes very appositely. He evokes vividly the life and times of the first Brothers. Brother Anthony, Jean Partois, who joined the Institute in 1686, was one of those closest to de La Salle so it is not too fanciful to connect him with most of the events mentioned in the letters.

Brother Alberto gives the impression of understanding clearly and judging correctly the concrete situations in which the Institute, the Brothers and the wider lasallian family find themselves to-day, particularly, but not exclusively, in Argentina. There is nothing banal in these pages; everything is described by a witness who is alert, well informed and impartial. Reading his book, one not only shares the anxieties but also the hopes and enthusiasm which sustain the work of to-day and inspire the plans for tomorrow.

We must not regard this correspondence as purely anecdotal. Each exchange of letters brings a corresponding exchange of ideas: he deals with the themes of vocation, schooling, gratuity, fidelity to the teaching of the Church, the lay character of the Institute, renewal, youth movements, administration and the question of lay teachers in lasallian schools.

At the end of the book the author provides an index of topics treated.

CHARMING FRESHNESS

The book has a charming freshness of approach. Neither of the two correspondents is in the least didactic; however different the conditions in which they live they recognise each other as engaged in the same kind of work and living by the same spirit. Gently and patiently each explains to the other when and why such a thing was done, why one thing was done and not another. Each time the correspondence is discontinued its resumption is an occasion to recall an event or some urgent need of the moment.

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Brother Anthony, for example, expresses his joy when he learns that the General Chapter of 1966-67 decided to maintain the lay character of the Institute. Brother Alberto explains to his correspondent that he must leave him to meet two Brothers who have come to help him with a week-end retreat for some young people whom he looks after. There are even some funny episodes to give pleasure to the reader. Brother Alberto tells Anthony that, reading his letter, one would think that he was watching a film of the life of de La Salle. He suddenly realises that his correspondent does not know what a cinema is and tries to explain it to him in a few well chosen words.

I cannot recommend this book too highly to anyone who, in his own apostolate, wants to make known both the message of de La Salle and the way in which the Institute tries to interpret it to-day.

Maurice Hermans, FSC
Director of Lasallian Studies
Casa Generaliza
Rome

The following extracts from the book give a little of the tone of the letters:

LETTER OF BROTHER ALBERTO TO BROTHER ANTHONY

How necessary it is for the young people of our day to meet men like de La Salle; men of real, deep prayer, not the countless false prophets who try to sell us gimmicks or "magic carpets" for reaching God, not those ridiculous people who tell us to pray in order to forget our problems.

No! Prayer is something else: It is a life lived in God, receiving and developing His message of love and bringing that message to men. It is in the heart of God that His message of love beats. It is there we must look. If the young people of our day discover this truth they will build a new world.

LETTER FROM BROTHER ANTHONY TO BROTHER ALBERTO

No doubt you have noticed that the Founder has twice called us brothers. He has never done so before. It was after he resigned his canonry that he got the idea of giving more stability to our group. For weeks he had been talking to us of a closer union amongst us. That is how the question of a name came up. At first it was "Community of the Christian Schools," then after we had begun to call ourselves "Brothers" the name became the community of "The Brothers of the Christian Schools." Our poverty was as great as our enthusiasm!

LETTER FROM BROTHER ANTHONY TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF TO-DAY

I must tell you how happy I am. I am proud of God's call to me and happy to feel close to Him and able to devote myself to the service of so many children and young people.

I know you are seeking God. He is very close to you: You can meet Him in the silence of prayer or "under the rags of the poor who attend your schools" (MDF 96,3). When you realise this you will find your own lives flooded with light and that many others will be enlightened by the light you bring to their lives.

Do not hesitate. Go forward. "God has made His light shine in their hearts."

Yours fraternally in Jesus Christ,

Brother Anthony

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01-A-05

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

These words have become familiar to us, but the title was strange and literally unheard of when de La Salle and a few schoolmasters from Rheims adopted it in order to identify themselves.

1) BROTHERS:

Men conscious of living in a brotherhood. "They shall be called by the name of Brothers and shall not allow themselves to be called otherwise," wrote de La Salle at the beginning of the first edition of the Rules.

Not allow whom to call them otherwise? First of all, those with whom they live, confreres and pupils; then those whom they meet normally, the parents of the pupils; finally all others who may be allowed or forbidden. If an unknown person calls me "padre" or even "monsignor" I cannot forbid him.

Signification, then and now: We must often reflect on what the choice of this title meant three hundred years ago and what it should still mean to-day. Very early on, we do not know exactly when, the schoolmasters grouped around de La Salle recognised themselves as "brothers." They did not have to invent the word but they recognised that it expressed the reality they were living.

In community: it meant taking the name "brothers" and really living as brothers with all that implied of evangelical sharing, mutual help and support, close union and collaboration in the exercise of the apostolate.

In class: it meant being called "brother" by the pupils and being truly a brother to them. De La Salle had wanted the relationship between master and pupil to be just that; not primarily a relationship of authority and paternity, still less a relationship of superiority, but, above all, one of fraternity.

The humble origins of the first companions of this man of noble family, as de La Salle was, have often been pointed out. The respect and affection with which the Founder addressed each of his disciples, especially in his letters, are very significant: "I am, my very dear Brother, yours," he writes to each one of them.

2) CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

The Facts: In seventeenth century France the Church controlled practically all the schools so they could be called "Christian." In fact they were known under various names: little schools, parochial schools, charitable schools, charity schools. There were, also, special schools known as schools of Christian doctrine where only catechism was taught.

When they wanted to characterise the schools they had charge of de La Salle and the Brothers preferred to talk of Christian schools. So much was this the case that these two words came to designate, without question, their schools as distinct from others.

Outsiders, even high ranking prelates, often wrote "of Christian Doctrine" or even "of the Schools of Christian Doctrine." The Brothers, themselves, never used those expressions.

Their schools were gratuitous but they were not charity schools. The latter could only admit the children of poor families, to the exclusion of all others. They were not parochial schools where the poor were admitted free but the rich had to pay. Christian they were from the start, open to all, free to all, rich and poor alike. They were Christian, above all, in their teaching, organisation and methods, which were focused on leading the children, who attended them, to live "as true disciples of Jesus Christ."

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3) BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

De La Salle gave St. Joseph and St. Cassian as patrons to his Institute. Neither he nor his disciples ever called themselves Brothers of St. Joseph or Brothers of St. Cassian. The Founder wanted his Brothers to be particularly devout to the Child Jesus and to the Most Blessed Virgin but he did not suggest that they be called Brothers of the Child Jesus or Brothers of Our Lady.

They were sometimes called "Brothers of Saint Yon" from the property where the Mother House then was. The Brothers, themselves, never used that title.

Before them there were the Society of Jesus, the Congregation of Jesus and Mary and many others. In their own day they saw the founding of the Sisters of Providence, the Sisters of Notre-Dame, the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus...

Patrons and devotions were not to define the disciple of John Baptist de La Salle but his mission as Christian educator and, even more precisely, the privileged field of his apostolate. The Brother is a catechist, but in a school. He is not only a catechist. His ministry as Christian educator requires a meeting place where, each day, for long hours, he shares the life of the pupils: that place is the school.

In 1690, when he had to defend himself before the ecclesiastical Superiors of Paris on the question of the habit adopted by the Brothers, de La Salle was not afraid to reaffirm the uniqueness of a creation which he, himself, defined as "The Community of the Christian Schools" and its members as "The Brothers of the Christian Schools"! In the Paris of three hundred years ago it took no little courage to dare do that!

Brother Maurice Hermans, FSC
Director of Lasallian Studies
Casa Generaliza
Rome

As a supplement to this leaflet it may be of interest to reproduce the first chapter of the "Rules" of 1705 where the Founder and his first Brothers defined themselves and their role.

1) The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society in which profession is made of keeping schools gratuitously. The members of this Institute shall call themselves by the name of Brothers and they shall not allow themselves to be called otherwise.

2) They cannot be priests nor aspire to the ecclesiastical state or wear the surplice or exercise any function in the church.

3) The end of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children: It is for this purpose the Brothers keep schools, that, having the children under their care from morning to evening they may teach them to lead good lives by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and by inspiring them with Christian maxims and thus give them a suitable education.

4) The necessity of this Institute is very great because artisans and the poor being usually little instructed and being occupied all day in gaining a living for themselves and their families, cannot give their children the needed instruction or a suitable education. It is, therefore, necessary that others take the place of father and mother so that the children may be instructed in the mysteries of religion and the principles of a Christian life.

5) It was to procure this advantage for the children of artisans and the poor that the Christian Schools were established.

6) All disorders, especially among artisans and the poor, usually arise from their having been, in childhood, left to themselves and badly brought up. It is almost impossible to repair this evil at a more advanced age because the bad habits they have acquired are overcome only with great difficulty and scarcely ever entirely no matter what care may be taken to destroy them whether by frequent instructions or the use of the sacraments. As the principal fruit to be expected from the institution of the Christian Schools is to forestall these disorders and prevent their evil consequences, it is easy to conceive the importance of such schools and their necessity."

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01-A-06

THE SPIRITUALITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

In a circular addressed to those in charge of formation, the General Council of the Institute pointed out a number of basic themes in order to help young people, preparing to become Brothers, to assimilate the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

These elements can also be helpful to those who are seeking to share more fully in the spirit of the Founder and his successors.

HERE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS

A warning

★ The spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle is not bound to any particular devotion. He does not base his message on any of those he recommended: devotion to the Child Jesus, to Mary, to Joseph among others.

★ His spirituality cannot be reduced to a spiritual theory. John Baptist de La Salle wrote about perfection and other aspects of the Christian life but none of these aspects represent his main contribution to our spiritual heritage.

Consistency of life and thought

The spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle is consistent:

★ between his concept of Christian life as centred on the essential: faith in God and commitment to others on the one hand;

★ and on the other, the life he himself led, totally consistent with his thinking. You believe witnesses whose lives confirm their words.

A concept of Christian Life

Though written for the Brothers this concept is valid for all Christians.

"The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God and to attribute all to God.

"Secondly, the spirit of their Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children and for bringing them up in the fear of God..."

What is implied in the spirit of faith and the spirit of zeal?

★ *God first of all.* The first Person in whose name we are asked to change our outlook and ways of acting. Therefore, a God who enters into relation with us and asks us to allow ourselves to be penetrated by His presence and to collaborate with Him. God in our mind. God in our heart. God in our actions.

★ *Each one of us.* The appeal is made to our sense of responsibility to commit ourselves. Our whole being is involved, our judgement, our feelings about what happens to us, our activities.

★ *Life of reality.* Far from leading us into a world of abstractions this spirit involves us in relationships with those around us, whom we are asked to look upon with the eyes of faith: It involves us in new relationships with the events which concern us so that we act and react according to that same faith.

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Consistency between the thought and life of John Baptist de La Salle

The life of John Baptist de La Salle is based on a few convictions and major decisions in which his way of looking at things and of acting and reacting in a spirit of faith and zeal is strikingly evident.

★ God is so good that He wishes to save all mankind.

★ But our knowledge of the world, and particularly of the world of the poor makes us realise that people remain far from God, especially if they have not received a Christian education in their youth.

★ God calls us to collaborate with Him, to become the ministers of His saving presence to these people.

★ I accept this invitation from God, I dedicate my life to Him, I try to live and act only for Him.

★ To accomplish this work I associate myself with my brothers in order to create with them that community of evangelical love through which men, and particularly the most deprived, the farthest from salvation, may perceive the love that God has for them.

Sketched thus, in broad outline, the life of John Baptist de La Salle illustrates his spirituality: that of a man, responsive to God's call, who enters daily into new relations with the Lord, with men, with those who share his faith...

THE WAY OF THE SPIRIT OF FAITH AND OF ZEAL: CHANGING MY RELATIONS

My relation to God

★ Who is God for me? A vague notion... a Being as remote as He is supreme? Or the God revealed by Jesus — the father who knows and loves me better than I know and love myself.

★ What is the place of God in my daily life? in my prayer? in my thoughts? in my family and professional relationships?

★ What means do I take to come closer to God? to get to know Him better? What time do I give to my own religious culture, especially to improving my knowledge of Holy Scripture?

My relations with people

★ St. de La Salle called his Brothers "ministers" of Jesus Christ, messengers of His love and salvation, especially to those who are far from Him and who endure poverty and injustice.

★ And I, who am I for those with whom I come in contact? What image do people have of me? A professional and nothing more? Do I occasionally, allow something more to appear, a something in my words or actions which shows a little of the love of God?

My relations with my "brothers"

★ John Baptist de La Salle formed the schoolmasters into an association. He made Brothers of them so that they could live the Gospel publicly and become a living cell in the Church.

★ With whom do I unite myself and for what?

★ Is there a group with whom I could learn what God wants of me and which I could join?

★ Am I aware of what is happening around me in the Church? — what is being done to spread the Gospel? — to work for greater justice among men?

PRAYER TO ASK THE SPIRIT OF FAITH AND ZEAL

Here is the prayer which the Founder, himself, suggests to the Brothers for the feast of Pentecost:

"In your state you need the plenitude of the Holy Spirit, since you should live therein and be conducted solely by the spirit and light of faith. Only the Holy Spirit can give you these dispositions... Beseech God to confer on you to-day the same grace He gave to the Apostles so that after filling you with His Spirit for your own sanctification, He may confer It on you for the salvation of others also." (43rd Meditation)

Brother Patrice
General Council
ROME

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01-A-07

LASALLIAN PRAYER IS AFFECTIVE PRAYER

I would like to make this clear with the help of a page from tome II of "A Christian's Duties to God." The first edition of this treatise goes back to 1703 and we know the sources from which de La Salle drew: "A Christian's Duty in the form of a catechism" by the bishop of Agen, Claude Joly, and "Theology of a Christian and his principal Duties" by a little known seventeenth century missionary, Jean le Coreur. The text quoted below is obviously taken from the latter.

It is interesting to place the two texts side by side.

Text of J.B. de La Salle	Text of Jean le Coreur
Q. *In how many ways can we pray to God mentally or from the heart?*	**Q.** *In how many different ways can we pray to God?*
A. In five ways: 1) by silence, 2) by thought, 3) by affection, 4) by action, 5) by suffering.	**A.** Five. The first by thought, the second by word, the third by silence, the fourth by action, the fifth by suffering.
Q. *How do we pray by silence?*	**Q.** *How do we pray by silence?*
A. By placing ourselves in the presence of God in a sentiment of respect and adoration, acknowledging our weakness and needs without asking to be delivered from them. This is what beggars often do. They are content to show their wounds and their poverty without asking anything from passers by in the hope of moving them to compassion.	**A.** By showing God our misery as we place ourselves in his presence without asking to be delivered, just as beggars do who are content to show their poverty and wounds to passers by in the hope of moving them to compassion.
Q. *How do we pray by thought?*	**Q.** *How do we pray by thought?*
A. By paying homage to God and acknowledging our needs without words.	**A.** By offering to God with love the desires of our hearts, in our thoughts alone without the use of words.
Q. *How do we pray by affection?*	
A. By showing God, more by our feelings than by our reason, the love we have for Him and our desire to receive His graces.	
Q. *How do we pray by our actions?*	**Q.** *How do we pray by our actions?*
A. By doing good for the love of God in order to pay Him homage and to obtain from Him the graces we need.	**A.** By doing good works inspired by the Holy Spirit.
Q. *How do we pray by suffering?*	**Q.** *How do we pray by suffering?*
A. By bearing with Christian patience all the pain and suffering it may please God to send us in this life in order to pay Him homage and to obtain the graces we need.	**A.** By bearing with Christian patience all the afflictions that God sends us in this life.

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"A Christian's Duties to God" was composed by St. John Baptist de La Salle between 1695 and 1698. The complete work is in three volumes. The above extract is taken from volume II (C.L. 21 pp. 261 to 263).

Since de La Salle is thinking only of mental prayer in this context he omits Le Coreur's question on vocal prayer but adds another. It is precisely this last question which speaks of prayer of affection.

In this manner of praying, more by movement of the heart than by the thoughts of the mind, de La Salle expresses a basic principle of his own prayer, at least to the extent that his writings reveal it. For him prayer is total: it involves the whole person. In terms of the anthropology of the seventeenth century this means the mind, heart and soul. It involves the whole person because, by its nature, it springs from the most intimate depths of his being. After defining mental prayer in the "Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer," as an interior occupation, that is, an application of the soul to God, he continues,

> "It is called interior because it is not simply an occupation of the mind but of all the powers of the soul. To be pure and strong it must come from the depths of the soul, from its most intimate depths. If prayer involved only the mind or the superficial emotions it would be subject to worldly and emotional distractions which would render it fruitless. Unless this prayer of the mind penetrated the soul it would be merely a series of passing thoughts which left the soul in a state of aridity and bereft of God."

It is clear that affective does not mean emotional, much less sentimental. It is a love marked by strong, even vehement desires. It is a love of togetherness, of union, of communion, of commitment. It is sustained attention to the gifts received as can be seen from the beautiful prayer after Holy Communion taken from "Instructions and Prayers." Is the saint not here talking of himself?

> "What a great honour it is for man to talk intimately to his God, his Lord and Sovereign, as Moses, that faithful leader of his people, did and as we can do every day in prayer!"
>
> "But it is a greater gift and an inexpressible happiness to possess in oneself this same God and to be able to talk to Him of one's salvation, heart to heart, as to a friend and to ask Him for the graces one needs."
>
> "This is the advantage I have in Holy Communion, for having Jesus Christ in my soul I find there a God who treats me as a friend, who shares my interests and who seeks only the good of my soul. Sometimes He communicates to me his interior dispositions, sometimes He shares with me his views and the intentions He had in his actions which were done purely for the glory of his Father. Now He inspires me to do something for God, another time He urges me to commit myself entirely to his service. Sometimes He reminds me of what He did and suffered to save me; at other times He reveals to me the assiduity and continuity of his prayers to the Father and his desire for my complete conversion.
>
> Grant, O my Jesus that all the inspirations you give me may be engraved on my heart never to be erased and that they may produce in me all the effects you desire."

John Baptist de La Salle gave a beautiful definition of "affective prayer" in "A Christian's Duties to God." It is, if I may say so, wonderfully illustrated in that prayer. You find in it the attitudes towards prayer of the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who has become His friend and the confidant of the secrets of his heart.

By asserting, in his catechetical manual, that there is a way of praying "by affection" St. John Baptist de La Salle wished to show that something essential is involved...

Brother Jean Pungier
Lasallian Study Centre
Casa Generalizia
Rome

(1) "A Christian's Duties to God" was composed by de La Salle between 1695-1698. The complete work is in three volumes. The extract given here is taken from the second. (C.L. 21. p. 261-263).
(2) Cahier Lasallien, n. 14, p. 3.
(3) Cahier Lasallien, n. 17, p. 275.

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01-B-01

EXPANSION OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

1983: 10,000 Brothers and more then 20,000 lay teachers in 82 countries

When he founded his first schools for the children of Rheims could John Baptist de La Salle have foreseen that three centuries later his spiritual sons would be doing the same work in 82 countries spread over five contents? Probably not, though with a man of such foresight and prophetic charism one can never be sure. It is a fact that, from the very beginning of his work, he left the provinces to go to Paris where his activities would have more influence. As early as 1702 he sent two Brothers to Rome to open a school. At his death in 1719 we find the Brothers of the white rabat and floating sleeves in twenty towns in France from Calais to Marseille.

Faithful to the ideals of the genial Founder, especially his desire to serve the underprivileged youth of the world, the Superiors who have succeeded each other at the head of the Institute — Brother Pablo Basterrechea, the present Superior is 24th in a very distinguished line — answered, as far as limited personnel allowed, appeals from all corners of the world. In 1750 the Brothers were in Switzerland. Already, in 1774, they were crossing the seas to take charge of an establishment in Martinique. The French Revolution, however, destroyed everything: the Institute was "officially" suppressed. In fact it continued outside the borders of France and especially in Italy. When Napoleon "officially" re-established it, the Institute resumed its expansion at an even faster rate.

EXPANSION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Before the middle of the nineteenth century the Brothers were established in several new countries: Reunion (1817, the first African country), Belgium (1831, after several abortive attempts following the Revolution), Canada (1830), Turkey (1841), United States (1845), Egypt (1847), and Germany (1850).

Then followed 20 years of extraordinary territorial development in 20 different countries. Several of these were in the Far East (Malasia, Singapore, Burma, India, Viet-Nam, Ceylon). Europe, also, was represented: (England, 1855; Austria, 1857; Greece, 1858; Rumania, 1860; even Monaco, 1868), as was Africa (Algeria, 1854; Tunisia, 1855; Mauritius, 1859; Madagascar, 1866; Seychelles, 1867) and Latin America: (Ecuador, 1863).

From before 1880, second centenary of the Institute, the Brothers had already had time to get to Hong Kong (1875) to Chile (1877) to the Holy Land (1878) and to Spain (1878). In that same year of 1880 Luxemburg and Ireland welcomed the Brothers. There were then about 11,800 Brothers in the Institute but they were already to be found in 30 different countries.

From 1880 to 1900 the Brothers landed on many foreign shores, some of which they later left (Armenia, Bulgaria, Syria) but their work was firmly established in Lebanon, Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Colombia and Hungary. The century ended with the jubilee year of 1900, marked by an important mile stone for the Brothers of the Christian Schools: On 24th. May Pope Leo XIII canonised their Founder.

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CRISES AND EXPANSION IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Despite the territorial expansion outlined above more than 10,000 of the 15,000 Brothers in the Institute were in France. But in 1904 a law compelled them to close their communities. A certain number remained and discreetly carried on their work but a much greater number emigrated.

From 1900 to the First World War the Brothers consolidated their earlier foundations and established themselves in several more countries where they developed local vocations as soon as soon as possible (Panama, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela). Irish Brothers established schools in South Africa and Australia, in 1904 and 1906 respectively, while the Belgian Brothers went to Zaire in 1909 and the Germans to the Philippines in 1911.

Between the two wars expansions slowed down slightly. It was a time for consolidation, for opening novitiates and for an increase in numbers (from 11,000 to 14,000 Brothers). This did not, however, prevent the opening of houses in Bolivia, Peru, Japan, Portugal, San Domingo, Aruba, Ethiopia and even Korea and China...

After 1946 when numbers reached 16,000 Brothers and then decreased considerably, expansion resumed at an increased pace. In Africa, first of all, where Spaniards, French, English, Italian, American, Canadian and Belgian Brothers founded schools in Djibouti, Upper Volta, Niger, Cameroon, Togo, Benin, Rwanda, Nigeria and Kenya...

During the same period countries of Asia such as India, Pakistan, and Thailand saw the arrival of the Brothers while the Australians reached out to Papua and New Guinea. In Latin America the Brothers moved into Paraguay.

We must now pay tribute to the latest foundations: that of the Canadians in Haiti, 1973, that of the Spaniards in the Ivory Coast in 1979, that of the French in Chad in 1979 and especially the praiseworthy effort of the Vietnamese Brothers who, expelled from their own country, founded a new community in New Caledonia.

Other foundations are under consideration...

In most countries to which the Brothers have gone since 1946, they have put down firm roots. Upper Volta, India, Pakistan, Rwanda, Paraguay and Cameroon have formed administrative units (districts or delegations) with an encouraging number of local vocations. Hopes for numerical expansion are realistic.

Three hundred years of history, of foundations and trials, of increase and decline in numbers have given to the Institute a centuries old, collective experience which allows it to regard the future calmly and without fear. The present phase is marked by territorial expansion. An increase in numbers is already discernible in the new sectors to which the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle has urged his sons.

Brother Raymond Brisebois
Rue Darlington, Montréal
and
Brother Patrice
Councillor, Casa Generaliza

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01-B-02

THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN THE WORLD OF TO-DAY

The above title is that of the "Declaration" published by the General Chapter of 1967. Brother Luke Salm, professor of theology, Manhattan College, contributed much to the final draft of the text. He explains in this paper the motivating force of the "Declaration."

WHY THIS DECLARATION?

The contemporary world has experienced profound changes in almost every aspect of its political, social and religious life. As a result, many individuals and groups seem to have lost their sense of identity. Thus the search for identity — group identity as well as personal identity — is a characteristic concern of people everywhere in today's world.

At Vatican Council II the entire Church was challenged to a program of *aggiornamento,* a renewed sense of the identity of the Church as the people of God relating to the joys and sorrows of the contemporary world. Religious congregations were challenged to do the same. Each Institute was invited to adapt and renew itself in such a way as to make its identity and purpose — its very *raison d'être* — manifest to its members, to the Church, and to the world at large.

For the Brothers, the search for the identity of the Institute and the identity of the individual Brother within it was undertaken as the principal concern of the 39th General Chapter held in Rome in 1966-1967. The Body of the Institute, represented by the Chapter, had to ask such basic questions as these: Why does the Institute exist? What is the role if the Institute in relation to the Gospel? to the Church? to its Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle? What are the essential elements that constitute the identity of the Brother? How can the Brother integrate within himself the many elements that comprise his religious life? How can the Brother give new vitality to his apostolic work? In short, what does it mean to be a Brother in today's world?

The response of the Institute to these fundamental questions can be found in the document entitled *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration.* More than any other document that emerged from the renewal Chapter, the *Declaration,* as it is called, represents the mind of the entire body of the Chapter. The text was discussed and debated on the chapter floor paragraph by paragraph. Some 500 suggestions to improve the text were received from the delegates and processed by the commission responsible for putting it into definitive form. It is not surprising therefore that the final vote was all but unanimous. That gives reason to hope that the special guidance of the Holy Spirit runs through its pages.

In presenting this text to all the Brothers, the late Brother Charles Henry, the Superior General at the time, describes the *Declaration* as "one of the principal documents of our 39th General Chapter." He goes on to say: "It is, then, in the light of the *Declaration* that we must read and understand the texts of our General Chapter, including the Rule and the Constitutions. It is the basis of the doctrine that you will find in each of them." Ten years later, in 1976, the 40th General Chapter reaffirmed the *Declaration* as a still valid statement to animate the apostolic mission of the Brother.

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The INTRODUCTION to the *Declaration* states that the Institute, "faithful to the spirit of Vatican II," intends to undertake the work of renewal and adaptation on the basis of the three sources proposed by the Council: a return to the Gospel, fidelity to the Founder, and the "signs of the times." Concerning fidelity to the Founder, CHAPTER I stresses fidelity to his spirit and charism, not necessarily to "specific texts and practices that may have to be abandoned." Thus fidelity to the Founder is a dynamic process, entrusted to the Institute, that involves a community search for his charism in dialogue. In relation to the signs of the times, CHAPTER II recognizes that the Institute will have to play "a more active role in the life of the world and the Church." The Brothers themselves recognize this; the Church desires it; and the world, caught between optimism and despair, needs the witness of consecrated persons who know the ultimate meaning of the world and the mystery of human existence.

Chapters III, IV and V constitute the heart of the *Declaration.* CHAPTER III defines the identity of the Brother: he is a baptized Christian, consecrated by vows in an exclusively lay Institute; he has given himself to a community totally dedicated to an educational mission with a special preference for the poor; his mission involves not only the ministry of the Word of God but the total educational process that brings students to full human maturity, the school being the preferred but not the only means to accomplish this apostolate. CHAPTER IV challenges each Brother to make his own personal synthesis of these elements, recognizing that "there is no changeless and universal type of Brother to which all should conform."

CHAPTER V addresses the problem of how to integrate the religious life of the Brother in its three principal dimensions: religious consecration, community life, and apostolic mission. Religious consecration, rooted in baptism, introduces the Brother into a new manner of life, a new community relationship, a new sense of mission and so it implies a new and irrevocable commitment of the entire life of the Brother to Christ. Community life is the place where the Brother meets God and finds his personal fulfillment. Since the purpose of the Institute is apostolic, apostolic action is of the very nature of the religious life of the Brother. These three elements work together in a remarkable integration and interdependence. The apostolate is a community enterprise and is, at the same time, an expression of the religious consecration of the Brother. At the same time, religious consecration motivates the apostolic work and stimulates the community to be an authentic community of faith. Thus the Brother lives an integrated religious life in an apostolic community of consecrated men.

The last three chapters of the *Declaration* deal with specific aspects of the apostolic mission entrusted to the Institute. CHAPTER VI calls for a rededication to the service of the poor through education. The Brothers are to combat poverty in all of its forms and to give special attention to the educational needs of the most neglected of the poor. Even when the Brothers are not teaching the poor directly, they will nonetheless sensitize all their pupils to the problems of justice and peace in the world. Thus every Brother must make his own the decision of De La Salle to go to the poor "with the heart of a poor man."

CHAPTER VII deals with the work of education as an authentic apostolic mission. For the Brother, the work of evangelization and catechesis holds the primary place, with attention to the professional training and personal qualities of the teacher, the relevance of the Christian message to the concrete experience of the students, and full respect for religious freedom. The teaching of religion cannot be divorced from the total educational experience which is itself apostolic and a preparation for catechesis. The Brother does God's work in whatever he does for the advancement of human civilization and culture.

CHAPTER VIII reaffirms "the intrinsic bond which links the school with the ultimate purpose of the Institute." But it is not enough to reaffirm the school; it has to be renewed. This calls for more creative methods in relating to contemporary culture, a respect for the students as persons, educating them to freedom in a genuine school community, adequate preparation of the teachers, and a reappraisal of traditional commitments so as to emphasize quality education over mere numbers. In addition, it is appropriate that the Brothers begin to exercise this apostolate outside the schools, provided they do so as members of a community and as representing the Institute.

The *Declaration* concludes with a short exhortation to each Brother to enter fully into the personal work of renewal and invites them to seek the help of the Holy Spirit and their heavenly patrons to bring supernatural blessings on the enterprise.

Brother Luke Salm
Manhattan College, New York

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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01-B-03

POINTS STRESSED IN 1981 FOR BROTHERS AND LASALLIAN ASSOCIATIONS

In May and June, 1981, the Brothers Visitors from all over the world, together with Brother Superior and the Council studied the present situation in the Institute and noted certain facts and trends. The following are some of their reflections on the apostolic mission of the Brothers and of the lay teachers who work with them.

1. UNDERSTANDING OUR TIMES

1.1 Our world is changing rapidly and we have trouble finding our place in it.

Who can deny that contemporary society is permeated and fashioned by the most radical questions?

★ The materialistic drive of the consumer society and the worship of money.
★ Migration of peoples in search of work: unemployment.
★ Ferment in the Third World (economic, political, religious — particularly the resurgence of Islam).
★ Militant ideologies exported from elsewhere.
★ The all pervading fear of atomic war, insecurity and terrorism.

1.2 The mental outlook of adults and of the young evolves considerably in a comparatively short time.

We, ourselves, are surprised when we study attentively the evolution of social morality, family life and religious practice. Everything seems to have become relative, bordering on general permissiveness. The young are subjected to evil influences over a long period but they are better able than adults to grasp the novelty, to struggle for justice and to believe in universal brotherhood.

Young people seem able to reconcile opposites in the life of the group as in their own lives: thus while the phenomenon of unbelief seems to spread unremittingly, a longing for the spiritual is becoming more evident and more urgent.

1.3 In the current of laicisation we have accepted deviations or lowered our standards.

Let us have the courage to admit it.

Has the lasallian school not sometimes been reduced to a mere teaching establishment? Such establishments usually maintain a high standard of teaching. Those parents are not mistaken who seek for their children a place of serious study with maximum chance of obtaining qualifications and diplomas. Brothers and lay teachers often show great dedication to their profession.

Nevertheless, the danger of their becoming professionals in the narrow sense of teachers — and the absence of all voluntary activity is becoming evident here and there.

2. LIVING TO-DAY FOR GOD MEANS RE-MAKING OUR COMMITMENT AND STRESSING CERTAIN ATTITUDES

2.1 An ever living source

The inspiration of the Brothers and of lasallian associations finds its source in the evangelical work of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Shocked by the wretched condition of both children and schoolmasters he gradually leaves his own "world" to join them and to establish with them a human brotherhood founded on faith and living by the Spirit, in order to announce, here and now and by a temporal benefit concretely realised, salvation in Jesus Christ.

2.2 A cultural Starting Point...

No education is possible without an a priori attitude of sympathy. Such sympathy is necessary in order to understand the life and reactions of young people:

★ Why and how has their concept of the family changed?
★ Why and how has the individual and social object of work changed?
★ How do their surroundings determine their behaviour?
★ What are the factors which shape their political ideals (ecological movement, fight against torture, rights of ownership etc.).

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★ Why are they attracted to God and Jesus Christ but often react against the Church?

It is not the reiteration of our own concepts which will enlighten their lives but the discovery — with them — of the meaning and answers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, ever new to modern man. To accept conversion for oneself so that the young may undergo conversion at the same time is not to deny one's past.

2.3 ...Which develops into an educational project...

A group of educators should define its understanding of education, its cultural components, its Christian character. In this way a charter can be drawn up "together and by association" which will call forth the enlightened commitment of each member of the educative community.

The project should be simple and precise but open to adaptation. If it is too rigid it would mean ignoring the rapid interplay of cultural and sociological factors mentioned above.

2.4 ...leading to a community of faith...

The life of faith is developed by the daily sharing of reflections inspired by faith. There are no limits to this daily reflection which is born of faith. Is a faith which is not openly expressed (under pretext of respect for freedom) sincere and living?

The community celebration of the faith will be the end result and the food of the life of faith, the starting point of a new take off.

Living to-day for God in the world as it is, calls for something more than a professional approach in order to adopt a pastoral attitude going beyond the time and place of the school and opening out to the life of the Church in which the risen Christ is active to-day.

3. CHECKING ON OUR FAITH AND ZEAL

There are certain marks which will help us check on our lasallian way of life.

3.1 Live with young people

It is no use talking if we are not, from the start, in communication with the young, if we do not share their anxieties and their hopes. It is no use talking if we measure our presence among them in hours of teaching and our action in terms of school programs. We must take steps to meet young people at other times and in other places (cultural clubs, camps, days of recollection, retreats etc.).

"The Brothers will live with their pupils from morning to evening in order to teach them to live well." (Old Rule)

This quotation reminds us of the spirit of gratuity and total commitment without which there is neither education nor evangelisation.

3.2. Welcome underprivileged youth — transform the traditional school

A basic element in renewal (because it is a return to our beginnings) is the priority given to children and young people who most need to meet an elder brother, because the poverty and marginalisation, which they suffer, impose a serious handicap on the threshold of adulthood.

The school is often based on a culturally elitist model which practically ensures the failure of the weakest. It is a real challenge to the Institute to-day to create a lasallian school truly capable of welcoming the underprivileged youth of our society.

A gradual change is taking place but we have still a long way to go.

3.3 Put pastoral ministry before professional work

High professional standards, though necessary, must not make us forget that school prepares for life and not just for a trade or diploma. The school should encourage a critical attitude towards accepted standards in social life, (cases of injustice, oppression, individual and collective selfishness, greed for money), which are in contradiction with the teaching of the Gospel.

By training students to live the Gospel values (justice, sharing, kindness, forgiveness) the school prepares them for participation in the life of the Church.

3.4 Expand the community of educators

The very conditions of our work in school make us one of the ecclesial groups where priests, religious and lay people are in constant contact with youth. These conditions are ideal for building together a life community and, in the best conditions, a faith community (sharing the same spirituality).

It is a contribution of the first importance, in the spirit of the appeal of Vatican II, that we make to the Church. Brothers and lay teachers are not just auxiliaries helping one another but complementary to one another in their specific commitments. Such expansion should allow the sharing of responsibilities.

3.5 Express faith in Jesus Christ and his Church

Each one is, according to his vocation, a member of Christ's Body.

Formerly the Christian school tried to form habits of Christian living, habits of religious practice.

To-day it is much more important to give students experience of the spiritual life (initiation in personal and collective prayer, discovering the Gospel message, catechetical renewal), suitable to the age and vocation of each one, in order to bring to life in each one the life of the Spirit and lead them to commitment in the Church.

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Regional for France
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01-B-04

VOCATIONS ANIMATORS

A break in the clouds

Priests, Brothers, Sisters, catechists, lay militants... all forms of commitment to the service of the Church have been affected by the vocations crisis.

Yet, in recent times a renewal of interest in vocation has become perceptible almost everywhere. But it remains precarious. This has led Brother Superior and his council to write to the Brothers to help them to reinforce and expand this renewal.

Here are the main lines of the circular

"Open your eyes and see the world's needs."

★ If the inspiring of vocations is reduced to mere propaganda for presenting impressive statistics then it were better not to mention it.

★ We must not fix out attention on statistics but on the young and the educational needs which arise.

"We invite each one of you to look at the youth of his own country or region as John Baptist de La Salle looked at those of Rheims, Paris and elsewhere. You will thus become more aware of the extent of the problem... the young need a greater number of educators to meet them — better trained to understand and speak to them and more Christ-like to make Him known to them." (Paragraphs 2 & 3 of the circular)

★ Well then?

— There are young people all around us: do we look on them with a little of the love that Christ has for them?

— Can we find out what is being done for them and what is not?

— Do we know who is working in the service of youth and what we could do to help them?

— Do we know how to pray the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His harvest? Do we invite others to pray with us?

God's co-workers in inspiring vocations

The circular states that: "Each vocation is the mystery of God's meeting with man." Every vocation of baptised persons: priests, religious or married.

John Baptist de La Salle explains his vocation as Founder: "One commitment led to another without my having foreseen it from the beginning." It is in this way that young people and their educators can discern the authenticity of a call from God. The way in which a person responds to events and commits himself, when this happens repeatedly and becomes habitual, directs a boy or girl towards one or other form of Christian life. Discernment of vocations is a respectful study of the life and personality of the individual.

God and the young person are the protagonists in this encounter, but, parents, priests and Christian educators play the role of precursors: to make plane the way, to help find the right direction, to prepare the encounter.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Via Aurelia, 476 – 00165 ROMA, Italia

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To help inspire vocations is an educative action

To inspire vocations is an educative action. It is not something reserved for the chosen few. It is the right of all young Christians. It is not something entrusted only to specialists: all Christian educators exercise this apostolate according to their degree of responsibility.

All education worthy of the name helps to direct a boy or girl towards finding his or her place in society. It helps them to discover and develop their talents. It suggests professions...

Thus every Christian educator helps young people to find in the Church the kind of service to which they are called by their baptism. The inspiring of vocations is, in fact, the faith education experienced by young people: deepening of prayer life, gradual commitment, finding the right way in which to respond...

It is in this general framework, normal and healthy, that the educator can carry on a more personal dialogue with a young person without infringing his freedom, and come to the point where he can discuss with him the possibilities of concrete commitment.

Inspiring vocations is, therefore, the concern of all educators:

★ of parents first of all — no need to stress that

★ of priests and religious, who, more than by their words, should show young people who they, themselves, are and what they suggest, "Come and see"

★ of every educator, catechist or militant, who, also, represents an authentic form of service...

★ not everyone for himself but each for all in the service of all forms of vocation within the Church. The Spirit of God is not the Spirit of divisiveness but of unity.

In conclusion: a few questions

These questions challenge us as educators because sincere work in inspiring vocations reveals in a clear light what we are doing and what we should be doing.

Have we not said, "precursors of the encounter between Christ and the young?"

★ I cannot fulfil this role without showing that the Lord counts in my life, that my life guarantees the truth of my words.

★ I cannot fulfill this role if I'm interested only in the intellectual abilities of the young, if I do not see them as real human beings with their aptitudes and their dreams as well as the difficulties they meet with.

If I do not listen to their personal questions — those concerning the meaning of their lives — I am merely a dispenser of knowledge.

★ Of what kind of future am I a precursor. What do I consider success in life? Having a good position? a high salary? or does it consist in doing or being something else, for example, putting oneself at the service of others for the sake of Christ?

★ We are all precursors: our families, our communities, our institutions... Are they places where one can encounter the Lord through us, the faithful, who compose, organise and direct them? Groups of people, also, speak a language. What message does the group for which I am responsible or of which I form part, have for young people?

Our Prayer?

★ First of all we must ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest.

★ Secondly, we must offer ourselves as workers in the apostolate of vocations among the young people confided to our care.

★ We must seek the grace of conversion in order to become authentic messangers of God's call.

★ We must realise what that implies for us. We must begin now!

Brother Patrice
General Council
Rome

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01-B-05

DE LA SALLE TODAY IN UPPER VOLTA

I - TO SERVE YOUTH, AND WHICH YOUTHS?

The facts: on 6 July 1983:

— 20,000 boys and girls who completed primary school passed the competitive exam for admission to secondary school.

— The Ministry will admit... 2,000 of them; and the 18,000 others?...

— And all those who have never attended school: 85% of the children under 15 years of age.

— And all those who will never enter secondary school...

Our responses:

These questions must always be present to those who work to educate the young people of Upper Volta...
These questions must influence our work and our commitments.
These questions must be faced continually.
But these questions must stimulate and challenge us:

— Only a minority attends school...
— Only a minority succeeds in school...
— The school must not be allowed to function as in an established society.
— The school must become part of another world...

What do Upper Volta and its youth need for tomorrow?
However, the classes are full: 45 or 50 students, at times even 100 in an elementary class...
However, the educational system is very costly...
What shall we do when everything is so urgent: health care, education, water, food, and announcing the Gospel...

Brothers of the Christian Schools, we try to respond to one need among others: the Christian education of adolescents in primary and secondary schools.

We do not forget the others, all the rest, but this is the work to which we are called and sent, with our limits our deficiencies, our errors...

our Faith and our Zeal...

and also with the appeals and the image of the youth of this country, with the hopes of a very young Church...

Because here as elsewhere, the young people demand from their elders that, without reservations, they help them to develop and to become men and women such as are needed by their country and by the Church.

Because everywhere the Good News of Salvation must be heard, among farmers as among the unemployed, as well as among young people and students.

Because 300 years of experience in the education of youth gives us a certain expertise in this area.

II - LOOK AT ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Seventeenth century France was 80% rural, but John Baptist de La Salle established his communities in the cities. He did not hesitate to choose.

He wrote *La Civilité Chrétienne* for poor students.

He made the son of the inkeeper and the son of the water carrier live together. The school was open to all because the salvation of God is for all.

Generally, he worked within the school system which already existed:

— but he radically changed the programs and the methods,

— but he went beyond the rudiments because he wanted to be helpful to the young in their world and in the one in the process of developing,

— but he consecrated himself entirely to this task, he and his Brothers.

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III - COMPONENTS OF A PRAYER SERVICE

You call us

You call us to love you by loving the world to which you send us.
O faithful God, grant us, that in loving the world, to love only you.
Go on your way, proclaiming my Gospel.
Go despoiled of everything, sharing your joy.
Make yourself worthy of love, of peace and of tenderness
Have the heart of a child, be simple and true.
So as to be my witnesses, watch in prayer
My kingdom is within you, it seeks your heart.
The Spirit will lead you in new ways
Go, fear not, I remain with you.

If you know how to see the earth

If you know how to see the earth, you will see the presence of God
If you know how to see your Brothers, you will see the face of God.
Look at this poor man, in his pain he calls to you
You will see the presence of God,
And receiving him into your comfortable house
You will see the face of God.
Look at those eyes enlightened by a beautiful love
You will see the presence of God
In their smile and their sweet light
You will see the face of God.
Look at these men with great hearts
You will see the presence of God
If you know how to fill them with hope
You will see the face of God.

Readings

Meditations for the time of Retreat: 1,III; 10,III.
Founder's Meditations: for the Feast of St. Louis 160,III.
Founder's Meditations: for the Nativity 86.

Questions

— What is the role of the local Church in the field of Christian education?
— Who chooses individuals for this work and on the basis of what criteria?
— To what extent do the parents, the youths, the laity, the Christian Community participate in this educational activity?
— To what extent is it identified with the country?
— How can the Brothers' schools be schools for pedagogical, spiritual, cultural, evangelical renewal...?

IV - WHAT THE CHURCH OF UPPER VOLTA SAYS

Letter of the African Priests to Educators (12 August 1974)

"they threaten to close the schools. Ask yourself if there is still an opportunity to teach rather than to dig wells. In brief, to close or to continue, to educate men or to feed them?

There are so many real questions which are so visible in the right eye and the left eye of the poor that we must consider them.

That is why we come to you who have consecrated yourselves with devotion and competence to this work. And going beyond you, as individuals and as teams, we address ourselves to your superiors and to all individuals in the diocese and elsewhere — as far as our fraternity can reach — to plead the cause of a promising future for youths with a Christian spirit who are prepared to reconcile the faith and their African culture.

This future depends above all on your understanding and our collaboration, but more immediately it depends on the humble and persevering devotion of innumerable teachers who accept their vocation as educators.

V - ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION OF OUR EDUCATION

1) In our country the Church is present in the midst of an illiterate population, and she cannot forget that the lack of instruction is one of the unnamed miseries in the world today.

2) The basic problem is to give these youths an ideal, and the ideal assumes a concrete form in the harmonious and lived relation between faith and culture.

"The Diocesan Community must state clearly that it considers the tasks and the mission of teaching one of the highest priorities of evangelization."

Brother Jean Louis Schneider
Collège de Toussiana
B.P. 312 Bobo Dioulasso
Upper Volta

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EVANGELISING A WORLD IN A STATE OF CRISIS

PRESENT EXPERIENCE

We are witnessing bewildering **changes** in our society in the matter of standards and values (keeping in mind particular situations in different countries).

This quickening rhythm is accompanied by connotations which demand from the believer **serious reflection** on the **foundations of his faith.** In effect, a naive or triumphalist attitude, lacking a critical sense is of no value. On the other hand, we cannot remain disorientated or resigned to accepting a state of discouragement and nostalgia for the past.

WARNING BY THE CHURCH

"The Church has recognised that a wide gap has opened between herself and modern culture. The enormous variety of cultures, customs and traditions throws down a challenge that, at first sight, might appear to be above our strength... The modern world feels fascinated by its conquests. Too often it accepts ideologies, standards of morality and behaviour which are in contradiction with those of the Church or, at best, it quietly ignores Christian values." (John Paul II: Address to the Pontifical for Culture)

FROM DE LA SALLE TOWARDS A MORE CHRISTIAN WORLD

"The Brothers, as members of the Church, live in this world and are necessarily sensitive to the problems which arise in each successive period of human history." (Declaration 8,1)

A world marked by the greatness of man and by his technical and economic progress.

A world become more and more secular in the continuing process of desacralisation.

A world where life, liberty and human dignity are more and more threatened.

A world where God is missing or rejected. (Declaration 11,2-3) These needs are not less urgent than they were at the time of the foundation of the Institute. (Declaration 23,2)

DE LA SALLE'S REQUIREMENTS: STANDARDS IN THE APOSTOLATE

De La Salle is a realist in his projects. He starts from the basis of faith which renders his zeal fruitful. (Declaration 47,2)

— He seeks a purpose in life (especially for the most deprived).

— His moral teaching is always based on the Gospel.

— His highest aspiration bears "the sign of the faith."

Based on these principles, the evangelising action of De La Salle and his disciples is the redeeming salvation of Jesus which becomes:

★ History because it enters the world through a preferential decision in favour of the poor.

★ Word of God, incarnate in the prophets, messengers of Christ.

★ Celebration in which we look forward to encountering the living Christ.

★ Community, where we feel responsible for one another because we love one another and share with one another. "In the Christian school the students experience true community." (Declaration 44,3)

AN URGENT APPEAL — BEYOND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES — COMMUNITIES OF BROTHERS

The spirit of de La Salle cannot be confined to communities of Brothers. It must produce fruit among those who have been enriched by it.

STUDENTS - FORMER STUDENTS

"The Brothers will remember that, instead of doing everything themselves, they can involve their students and alumni in some of their educational and apostolic activities." (Declaration 52,4)

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EDUCATIVE COMMUNITY

"Lay teachers make a unique contribution through their knowledge of the world, of family life and civic affairs." (Declaration 41,3).

TEACHERS

"Lay teachers should be completely involved with the whole life of the school: with catechesis, apostolic organisations, extra-curricular activities and administrative positions."

"In certain cases it may become necessary for the teachers to take charge of these leisure activities." (Declaration 46,3; 47,2)

PARENTS

"The Brothers work closely with parents, keeping in mind that they can learn much from parents as well as give them information." (Declaration 47,2)

"LAND OF OUR SWEAT" - EDUCATION, OUR SPECIFIC APOSTOLATE

"The end of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children: it is for this purpose the Brothers keep schools." (De La Salle: Rules, 1705)

PARENTS, TEACHERS, FRIENDS OF DE LA SALLE

Brothers; we exercise our apostolic mission by providing Christian education in schools. De La Salle wants us to live in the world, to interest ourselves in its needs and to share its preoccupations and hopes. By our formation and life style we invite people, especially the young, to live fully and joyfully their own lives. "Very conscious of the ways in which God speaks to the young to-day" we exercise our faith and find stimulus in our work. ("Very... to-day" Paul VI)

A PROPHET IN DIFFICULT TIMES

For our activity to be effective it must be based on present reality, accepted with love. This presupposes and demands:

Avoidance of prejudice:

God's salvation is for everybody. Respect reality. Do not distort it.

Commitment to the place where we live:

Organisations and structures: cultural, recreational, professional. Cultivate human relations — in families, at work, in political circles. Promote values supportive of human dignity: campaigns for supporting human dignity at school, parish, diocesan and international level etc.

Conformity with the faith we profess:

Autonomy of the individual conscience. Respect for those who live by another ideology. Encouragement for local forms of religious expression. Conformity of life with faith.

Professional Integrity:

Have a thorough knowledge of what we are doing. Be qualified for our professional task. Make our methods and procedures known. Become integrated in a conscientious and responsible laity.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND SUPPORT IN OUR APOSTOLATE

★ Luke: 1:21,24: The wisdom of the simple.

★ De La Salle: Called by the Church (Meditations: 199,1; 203,1; 198,3).

★ In my position I judge conflict situations from the view point of faith: their causes, their manifestations, their solutions.

MY SONG OF HOPE:

I shall rise every day
above all discouragement.
You, yourself will saturate the air
with those droplets of hope
That, sometime or other
will bring back to me.
The little joys long forgotten

Brother Augustin Cabria
Visitor of the Central District
Madrid

(1) Como referencia doctrinal, cfr. «Exposición preliminar de G.S.».

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01-C-02

YOUTH AND THE WORLD OF WORK

"The renewal of the Christian school calls for relevance to contemporary culture... an openness to the life of the world..." A Declaration: *The Brother in the world to-day*.

"If the schools have any function, any justification, it is to prepare young people for the future. If it prepares them for the wrong future it cripples them" — Alvin Toffler in "The School Administrator," April 1983.

"...John Dewey... had seen the division of education into vocational training and the academic curriculum as reflecting the division of labour inherent in a class-divided society." H. Svi Shapiro, in Harvard Educational Review, August, 1980.

Among other goals a good school will seek to prepare its students for the future, preparing them to some extent for earning their living and for life in a world which by high technology is undergoing a revolution at least comparable to those effected by the end of feudalism and by the flowering of the industrial revolution. In this paper we shall consider chiefly the first of these goals, what, broadly speaking, might be called vocational education, but we shall not be able to evade completely the impact of the second. For the present purpose the words school, schooling and education will be used interchangeably. The importance of the Christian religious element in education is presumed.

There is a very large body of information on vocational counseling and training in the US. The current volume of Books in Print lists nearly 1,000 titles. The January, 1983, catalogue of the Educational Research Information Clearing House (ERIC) carries abstracts of about 400 studies by state and federal departments, universities and private agencies. The Education Index lists almost 700 articles on vocational training and counseling published in professional journals in 1982. The latest catalogue of the US Government Printing Office has over 400 government publications in these fields, from pamphlets of a few pages to thoroughly researched volumes.

In all this there are extensive accounts of everything needed to pursue any profession, career, trade, job opportunity, requirements, preparation. There are guidelines for starting a small business and for running a family farm. There are studies of priorities in inner city vocational education, of federal subsidies for medical training and for training teachers of agriculture in Iowa. There are evaluations of courses and opportunities for computer programmers, dentists, and electricians. In short, there is a vast store of information of value to students, parents, counselors and educational planners on vocational training and preparation for the world of work.

Traditionally the secondary high school in the United States has sought to ready students for the future by providing college preparatory programs in the same institution with business and commercial curricula. In fact, the earliest of the Christian Brothers' schools, working in large cities with the sons of immigrants and the poor, were exemplars of this model. The theory is obvious: that this is a sound and relatively inexpensive way to provide for different levels of ability and different careers in an ambiance conducive to social unity. The larger public

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systems also included specialised vocational and trade schools at both the secondary and junior college level. Various industries in a given area conduct job training, and specialised trade schools are operated by private enterprise often at fairly high tuitions.

From this plethora of information and from generations of experience with this variety of schools two sets of goals for life/work planning have emerged. One stresses job performance: competence, good work habits ability to accept correction and follow directions, loyalty to the employer, minimal academic skills. The second set is quite different. It includes fairly high levels of literacy, by which is meant ability to read and interpret fairly complex sets of directions and to listen with comprehension; a good level of math skills and ability to develop them; capacity for decision making and sound judgment.

About 25 years ago, dissatisfied with what he saw as an inadequate attempt to achieve these two goals and to do so in an atmosphere conducive to both overall excellence and a democratic society, James Conant proposed the "comprehensive" school. Eliminating small academies and separated trade schools, this was to be a large institution combining the best of academic, business and trade courses. Students of all levels of ability and career orientation mingled freely, and were assigned indiscriminately to certain programs. Other programs challenged the brightest, and still others provided preparation for careers in business and trade, even for the least gifted. In an atmosphere of equality and multiple opportunity everyone would be prepared for a satisfying and useful life.

The practical approach taken by individual institutions in preparing students for the transition into the world of work has depended on local conditions, the needs of the community which the school serves, and the resources available. Models and ideas developed elsewhere have their value, but the actual implementation must be determined by a proper assessment of local conditions.

Achieving this twofold goal presents a special challenge to the American Catholic schools with their limited resources. The goals must be integrated. Where only the first is pursued vocational education becomes liable to the Dewey/Shapiro charge cited at the beginning, that its real purpose is to stratify social class and create a docile workforce for industry. But where the second is properly implemented, for example, by routine use of I:Q. and mere ability testing, the slow learner is not seen as a putative late bloomer, and the school becomes another unwitting agent for stratification of social class. A good education will prepare students to earn a living but not by teaching them a job while in the common school. Respect for persons, an essential characteristic of the Christian school, demands of a system of education which, while recognising that individual differences must also mean recognising limitations, still strives to provide the fullest opportunity for all levels of ability.

The Constant study in the late 50's had made the large comprehensive high school, with its great mix of the academic, the commercial, the technical curricula, the ideal, but student motivation for academic excellence never fully materialised and many bright students were satisfied with a minimum of challenge, and filled their schedules with entertaining easy electives.

Those who began vocational, non-college programs changed their minds as graduation and the world of work approached. The 60's and 70's brought education for self-fulfilment and both college preparatory and vocational preparation work suffered. Nowadays the misguided look to the computer and high technology as an easy solution to problems of life and career planning.

The result has been confusion and mediocrity at all levels of education for no norm has been discernible. A "dis-learning society" has emerged documented in the recently released report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, entitled "A Nation at Risk."

> "...educational reform should focus on the goal of creating a learning society. At the heart of such a society is the commitment to a set of values and to a system of education that offers each member the opportunity to stretch one's mind to its full capacity from early childhood through adulthood, learning more as the world changes."

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In other words, the school must prepare the student for life in which a simple "how to do it" training will not suffice. No matter what shape education will take, the future and the world of work will belong to those with a very different kind of preparation.

Anticipating the Report and its findings by two years, the distinguished American educator and philosopher, Mortimer Adler, saw the cause in an inappropriate attention to the first of the goals we have considered: preparing for jobs at the level of the secondary school. Specialisation, (at so early an age) he says "is the disease of modern society." He then offered his solution, called the Paidea Proposal, which seems an adaptation of the medieval trivium and quadrivium. He divides all education into three programs: acquisition of organised knowledge, development of intellectual and learning skills and the improved understanding of ideals and values. All students would follow the same program, though provision for different ability levels would be made. All students would take physical education. There would be no trade schools as such, but students would be expected to master certain manual skills: cooking, sewing, carpentry, and have work experience.

Whatever the structure of the educational system needed now, no school which calls itself Christian can function as though we still live in the old world. Teachers and programs must help students look at their futures in a realistic way, in terms of the sort of reality which to-day's world of work has created. A whole, Christian view of each student as a person in the modern world demands this:

> "The Christian school endeavours through its program of instruction to prepare its students for their professional life, for marriage and its responsibilities, for service to society and the Church. It makes known to them the great needs and aspirations of modern man. It encourages them to be competent in to-day's world..." (Declaration 47,2)

The suggestions are given only to provide foci around which discussion might be planned. There is no prioritization, no sequence and these questions, topics and activities should be adapted to local use. They do assume some preparation for any discussion.

1 - Prepare a list of what graduates of this school are doing since they received their diplomas 5, 15, 25 years ago.
Why do we not know more about our alumni?
What do they say about how this school prepared them for life and work?

2 - Tell the story of your own search for a job, a career, a profession. What helped you most?

3 - Which passage in the accompanying paper do you agree with most strongly? Why? Which do you oppose and why?

4 - How many of the current student body are working after school? In what jobs? What is the average earning? How are they using this income: current tuition? for college? for family or self support? Savings? Entertainment? Auto? Other?

5 - Does the school have any contact or cooperation with industry for job training, career counseling, etc.?

6 - Organize a "Career Day" featuring exhibits, talks, interviews with representatives of local business and industries. For students and parents (and teachers!).

7 - Evaluate publications for career counseling available in the library and in the counselors' offices.

8 - List the job-training programs and technical schools of this region, e.g., in junior college, and private schools, or industry-related. What evaluation is available on the quality and reliability of each?

9 - List the job-finding and counseling services available in the area. How reliable are they?

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10 - How does this school foster decision-making skills? Foster judgment & critical thinking?

11 - What non-academic manual skills can be learned in this school?

12 - Discuss the Peidea Proposal of Mortimer Adler. There is a brief, excellent summary prepared by Adler himself in the July 1982 issue of "The National School Board Journal."

13 - Do academic and early vocational specializations, early separation by ability (de facto if not de jure), the proliferation of electives and less demanding academic programs, etc. impede or stimulate the growth of the learning society? Do they foster or promote equality or class structure, or are they in fact indifferent?

14 - Mortimer Adler says that the twentieth century has contributed the concept of "the equality of man universally" to his original list of great ideas. Do you agree?

15 - Discuss this proposition: "A good education prepares students to earn a living but not by teaching them a job while in the common school."

Brother Francis Huether
Christian Brothers' Conference
Romeoville, Ill., USA 60441

N.B.: Addendum: Several UNESCO publications, which arrived at the writer's office too late for incorporation in the present text, will be of special interest and value to some people discussing the topic: "Youth and Work" (UNESCO - ISBN 92-3-101610-5). 171 p. with tables. "Youth in the 1980's" (UNESCO - ISBN 92-3-101885-X) 384 pages. - "Youth Prospects for the 1980's" (SS. 80/D-119/A). A synthesis. 47 p.

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01-C-03

LEARN TO LOOK AT REALITY
EXAMINE WHAT IS SAID
LISTEN TO WHAT IS NOT SAID

It all began because St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first Brothers were able to see all around them the real misery of youth.

Everything: their personal vocation, their creations.

The following paragraphs tell how, in our own day, a community of Brothers (at Garges in a Paris suburb) observed the young people who lived near them and how they reacted:

TO SEE THE HIDDEN DISTRESS AND HEAR THE SILENT APPEAL

There is no need to travel thousands of miles in our affluent society — over equipped and over informed — yet adept at hiding its misery — in order to find spiritual loneliness, cultural deprivation and religious confusion.

* * *

"In our town of 40.000 inhabitants there are more and more abused and battered children. Tragedies due to unemployment and alcohol. It is often urgently necessary to place families in care for short periods so that the children can breathe and sleep peacefully free from fear and without having to separate father and mother in the middle of the night. Can you do anything about it?

(Statement of a social worker dealing with family allowances)

Children, young people disillusioned with life, who have seen too much...

Refugees, deportees, what can we offer them so that their lives be not passed in a state of misery and apprehension.

* * *

"Look...

In this area there are more than forty of us who know nothing and can neither read nor write. Something must be done. We can't go on like this. It's not just...
We don't want to go to school... Get us a school...

(Youths aged 12 to 15)

What kind of school do they need?
What kind of teaching? For what kind of men and women of the future?

* * *

"You know we attended a Technical High School. From the age of 17 we gradually became drug addicts.
Why? What happened? Tell us what's wrong with us. How do we get out of this mess? Our ties are broken... We don't want to work. What have we got to live for?"

(Young people aged 22-23)

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Shipwrecks from elsewhere...
How can we be with them, close and discreet, in order to be, at the right moment, that attentive ear which catches the cry for help.

* * *

"Brother, in this area there are little gypsies who want to go to school. Our public school made a great effort to help but it quickly came to nothing because the local authorities chased them from the site. Our structures are too rigid. Could you do something for them?"
(Departmental Inspector of Education)

Tracked down, chased away. They're different. Aren't they...
How do you provide them with the means of expressing their difference and thus enriching our common heritage...

* * *

"Since I came to this school my father listens to me and takes an interest in me"
(A boy of 14 years)

"Oh, you know a child is like a puppy. He just grows"
(Father aged 40 years)

"Tell us what goes on in a child's head. My baby does things with his hands and feet and I don't know why."
(Young mother aged 15)

Parents are confused, crushed by life, helpless in the presence of their children.
How do you get them to take heart again and come alive.

TO LISTEN ATTENTIVELY TO THE HEARTS OF MEN
TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR CARES
DEMANDS GREAT INTERIOR SILENCE...

* to listen to all the noises arising from modern planning and hear behind its clanging and rationalisations the strangled cry of those who can no longer speak;
* to let pass again through our minds and hearts the little acts, the little things seen and heard and felt and then forgotten which — in the long run — are going to become the flesh and blood of our own conversion.

* * *

SUGGESTIONS:

* to each one of us individually: take time to observe young people and question those who know them.
* to our communities and lasallian groups: take as your objective to get to know a group of young people in an area, in a street, in a parish, in their families... then draw up a viable plan of action or take part in a community service already in operation.
(La Communauté de Garges, 5, rue Gambetta, F 95140 Garges, France)

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01-C-04

CHRIST'S CHALLENGING CHOICE

The poor, the despised of this world, the troublesome, those on the fringe of society, the sick, the handicapped, the victims of segregation — one is almost led to believe that the Gospel is for them alone.

1. THE LIFE OF JESUS

To start with, His parents are poor, unknown, from a forgotten village. He is born in poverty and because of this He endures all the disadvantages of the poor.

From infancy He experiences emigration — the curse of our time — and He experiences it again at the age of seven. During His public life He has nowhere to lay His head.

Occasionally, He has nothing to eat: He has to "steal" ears of wheat or find fish by a miracle.

He dies, nailed to a cross, despised, outcast, without a supporter.

He hasn't even a tomb of His own to receive His mortal remains.

2. HIS DOCTRINE

His beatitudes are not exactly for the rich and powerful: they talk of the poor, of those persecuted for justice sake, of those who mourn...

He does not choose His disciples from among the rich and powerful. He tells them to carry nothing with them, not even a scrip nor a spare tunic.

As for us, Christians, who are His disciples, He wants us to be detached and free as the lilies of the field (who do not spin to make clothes) and as the birds of the air who do not store up provisions...

He tells us clearly, "Do not store up treasures for the moths to destroy."

"Give and it shall be given you."

He utters terrible reproaches and maledictions against the rich and powerful of the world, against those who use "religion" to live in comfort.

He will judge us on our generosity, on our love — a love which is effective — "I was hungry... I was naked..."

3. HIS PARABLES

The Lost Sheep — we must leave all to find it.
The Rich Man and Lazarus.
The Prodigal Son — the wastrel who wants to leave home.
The Good Samaritan...

4. HIS ACTIONS

★ All His miracles are worked in response to needs, to difficulties, to sickness, to the misfortunes which befall people. One could say that He suffered constantly from seeing others suffer.

★ He defends the woman taken in adultery when they wanted to stone her.

★ He heals lepers and paralytics...

★ He helps the paralytic who hasn't the strength to get to the pool.

★ He shows a special predeliction for the blind.

★ He frees those possessed by the devil.

★ He has pity on the crowd who followed Him and have nothing to eat. He multiplies the loaves.

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I have quoted only a few examples. One could find many more in the Gospel.
From all this the conclusion is clear:

★ A marked preference for those on the fringe of society.

★ Denunciation of injustice and struggle against it.

★ Dignity of the person, of the individual — before property, honours.

★ The law must be made to serve the person.

★ Greed, riches etc. make it difficult for the Christian to enter the kingdom.

★ We shall be judged solely on our relations with others — with the unfortunate.

★ Can one be a Christian without sharing, without loving those in need — even to the ultimate consequences?

5. A TESTIMONY

The Lord, who has this disconcerting preference, often enlightens, through His Spirit, the marginalised, the forgotten, the oppressed.

The light comes slowly, as if by stealth, and young people, who have no education and who are totally oppressed, gradually come to know Life and express it joyfully in their own way.

I quote from a letter received from Teodoro a few days ago.

Teodoro is twenty years of age. He has already done two years of an eight year sentence in a very tough prison. He was sent to gaol at the age of eighteen for carrying arms and using threats — all under the influence of drugs — Here is what he says. You may interpret it as you wish:

"The Word of God is very beautiful but It is also a two edged sword which penetrates the heart and leaves it bare.

To begin with, I want to tell you that I have found God in prison. There is no doubt but that 90% of people have a wrong idea of Him. Life has taught me that one is punished in the same way he made others suffer. The person who has been unjust is punished by life to make him realise that injustice is not the road to follow. The person who does wrong and knows it ends by having to pay for his wrongdoing, and how!

Even in prison, the man who takes delight in exploiting the weak, robbing his fellow prisoners while threatening them with a knife, bullying others because his heart is filled with pride, is hated by the other prisoners.

O.K. One day he runs across someone stronger than himself, who gives him what he deserves and makes him pay for all the evil and injustice he has committed. He ends up in the most humiliating condition on earth — conquered, beaten, and what is worse, despised for his cowardice.

A man worthy of the name, a human being, does not exploit the weak or rob his fellows. He respects his neighbours as he wants them to respect him. He treats his companions as he wishes to be treated. He despises hypocrisy and injustice...

As for myself, I neither believe nor disbelieve as yet. I feel great respect for Holy Scripture. There is no doubt but that the message it contains is the truth. Christ, too, had a wonderful message but they killed Him because He spoke the Truth and Truth is Love. With love there are no wars; there is justice and goodness instead of wickedness; understanding instead of jealousy. Yes, it's true that love is peace...

Life is very different from that, it's quite the opposite. And from all the ruin, misery, suffering, and sorrow that one sees I have come to the conclusion that life is a school which helps to perfect man because man will never be perfect until he learns to know evil.

I feel certain, not because of my own ideals, but rather because of the Scriptures that "God is eternally good and just." For that reason as I understand it, I firmly believe that there is no eternal fire because God could not be as cruel as man... It could be that man judges himself. Can you image anyone as severe as oneself in judging his actions?

I know that what is more important is to be rich in spirit rather than in material goods... To be rich in spirit is to be in possession of the whole world. He who is rich in worldly goods and poor in spirit is like a tiny atom in the midst of the universe.

NOTES

★ Teodoro has little education. He spent a few years in primary school.

★ He wrote the above in his prison cell. He reads, writes and thinks though he can only send one letter a week, alternately to his mother and to the Brother who befriended him.

★ I think his testimony should make us all think, whoever we are.

Brother Adrian Trescents
Educator in a working class district
Barcelona, Spain

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01-D-01

THE PLACE OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER
(Reflections of a lay teacher working with the Brothers)

★ WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

As a Christian teacher — man or woman — working in a school under the patronage of St. John Baptist de La Salle or as an employee in the same school, I find myself faced with three problems:

1) I love my pupils and apply myself to my work to the best of my ability but what can I do to be more responsive to the young, especially those who are in trouble (scholastic failure — family difficulties).
In other words: how to be a true educator?

2) I teach one or several subjects as well as doing some secretarial work and looking after maintenance etc. I do this wholeheartedly but am aware that I must do more to help young people to find Christ.
In other words: become an apostle in my school.

3) I mix every day with the Brothers of the Community or if they are not there I meet them frequently. But, in spite of all this I feel so different from them.
In other words: how, in my situation, can I get into communication with the Brothers and live according to the spirit that animates them?

★ WHO ARE WE?

The three problems outlined above can be reduced to one and the same question: What is the place of the Christian teacher in the school?
Let's hear three statements which are also answers:

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

"*You are engaged in a ministry wherein you have to touch hearts. But you cannot possibly do this without the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Beseech God to confer on you to-day the same grace He gave the Apostles, so that after filling you with His Spirit for your sanctification, He may confer it on you for the salvation of others.*" (Meditations 43,3).

POPE JOHN PAUL II
(a friend of the lasallian family)

"*Be faithful to the charism of your Institute. Be faithful to your original vocation as "apostles of the school." A really arduous vocation, which involves renunciation and sacrifice, total dedication to the mission of education, inexhaustible confidence in the young and great love of the Lord, nourished by assiduous prayer because only God can give growth.*" (Message to the lasallian family, 1982)

JEAN GUITTON: Another friend of the Brothers

"*The teacher is a prophet who should inspire prophets: The prophet is one who continues Christ, in so far as Christ was a traveller, speaking to each individual and awakening in him or her the sense of being and the sense of God.*" (Conference at Passy-Buzenval, May, 1965)
"*Obligation to touch hearts,*" *but it can only be done by the Spirit of God.*
"*A great love for God, nourished by assiduous prayer.*"
"*Only God gives growth.*"
"*To be a prophet and inspire prophets.*"
Our horizon begins to light up, doesn't it?

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★ WELL THEN?

Let's look again at the questions asked at the beginning: Basically the first question asks that I have **the spirit of faith** (availability, attention to others, to the action of God in my life).

The second question: **"the spirit of zeal"** (be aware the God calls me to collaborate in His plan of salvation, in my own small way).

The third question: **"the spirit of love."** (Give God an important place in my life: have a sense of community and brotherhood).

The spirit of faith, the spirit of zeal and **the spirit of love** are the three great characteristics of lasallian spirituality.

★ WHAT SHOULD WE DO? SIX PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

1) Become a man (or woman) of prayer, possessed by the Holy Spirit (a time set apart each day for prayer and meditation... a short annual retreat). My relations with others will quickly change.

2) Become gentle, affable to all, discreet and respectful to others. Blain, biographer of St. John Baptist de La Salle, notes that the young seminarist was an example of virtue in the seminary of Saint Sulpice but that his teachers did not realise it to later on: true virtue is discreet, unrecognised, perhaps despised.

3) Live as much as possible among the young: recreation and other activities...

4) Have a sense of togetherness, of community (educative community, various groups, movements, charitable activities...).

5) Nourish myself regularly from the Gospels for: "We have one master, Jesus Christ."

6) Examine often, alone or with a spiritual director, how God guides my life, what signs He gives me (chance meetings, failures). God will make known to me whether He wants me to take a position of responsibility in the school or whether He wants me to work in anonymous obscurity.

★ HOW FAR SHOULD I GO?

At one time or another I must consider the question of my station in life:

★ If I am single, does God want me to consider the religious life — Brother, Sister, priest? I must give the question serious consideration and the Holy Spirit will enable me to say yes or no.

★ If I am married and committed for life does the Lord want me to join the hundreds of Signum Fidei who, throughout the world, try to live the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

★ PRAYERS

Here are two prayers which will help each one whether in the context of private meditation or while taking part in public celebrations.

"Oh God, who conducts all things with wisdom and gentleness and who does not force the will of man, wanting me to dedicate myself totally to the care of schools You led me imperceptibly from one undertaking to another without my having foreseen it from the beginning." (St. John Baptist de La Salle)

"Oh God, Trinity whom I adore, help me to forget myself completely so as to rest in You, calm and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity! Let nothing trouble my peace nor cause me to depart from You. Oh my unchanging God, let each moment carry me farther into the depths of your Mystery. Set my soul at rest and make it your heaven, your beloved home and the place of your rest. Let me never leave You alone there, but let me be entirely present there in living faith and adoration, completely submissive to your creative action." (Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity)

Michel Belly, S.F., *professeur*
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01-D-02

INTEGRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER IN THE EDUCATIVE COMMUNITY

1) A Brazilian experiment

Up to thirty or forty years ago the schools were, from the point of view of technique and educational methods, run by the Brothers. Lay teachers were the exception. But times have changed. Establishments of from a thousand to four thousand students are in the charge of a religious community of few members, assisted by scores of lay teachers and other educators. These people are professionally qualified but do not necessarily know the spirituality and educational methods of de La Salle.

Faced with this reality, Brother Visitor of Sao Paulo began, in 1982, to make contact with a small group of lay teachers in each school. He did this to satisfy a latent desire on the part of the teachers to gain a better knowledge and understanding of lasallian spirituality and educational method.

He invited the teachers to come closer to the Brothers' spiritually so as to inspire in them enthusiasm for maintaining a Christian ethos in the school.

From this arose the Lasallian Teachers' Groups — an attempt to initiate collaborators of the Brothers into the same spirituality and educational methods in order to continue the educative work of the Brothers.

To attain this objective, each "Lasallian Teachers' Group" meets, under the direction of the Brothers' community, once a fortnight for prayer, study and reflection. All the groups of a province come together for an annual retreat.

2) Community spirit

The great values of the lasallian educative system are the spirit of faith, the spirit of zeal and the spirit of community.

In 1680, on the feast of St. John the Baptist, de La Salle took the first masters into his own house for meals during which they read while he commented and explained. He succeeded, also, in introducing them to daily prayer and morning meditation.

A year later he decided to lodge them in his own house despite the objections of his family. On 24 June, 1682, he went to live with the schoolmasters in a rented house in the rue Neuve. All this helped in the formation of the new masters and ensured that the schools would be maintained by an incipient community.

The primary importance that the Founder attached to community is expressed in the passage of the first Rules which reads: "In this Institute the members will always show and maintain a true community spirit."

3) Origin of community

"Every human community is in origin divine and by nature spiritual because we are all children of the same Father. God wills that men should form one family and should treat one another as brothers..." (G.S. 24,1). "God chooses men, not only as individuals, but also as members of a definite community." (Id. 32)

Very opportunely the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education affirms that, "All the work of a Catholic educator takes place within a structure — the educative community — which is composed of all categories of people — pupils, parents, teachers, administrators and non-teaching staff — who have mutual relations of collaboration and who give to the school its character as an institution for complete formation..."

"Thus the educative community is, in its turn, a school forming part of greater social communities and when that educative community is truly Christian at the same time — as the educative community of the Catholic school is called to be — then it is the milieu where the educator has the greatest opportunity for teaching the pupil to experience practically what it is to be a member of the great community which is the Church." (The Catholic Teacher, Witness to the Faith in the Church, No. 22)

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Two questions for consideration

★ What more could I do to promote union and participation in the educative community of which I am part?

★ Is it possible to form, where I am, at present, an educative group with the aim of deepening knowledge and experience of lasallian spirituality?

TESTIMONY

Personal witness

In his writings St. John Baptist de La Salle insisted on the importance of personal witness which should precede the verbal message of the Gospel. "If you want the instructions you give to those you have to teach to be profitable and to lead to the practice of virtue, you must be careful to practice, yourself, what you preach. You should be filled with zeal in order to communicate the graces which are in you to your pupils and thus animate them to what is good and in order to draw down God's Holy Spirit upon you, the more easily to urge them forward." (Meditations 194,3)

In his meditation for the feast of the apostle, St. Thomas, de La Salle writes, "You have the happiness to read the Gospel and meditate upon it every day and are entrusted with teaching it to others. Show that you really believe in the maxims of the Gospel by making your actions conform to these maxims and by putting them in practice." (Meditations 84,1)

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education

The recent document of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "Lay Catholics in School — Witnesses to Faith," published on the feast of St. Teresa, 15 October, 1982, has this to say:

> "Conduct is always much more important than speech; this fact becomes especially important in the formation period of students. The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person that is being presented to the students the more this ideal will be believed and imitated. For it will then be seen as something reasonable and worthy of being lived, something concrete and realizable. It is in this context that the faith witness of the lay teacher becomes especially important. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behaviour that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behaviour as an impossible ideal. It must never be forgotten that in the crises 'which have their greatest effect on the younger generations,' the most important element in the educational endeavour is 'always the individual person: the person and the moral dignity of the person which is the result of his or her principles, and the conformity of actions with those principles'." (Cf. "Lay Catholics in Schools — Witnesses to Faith," No. 32 which quotes John Paul II: Address to UNESCO, 2 June, 1980)

SUGGESTIONS

★ Discuss the above passages in a group.

★ How can the Christian educator use the matter he teaches in order to witness to the Faith?

A PRAYER

"God our Father, who sent your Holy Spirit to the Apostolic College so that by His movement they might renew the face of the earth, send us your Spirit, also, that our lives may respond to your plan of salvation for us and for our society."

Brother Arno Boufleuer
Curitiba, Brasil

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01-E-01

ASSOCIATION TO-DAY

It was three hundred years ago and it's a very nice story!... No! It's to-day and right where I'm living!

By comparison with the rest of the world, the young people of my country are by no means the most deprived but they do not know how to find happiness. Who is going to help them find the liberating message of Jesus Christ? The Brothers' Institute is responsive to this situation. As the number of religious is insufficient to provide solutions to all the problems posed the Institute is constantly searching for new solutions.

Instead of withdrawing fearfully into itself and thinking nostalgically of the past it is looking objectively at the situation and investing in the future. It can no longer fulfil its mission by itself. What of it! Like John Baptist de La Salle it is content to work with those who come to it.

Lay collaborators want to become progressively involved in the lasallian project. The Institute welcomes this desire and works with them. The Brothers Visitors' conference has said so publicly.

Together and by association, Brothers and lay teachers accept their differences, share their respective riches and try to find new forms of living together. Thus, for the past several years we find joint teams of Brothers and laymen forming school administrations where responsibility sharing is effective. Educational establishments run by laymen voluntarily maintain relations with the Institute. Brothers Visitors in all the French districts meet regularly and for long periods with lay principals and take part in faculty discussions. The members challenge the Institute as to its objectives in order to know what position they could agree to accept in its structures.

Lasallian establishments under lay administration are visited by joint teams of Brothers and laymen. As these visits are carried out in a spirit of real fraternity the experience has proved extremely beneficial to both visitors and visited.

Finally, week-ends of reflection, formation and sharing are organised for the human and spiritual satisfaction of both Brothers and laymen. The latter are often accompanied by their wives.

"TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION"

Here is the testimony of the lay Principal of a Technical High School where a community of Brothers also works.

BEAUVAIS, 1980: Five hundred Brothers met on the occasion of the commemoration of the third centenary.

At the close of this special event at which I had the good fortune to be present Brother Jacques d'Huiteau drew this conclusion which attracted my attention on re-reading the report of the meeting: "I believe the Institute has re-lived the experience of Sarah. She laughed when the angel told her she would become a mother. You could laugh, or sneer, on seeing the average age of the Brothers. Nevertheless, at no time did I feel nostalgia for the glorious past nor fear of the uncertain future. Those who were present were living fully in the present... Sarah has given birth!..."

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It is my profound conviction at this moment that the Brothers' Institute is living fully in the present and that it shows by its actions that it has no fear of the future.

A layman, married and with two children, I have been, for the past ten years, head of a Technical High School which has been in the charge of the Brothers since 1941. I am convinced that John Baptist de La Salle created, three centuries ago, a cell in the Church which has not ceased to grow and regenerate itself. That basic cell is the spirit of association.

ASSOCIATION DESIRED BY DE LA SALLE

The lasting success of the work of De La Salle does not rest solely on that basic idea but it seems extremely important to me to examine, in our time, how the Brothers' Institute continues the work begun through its commitment to association.

John Baptist de La Salle appears to me, as I gradually get to know him, an extremely pragmatic man. All through his life he observed, he saw, he calculated, not grudgingly, but with a generous, courageous realism and then acted. Living in community must certainly have been, for a man who was essentially contemplative, a form of action. What else could he have done to solve the problems which confronted him? His action seems logical in the face of the diverse origins of the first schoolmasters and especially in view of the enormous difference in education which existed between the wealthy nobleman and those men of the people.

Only a common life shared at every moment of the day could provide mutual self-education. Besides, John Baptist de La Salle could only convince his schoolmasters by living with them, like them and for them. In so doing he followed the teaching method of Jesus Christ.

I like to think that this osmosis took place little by little. John Baptist de La Salle was no longer quite as he had been, he had become a little of them and entered the hearts of the men whom he was able to call Brothers.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Obviously this new form of association does not develop without some clashes and difficulties.

The situation is not idyllic, reactions and expectations of the various partners are sometimes, perhaps often, surprising; analyses of a situation are not always the same.

However, those who are experiencing these changes are decided to continue their experiments along these lines. Each one is aware that he must get accustomed to his partner and that requires a lot of time, patience and self-denial.

The Brothers' Institute, by agreeing to follow the road opened up by Vatican II, assumes the role of pioneer. There is no question of forming a third order but of finding a form of partnership between consecrated men and men living in the world which can offer a challenge to those who attend our schools.

The Brothers, by re-thinking the forms of their action and by agreeing to work through intermediaries, risk seeing, in a few years, the Institute in the forefront of the Church's educational apostolate, because the lasallian virtues are quite capable of filling the void that many teachers experience who want to carry out their work conscious of their responsibilities.

We are witnessing the birth of new cells in the Church.

Sarah has given birth!

Christian Joly
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01-E-02

"WHY STAND YOU THERE LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN?"

(Eleven celebrations for vocations) (1)

THEME: Masters and Apostles
To-day de La Salle is ourselves.

Text of de La Salle:

"This is also one of the essential qualities required of those who instruct others, for they must get to know their pupils and discern the manner in which to act towards them. Some require great mildness, while others need to be directed with firmness. Some require much patience; others need to be goaded on. It is necessary to punish and reprehend some, in order to correct their defects, whereas others need to be continually watched lest they should wander and perish. This varied conduct must depend on knowledge and discernment of character, and this grace you must beg of God most earnestly, as being one of the most essential for you in the direction of those over whom you have charge."

CREATION OF ATMOSPHERE

Has the Christian school a role in evangelisation?

That is a critical question which requires serious analysis and one we should often ask ourselves during our tricentenary celebrations in order to be able to give satisfactory answers to those who trust us, as well as to the frequent criticisms we receive.

All periods of history, which brought important changes in civilisation, knew similar crises. The solution lay, not in closing the school or abandoning it to its fate, but in renewing it. Continuing renewal, the constant law of all pedagogy, coincides with the need for continuing conversion in every Christian, apostolic community. What urges us to act in this sense is our quest for a true Christian identity.

John Paul II says, "The proper character and the basic raison d'être of the Catholic school is precisely the quality of religious education integrated in the general education of the pupils."

Hymn Themes
★ The song of Ruth
★ If the Lord is for us
★ Come, come follow me.

Gospel Text:

"Whoever welcomes in my name one such child as this welcomes Me." (Mt. 18,5)

★ "Que haceis mirando al cielo?" by Aingeru Castaños, F.S.C. Edic. S. Pio X. Madrid, 1982. This gives 11 Celebrations of the Word and each is a paraphrase of a Chapter of the Brothers' Rules. They pray and commemorate the Rules in as much as they propose a way of living and call for personal and community commitment. Written by Brothers these pages offer the Lasallian spirit to youth groups, teachers, men and women of the Signum Fidei movement. They deal with poverty, obedience, the spirit of faith, life of prayer, active apostolate, the community, teachers, apostles, religious consecration and fidelity.

To-day's Text:

"To-day de La Salle is ourselves, even if we find it difficult to believe. This challenge demands effort... because in the light of his teaching we have found to-day that the Christian school does not concern the teachers alone. It concerns us all. All of us support its walls and its roof. All of us maintain its enthusiasm and its ardour." (*F. Gainza*).

Has the Christian school a role in evangelisation?

Do not try to give easy, abstract, general answers. Each school is more or less capable of evangelisation to the extent that those in charge are able to animate it.

Our presence in any school, our presence and especially our action in the school should aim at giving a really satisfactory answer to the question. If that were not so the raison d'être of the Institute would be called in question and the heritage of St. John Baptist de La Salle would be no more than an historic memory.

May the constant meditation of the saint's message and the sincere request for his help bring us nearer to him and, by that very fact, bring us closer together while bringing our schools more into conformity with the model he put before us.

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THE WORD OF GOD

Advice: The sacrifice of His life, which Jesus is about to offer, gives meaning to all prayer. The unity of all among themselves and with the Father is the fruit of the love which gives life in giving up its own life. The Father and Jesus are one because He did the will of the Father who lives in Him. "If we love one another God is in us."

a) Reading from the first letter of St. John, the apostle (4,11-16)

"Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another: no one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and His love is made perfect in us.

We are sure that we live in union with God and that He lives in union with us, because He has given us His Spirit. And we have seen and tell others that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone declares that Jesus is the Son of God, he lives in union with God and God lives in union with him. And we, ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us."

Hymns for meditation (Themes)

★ The Spirit lives to set us free
★ All over the world the Spirit is moving
★ Alabaré
★ Glory, glory, Alleluia...

b) Reading from the holy Gospel according to St. John (17,11-19)

"I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world. Holy Father keep them safe by the power of your name, the name you gave me. I protected them and not one of them was lost, except the man who was bound to be lost — so that the scripture might come true. And now I am coming to you and I say these things in the world so that they might have my joy in their hearts in all its fulness. I gave them your message and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world. I do not ask you to take them out of the world but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One. Just as I do not belong to the world they do not belong to the world. Dedicate them to yourself by means of the truth."

Acclamation (Themes)

★ Jesus you are the Lord
★ All glory to you
★ How lovely on the mountains

REFLECTION (One of six given in the book)

Unpublished letter of St. John Baptist de La Salle

De La Salle's style in his letters is rather harsh, exigent and critical, like that of the prophets. He calls a spade a spade. He gives laconic answers to questions of conscience and administrative problems. Strict use of the rudder to keep on course.

"I see you doing ordinary things. Prepare yourself for the extraordinary. The Spirit will blow strongly. I allowed myself to be led. They all took me for a fool — my family, the archbishop, even that first handful of chance companions. One saw nothing at all. But the Spirit continued to blow powerfully. Up to the time of the heroic vow. With what joy! Eat the bread of charity but be in the breach. Without yielding to the pressure of hypocrites nor to be persecutions of the writing masters nor to the fatigue of travelling companions. Temper your soul for risks. The Lord's ways are not our ways. You must be a tracker dog. Dig among the garbage and the ruins till you find his traces. Open up paths. Beware of easy solutions.

The young are waiting for you. Look at the swarming mass of young people in town on a Sunday evening. They are as sheep without a shepherd. Lift up your eyes and see the fields ripe unto the harvest. How many good qualities, how many anxieties await the friendly hand of the harvester. You must find a way. Study will help you. But that is not enough. You should develop intuition, a taste for adventure, for risk, intelligent dedication to team work. Charismatic friends of the young."

Guide: COMMUNITY REVISION (The book contains 17)

★ Do we offer the young more active ways of participating in and expressing themselves than mere formal, silent presence in the councils of adults?

★ Do we allow the young to think about their future responsibilities social, civic and political. Do we ever reflect that by restraining them we leave them more vulnerable?

★ Do we not allow students to move from one class to the next without learning to be responsible, either as individuals or as a group?

★ Do we not place obstacles to their freedom by an excessive work load and obligatory activities, without the possibility of choice; by reserving information for the few and by not taking the young seriously?

★ Is the witness given by educators before the young an invitation to know the hope of liberation assured by faith in Jesus Christ? (Brother Aingeru Castaños - Editions San Pio X - Madrid)

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No. 2

1st february 1984

INTRODUCTION

As a preface to this edition of LASALLIANA I wish to inform you that Brother Superior agreed to the request of the editorial committee and appointed Brother Léon Lauraire as its chairman. Brother Léon is in charge of the Education Office in the Generalate. In fact, the Education Office has widened its scope to become a secretariate for education and particularly for education in Lasallian inspiration.

Brother Léon Lauraire will continue in Rome, at international level, the work he was doing for the French Region. He will help Lasallian educators, both Brothers and lay teachers, to benefit from the sum total of tradition, experience and achievement which were bequeathed to us by the Founder and his successors. That is the purpose of the Lasallian leaflets and the reason why Brother Léon was given charge of their production.

I myself, had the pleasure of getting this publication under way and shall be glad to continue collaborating with the editorial committee.

Brother Patrice Marey, *General Councillor*

The second number of LASALLIANA has extended the scope of its articles and increased the number of its contributors. Their contributions witness to their sincere interest in the Institute and their willingness to share their thoughts and achievements.

These Lasallian leaflets are intended to be used as a subject for reflection and as aids in their work, by individuals and groups but their practical value will only become evident after several editions. At present they appear rather fragmentary and disjointed.

We are counting on our first readers to introduce them to others in order to increase their impact and spread their influence among educators and to increase the number of contributors.

Publication of the leaflets is in the hands of a group of Brothers in the Generalate. In addition to their regular duties they have generously agreed to help with the production of LASALLIANA. I have the pleasure of introducing to you the editorial committee:

- Brother Patrice Marey, General Councillor,
- Brother Manuel Olivé, Assessor of the Lasallian World Federation,
- Brothers Maurice Hermans and Jean Pungier of Lasallian Studies,
- Brother Edwin Bannon of the Archives Department,
- Brother Yves Mazé, Secretary to the Procurator General, translator and secretary to the editorial committee,
- Brother Léon Lauraire, Education Secretary.

All are happy to contribute, through LASALLIANA, to a better mutual understanding between the Brothers of the Institute and their lay colleagues, in their work and witness, as well as to bringing a more explicit Lasallian charism to their educational ministry.

In the first number of the new year, 1984, they wish to extend to their contributors and readers their fraternal good wishes, encouragement and thanks.

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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02-A-08

AN X-RAY PHOTOGRAPH OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

This paper will, like an X-Ray, show only a skeleton. It could be covered in flesh and blood and given a living soul by a reflective reading of good biographies and the Founder's own writings. The following may serve as a guide.

I. HIS LIFE

A. He prepares himself without knowing it: 1651-1678

1651-1661: Education at home: parents, grandparents.
1661-1669: "Bonorum Puerorum College": Latin, Greek, Rhetoric.
1662?: First Communion.
1662?: Confirmation.
1662: Clerical Tonsure. Rheims.
1667: He takes possession of his Canonicate.
1669-1678: Universities of Rheims and Paris. Philosophy and Theology.
1670-1672: Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris.
1672-1676: Guardian of Brothers and Sisters.
1672: Spiritual Direction by Nicolas Roland.
1672: Sub-deacon in Cambrai.
1676: Diaconate in Paris.
1678: B. Theology. Rheims.
1678: Ordination. Rheims.
(1680-1684: Guardian of Brothers and Sisters, second time).
(1680: Doctor in theology. Rheims).

He does not yet know exactly what his vocation will be as a priest. The thought that it could be the christian school was furthest from his mind.

"I had never thought of it before. Many of M. Roland's friends had tried to get me interested but it had never made any impression; and I had never had any thought of doing anything about it". (Blain I,169; Bernard 30).

B. A ninety degree turn: 1678-1682

1678: He interests himself in the Sisters of the Child Jesus.
1679: Meeting with Nyel. St. Maurice School.
1679: Meeting with Mme. Catherine Leleu. St. James' School.
1680: He brings the masters to live with him.
1681: He introduces them into his family life in his own home.
1682: He moves with them into a house in the Rue Neuve.
Thus starting a new community life.
Some people have doubts about the future.
"End 1682": He sees clearly that the christian school is his vocation.

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"After much prayer, after much consultation, it became clear towards the end of the year 1682 (he himself says so) that God was calling him to take care of the schools..." (Blain I,193; Bernard 49).

C. The foundations of God's work:

1682: The Brothers of the Christian Schools.
1683: He gives up his family.
1683: He reduces his priestly activities to a minimum (preaching, confessing, directing).
1683: He gives up his canonicate.
In favour of a priest who is not his brother.
1684: He gives up his personal fortune to the poor.
1682-1684: First foundations outside Rheims.
1684: He gives the Brothers a habit.
1686: They make the first vows of obedience.
1686: He consecrates the Institute to Our Lady of Joy in Liesse.
1686: He gives up his post as superior.
1688: He goes to Paris to give the Institute a character of universality.

Such are the essential and solid foundations but a stout building needs to be raised thereon.

"I always looked on my salvation and the establishment and government of our community as the work of God; that is why I leave everything in his care, to do only therein what is according to his orders; and I shall consult him often on all that I should do for the one or the other; I will often say to him these words of the prophet Habacuc: Domine, opus tuum." (Rules which I have imposed on myself, Blain II, 319).

D. Consolidation: 1688-1694

1689: "Decision to maintain completely the lay character of the Institute.
1689: He draws up the "Mémoire sur l'habit". Among other things he says: "Work in schools requires the entire man."
1691: Vaugirard. No more schools will be opened until the Institute has grown.
1691: Heroic vow of two Brothers.
1691: Long annual retreat.
1692: The novitiate is established.
1694: First Rules.
1694: General Chapter.
1694: First perpetual profession with 12 Brothers.
1694: New attempt to give the society a Superior General who is a Brother.

It could be said that the work was complete. If God decided that the Founder should vanish physically, the Institute was already constructed. If he survived, it was to enrich it...

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, prostrate in profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty I consecrate myself to you to procure your glory as far as I am able and you will require of me..." (Signed formula of his profession).

E. Enrichment: 1695-1719

a) *Under his direction*

He opens 20 communities.
He sends two Brothers to Rome.
He writes six spiritual books.
He publishes 13 school books.
He plans to write and writes the "Conduct of Schools".
He answers 7,000 letters.
Each year he visits the houses.
He establishes Visitors from 1708 onwards.

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General Chapter 1717.
Brother Barthélemi, Superior General.
Second Rule, 1718.

b) *By his virtues*

Abandonment to Divine Providence.
Spirit of faith. Prayer.
Zeal. Charity.
Fidelity to the Pope.
Penitence. Poverty.
Obedience. Humility.
1702. Deposed from the superiorship.
1704,1706,1712. Condemned by the courts for various reasons.
Betrayed in Saint-Denis and Marseilles.
1713-1714 Obscure night of the soul.
7.04.1719 A holy death.

"I adore in all things the conduct of God in my regard." (Blain II,174; Maillefer, 163 and 297).

F. The zenith, after his death

1724: Letters patent for St. Yon.
1725: Bull of approbation of Benedict XIII.
The Church approved the Institute just he wished it to be.
1888: Beatification of the Founder. Leo XIII.
1900: Canonization of the Founder. Leo XIII.
1950: The Saint is declared "Patron of all Teachers". Pius XII.
1926: Beatification of Brother Salomon (Nicolas Leclercq), martyr.
1967: Canonization of Brother Benildus (Pierre Romançon).
1977: Beatification of Brothers Miguel (Francisco Febres) and Mutien Marie (Louis Wiaux).

Survival and diffusion of the Institute in the world.

II. ASPECTS OF HIS PERSONALITY

A. SAINT: see his life sections B,C, and E.

"One must cast a look interiorly at Our Lord Jesus Christ doing this action, and then begin, continue and finish ours in union with Our Lord, and with a view to imitating Him as perfectly as we can" (Recueil p. 125).

B. FOUNDER: He opens Christian and free schools for the populace in 25 towns.

Rheims, Rethel, Château-Porcien, Guise, Laon, Paris, Chartres, Calais, Troyes, Avignon, Rome, Darnétal, Rouen, Dijon, Marseille, Valréas, Mende, Alès, Grenoble, Saint-Denis, Moulins, Mâcon, Versailles, Boulogne sur Mer, Les Vans.

Secondary schools: Paris (Irish), Rouen.

Sunday schools or academies: Paris.

Missionary schools: Alès, Les Vans.

Re-education centre: Rouen.

Confinement centre: Rouen.

Seminary for country teachers. Rheims, Paris, Saint-Denis.

He writes: The Conduct of Schools, from experience. Something entirely new: School for the populace. Priority given to reading in the native language. Groups and standards by classes. Silence, (the use of the "signal"). Continuous activity: various jobs. Individual control. Personal record cards. Catechism; Christian atmosphere.

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Eight Catechisms: Instructions and Prayers for the Holy mass. Instruction and Prayers for Confession and Communion. Instruction for Learning how to make a Good Confession. The Duties of a Christian towards God: by question and answer. Exterior and Public Worship (Christian Life). The Duties of a Christian towards God. Continuous discourse. Long summary of the Duties of the Christian towards God. Short Summary of the Duties of a Christian towards God.

Five other school books: Spelling book (to learn how to spell and pronounce). Office of the Blessed Virgin and Psalter (for reading in Latin). Exercises of Piety for the Schools. Rules of Good Behaviour and Christian Politeness.

"If you love Jesus Christ, you will take every care to imprint his holy love in the hearts of the children you train to be his disciples: see, therefore, that they often think of Jesus, their good and only Lord, that they often speak to Jesus, that they aspire only after Jesus and that they breathe only for Jesus" (*Meditation* 102,2).

D. SPIRITUAL WRITER: His originality becomes apparent in four principal themes:

— Unity of life. Make no distinction between the business of your state and those of your salvation and perfection..." (*Recueil of short treatises,* p. 184).

— Spirit of Faith. The spirit of faith should induce those who compose it (the Institute) to view nothing except by the eyes of faith, to do nothing except with a view to God and to attribute all to God. (*First Rule,* Ch. II, art. 1).

— Meditation in the Presence of God. "It is worthy of note, as regards the presence of God, that one must not dwell on it for but a short time, for it is that which most contributes towards obtaining the spirit of prayer..." (*Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer,* p. 35).

— Theology of Education. "All the care you take of the children confided to your care will be useless if Jesus Christ Himself does not give them the virtue, the strength and the efficacity..." (*Meditation* 195,3).

He writes: The Collection of Short Treatises. The Common Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Rule of the Brother Director. The Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer. Meditations for the Time of the Retreat. Meditations for Sundays and the Feasts of the Year (192 in all). Numerous letters, nearly all of spiritual direction. We have only 134 of them of which 53 are signed.

"You have committed yourself to taking the place of God with regard to those you teach. And in taking care of their souls you have, so to speak, offered him soul for soul" (*Meditation* 137,3).

E. PRIEST: A very small aspect since he subordinated everything to his vocation as Founder. He was a priest however:

— An exemplary celebrant of the Mass.
— Confessor.
— Spiritual director (there are 14 letters giving direction to people outside).
— Convertor of souls. (There are 8 very impressive cases known).
— Defender of the Pope: against Gallicanism, Jansenism, Quietism...

Brother Saturnino GALLEGO
Sagrada Familia «La Estrella»
SAN ASENSIO (La Rioja)
SPAIN

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02-A-09

A MEETING OF THE FIRST BROTHERS WITH M. DE LA SALLE. THE 1686 ASSEMBLY

1st PARAGRAPH: Introduction

In 1686 John Baptist de La Salle summoned the 12 principal Brothers to an assembly which started on the eve of the Ascension as a retreat and continued to Trinity sunday.

This procedure of the Founder reveals his pedagogy which is worth while studying. It is revealing not only because of his methods of procedure but also because his attitude and the atmosphere of prayer throughout the day were so many lessons.

This assembly put some fundamental decisions to the Brothers and they can be summed up as follow.

— Regulations cannot become Rules properly so called till they have been tried out for a number of years.

— Henceforth they would no longer be known as "masters" but as Brothers.

— Their dress would distinguish them not only from the clerics but also from lay people.

— Their food and life style would conform to that of the poor families whose children they had in class.

— Finally, the Brothers who made the request would be allowed to pronounce the vow of obedience for three years by consecrating their life to God in the service of the poor in school.

It was not by chance that such gestures consolidated the Society. De La Salle went into detail, planned rigorously, prayed, reflected, took council and finally obtained the agreement, participation and commitment of the Brothers. What was his method? How did he propose to accomplish it? We shall try to find out in the following extract from Blain (1).

"In order to transform the Assembly of Masters into a community, they must be given a habit, constitutions and everything established with a perfect uniformity suitable to their vocation. They must all be inspired with the same spirit, the same sentiments, the same dispositions, the same outlook and make but one body and one soul just as the first Christians forming the primitive Church presented the model of a perfect community for the years which followed. But in order to do this, he did not think that he should contribute anything from what he thought personally.

The humble institutor convoked his principal disciples to the number of 12 and they assembled together to discuss the means of giving them shape, of getting them settled and assuring their stability...

It started on the eve of the Ascension of the year 1684 (*) and finished on the feast of Pentecost; but it was extended to that of the Blessed Trinity. Monsieur de La Salle opened the meeting with a very touching speech. He made them see that the order which reigned in the house should lead them to think of the means of maintaining it; that regularity which is the soul of a community needs wise rules and that thought should be given to practicing them before drawing them up... You will perceive your own work in the book which will be written and the laws it contains will appear agreeable because you yourselves have been the legislators...

He concluded that on this point as on all others he left them entirely free to speak their mind, and even greater freedom to follow it; that all that he would do would be to listen to them and to decide according to the greatest number of votes; and finally that what he recommended most particularly was to pray well and to prepare themselves by a fervent retreat to know the will of God.

(1) BLAIN. Blain was, with Dom Elie Maillefer, his nephew, and Brother Bernard, one of the 3 contemporaneous biographers of the Founder. In 1733 he published in 2 volumes "La vie de Monsieur Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Instituteur des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes." They can be consulted in Cahiers Lasalliens Nos. 7 & 8.

(*) Recent studies lead us to prefer 1686 as the date.

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During this long period of prayer and meditation they had time to invoke the Holy Spirit and to prepare their hearts for his inspirations. In silence and recollection, as each one was free to pay attention to his voice and to listen to his inspirations, each one also had the right to communicate his thoughts and feelings to the others. Without forewarning, without suggesting his views or inspiring them with his ideas, Monsieur de La Salle left them free to think and say what they wished. Doubtlessly the shortest way and the easiest for them would have been to get him to speak first and allow themselves to be led like docile children by the light of their father. A man of God such as he, was the mouth piece of the Holy Spirit and pronounced his oracles for them. Perhaps they did this; perhaps they told him they were his children, and asked him to govern them like a father and give them rules without their advice and without deferring to their feelings. But what means could they take to overcome his humility on this point which gave him the right only to listen to them, take their advice and decide on a majority of votes? Not that he did not help them with his own inspirations or put them right when their ideas were not sensible nor correct. But he did it in such a way that he did not find therein his self esteem and that it did not hinder their liberty to make their own suggestions and justify them in any way. The only right he reserved to himself was to speak a lot with God and ask Him to speak Himself to this college of his 12 disciples, and to make known His holy will through them so clearly that that there was nothing further to do but to endorse these thoughts dictated by the Spirit of God..."

THIRD PART: General Objective

"...inspire all with the same spirit, the same sentiments, the same dispositions, the same outlook and make of them but one soul like the first Christians" (1).

Specific Aims

1) "...consult together on the means to give shape to the establishment, to get them settled and to give them stability" (2).
2) "...transform the Assembly of Masters into a regular community..." (3).
3) "...give them a habit..." (4).
4) ...rules and constitutions.
5) "...establish perfect unity in all things suitable for their vocation" (6).

Method Followed

1) Motivate the Brothers: "opened it with a touching speech" (7).
2) Start from what has actually been practiced: "...the order already reigning in the house..." (8).
3) Faith in the group and in its aptitudes: "...he did not think he should put in anything of his own..." (9); "he left them perfectly free on this point as on all the rest..." (10).
4) Number of representatives (12 Brothers).
5) Freedom of discussion on ideas and feelings: "...give their opinions..." (10).
6) Sufficiently long meeting (18 days).
7) Expressing what they live, they reaffirm their identity: you will find therein your own work..."

Attitudes

1) Complete freedom (107).
2) Listening to the Spirit (11).
3) An Assembly of prayer (12).
4) Respect for the Brothers (13).
5) Listening attentively to the Brothers (14).
6) Accepting the majority view (15).
7) Judicious and discreet direction (16).

Brother José CERVANTES
General Councillor
ROME

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02-A-10

A NEW IMAGE OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FROM AN ANTHOLOGY OF HIS WRITINGS

Educating young people is becoming a more complex and difficult art, so much so that leading educationists are beginning to feel the need to go back to those masters of the art who produced the best results in the past in order to find enrichment and a stimulating model for comparison.

In the front rank of those educators is St. John Baptist de La Salle, and the anthology "Proposta Educativa", Educative Proposals, presents a complete synthesis of the treasures of his human and Christian wisdom, allowing the educator to discover a new image of de La Salle — a saint alive, relevant and stimulating and not a rigid figure encased in three centuries of history.

ATTENTION TO GOD AND TO THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG

The real de La Salle is a rich and complex personality in whom attention to the things of God and to the needs of the young are united in what seems a wholly natural manner but which is, in reality, the fruit of intense effort and genuine self sacrifice.

In none of his writings do we find him speaking of God without allusion to man nor of man without reference to God. His pedagogical counsels drew their reason and strength from a Christian vision of reality but in their constant reference to God there is nothing which constrains or confines the development of the human personality. This balanced synthesis of the divine and human de La Salle attained thanks to his intimate acquaintance with the Word of God, evident in every line of his writings, and to his realistic view of the needs of the young people of his day.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSTA EDUCATIVA

This book which is divided into two parts, has a fifty-six page introduction to the writings of de La Salle. In it the following points are briefly dealt with:

— The historical and cultural background to de La Salle's thinking.
— Essential biographical information.
— A spiritual profile.
— His principal pedagogical insights.
— Lasallian educative style.
— The vitality of his message to-day.

In the second part (152 pages) he develops his theme. By a judicious choice of the best Lasallian texts on education and pedagogy, skilfully inter-related, he throws new light on the Founder's concept of a Christian education:

— The meaning de La Salle gave to "educate".
— The implications of an educative community for pupils, educators and parents.
— The characteristic marks of Lasallian pedagogy.

This is not a history book but a book which compels, which forces us to take up a position, to put ourselves in unison with de La Salle. It in an educational code but without the rigidity of a

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code. It is full of the warm, brotherly and persuasive encouragement of a man who sees clearly, understands and foresees with convincing force but without imposing himself.

THOSE TO WHOM THIS ANTHOLOGY IS ADDRESSED

While taking into account the need to introduce young Brothers, about to begin their apostolate, to Lasallian educative methods, "Proposta Educativa" is addressed, primarily, to lay teachers and to all who work in schools of the Lasallian "family". It is meant for those who want, not only to work with the Brothers and to adopt their methods, but also to share their spirituality and to discover not only how to educate but how "to be" in order to educate.

In the school of Lasallian Christo-centered spirituality they will learn to look at the model proposed by de La Salle:

— Christ the Master who was ever willing to listen,
— Christ the model because of His example,
— Christ the liberator because He himself was free,
— Christ the model for men by His obedience.

The path that de La Salle proposes to educators is a demanding one but one that is in harmony with the concept of continuing education, so widespread to-day. It is a lesson taught by de La Salle and worth meditating on.

THE AUTHOR

Brother Secondino Scaglione, from the District of Turin, is a specialist on the life and work of St. John Baptist de La Salle and editor of the review "Rivista Lasalliana".

THE BOOK

San Giovanni Battista de La Salle, *Proposta Educativa,* Edizioni Marietti, Torino 1983, 208 pages.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

• The prophetic spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle is not dead. His message is still a challenge to us. His love for children is still with us.

• The Lasallian educative message, existential and dynamic, is in no way an idealisation of the past nor a blind disregard for reality. Neither is it wishful waiting for a miraculous restoration, but a firm determination to follow in our own day and in our own circumstances the footsteps of de La Salle marked as they are by the imprint of the divine.

• There is a widespread temptation to-day to do something new, decisive, definitive but it is all very vague and no real progress is made for want of a model.

The examples of the decisive action both in the human and spiritual sense, given by St. John Baptist de La Salle have something to teach us in our present circumstances in the world of to-day.

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02-A-11

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE'S MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

THREE NOTES CONCERNING THIS LEAFLET

I. On the reverse of this page is an extract from a book by Brother Jean Pungier which is to be published shortly under the title: "Message of St. John Baptist de La Salle to Catechists and Educators."

In about 150 pages, it examines the ideas of the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on catechetics. It is not an exhaustive study, basing itself on only two of La Salle's texts on the subject. One, which is fundamental, is taken from the "Meditations for the Time of the Retreat". The other, which is perhaps less original, is from the "Duties of a Christian towards God" by question and answer, (*Cahiers Lasalliens* 21). It contains some quite interesting points.

1) *John Baptist de La Salle's message to Catechists and Educators in the Faith:*

Chapter 1. Your are the ministers of God.
Chapter 2. You are building the Church.
Chapter 3. Your God is a God of Goodness.
Chapter 4. Since you are disciples of Jesus Christ, bring disciples to Him.

2) *A Catechism by John Baptist de La Salle:*

Chapter 1. The Duties of a Christian towards God.
Chapter 2. A Source of these Duties: The Catechism by Jean Le Coreur.
Chapter 3. Another Source of these Duties: The Catechism by Claude Joly.

3) *A few Extracts from the Duties of a Christian towards God* (with a short commentary).

II. At first sight, one is generally disconcerted by the texts presented by John Baptist de La Salle. They are written in the language of the 17th Century and the Founder concentrates on strict doctrine. They are, moreover very condensed as is the case for the extract from the Meditations for the Time of the Retreat (MTR 13,3) (see reverse) which seems to have been woven from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, (4,11-16). An effort is, therefore required, but it is well worth while.

III. *Possible questions which would make this leaflet a basis for reflection, discussion and prayer:*

1) How would you describe for young people today their "Situation of Neglect"?

2) How would you, for yourself or for your group or educative community, rewrite "God's Plans" for these young people?

3) *a*) Looking through the eyes of faith at your life as a catechist or educator in the faith, can you say with John Baptist de La Salle that God has intervened in your life? That He has enlightened you? That He has called you or that you have offered yourself to Him with a view to realizing His plans for salvation?

b) "Minister of God". What is your understanding of this expression of the Founder? How do these demands, these responsibilities, affect you?

c) What role does the Holy Spirit play in your activities as educator in the faith? In yourself, in the young people committed to your charge?

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JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE'S MESSAGE

THE REALITY,
a situation of neglect

"Consider that it is a practice all too common among craftsmen and the poor to allow their children to live like vagabonds, going hither and thither, till they are of an age to find employment in some profession. This situation arises not only from their inability to pay teachers because of their poverty but also because, having to work away from home, they have perforce to neglect them.

This has disastrous consequences, for these unfortunate children, having become accustomed to doing nothing for many years find it difficult to accustom themselves to working. Moreover as they get into bad company, they learn to commit many sins which are very difficult to give up later on because of the bad habits contracted over many years" (MTR 2,1).

Between the Two Situations:

God intervenes in our lives:

"God has been so good as to bring a remedy for such a great evil by establishing the Christian Schools" (MTR 1,1).

"God Himself has enlightened the hearts of those whom He has destined to teach children His word, so that they may enlighten them by showing them glory of God" (MTR 1,1).

Men,

— who offer to work for God's designs:

"Admire the goodness of God who has provided for all the needs of His creatures and the means He takes to bring men to a knowledge of the real good (...) and offer yourself to Him to help the children He has confided to your care as far as you are able" (MTR 5,1).

— as responsible ministers:

"God has called you to your ministry to procure his glory and impart to children the spirit of wisdom and light in order to know Him and to open the eyes of their hearts. You will give an account of how you have instructed those under your care" (MTR 14,1).

— open to the Spirit of Jesus Christ:

"Hence you must ask Him for much, so that all the lessons you give them may be animated by His Spirit and that they may draw all their power from Him. Thus as it is He who enlightens every man coming into the world, it may be He also who enlightens their mind and leads them to love and practice the good you teach them" (MTR 3).

GOD'S PLANS,
a situation of salvation:

"When Jesus Christ made you responsible for the instruction of children and their formation in religious practice, he entrusted to you the task of building up his body which is the church.

Since children are the most innocent part of the church, and usually the best disposed to receive the impressions of grace, Jesus Christ desires that you fulfill your task of making them holy, that they all form that perfect man who is Christ come to full stature, so that they are no longer like children tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine that originates from human trickery and skill in proposing error. They can be victims of such error in the companions with whom they associate, or in others who propose evil and lead them into falsehood. But you are to help them in all things to grow to the full maturity of Christ, the head, through whom the whole body of the church grows with the proper functioning of the members joined firmly together by each supporting ligament, building itself up in love. In this they share in the promises of God in Jesus Christ. (MTR 13,3).

Frère Jean Pungier
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MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

02-A-12

INTRODUCTION

In the history of the foundation of the Institute we note that the majority of texts written by St. J.B. de La Salle date from 1700. It seems that, after 20 years of research and experimentation, the Founder and the first Brothers felt the need to formulate their common experience.

Thus it is that about 1705, The Rule, The Meditations for the Time of Retreat and the Management of Schools appear almost simultaneously. It is, therefore, an important moment in the self-awareness of the Institute and in its consolidation.

To read the Management of Schools to-day requires a complete intellectual displacement. We must continually keep in mind that it was written for primary school teachers, concerned with giving a basic education in schools entirely staffed by Brothers.

The evolution of education and pedagogy, the diversification of the scholastic and educational commitment of the Brothers, the co-operation of Brothers and lay teachers in the same tasks, the geographic expansion of the Institute to varied cultures and educational systems, all emphasise the "strangeness" of the Management of Schools to our twentieth century mentality.

We must, consequently take an overall view of a text which is characterised by an obvious concern for precision and detail. But under the rather off-putting surface of the text we find orientations and educational insights of astonishing richness and of singular relevance to our own time. It is these educative insights which give sense and coherence to the "ministry" of the Brothers which is so well synthesised in "Meditations for the Time of Retreat".

1) THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS: PART OF THE PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENT OF THE TIME

We know, especially after the Lasallian studies of the past twenty-five years, that de La Salle organised the Brothers' schools in the educational context of the late 17th century, that is, in an era of increasing concern for popular education. By his training and his contacts de La Salle was well aware of previous efforts in this field and of what was being done at the time of the foundation of the Brothers' Congregation.

His biographers and historians of education have shown the influence that Charles Démia, Nicolas Barré and Nicolas Roland had on him. From the point of view solely of schools it would be interesting to study the resemblances between the Management of Schools and such works as: "The Parochial School" or the "Remonstrances" of Charles Démia, or the ideas stirred up by "La Lettre" of Deacon Paccory. The Management of Schools shared, therefore, the educational concepts widespread in society or explicitly formulated at the beginning of the 18th century.

At the same time, its content is coherent with the particular end of the Foundation of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It is meant for schools which admitted the children of artisans and the poor — children who must be saved while, at the same time, receiving instruction and serious training.

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2) MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS: A PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

> "The Management of Schools was written in the form of regulations only after a great number of conferences with the Brothers of the Institute who were the most senior and best qualified to conduct schools, and after the experience of a number of years. Nothing was included which had not been agreed on and well tested, advantages and disadvantages weighed and the consequences, good or bad, foreseen as far as was possible." (*Manuscript of 1706 - Extract from the preface*)

The Management was written with the aim of helping the Brothers in their daily task of instructing children. Other texts and studies of de La Salle have shown how anxious he was that his schools should be successful. That preoccupation is evident in the Management of Schools and dictates the choice of methods of work and the system of organisation there presented.

Why such a guide?

• Because teaching is a noble task. For the Brothers of the Christian Schools it is a "ministry". To be convinced of this one has only to read the last two paragraphs of the foreword to the Meditations for the Time of Retreat. Here de La Salle quotes St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Protogenus, St. Cassian and the Chancellor of the University, Gerson, as illustrious forerunners of the Brothers in this ministry.

• Because the Brother must not separate "his employment from his state of life". It is in and through the school that the Brother fulfills his mission. He must bring to his daily task the same seriousness, the same conscientiousness as to the spiritual exercises which regulate the life of the Community.

• Because the Brothers must be effective in their work the Management of Schools gives them the means. Effectiveness means the success of the pupils. That is only natural. But we know that de La Salle reminds the Brothers:

— that it is the poor who should benefit by their work,
— that their modest or poor condition does not permit the waste of school time,
— that progress in their studies is the guarantee of their future.

The corollary to this concern for efficiency is the importance given by de La Salle to the formation of future Masters or young Brothers.

A professional guide to what?

To understand the importance and necessity of the directions given in the Management of Schools we must put ourselves in the context in which it was written. Essentially it was at a time when popular education in France had just begun. It was still at the initial stage. Brothers and schoolmasters had to be pioneers in many respects. They had to organise their classes so as to reconcile collective teaching with the needs of the individual pupil. They had to introduce the teaching of reading in French instead of in Latin...

The Management of Schools mentions the introduction of training in new subjects so as better to prepare the pupils for social and professional life: for example, legal documents such as wills, contracts etc. required in daily life.

These few reminders explain the need for a complete and precise text on the organisation of classes, methods of teaching and the working tools of the teacher etc.

3) THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS: A GUIDE TO OUR MINISTRY

Teaching in a Brothers' school was not just a matter of practising a profession. The Brothers were not just a new "Corporation" like the "Writing Masters or the "Masters of the Little Schools". Besides instructing the children, the Brothers were concerned for their salvation. They exercised a ministry. This was their real raison d'être.

The Management, therefore, gave an important place to all the daily activities which could help directly in the salvation of the children:

• Good example — to-day we would call it witness — which the Brother should give to the pupils in his conduct.

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- The acts of piety which punctuated the school day for the class: prayer in common, recalling the holy presence of God, the morning reflection, recitation of the rosary.
- Assistance at Mass in the parish church.
- Daily catechism lesson.
- The choice of edifying texts in the teaching of reading.

There was no ambiguity as to the Christian orientation of the Brothers' school. Here again we encounter the general thinking of the time. In a country where Catholicism was the State religion it was essential that children be taught the mysteries of religion and the truths of the Catholic faith. Other sects, even Christian ones, had had no legal existence for a number of years.

The Brother and the Master share in God's universal plan of salvation. They are workers in the cause and are given a great responsibility in what concerns the children's salvation. They will have to render an account on the Day of Judgement. That responsibility is all the greater when it concerns "children of artisans and the poor" because they are generally "farther from salvation". We recognise in these expressions the themes developed by de La Salle in "Meditations for the Time of Retreat".

4) THE MAIN EDUCATIONAL LINES OF MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

If we go beyond the letter of the text, the impression of uniformity and repetitiveness and the feeling of constraint it conveys to the modern mind and if we try to place it in the context of the period, then we can discern in the Management of Schools the main educational lines that guided de La Salle and the first Brothers in their schools. These orientations can surprise by their richness and their modernity. Here are some of the more obvious ones:

• Priority of the Person

The text of the Management of Schools brings us back time and again to the child, to his needs, his personality, his behaviour, his character, his future, his surroundings, whether family, parochial or social.

This attention to the children is all the more evident when it is a question of "poor" children, that is, of those whose families live in difficult conditions without help from anyone. For them the schools plays an essential and effective role in supplying the deficiencies of the home.

The priority given to children demands availability, attention and presence on the part of the Brother or Master and great flexibility in the organisation of the school and the class. A revealing detail is the provision of a supernumerary teacher so that the pupils are never without a teacher if the Brother or Master is absent or ill.

• An all round formation

The text of the Management of Schools reveals a concurrent concern for: Scholastic formation: acquisition of the indispensable rudiments of reading, writing, arithmetic and knowledge of legal documents required in ordinary life.

— Training in a trade, as far as was possible at the time, to prepare for life after school and to give the pupil a better chance in the struggle to earn a living.

— Doctrinal formation through knowledge of the mysteries of religion and revealed Truth. Insistence on this aspect of religion is explained by the controversies of the period: Jansenism, Quietism, Gallicanism.

— The acquisition of good habits. It is not enough to have an abstract knowledge of the truths of religion. We must form good habits of conduct.

• In an atmosphere of close personal relationships

Concern for the Brother's relations with the family, the parish and the area in which the pupil lives, is everywhere evident. To this is added concern for the Brother's relations with the pupils in class. Here, for example, are some of the usual recommendations:

— Effective attention of the Brother to each pupil through constant vigilance.
— Reception of the pupil and parents at the time of enrolment so as to get to know the family.
— Importance attached to mutual respect among the pupils and between teachers and pupils.

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— Importance of good example on the part of teachers and pupils alike.
— Practical mutual help in lessons and work.
— Personal relationship even in correction so that it may be understood, accepted and, therefore, effective.
— Retention of some pupils during lessons when their presence is beneficial to the group even though they are capable of promotion to higher grades.

All these provisions are aimed at creating and sustaining mutual affection among all, pupils and teachers. The Brother is asked to love all his pupils tenderly. The reciprocal affection of the pupils is the best indication of the good order and progress of a class. In this way is a "fraternal" school created.

- **A pupil centred school**

Historians of education in France have stressed the contribution of de La Salle and the Brothers to simultaneous or collective teaching. This risks giving a deformed image of the Brothers' schools at the beginning of the 18th century. In reality the Management of Schools describes a school where Brothers or Masters:

— give to each pupil, in each subject, work adapted to his age, his knowledge, his progress and even to his character;
— maintain great flexibility in school structures and organisation so as to permit the admission of pupils in the course of the school year, change of lessons at appropriate times for the pupils, special holidays for certain among them and varying times for beginning and ending school according to circumstances;
— form heterogeneous classes for pupils of different levels of attainment or "lessons". The latter term meant "learning units" in different subjects.

This is far from the image of the monolithic class. Thanks to sub-divisions in reading, writing arithmetic etc. each pupil could find the work adapted to his ability and rhythm — a program made to measure.

CONCLUSION

It is not a question of attempting an exaggerated exegesis of the Management of Schools. The text, as we have seen, owes much to previous or contemporary thinking, as is often the case in the history of educational currents or ideas.

But the concepts formulated in the Management of Schools made possible the creation of a school adapted to the needs of the time and especially to those of the poor. This is what accounted for the success of the Brothers' schools and drew large numbers of pupils to them.

What is more important to us to-day, wherever we work, is to understand and follow the procedure which produced the Management of Schools at the beginning of the 18th century. This procedure may be summed up as:

— attention, awareness and openness to the needs of the child;
— analysis of those needs;
— trying out concrete suggestions in answer to those needs;
— consultation in order to find out the best answers;
— rationalisation and development of effective positive answers.

This is what the first Brothers did and the preface to the Management of Schools, quoted above, bears it out. If "Meditations for the Time of Retreat" is the theological synthesis of the Brothers' ministry, the Management of Schools is, if we may say so, the description of its daily application.

By the method of its composition and application it illustrates perfectly the expression contained in the formula of vows of the Brothers since the beginning, "Together and by association".

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02-B-06

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF CAHIERS LASALLIENS (1959-1984)

1) A CLEARLY FELT NEED

Even before 1940, especially in France and Italy, the study of Lasallian origins was seen as a matter of primary importance, in the Institute, first of all, and later in the wider field of the history of pedagogy and spirituality. The publication of the first nine volumes of the *"General History of the Brothers of the Christian Schools"* by Georges Rigault in 1937 made a contribution of the greatest importance to this study while, at the same time, demonstrating the urgent need for further research and publications on the person and on the written works of J.B. de La Salle.

It was, however, the late Fr. André Rayez, S.J. who published, in 1952, an inventory of the known sources and works published up to that time. This inventory not only pointed out the merits and limits of a certain number of essays and studies but called for more research with a view to publishing the ardently desired *Monumenta Lasalliana*. (cf. André Rayez, *Etudes Lasalliennes* in the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique,* January-March, 1952).

During this period, Brothers who were studying theology or other ecclesiastical sciences foresaw the eventuality of presenting theses or memoirs consecrated to Lasallian origins and particularly to the spiritual teaching of the Founder. At the beginning, these Brothers, for their part, could only confirm the findings of Fr. Rayez. Of the first three biographies of J.B. de La Salle, only one, that by Blain, had been published. A work such as this was not easily accessible except in abridged editions or in editions containing important deviations from the original. Of the written work of the Founder only some manuscripts were preserved in the Institute Archives. The works published by de La Salle or by his second successor, Brother Timothée, could be consulted, for the most part, only in later editions unless one went to some of the great libraries, notably in Paris, to read one or other of the editions published during the life-time of the author or shortly after his death.

2) A DECISION OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF 1956

A memoir was submitted to the Brothers capitulants in 1956 which tried to focus attention on the lacunae mentioned above. It proposed a first program of work: research and publication of texts and documents capable of serving as a basis for scientific study of J.B. de La Salle and more generally of the period of the origins of the Institute. It requested that Brothers, who were particularly qualified for the work, should be allowed to devote themselves full-time to such research and publications. In the capitular commission and in the full assembly the Chapter recognised the validity of the points made in the memoir and accepted its conclusions.

3) AN UNDERTAKING WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF POSSIBILITY

With a view to preparing the desired Monumenta it was decided, first of all, to bring together the basic documents already known, to make known the documents uncovered by recent research and finally to prepare studies of the sources and content of Lasallian thought. Thus it was that in April, 1959, the *Cahiers Lasalliens* first saw the light of day.

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The first twenty-five volumes (1959-1966) presented the earliest biographies — Bernard, the two Maillefer and Blain — and included two volumes of indices for the series (1974-1979). After these came the complete series of the works of the Founder based on the first edition or on the earliest known edition. The series was reproduced by the anastatic process.

Some volumes in this series belong more to the category of studies or essays: on Meditations for the Time of Retreat, on the Collection and even on the canonical status of the Institute.

A second series starts with Cahier 26 (1966). It is still continuing, thanks to the untiring research and publications of Brother Léon Aroz. Several hundred documents are thus presented, analysed and annotated. All of them throw light — often in a novel way — on the initiatives of de La Salle in his own family, within the body of the clergy and especially in his relationships and responsibilities as Founder.

On the last page of each volume of the collection the aims are summed up in a few lines:

"Cahiers Lasalliens": Texts, Studies, Documents,

- published in a collection which is not periodical,
- centred on the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle, his written work and the origins of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools,
- in preparation for the publication of two definitive works: A critical biography of the saint and the corpus of his works.

2) TO WHOM IS THIS COLLECTION SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED?

To the Brothers of the Christian Schools, very definitely, and also to those whose studies or activities lead them to a greater interest in the holy Founder, in his thinking and in his educational achievements. The critical notices which appeared in several scientific reviews on the publication of the different volumes drew attention to the remarkable contribution that such publications make to a better understanding of the history of ecclesiastical and civil society under the Ancien Régime.

For this reason the complete collection of the *Cahiers Lasalliens* is to be found in most of the great libraries of Europe and America, North and South.

5) WHO PUBLISHES THE CAHIERS LASALLIENS?

The publisher is the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It is to the General Council of the Institute (General Secretariate or General Accounts Department) that application must be made for authorization to reproduce or translate the Cahiers Lasalliens.

Subscriptions and orders should be addressed to: Cahiers Lasalliens, Casa Generalizia FSC, Via Aurelia, 476 - ROMA.

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02-B-07

THE BROTHERS' PART IN THE CATECHETICAL MOVEMENT IN CHILE

In Chile, as in other parts of the world, the catechetical movement got now impetus from and took specific shape after the second Vatican Council. At that time two Brothers were engaged in catechetical work for the diocese of Santiago: Brother Miguel Dominguez, from Cuba, a specialist in youth work and group dynamics, and Brother Enrique Aguilo, from Spain, a specialist in catechetics.

CATECHESIS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Brother Miguel Dominguez was the first Brother to be called, jokingly, "Monsignor", since he was made Vicar in charge of the arch-diocesan apostolate of youth. Needless to say, he never used the title! The post was created by the Cardinal Archbishop, Raoul Silva Henriquez. Brother Miguel's task was to form animation teams among young people in each of the eight pastoral zones into which the arch-diocese, with its three million inhabitants, was divided. In addition he collaborated in the production of catechetical text books for children and adolescents. At present he is Director of Scholastics in Medellin (Colombia) but his memory is still fresh among us. You may still meet priests, religious and lay people who consider it a priviledge to have followed his courses and who have, as a result, greatly increased their possibilities for enriching their human relationships, increasing their efficacy among apostolic groups and bringing greater maturity to Christian communities.

FAMILY CATECHESIS

Brother Enrique Aguilo, from the District of Valencia, also worked full-time in the diocesan catechetical apostolate. He contributed to the first edition of "Al Encuentro de Dios Vivi" (Meeting with the Living God) which adopted an original approach to religious education. It is for the use of parents and is aimed at helping them to prepare their children for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion. The Cardinal, a former student of our college of Talca, initiated this new approach and supported it in person.

The program was first intended to last for one year but was later (1971) extended to two years. The authority of the Archbishop was indispensable to getting adults, who considered that they had no need of it, to accept a long course in faith education. Until he returned to Spain in 1973, Brother Enrique worked with the diocesan team, giving courses to responsible lay people, recruited in the parishes to help parents fulfill their obligations. He also published a book entitled, "Methodology of Family Catechesis".

Since 1968, De La Salle College, Santiago, has adopted this system of family catechesis for preparing children for First Communion in preference to direct preparation in class. Gradually the system has spread to other schools and colleges. Though they did not create the system, it can be said with truth that the support of the Brothers was decisive in having it accepted by all the catholic schools of Chile. This initiative has convinced the Brothers that they should address themselves directly to the parents and not limit their work to the children.

I remember that, at first, we were not at all happy with the Chilian bishops' emphasis on the apostolate of adults. We thought that it would downgrade our centuries old tradition of work with children and adolescents. When we began to bring the parents together to teach them how to give a Christian education to their children we were rather condescending towards them.

But as soon as we decided to form small groups and when our reduced numbers no longer made possible our presence at each meeting, the movement gained a new dynamism from the laity. It was only then that we began to listen to these lay people who could sort out their family problems among themselves without continual recourse to our guidance.

In 1974 I was asked, as a member of the diocesan catechetical committee, to contribute to "Meeting with the Living God" and to form a group of animators of the Liturgy for the younger children who also share in family catechesis by taking part in the liturgy of the Word on Sundays.

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SCHOOL CATECHESIS FOR THE YOUNG

I have also been called on by the archbishop to direct the National Office for Catechesis. A group of us, lay people, priests and religious, have drawn up various programs of catechetics for schools throughout the country. We have also produced a series of teaching aids, both written and audio-visual.

In Valparaiso, Brother Rodolfo Andaur has worked for several years with the diocesan education committee in the initial and the in-service training of religion teachers for Catholic schools and non-confessional state schools. Religion courses are, in fact, provided in state schools for children whose parents do not claim exemption. Brother Miguel Angel Ortiz has replaced him in this post after having worked with the diocesan team in Santiago. For several years Brother Ramon Lara had helped him in Talca.

In Temuco, Brother Juan Fernando Garcia was given special responsibility for Confirmation with instructions to train catechists for this new form of the apostolate of youth. All these extra responsibilities in the general apostolate have not prevented the Brothers from carrying out their duries in their own schools and in their own communities.

NATIONAL CATECHESIS

In the past ten years the most notable work carried out by the National Office for Catechesis has been:

a) the extension of family catechesis in preparation for reception of the sacraments to all the dioceses of the country;

b) the systematic training of lay volunteer catechists in schools and parishes;

c) the production of a catechetical program for pre-adolescent children and a socio-religious program for adults;

d) the preparation of means for mass evangelisation and group catechesis.

Brother German Martinez, scholastic and student of theology, has been helping our group recently by going round the country giving courses in catechetics and conducting days of reflection for the diocesan clergy who request it.

The Brothers who participate in catechesis at national level in Chile have the advantage of personal experience in the classroom and in the educative work of our own schools and colleges. Wherever the Church has called on us, as in Temuco and Talca, we have made our schools available to the town and to the diocese for the work of catechesis. We have also taken part in the apostolate of the young and of the family at diocesan and national level. This has in no way hindered our total dedication to the Christian formation of the students in our own schools. The District Commission, responsible for education and catechesis, is, at present, planning Lasallian apostolic action in the ten centers for which the fifty Brothers of the District of Chile are responsible.

A healthy interaction is taking place between the internal apostolate of the Brothers and their wider ecclesial commitments. The experience gained in school has accustomed us to dealing with children and young people and has taught us the value of work thoroughly prepared. Our commitments at diocesan and national level bring us into contact with the realities of life and pastoral problems of which Brothers, who remain in their communities, have only the faintest idea.

I believe that these apostolic activities outside our own houses improve the quality of our work and bring us closer to our bishops and priests. In return, the bishops and clergy get to understand us better and appreciate us more. In this way possibilities for pastoral work are opened up and we are prepared to undertake them if and when we are no longer allowed to work in our own schools.

REFLECTIONS

- What connection can you see between the charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the activities mentioned above?
- What does the work of the Chilean Brothers, in the field of catechetics between 1966 and 1983, suggest to you?

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02-B-08

INCULTURATION OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN AFRICA

1) CONTEXT

It is a well-known fact that religious have played an important role in the evangelisation of Africa. Jesuits, Redemptorists, Holy Ghost Fathers, White Fathers, Capuchins and Franciscans, to cite only a few of the male congregations, have made outstanding contributions to the Church in Africa.

Nevertheless, there is little understanding of the religious life among the African people. This is because the work of the missions took precedence over the religious life of the missionary. Religious life was considered in some way an adjunct to missionary work. Religious Sisters and Brothers were, first of all, auxiliaries on the mission. Local congregations, particularly of women, exist in fairly large numbers to-day. They were founded mainly to provide helpers for the clergy in various ways. They did not specialise in any particular field and their numbers grew in proportion to the needs of the young churches. As a result these congregations have difficulty to-day in specifying their charism and spirituality.

It is, therefore, easy to understand why religious life, as such, had not been well presented or offered to Africans as an ideal of the Christian life. In general we can say that, before Vatican II, priority, in Africa, was given to establishing the Church with the help, of course, of religious Brothers and Sisters. Before discussing the inculturation of religious life in Africa these facts have to be pointed out.

2) A COMPLICATED PROCESS

For the past twenty years there has been a lot of talk about africanisation adaptation, indigenisation, localisation, incarnation etc. when discussing inculturation of religious life in Africa. It is a recent preoccupation in the history of the Church in Africa — one might say a post missionary preoccupation.

Whatever feelings one may have about inculturation — enthusiasm, annoyance or reticence — it is not open to doubt. It is a necessity which follows from the logic of the Incarnation. The Faith needs cultural supports so that it may be preached and lived. The credibility and force of the witness given by religious life depend, to a large extent, on the cultural channels through which it is expressed. This is the fundamental principle which justifies inculturation.

Talking about inculturation will not bring it about. Far from it! Talking about it in a naive manner as though it were a simple matter of transposition or substitution, of replacing western cultural supports by African ones is much too simplistic.

In the matter of African customs and traditions, for example, we must face the fact — and get rid of dangerous illusions — that these customs and traditions are no longer to be found in their pristine state and that, consequently, the choice to be made is much more delicate and complex than had been thought.

— *Africa is not a village.* Customs and traditions vary from one region to another, from one country to another. They vary even within the same country from one ethnic group to another.

— These customs and traditions have not all an equal chance of survival, even if they have existed for centuries.

— We must take account of necessary breaks with tradition and the resulting void.

— Inculturation to be authentic must be effected *in the spirit of the Gospel,* that is with complete abandonment of one's own cultural inheritance and an openness to local culture. We must never lose sight of this for in this debate I get the impression that some think it sufficient to "africanise" in order to render the process easy. It is true, for example, that mixed communities create problems and are sometimes an obstacle to inculturation in certain ways. However, it is equally wrong to think that the creation of homogeneous communities will solve the problem.

In short, the process of inculturation is a human process involving human beings. It should be brought about gradually and with care to discern what is good in local customs and traditions in order to retain it.

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3) AREAS OF INCULTURATION

Experience, however limited, helps us to discern paths to the principal areas of inculturation.

• We must strive for *a meaningful religious life.* I mean by that that inculturation is not an end in itself but the means to a religious life which speaks to the people.

That implies a great deal. Let us ask ourselves the following questions: In what local terms do we identify ourselves? What is our real name? Up to the present we use approximations or awkard paraphrases to translate "religious", "religious life", "congregation". As for "Brothers" and "Sisters", there are, as far as I know, no appropriate words to express them in our African languages (at least in the most widespread ones). How do you translate "Vow"?

• Inculturation must make an effort to find *adequate ways to incarnate* the charism of each congregation in its own context. That is the essential. If not, inculturation risks becoming a kind of folklore. The great orders were inculturated because they were able to form part of the society of their time and respond to the needs of the age and the problems which beset it. That is the task in the Africa of to-day.

• It is important to relive, in the spirit of the Gospel, *the cultural values* which are recognised as the cardinal values of the great African tradition: solidarity, community, welcome, hospitality etc. which are also in the great tradition of the religious life. Considering solidarity under its family aspect, African religious are led to find new and unprecedented ways to live this family solidarity and integrate it into their religious life without sacrificing the essentials of their vocation. Experiments are taking place which must be encouraged and improved in the light of experience. In community life much remains to be done to combine, with prudence, what is good in African family tradition with the requirements of life in a religious community.

• Inculturation will be brought about by *African religious* and only by them. Religious life, like the Church itself, which is involved in the same necessary inculturation, cannot go on indefinitely wearing a foreign mask. Many elements will disappear of themselves in the course of time and with the onward march of life. Religious life will become part of African life or it will disappear. I repeat that religious life will be inculturated *by Africans or not at all.* But this will not be accomplished by just any African religious. It will be done by those who have the gift of foresight, who can rediscover the fundamental values of the African soul and who will be able to give to that soul a religious expression because they will have lived, assimilated and made their own what is essential in the religious life. Such people will have something to say. They will be "the fathers of the religious life" in Africa. They will, in a manner of speaking, refound religious life. Inculturation concerns people rather than things.

2) HOW DOES ALL THIS CONCERN THE WESTERN WORLD?

It concerns the Western World in more ways than one.

• First of all because it is the West, through the accidents of history, which brought religious life to Africa. This resulted in the fact that the African Church, in general, knows nothing of Eastern religious values and that is a pity. Now that the child is passing through the normal process of growing up it is only natural that the father should not be disinterested in nor dissociate himself from his offspring.

• Secondly because we all belong to the Church and in the Church all are brothers. Belonging to the Church demands the willingness to listen, and calls for dialogue, empathy and welcome among its members. Local churches or continental churches which dissociate themselves from or show indifference to other churches do not belong to the Church. In this sense I highly appreciate my membership of an international Institute which opens to me the widest ecclesial horizons.

• Lastly *inculturation is not an exclusively African problem.* In many respects the Western World is also concerned. There's nothing more annoying than to be told at every turn, "You must africanise". "You must adapt"... giving you to understand that on the other side of the Atlantic or the Mediterranean there is nothing more to do. It has already been done. The backward are always on the same side! Inculturation is not the exclusive duty of the young Churches.

5) CONCLUSION

The duty of inculturation is continuous and long term. What one has found is always relative, never definitive. I think this is implied in "Perfectae Caritatis" (2,1) which urges religious institutes to initiate a renewal combining adaptation to the conditions of existence with a continuing return to the sources of Christian life and to the original inspiration of their Institutes.

"Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit: and the Holy Spirit is still at work".

Brother Dominic Samne
Maison Provinciale, B.P. 461
BOBO-DIOULASSO - Haute-Volta

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02-B-09

YOUTH APOSTOLATE IN RURAL AFRICA

The Executive Committee of S.E.C.A.M., in collaboration with the Superiors General of Congregations (male and female) working in Africa, took as its theme for 1983 "The Apostolate of Rural Youth". A dossier on this subject was submitted to all the bishops of Africa. The following gives the essential points of discussion and the lines of action proposed:

1) NEGLECT OF THE RURAL POPULATION

• Despite the growth and development of several big cities Africa remains a predominantly agricultural continent.

• The rural population suffers from poverty and ignorance. The causes are multiple: uneven distribution of available land, lack of productivity, ignorance of modern methods of agriculture, lack of training and leadership.

• Young people suffer more keenly from these rural problems:
— lack of schools, or of places in those which exist,
— high drop-out rate because of unsuitable programs for rural life,
— teachers who are poorly trained, badly paid and who, consequently, have little interest in their work.

This list of problems is not exhaustive. Those who are in close contact with rural Africa could complete it and perhaps suggest some solutions to the condition of endemic poverty.

2) NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH

The rural world is not closed in on itself. It shares the incessant mobility of the modern world. The mass media puts it in contact with the whole world. It learns the history, the way of life, the cultural and religious heritage of other peoples. Young people in rural Africa are aware of all this, hence their aspirations for a better life and their desire to satisfy new needs.

Family life and marriage

They want to free themselves from traditional customs such as payment for a wife and the inheritance system, but at the same time maintain the principle of the extended family and use it intelligently. Many prefer the ideal of monogamy to the traditional polygamy.

Society

They want socio-political reform as well as reform of the educational system which is at the root of many of the problems of rural society. There is a growing spirit of individualism and a consequent loss of the spirit of solidarity.

Religious beliefs

Young people are beginning to question ancestral rites and practices. They are less willing than their parents to have their lives governed by religious rites. Therein lies the challenge to the Church. How can we create a synthesis of the world inherited from ancestors and the modern world, between traditional beliefs and faith in Jesus Christ?

3) DIFFICULTIES OF THE YOUNG

The influence of the elders is a tremendous force in rural society and weighs heavily on the young. The pressure of society, of the family, of the tribe is still felt even in middle age. Among young people, ancestral customs are no longer regarded as forces of cohesion in society so much as a straight jacket which prevents growth in the individual. Pressure is also exerted by religions such as Islam and by certain Christian sects as well as by modern ideologies such as marxism and apartheid.

4) PRIORITIES IN THE APOSTOLATE OF RURAL YOUTH

The Church in Africa has always tried to meet the needs and aspirations of young people. It has established schools of all kinds; Secondary, Technical, Trade and Agricultural Schools, apprentice training and health services. For their formation as Christians the Church has tried to provide catechetical instruction at their level, has organised small Christian communities, has established houses for prayer and multi-purpose centers. It has formed youth organisations such as J.A.C. (Young Christian Agricultural Workers) which are best adapted to rural conditions.

5) NEW LINES OF ACTION IN THE APOSTOLATE

Though the work accomplished by the Church, including that of the Religious Congregations, has been very important there remains an enormous amount to be done. Some new lines of action proposed are:

- Africanisation of schools to bring them within the reach of rural children. This means adopting programs suitable to rural conditions.
- Respecting African culture and languages while at the same time providing modern technical training.
- The establishment of schools which will prepare students for afterlife.
- *Collective development*

Through the school we must aim at influencing the entire village.

- *Restoring the sense of solidarity*

As in cities, the rural population is threatened by individualism and self-interest.

- *Developing a critical outlook*

This is essential in one-party states where all are expected to follow the government line. It is equally important in the face of certain traditions carried over from the past and which are at variance with the teaching of the Gospel.

6) PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATORS

Here we shall mention only a few:

- Awareness of rural problems. This means the numerical importance of young people in rural areas and taking account of their difficulties and special needs.
- Suitable Training, particularly in technical subjects. This implies getting to know the needs of rural areas and acquiring the necessary technical ability to deal with them.
- An essential quality is that of being able to form relationships. Young people expect their educators to be approachable and sympathetic, to interest themselves in their personal lives in the village, to boost their self-confidence by allowing them to speak for themselves and look after themselves, to speak to them of God in a language they can understand.
- *Example of one's own life*

"Modern man pays more attention to witness than to masters, and if he listens to masters it's because they are witnesses."

St. John Baptist de La Salle and the problems of rural youth

— De La Salle was well aware of the problems of young people in the country.

"The good priests of the countryside sought a remedy for the ills which the servant of God had long deplored. He was more anxious than they to heal the wounds that were becoming fatal for the poor people of the rural areas."

— The work was appropriate for the Brothers.

"The Brothers could do in the villages the good work they were doing in the towns. They would even have done the work more easily as the country children were more docile and the parents less troublesome."

— De La Salle would not allow the Brothers to take on the work for financial and community reasons.

"The poor country parishes had not sufficients funds to support two Brothers nor enough work for them. There was no question of sending a single Brother as de La Salle had made it a rule never to send less than two Brothers."

— De La Salle established a seminary for country schoolmasters.

"He encountered many obstacles and tried several times to re-establish it. (We know of three attempts — two in Paris and one in Rheims) "He gave up the idea after the third attempt, deciding to leave the task to others whom God would inspire to undertake it" (Extracts from Blain and Bernard).

Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly
General Councillor
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02-B-10

1983 MISSIONARY SYMPOSIUM

To fulfil the wish expressed by Brother Superior General in his letter of 8 December 1981, the first Missionary Symposium was held in Togo from August 15 to 20, 1983.

SECOLI encouraged the Districts to prepare for this between October 1982 and May 1983 with the result that the following four points were chosen for discussions.

— The mission (Evangelization, School, necessary initiatives).
— The Community (animation, inculturation, a life of witness).
— Initial and continuing formation and the need of training staff.
— The missionary spirit: why go on the missions?

The 24 participants from the centre and from various regions of the Institute, after intensive work, voted the following propositions. Because of a "coup d'état" in Upper Volta, a neighbouring country, the programme had to be shortened and thus the formulation of these propositions could not be perfected by the introduction of modi. As set out they concern the Institute as a whole.

MISSION

1. The Brothers should, at regular intervals, reflect on the nature of their work, studying carefully the real needs of the country where they live and examining themselves as to whether their work is adequate for those needs. The assistance of competent persons should be sought for these periodical re-assessments.

2. In the light of Brother Superior's 1981 letter, par. 22a, schools in the Third World should examine their present commitment to see whether they are rendering a preferential service to the poor:

a) In countries where the majority work on the land we should favour agricultural foundations suited to the employment of young adults, not children. The final objective would be the formation of leaders for the rural districts.

b) In urban centres the Brothers must aim to form Christian leaders who will work for the promotion of the Church and of social justice in their areas.

4. The Brothers' work must always be carried out in association with their community, the witness of community life being of the highest importance in the developing countries.

FORMATION

6. Our mission as Lasallians is primarily to bear witness to the Gospel truths and not only in a teaching apostolate. The formation of our Brothers and of our lay collaborators should lead them to become animators of our institutions which will thus remain centres of evangelisation both proclaimed and lived.

8. As there are at present insufficient formators to staff our multiple national novitiates we

propose the establishment of regional novitiates capable of being provided with competent personnel and adequate means for ensuring first-class formation.

9. Following the novitiate there should be a scholasticate period devoted to the continued deepening of the religious, catechetical and theological formation — this to precede the undertaking of academic studies. At the conclusion of this period of religious and academic training the Brother will be assigned to a community where his formation may be continued with the help of a visiting Brother counsellor.

STRUCTURES, RELATIONS

11. The African Region should appoint a full-time delegate who would reside in Africa and would ensure liaison between the Region and the Centre of the Institute. The Region must specify his duties and provide him with the means and the authority to fulfil them successfully.

13. SECOLI should be the linking agent between the Third World districts and the sponsoring Districts and other funding organisations.

15. Since a greater representation of delegates from the Third World to the General Chapter is not possible, the Superior General and his Council are urged to invite more observers from these areas.

COMMUNITY

16. Our communities should be involved in an apostolic project and should be much concerned to be seen as religious communities recognisable as such by their availability to others, their openness to, and concern for, their immediate neighbourhood, the simplicity of their life style, their prayer-life and their fraternal sharing.

18. The Brothers working in Africa should integrate themselves more fully into the local culture and customs, and should seek to discern the Gospel values and the apostolic possibilities implicit therein.

19. A willingness to study the local language is an integral element of a missionary vocation. It is essential that any Brother destined for the Missions be given sufficient time to learn the vernacular of the area he will serve.

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02-C-05

LASALLIAN EDUCATORS: MEN AND WOMEN OF PRAYER

Throughout the Lasallian world today the emphasis on creating schools that are authentically Lasallian is striking. In many places, Brothers, lay teachers, parents, former students, associates, and the students themselves are reflecting together on the meaning of Lasallian education and are working together to effect genuine renewal of their schools.

We are beginning to see, for example, Lasallian *Days,* workshops, and retreats, together with productive efforts at building educative communities that are faith-filled, person-centered, committed to excellence in teaching, creative, zealous for the religious growth of the students, concerned for the poor and for justice and peace.

What is most encouraging in this movement of renewal is the desire of many members of the Lasallian Family to participate not only in the educational objectives of the Institute, but also in the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. There is a growing realization that the Lasallian Family of Brothers, lay teachers, parents, former students, associates, and students, united in the vision and spirit of the Founder, could be a highly effective instrument in the mission of Christian education today.

IDENTITY AND PRAYER

This introduction might seem a bit long in a short article entitled *"Lasallian Educators: Men and Women of Prayer".* But in fact, what has been said is fundamental to understanding De La Salle's teaching on prayer. For our Founder, there is an inseparable link between the identity of the Brother (and, by extension, all members of the Lasallian Family) and a regular pattern of personal prayer.

For De La Salle the Brothers' vocation is to respond to the needs of the young as ministers of the Lord, as his *ambassadors* and *co-workers.* The Brother is to *re-present* Jesus Christ, making his loving and saving presence a visible and effective reality among young people. Logically, then, De La Salle can say: "Hence, since the object of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to educate children in the spirit of Christianity, and to endeavor to procure them that spirit, it is of the utmost importance that the Brothers be... imbued... and abundantly filled with the Spirit of faith." (Collection)

De La Salle's meaning is clear: we cannot give what we do not have. The Lasallian educator must be a man or woman of faith, that is to say, a person in a living, conscious, dynamic relationship with God. It is in this context that we can understand the Founder's insistence on the necessity of regular personal prayer. It is prayer that nurtures this close relationship with the Lord: "The principal occupation" in personal prayer is *to be filled with God and united interiorly to him."* (*Explanation of the Mental Prayer:* EMMP). We can now understand why De La Salle insisted that the Brothers should have a great love for personal prayer and should look upon it as the first and principal of their daily exercises.

It is not possible in this short article to consider in depth our Founder's teaching on prayer. What we can do, however, is reflect briefly on some of the most fundamental orientations. The first we have just seen:

1) The necessity for regular personal prayer in the life of the Lasallian educator springs from his or her identity as minister of the Lord.

THE WORD OF GOD

Closely related to a commitment to regular prayer is a love for the scriptures. De La Salle considers the scriptures the first Rule of the Institute. "The scriptures," he says, "must *be eaten* by all true servants of God, that they may subsequently be able to communicate and explain their secrets to those whom they are called upon to instruct." (*Meditation* 170).

De La Salle taught the Brothers to meditate on the scriptures daily, allowing the *Word of God* to penetrate their minds and hearts. He taught them to move from reflection to ardent conversation with the Lord.

For the Lasallian educator, therefore, the habit of reading and meditating upon the scriptures is of primary importance. Our second orientation, then, can be expressed as follows:

2) The Lasallian educator devotes some minutes every day to prayerful reflection on the *Word of God.*

PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD

Another fundamental orientation of De La Salle is that prayer is a personal encounter with the Lord at the center of our being. He doesn't use those precise words. His language is the language of his day: "Mental prayer is an interior occupation, that is to say, an application of the soul to God... It is not only an exercise of the intellect but also brings into action all the powers of the soul... its operations must take place in the inner recesses of the soul." (EMMP).

Dated language, yes, but the meaning is clear. The Lasallian educator should meet the Lord daily at the center of his being. Prayer is more than a period of reflection on God, or on some doctrine, teaching, or idea. "The first things which we should do in mental prayer," he says, "is to penetrate ourselves interiorly with the presence of God." (EMMP) To make sure that the novices did not spend too much time in "thinking about" God, De La Salle insisted that they converse with the Lord. To help them sustain this conversation, he suggested they follow a series of *acts.*

The Founder said that beginners would normally use many words in their conversation with the Lord, but that those more experienced should use *fewer words* or even no words and *remain for some time in an interior silence."* (EMMP)

The heart of De La Salle's teaching is that prayer is a period of heightened awareness of the Lord's presence in our life. It is a time for conscious personal encounter with the Lord in the depths of our being. At times we might want to converse with many words. At other times with few words and more silence. And there may be times when we are quite content to remain before the Lord in a loving attentive silence. Our third orientation is this:

3) The Lasallian educator, convinced that to *render present* Jesus Christ, regular contact with him is required, makes it a personal rule to encounter the Lord in prayer every day.

LIFE'S EXPERIENCES AND PRAYER

Let us consider one more basic orientation of De La Salle: the link between our daily experiences and our prayer. For De La Salle prayer was never an escape from everyday realities. On the contrary. He urges the Brothers to see the relationship between their prayer life and their daily service of youth. They should bring their experiences to the Lord. He tells them to intercede for those *"confided to your care."* "When you encounter some difficulty in the guidance of your disciples when there are some who do not profit from your teaching and you observe a reckless spirit in them turn to God with confidence. Earnestly ask Jesus Christ to make his Spirit come alive in you, since he has chosen you to do his work." (*Meditation* 196)

De La Salle trained his novices to make a conscious link between their daily experiences and their prayer by concluding their reflection and conversation with the Lord with a practical daily resolution. Brothers more experienced he advised to "leave meditation with a renewed desire to discharge your duties well." (EMMP) The orientation is clear. We can formulate it thus:

4) The Lasallian educator comes into the presence of God fully alive. There he or she reflects on life's daily experiences, converses with the Lord about them, and renews his or her intention to serve him with greater fidelity.

ZEAL AND PRAYER

"Your zeal must go so far that you are ready to give your very life, so dear to you are the children confided to your care." (*Meditation* 198)

The same De La Salle who made that remarkable statement is the same De La Salle who exhorted his Brothers *to have a great love for the holy exercise of Mental Prayer.* (Rule). He was convinced that only persons of prayer could be truly Christian and effective ministers of youth. That is why he urged the Brothers to make the scriptures central to their life and to bring themselves into the presence of God daily, encountering him in the depths of their heart.

Those of us who wish to live the Lasallian spirit would do well to take to heart these words: "As you are under the obligation of obtaining graces not only for yourself but likewise for others, and also of acquiring the gift of touching hearts, you ought to apply yourself in a special manner to the practice of mental prayer, for this is precisely the exercise which God has provided you with for the purpose of obtaining his graces." (*Meditation* 129)

Brother John JOHNSTON
Vicar General
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02-C-06

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER EDUCATES CHILDREN TO LIVE ACCORDING TO CHRISTIAN VALUES

1) FROM 6 TO 11 FEBRUARY, 1983

A meeting of Lasallian educators in Brazil was held at Florianopolis to discuss education in values. Ninety-two teachers from the Brothers' schools were present. The aims of the meeting were:

a) Integration of Lasallian teachers, mostly lay teachers — in the mission of the Institute.
b) Heightening among the teachers awareness of the importance of values in education.
c) Study of the principal lines of action for education in values.

At the end of the meeting criteria for action were formulated and educative groups present were asked to draw up definite plans as a guide to future action:

1) Our mission as educators must first of all be one of evangelisation.
2) The principal characteristic of a Lasallian school should be its concern for the poor and the oppressed.
3) Education should form consciences critical of unjust conditions and willing to work for their amelioration.
4) An educative community should try to inculcate values of truth, justice, brotherhood, service and sharing.

Those who took part in the conference agreed that it was a very valuable experience. We hope that it will bear much fruit in the educative mission of those who participated in it.

2) FOR ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

The ultimate object of all educative action is God, revealed as Father by His Son, Jesus Christ — our Brother.

It is a source of joy for the disciples of St. J.B. de La Salle to teach the young to live their lives in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"You will experience great satisfaction, when they have grown up, in seeing them live in justice and piety, far removed from evil company, and in the practice of good works. The instructions you will have given them will not have consisted solely of words but will have been accompanied by an abundance of grace in those who will have benefited by them." (*Meditations,* 207.3)

Other human and spiritual values inspired by Lasallian pedagogy and spirituality are instrumental values capable of leading young people to the absolute value — God.

"The mission of the Christian teacher aims at the creation of a society where God reigns through truth, justice and charity; a society where the weakest find social redemption. The Christian teacher will find means of forming the consciences of his students to be critical of their own society and confident of themselves. He will encourage them to participate in activities for the common good, warn them against manipulation by the means of social communication and encourage them to say what they think." (Cf. *O Carisma de La Salle,* RELAL)

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3) THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in its document "Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to the Faith" speaks of the values and importance of the Christian teacher who witnesses by his attitude:

"Critical transmission also involves the presentation of a set of values and counter values. This must be judged within the context of an appropriate concept of life and of the human person. The Catholic teacher, therefore, cannot be content simply to present Christian values as a set of abstract objectives to be admired, even if this be done positively and with imagination; they must be presented as values which generate human attitudes and these attitudes must be encouraged in the students. Examples of such attitudes would be these: a freedom which includes respect for others; conscientious responsibility; a sincere and constant search for truth; a calm and peaceful critical spirit; a spirit of solidarity with and service towards all other persons; a sensitivity for justice; a special awareness of being called to be positive agents of change in a society that is undergoing continuous transformation."

"Knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviour fully integrated with faith will result in the student's personal synthesis of life and faith. Very few Catholics, then, have the opportunity that the educator has to accomplish the very purpose of evangelisation: the incarnation of the Christian message in the lives of men and women." (Paragraphs 30 and 31)

4) FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION?

a) What place do the Gospel and the Holy Scriptures, in general, have in our scale of educational values?

b) What attitudes does the teaching of Saint John Baptist inspire in our students and teachers so that Christian-human values permeate our educative community?

c) What injustices exist in our own educative community?

d) What can we do to ensure more awareness of liberty, justice and brotherhood and what action can we take to transform the relations and structures of the educational system?

e) How do the educational activities of our community show up when judged in the light of de La Salle's teaching on the educational service of the poor?

5) SUGGESTIONS

1) During Eucharistic celebrations use the penitential rite, the Offertory or Communion to:

a) ask pardon for our personal and community neglect of Christian values in our lives;

b) offer to the Father our resolution to live by and give witness to Christian values in our own lives;

c) thank God for the progress made and the good example given by Brothers and teachers from de La Salle's time to the present day.

2) Commentary followed by the Lord's Prayer.

3) Prayer: "Oh God, who hast manifested Thyself through the mouth of the prophets, send unto us Thy Spirit that, faithful to our Christian vocation, we may, like Mary, in her canticle, announce Thy message of liberation and renounce social and personal sin. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Amen." (*"Spirituality of St. J.B. de La Salle: Here and Now"*, Review "Integracão" - Supplement No. 13, page 24)

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02-C-07

WHO ARE THE MARGINALISED?

In the guidelines given to the Barcelona Secretariate of the mission to those on the fringe of society we find a definition of this concept. Here are its terms:

"We consider as marginalised all individuals or groups who, for economic, racial, cultural or ideological reasons or because of physical or mental disabilities, have not got free access to the benefits of society (work, culture, services, participation, consideration etc.); everything in fact, which places them in a situation where they are unable to fulfil their potential as human beings."

REMARKS

- The economic factor is all important. If you have money, even though you are disabled, you are not marginalised or treated as such. A President of the United States was paralysed as a result of polio. A handicapped person from a wealthy family gets all the care that specialised services can provide.
- In some countries, immigrants belonging to certain races who come in search of work, are completely marginalised. Some are sent to prison merely because they do not have valid identity documents.
- The person who, in his youth, did not have a chance to receive instruction or education will have difficulty in reaching a position where he will be treated with the respect due to him as a person.
- In cities many sick people receive only occasional treatment. Society does not accept full responsibility for them and if it is a totally capitalistic society so much the worse for the sick.

THE SOCIALLY MARGINALISED PERSON

He lives on the fringe of society: he failed to keep peace with it and is now without friends, if indeed, he ever had any; he has given up hoping; he realises that it is impossible to improve his situation and ends by feeling that he is "on the other side of the tracks" among those condemned to look in from the outside, to watch the march of social progress, wealth, well-being, decent standards of living, social consideration and self-respect.

He does not belong!

THOSE WHO SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS SOCIALLY MARGINALISED

- Certain groups who, for ideological or political reasons or merely to defy the social system, opt out. Generally speaking, they can give up their self-imposed marginalisation if they so wish.
- Certain classes who consider themselves or call themselves marginalised: women engaged in the feminist struggle, homosexuals, prostitutes etc. We all, in some way or other, suffer a degree of marginalisation. There is always someone who does not accept us or places to which we do not have access.

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THE MARGINALISED PERSON AS DEFINED BY THE DIOCESE OF BARCELONA

• He endures material poverty and human deprivation as a cause or consequence of his marginalisation.

• He cannot escape from his unfortunate condition without help from others.

• He does not choose this condition, does not seek it and is incapable of protest against the society which forced it on him or of seeking help to face up to and improve his lot.

• His condition is imposed not by the society as a whole but by groups within it. He ends up by creating a world of his own, a world apart... Social legislation is of no real help to him (in the end it serves to punish him). Cultural organisations do not help him nor do the social services to which he cannot or does not know how to apply without help from somebody else.

• It is very difficult for society, whether through government agencies or voluntary organisations, to take responsibility for the complete and effective integration of such people.

THE MARGINALISED

— Many children who do not receive even basic care from birth.
— Those who get no education — they are often rejected because of the problems they create.
— Young people without home or family or who have left home for reasons which were unforeseen or unforseeable.
— Old people without a roof over their head.
— Unmarried mothers, rejected by their families.
— Prostitutes, especially when they get old.
— Prisoners abandoned by their families and without legal aid.
— Families of unemployed parents, left without means of subsistence.
— The sick who are unable to do productive work and have no families to help them.
— The mentally handicapped who, at best, are locked away in institutions where they often receive treatment which reduces them to vegetables.
— Migrant workers who cannot find work, have neither home, family or friends and no knowledge of the language of the country.
— Ex-prisoners whose families don't want them.
— Vagrants without a home, belonging to no group, no family.
— The populations of countries which did not benefit by industrialisation and are exploited by the more advanced countries of the world.
— Ethnic minorities persecuted in their own country.

We have among us many marginalised people whether in rich countries or poor countries. It is only too easy to ignore them, to pass them by, to forget them. At best, we concern ourselves with them when they inconvenience us. Then we try to get rid of them by placing them in "homes", putting them out of sight in shanty towns or slums. If we could, we would put them in concentration camps.

Some years ago, when I was working in a center with five hundred boys between the ages of six and fifteen I was subjected to all sorts of criticism, recriminations and prohibitions, even by the administration, because we decided that the boys had the right to go for a walk, play with the children in neighbouring villages, go to the cinema or go on excursions in small groups...

But Christ went to meet the marginalised of His time: lepers, beggars, the blind, the possessed, prostitutes... And we walk with Christ only when we are sensitive to this burning problem: The existence of men — our brothers — whom we ignore or try to get rid of lest they trouble our tranquillity!

Brother Adrián TRESCENTS
Residência Provincial La Salle
Sant Joan de La Salle, 38
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02-C-08

THE CHARISM OF TEACHING

The term 'charism' has transcended its theological connotation in recent times, becoming a 'media-word', applied freely to notable talent in almost any sphere — politics, entertainment, sport etc. The present article recalls its scriptural origin and considers its significance with special reference to the teaching vocation.

The word "charisma" may have been coined by St. Paul himself. The addition of the suffix "-ma" to effect a slight change in the meaning of an existing word was not, it seems, unusual in the spoken usage of Paul's time. In this case, the classical word "charis", meaning "a favour", became "charisma", meaning "the result of a favour", taking on a further specific shade of meaning by the use to which Paul put it. Some commentators prefer to think that he took over the word for his own purposes from Hellenistic Greek, but the difficulty with this view is that only two examples of its use have been found in one of the two most important writers of the period, Philo, and none at all in the other, Josephus.

But, whatever its origin, it is very much Paul's own word. Of its total 16 occurrences in the New Testament (there are none in the Greek O.T.) 15 are in the Pauline corpus. The exception is in I Peter 4:10, a single coincidence which may have something to do with the acknowledged assistance in the composition of that letter of Paul's fellow-missionary, Silas. We have come to think of the word in the technical sense conveyed by its modern derivative "charism", but Paul's use of it shows that it could be applied to any of God's gifts freely bestowed, without merit on the part of the recipient and without recall on the part of the divine giver (Rom. 11:29).

THE PAULINE LISTS

It is, however, in its technical sense that the word is most characteristic of Paul and most frequently used by him. There are four lists of the charisms in his letters: two in I Corinthians (12:8-10 and 12:28), one in Romans (12:6-8) and one in Ephesians (4:11). Not all four lists contain the same charisms; it would be uncharacteristic of Paul's spontaneous manner if they did. When we compare the four lists, we notice that only two charisms appear in all four, namely prophecy and teaching. This coincidence cannot of itself be taken to mean that Paul considered these two charisms the most important ones, for that would raise a problem about the status of "apostles", named in only two of the lists. But it may be fair to infer that Paul thought of prophecy and teaching as being particularly representative of what he intended to convey by the word "charism".

AN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE?

The question of relative importance among the charisms is, in fact, one that is discussed by N.T. commentators. When Paul wrote in I Cor. 12:28: "And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues..." did he intend to establish an order of importance among the charisms? Some authorities (e.g. the German K.H. Rengstorf and the Englishman J. Ruef) would answer negatively; but the author of the standard commentary on I Corinthians, Père E.B. Allo, O.P., is categorical for the affirmative view: "God has established in his Church a strict order of function and dignity. The words 'first', 'second' and 'third' are to be understood as literally as possible; he who is 'first' is above him who is 'second', the 'second' above the 'third'..." (*Première Epître aux Corinthiens,* p. 333). A similar opinion is favoured by Rudolf Schnackenburg and by the authors of *The International Critical Commentary on I Corinthians.*

APOSTLES, PROPHETS AND TEACHERS

If we follow these latter authorities in opting for a hierarchical order in our interpretation of I Cor. 12:28, we note that those who were designated "apostles" in the early Church were ranked first. The primacy of apostleship, as a service to the community, was unchallengeable. This charism

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corresponded most closely to that of Jesus' chosen Twelve. Paul, an apostle 'born out of due time', is the staunchest apologist for the role and its most eloquent panegyrist. He more than once lays vehement claim to the title for himself (as, for example, in the opening sentence of his letter to the Galatians) and, in II Cor. 3:1-6:10, he spells out what such a claim implies, what it is to be, by this charism, "ambassadors for Christ" and "fellow-workers with God".

Next in Paul's list come the prophets, those agents by whom the Holy Spirit declared God's will or revealed coming events to the Church. Their lineage went back to the great seers of the Old Testament. "He who prophesies," wrote Paul, "speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation" (I Cor. 14:3).

And, ranking only below those two noble charisms in Paul's list, comes that of the teachers. Needless to say, this charism was possessed and exercised in a supreme degree by the apostles, as is clearly shown throughout the Acts of the Apostles. But, as time went on, a specific teaching office began to emerge in the Church, evidence for which is supplied by the Pastoral Epistles and by the writings of the earliest Fathers. Our available space will not allow us to examine the way in which, in fact, the N.T. demonstrates the potent influence of the teaching charism in the early Church. But what we can touch upon is the relevance of this evidence for us today.

THE VATICAN COUNCIL'S RENEWAL OF THE CHARISMS

A succinct statement of that relevance is to be found in paragraph 12 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium,* where we read: "It is not only through the sacraments and official ministries that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the People of God and enriches it with virtues. Granting his gifts 'to each one as he chooses' (I Cor. 12:11) he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank, by which he makes them able and willing to undertake various tasks or services advantageous for the renewal and upbuilding of the Church, according to the words of the Apostle: 'To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good' (I Cor. 12:7). These charisms, whether they be the more unusual or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church."

In another document, the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), the Council Fathers declared that the Holy Spirit confers the charisms which enable the laity to carry out an apostolate in the Church (par. 3) and later, in the same document, that "teaching is a distinguished form of this apostolate" (par. 30). (It is worth recalling, also, that Cardinal Suenens, in his decisive intervention in favour of the Council's stressing the perennial value of the charisms for the Church, instanced the field of catechetics as his first example of the way these charisms are seen to be active today.) Yet again, in par. 8 of the Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), the contributions made by religious Institutes to the apostolate, including that of "teaching doctrine", are specifically related to the Pauline charisms listed in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.

ST. DE LA SALLE'S ANTICIPATION OF THE COUNCIL'S TEACHING

It is impossible for anyone acquainted with the *Meditations* of St. John Baptist de La Salle, and particularly with his sixteen *Meditations for the Time of Retreat,* not to be impressed by the way in which he anticipated this teaching of the Council on the renewal of the charisms in the Church. All four Pauline passages are quoted or alluded to in the Retreat Meditations, and their doctrine underlies our Saint's profound understanding of his disciples' ministry in the Church — and indeed the ministry of "all persons engaged in the education of youth", for the meditations were written for them as well as for the Brothers. One passage, in particular, explicitates this concept and may be quoted here as an appropriate conclusion to these brief considerations:

> "Reflect on what St. Paul says, that God has established in the Church apostles, prophets and teachers, and you will be convinced that he has also established you in your ministry. The same saint gives you another expression of this when he says that there are different gifts, different ministries, and that to each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good, that is, the good of the Church. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the gift of faith is given by the same Spirit. You must not doubt that it is a great gift of God, this grace he has given you to be entrusted with the instruction of children, to announce the gospel to them and to bring them up in the spirit of religion. But in calling you to this holy ministry, God demands that you fulfill it with an ardent zeal for their salvation..." (MTR 9,1, Tr. Loes).

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02-D-03

MEETING OF YOUNG LASALLIANS MALTA AND CARACAS 1983

BROTHER JOSE PABLO BASTERRECHEA, Superior General, to the Young Lasallians gathered in MALTA and CARACAS

Dear Lasallians,

This time I am going to address you in the form of a meditation. What you have done in meeting here is of greater importance than a simple meeting and enters the domain of the Church's mission in the world today.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

This is the first condition for meditating on the Kingdom. So: "Let us remember that we are in the presence of God".

In De La Salle's spirituality, the PRESENCE OF GOD impregnates everything. God present at the centre of his life, such is the objective which every Brother who understands his mission proposes for himself. These are, therefore, the opening words to our meditation. "What place does God fill in my life? What role does his presence play in my daily activities? How does this presence enlighten my youth? Does God count above all the other values to which I am attached?"

1st POINT. FRATERNITY

This is the basic charism of the Brothers since their first Assembly in 1684. And their pupils have inherited it. Brotherhood stands out as soon as there is a Lasallian meeting. But this friendship, this brotherhood, today has not as objective the meeting of friends or old school companions. It is rather a force and a responsibility. Like the Brothers, we form a whole and we are a force. It all depends on the REASONS for our meetings.

For the last 20 years, we, the Brothers, have accepted the need to, and, in fact, do transform internally, our spirit and objectives, in full agreement with what the Founder would do if he had to start all over again.

I believe that this transformation affects the Lasallian Associations in the same way and for the same reasons. But I think that this transformation is too slow, sometimes they hold back and do not always understand it.

We Brothers, perhaps more than anybody, should understand the importance of the Lasallian layman and encourage him intelligently.

Practical application of this first point

Multiply these youth groups, starting with those in the last years at school. Meet often to discuss your experiences and to start initiatives. Seek objectives according to De La Salle's guidelines. And give the Associations that youthful look which is its special characteristic.

Then try to reinvigorate and rejuvenate the Associations. Give them a soul and make them joyfully alive. Propose high objectives to them and get to work yourselves with generosity so that the slogan you yourselves invented may be true: "TODAY WE ARE LA SALLE"

2nd POINT. FAITH

Your course resembles that of the Brothers. It is therefore inevitable that you be concerned about their "spirit". The Brothers, you know, do not lead a life which is strictly speaking "contemplative". Their life requires them to be active. The Brother is "born to activity". Yet he is a religious, consecrated to God who is the "centre and end of his life".

The Founder was able to fuse the two extremes and the result is that he wants the Brothers to inspire this activity. Hence he gives the Brothers three indispensable axes: personal daily PRAYER by which "he goes up to God with his apostolic anxieties... and comes down to his pupils to communicate to them the divine

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orders". And this, for the Brothers, is fundamental. The second is the PRESENCE OF GOD of which we have already spoken. God is with him the whole day long to be loved and served. The third is that of the GOSPEL, meditated profoundly to draw from it a way of life suitable for the Brothers.

It should be the same with the conscientious Lasallian. And let me say that something very similar should inspire your groups of young Lasallians who meet together to reflect, pray in community and sincerely seek the Kingdom. You act, you feel, you are seeking the same thing... The means should be the same.

FAITH consists not only in "believing in something". It is above all LIVING SOMEONE. FAITH means assimilating the Gospel which becomes a criterion. To succeed in this living faith, I put two means to you which are taken from the Founder himself:

The GOSPEL assimilated through quiet reading, meditation and prayer. Feel that your mission today is a real VOCATION very similar to that of John, Peter, Philip and James and that the Spirit confirms and makes the morning of pentecost definitive. Our Lord Jesus has not ceased to call us today and the Spirit is not yet exhausted so...

Practical applications of this second point

See that those groups of young people you are going to multiply are Christian groups: groups of prayer, of the Gospel. That FAITH, which we are considering today, be the strength of this community.

3rd POINT. SERVICE

Now we must turn to the Founder. We do not know whether it was because he gave himself completely to God that he devoted himself also to the poor... or whether, understanding the needs of the poor, he devoted himself to them and felt the need of God. What is certain is that John Baptist de La Salle, under the inspiration of the Spirit, tried to find a remedy for the poverty afflicting neglected children and young people far removed from salvation. It was they, the children and the young who caused the conversion of this noble bourgeois into an apostle and a saint.

Young Lasallians must learn this lesson, united in FRATERNITY, leading a life of profound FAITH, they must enroll themselves in the SERVICE of the poor. And here everything is possible except for the lack of spirit, irresponsibility, the incoherence in our life style. Children and young people suffering some deprivation and, especially those who do not benefit from education, the outcasts, are all objects of our Lasallian preoccupations.

Young Lasallians, this year which precedes Mexico must be a year of few words but of numerous Lasallian "facts". Come to Mexico with the assurance of having inaugurated a new style in the Lasallian Associations.

Here is the new objective I am putting to you: get in contact with some Lasallian missionary work. Let each group of young Lasallians try to find a Lasallian "mission" and get to know it. Let it try to help it by all the means suggested by your interest in a work which is really worth while.

Will the young Lasallians understand and accept this new sign of the Institute, and will they have the evangelical courage to follow this movement through their personal and communitarian devotedness?

If, when we come to Mexico, your actions express positively that you have understood me and that this year will have been a year of "signs", we can face the Congress with hope.

Practical application of this third point

Do not go off in different directions. Determine WHAT you are going to do, WHEN and HOW you are going to do it... because it is you yourselves who have said it — following De La Salle is SERVICE, and today, WE ARE DE LA SALLE.

SPIRITUAL BOUQUET

At the end of our life, we shall be judged on our LOVE. Our Lord says: "Then the Son of Man will say to those who will be on his right hand: 'Come you blessed of my Father, for I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me'... And they will say to Him When did we see you hungry or thirsty, or poor, or sick or in prison and we assisted you?" And He will answer them: "I tell you that every time you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me".

Dear young people, here we are at the end of this meditation. Now is the time to return to reality. Accentuate FRATERNITY, enlightened by FAITH, devote yourself to SERVICE. Then Malta and Caracas will be two lights on the Lasallian journey.

So be it.

Brother Superior General
Rome, August 1983

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02-D-04

MEXICO CONGRESS 24 TO 28 JULY, 1984

In the history of the Lasallian World Federation it was the congresses which revealed the signs of the times, often in a rather disconcerting manner. A quick glance at the various congresses will show us a little known aspect of the Lasallian movement among lay people.

• **First CONGRESS, BRUSSELS - October, 1958.** The first international meeting of past pupils was expressly called by Brother Nicet-Joseph, Superior General. A thousand past pupils attended and enthusiastically approved the project for a world federation, which Cardinal Pizzardo had asked for in his letter of 30 September, 1958. He stated, "This project fulfills one of the dearest wishes of Pope Pius XII" and Pope John XXIII told the group which was drawing up the constitution, "The moment has come to form this federation".

• **Second CONGRESS, ROME - September, 1960.** Thirty-seven delegations, meeting in general assembly, adopted the constitution of the World Federation.

• **Third CONGRESS, BARCELONA - September, 1964.** (2,000 Delegates attended.) For the first time the Congress considered a theme under 21 different aspects. The theme was the Second Vatican Council and the Congress showed, in a striking way, its relevance to society. For Spain it meant a complete revolution in thinking and marked progress towards association. For the other delegates it was less revolutionary, perhaps because they had not had time to study the Council documents.

• **Fourth CONGRESS, CANADA - 1967.** Two factors adversely influenced the work of this congress. It met in five different cities, each of which had wanted to sponsor it. 1967 was, also, the year of the World Exhibition in Montréal. These two circumstances did not make for the serious study of the theme prepared for the congress. However, Brother Charles Henry, Superior General, spoke at all five centers, briefly but very much to the point.

• **Fifth CONGRESS, BUENOS AIRES - 1972.** A wind of change, made stronger by the Second Vatican Council and the General Chapter of 1966, was blowing. For the first time, the Institute, in the person of Brother Pablo, Vicar General, stated what it thought of and expected from the associations of past pupils — Christian living and social and missionary action were the order of the day.

• **Sixth CONGRESS, MALTA - 1976.** Not more than 600 delegates attended but they made their views clear. The federation changed its name and its structures. Its objectives were henceforth to be precise: The Lasallian World Federation comprises the whole Lasallian family; former students, lay teachers, parents of pupils, friends of the Brothers and young people who wish to join — all who wish to follow the inspiration of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

The federation accepts as a challenge its role in: the welfare of young people, the strengthening of Christian family life, the promotion of solidarity and justice, concern for those who are suffering and the defense and development of Christian education.

• **Seventh CONGRESS, PARIS - 1980.** It was the year of the Third Centenary of the foundation of the Institute. Not surprisingly, therefore, the congress was held in Paris, Reims and Rouen and the central theme was the Founder, whose work was studied both before and during the congress. The presence of a number of young people who knew what they wanted was an important aspect of the congress. Admiration for the Founder took various forms.

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One large group undertook to lead an evangelical life, in the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle, by becoming members of "SIGNUM FIDEI". Henceforth the activities of the associations would center on the Founder.

• **Eighth CONGRESS, MEXICO - 1984.** It seems that the Federation has found its raison d'être which is to inspire the whole Lasallian family. It is not enough to admire our Father. We must imitate him, otherwise we get lost in theories which are not translated into action. Here, then, is what the coming congress in Mexico can offer those who are willing to attend, even if it means a real effort on their part:

— *Fidelity to the Institute* in the sense that the federation is following a path parallel to that of the Institute in its devotion to the Founder and its dedication to the poor as desired in the last two General Chapters. The Paris Congress showed, in a very moving manner, its devotion to the Founder. That of Mexico should demonstrate, in its own way, its dedication to the poor — the preferred of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

— *Sense of the Lasallian family* which meets as brothers. Nothing in Mexico must give the slightest hint of class distinction: neither religion, race nor social status. All are brothers in de La Salle and must maintain simple, friendly relations so that those of modest means may feel themselves at home.

— *Faith in the depth of our own hearts — faith in the mission* confided to John Baptist de La Salle and to us in turn. We are certain that praying together will provide us with some of the most memorable moments of our stay in Mexico. The presence of God, so characteristic of the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle, will fill our days there. The wish of all, irrespective of religious denomination, to put God at the center of our lives, will be one of the principal fruits of this meeting.

— *Educational service of the poor.* This was the one great preoccupation of de La Salle's life. The Brothers have rediscovered its vital importance and we hope that it will be a major theme of this congress. The whole Lasallian family must turn its attention to the poor and make their educational needs the objective for which they will work all the harder. After the Paris Congress the only honourable way for us is to dedicate ourselves to the point of suffering, as Mother Teresa told us in Malta. This, we hope, will be the revolutionary call coming to us from Mexico.

• In the light of this ideal we would make the following suggestions:

1) Everything about the congress should be simple, austere and poor. It would be absurd to talk of the poor in an atmosphere of luxury.

2) More than any previous congress, this one should be organised with the poor in mind. Let us not come to Mexico with empty hands.

3) Everything in Mexico should be eminently practical: organisation, discussions with definite objectives, practical projects, real achievements.

4) After Mexico each National Federation should hold its own "application" congress to consider what was said and done in Mexico and to put it into practice at local level.

5) Young people, like others, must bring their dynamism and drive, as well as the experience acquired at an international meeting, to the task of putting into practice what they have learned.

For information about the Congress write to:

Lasallian World Federation
Via Aurelia, 476
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Federación Lasallista Mexicana
Apartado Postal 2820
06000 MEXICO D.F.

Brother Manuel OLIVE
Assessor, Lasallian
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02-E-03

REACHING THE UNREACHED... IN THE STEPS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Note: The Editorial Committee is grateful to the author for his response to an invitation to contribute a paper to 'Lasalliana'. Brother Superior General, in his Christmas Letter 1982, paid tribute to Brother James's work in these terms: "Not far from Madurai, Brother James Kimpton is engaged in an impressive work of development and training among very poor children and families (including a group of lepers) in the 'Saint Joseph Village' of Genguvarpatti. This type of work deserves our fullest admiration and our wholehearted support, inspired as it is by an authentic Lasallian spirit on behalf of people whose needs are extreme."

In my work among the poor remote villages of this part of South India, St. De La Salle and his special charisms have been the heart and soul of what I do. Without the very particular atmosphere that the whole Lasallian drive has given to my own individual outreach, I think little would have been achieved of any permanence.

THE UNKNOWN FUTURE — AS IT WAS FOR DE LA SALLE, AS IT IS FOR US

Quite definitely De La Salle's whole life was one of several displacements in which he had to take steps out into the dark of the unknown future. These steps, these displacements, he had to make in total trust in the call of divine Providence. He had to make them, not asking for light to see the whole road, but just enough to make the next few steps. He was called gradually to leave all aspects of his established life for which he had been specially prepared during his earlier years. Thus he gave up his position in the Cathedral of Rheims to go down and live with the much lower level of society his new work demanded. He had eventually to leave his aristocratic paternal house and family in order to live among the uncultured men whom God had chosen for him to work with. He went into work that was wholly new, started off in an apostolate which he could not possibly foresee. So much so that eventually, towards the end of his life, he admitted that if he had known the amount of suffering and hardship entailed in the work he had founded, he would not have touched it with the tip of his little finger.

Our work sometimes requires that we leave absolutely everything connected with the first part of our lives or even with subsequent parts of them, so that we are making new starts in unknown territories during different times of our lives. We may be asked to leave family and all established friends, home, and even country, permanently. We may have to abandon any connection with our own culture and accept another which is completely foreign. And we may have to step out into a way of life and work which is totally unknown.

Thus I, as an Englishman, have, at the choosing of Providence, spent most of my life in countries of the East, doing work I never dreamed I would do, and of such a wide variety that I too would have taken fright had it been presented to me in the beginning years: healing the sick, housing the homeless, teaching the untaught, caring for orphans, even mothering the tiny babies that are brought to us unwanted and uncared for, caring for leprosy patients... In all this, God's voice was heard and a step was made into the dark of the unknown future, taking the risk of launching out into the deeps pointed out by God.

TRUST IN PROVIDENCE WHICH DID NOT FAIL DE LA SALLE AND DOES NOT FAIL US

De La Salle taught me that his Brothers must have blind and total trust in divine Providence. He made it clear in his own life that God gives only so that we may give it all away, and that the more we give the more we will receive to give away, and that what is held on to can only stagnate and be fruitless.

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Thus when De La Salle consulted his spiritual director to find out what he should do with all his inherited wealth he was quite bluntly told to give it all away and not keep even a fraction of it in any form. So-called wiser men thought he should use it to found his new schools, or that he should put it into the bank and live off the interest. But no, once again there was that step into the dark to be made, a challenge from God to be faced and a risk to be taken. And De La Salle took it. He literally gave everything away to the non-productive poor and went off and lived like them, completely dependent henceforth on Providence for all his needs and those of his earliest followers. Surely that too was meant as a lesson for us all; and so De La Salle made sure that his Brothers understood that their work was to be among the poorest and to be wholly gratuitous, and that they too were to depend on Providence — in the spirit of faith that he so often referred to.

In our work among the poorest of people in these villages, which are primitive and so lacking in every kind of security and necessity, our approach has always been, and I hope always will be, that if there is a need clearly shown to us by God, then the first step is not to look into purses or bank accounts, but to attend to the need, knowing full well with deep conviction that God will provide all that is needed in materials, finances and men. Never once has this failed. We came here with an allowance of Rs. 2,000 and we were asked not to request more hereafter. We looked around at our neighbours who lived in the most abject poverty and saw what we must do. We reached out. We attended to the greatest needs. We did the most foolish things in the eyes of the world and of those who depend upon large bank accounts or strong sources of income. We simply gave away what we had and we also started to build and heal and to care for children and the very needy, with no money. Our annual expenditure (not our budget, note, because only God can budget) is now Rs. 2,600,000 in the villages alone; and we also run a children's home for the most destitute and for unwanted babies, with its own separate accounting of close to Rs. 700,000.

Our Founder stepped out into the dark with empty hands and apparently inadequate helpers. But divine Providence never failed him. Divine Providence has never, in any way, failed us. Always there is enough to feed the five thousand in the desert — with twelve baskets of superabundance left over for still others.

THE SAINT'S ENDURING MESSAGE: TO RADIATE CHRIST TO OTHERS

But De La Salle knew full well that his real work was to be a redeemer with and for Christ. He knew that there was no other reason for his call from God than that he should spend himself in order to lead other souls to God, in order to be another redeemer in the work chosen for him by God. He knew also full well, and kept on reminding his Brothers, that the whole reason and meaning for their being Brothers was that they should radiate Christ to all with whom they came into contact the whole day long. They were to carry Christ in themselves because Christ in others awaited their love, and also their love was HIS love. There was to be this mutual interchange of Christs from the carrier to the receiver, as is always the case. De La Salle kept on insisting that we meet Christ in the early part of the day, at meditation and Mass and Communion, and that we keep in close touch with Him all day long, and that thus, indeed, we would be able to radiate Christ, that thus we would be other redeemers — and only thus. How frequently he came back to that refrain; how much he insisted that the Brothers be men of deep prayer — or else be worthless as pruned vine twigs.

In our work among the Hindus and Muslims in these small villages hidden away behind their veils of coconut palms, we rarely meet with Christians. And when I questioned myself why God had put us in such a place, among people we would not ever convert, He made it very, very clear that He was the one who was working and not us. He, Christ, was the one who would reach out to whomsoever He put in our paths each day. We know full well that only God can convert if He sees the need and when He is ready. He, Christ, would do His work, in His way — and often without our ever knowing what He was doing or why. *Our* responsibility was merely to keep in the closest touch with Christ and then to let Him work in the way He wanted. Our part was merely to show Christianity in action. All the rest was His doing.

Prayer: Lord, when I am hungry give me someone to feed; when I am thirsty give water for their thirst. When I am sad, give me someone to lift from sorrow. When burdens weigh upon me, lay upon my shoulders the burden of my fellows. Lord, when I stand greatly in need of tenderness, give me someone who yearns for love. May your will be my bread; your grace my strength; your love my resting place.

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02-E-04

GROWING *INTO* FAITH...

some insights into catechesis with adolescents in the context of contemporary society

In January 1983, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, published a short book by Brother Gerard Rummery, FSC, Australian Director of CIL, and Brother Damian Lundy, FSC, England, in which these two friends present a distillation of some of the ideas they have explored in recent years with parents, teachers, priests and young people in several countries. We offer a brief outline of the book's principal themes. Each of its five chapters contains material for reading, reflection and discussion, offering some questions to be explored in groups.

PILGRIMS TOGETHER

The authors argue that "there are no simple, universally applicable answers to the important questions we are considering. As the twentieth century moves towards the twenty first, old and young alike are pilgrims together, and in our changing society and church it is no longer a case of confused young searchers asking their questions to which older, wiser believers trot out the obvious familiar answers to be found, in a more stable age, in the common catechism, or in the standard manuals of theology of a centralized, unchanging, uniform church." And they add: "In adopting this attitude, we believe that we are being faithful not only to our times but to the very nature of faith itself, and to the experience of the first Christian believers. We believe that people are called to make the journey of faith not by treading mechanically a predetermined path..." (vii).

GROWING *INTO* FAITH IN A CHANGING WORLD

This is an unfamiliar and challenging concept for many Catholics: its notion of faith is dynamic, not static, seen as a gradual personal response to the God who speaks, calls and saves. At the same time to grow into faith is a challenge to grow into church, for "I am baptized into the faith of the community, and, as I grow, I look to my fellow-Christians to be accepted, nourished, forgiven, healed, blessed, renewed, challenged and enlightened, so that I, in my time, with my brothers and sisters, may become the Good News which will save the world." (4)

This positive view of church is, sadly, often lacking in the young, because it does not correspond to their experiences. As infants they were baptized into a church and a faith, from which many have become estranged: some simply drift away, while others, hostile and disillusioned, choose consciously to reject the faith of their parents.

A key task for adults is to ask how our church can transcend the cultural forms assumed in its historical development so as to be relevant to this new society and especially to the needs of the young. This calls for an analysis of past memories and present experience, helped by the insights of contemporary poets, anthropologists, social commentators and theologians — of which the book offers a sprinkling.

LISTENING TO THE YOUNG

A study of American youth in 1974 pointed to five dominant "cries" of the young: the cries of "self-hatred" (arising from a conviction of personal worthlessness and failure), of "the psychological orphan" (after conflict at home), of "social protest" (against inadequacies and injustice in society), of "the prejudiced" (eg. inherited racial discrimination) and of the "joyous". Does the adult church *hear* these cries? and, if so, how do we respond to them? Many feel that teenagers are more inclined to reject "churchianity" rather than "Christianity", because they see the church as irrelevant and outdated: "God, tell me... Are you really counting on this old lady to invite young people to dance?" (27)

But we must take care not to equate rejection of *religion* with loss of *faith*. The distinction is important. Indeed, the authors argue, "such a rejection may sometimes be necessary if the young person is to become

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emancipated from an image of God and his service which has never developed beyond the cultural conditioning of a family, church or society" (27).

FROM CONVENTION TO CONVICTION

We are familiar with the notion of "growing in faith", in the faith received as a gift of God in Baptism, which we are urged to hold on to or preserve. As an alternative to this rather static notion, the authors propose that we consider what is involved in "responding to the continuing call of the God whom we meet at the different stages of our lives — and not merely within the confines of one particular institution or system." So they speak of growing "INTO" faith, and explore the traditional image of life as a pilgrimage, suggesting that this has received new force from the stage-development theories of human psychology, proposed by pioneers like Piaget, Erikson and Kohlberg. The American Methodist researcher and teacher, J.W. Fowler (with whom the authors worked during the summer of 1983), has applied the psychological insights of these pioneers to the study of faith-development. The findings of years of research are presented in Fowler's book, *Stages of Faith* (Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1982). He shows how the faith of childhood, rooted in experiences associated with the family and social background, is challenged in our culture to grow beyond these boundaries through a process of personal struggle, critical reflection, reassessment and searching in the years of adolescence and adulthood. Older Christians, more secure and established in their faith, must not "lose faith" in the young but try to assist the process whereby the "turning away" of adolescence can become a "turning toward" a new and positive set of values and beliefs. Catechesis can help this process, but it can also hinder it.

The journey from the "received faith" of convention to the "sought after faith" of personal conviction is difficult and confusing in a society as complex as ours: it demands time, space, guidance, encouragement and patience, and a great respect for personal freedom. The concerned adult reader may best be brought to appreciate this by tracing the main stages of his own personal growth into the faith which is now his own, though he may need to be reminded that the society in which he grew up has changed radically in most countries.

"NO ONE MAKES THE JOURNEY OF FAITH ALONE!"

The final pages of the book are concerned to explore, in practice, how parents and teachers can respect the growing autonomy of young people, while trying to provide the conditions which appear to favour growth into a more mature personal faith. We are called to pass on the Christian heritage and to open up the richness of a concept of faith which invites the development of a trusting relationship with God which will prompt a person to act according to Christian values, not just to give assent to verbal formulae.

If we apply the Emmaus story (Luke 24) to our present situation, we shall see that *ministry* to the young may be much more important than formal classroom teaching — though there is a place for such teaching provided that it is done well. Sensitive ministry offers the challenge to commit oneself to Jesus as a disciple, while respecting the individual's freedom to respond to the call, as Jesus himself did (Matthew 19,16f.). In a constructive spirit, readers are invited to work with young people on a "re-designing exercise" on the church they would like to become — a church in which personal ministry could be more effective.

One central idea of this book is that not only do young travellers need the support from an older generation, but equally that older travellers need the vitality, the promise and the hope communicated by the young. The process of *accompaniment* at different stages of the journey is explored with reference to models of the faith-community opened up in official church documents, as well as in personal "dreams", and the authors discern some signs of hope, as they ask:

> "So what about this vision of a living church, which is good news for a world often disillusioned by the failures and inadequacies of religious systems which seem to preach one thing while practising another? How does it compare with the sad old lady, dressing up for the hollow celebrations, while the young yawn with boredom? It's a long way off... And yet, in the last few years, there have been so many promising signs of a renewal of faith and of community in the most unlikely places, sometimes in the very centre of decay and hopelessness. Our age has its prophets, like every other. God still speaks, and his word has lost none of its power. It is a word many young people long to hear: 'I want the Church to show me the love and glory of God himself, so that, with God's help, the Church, society and the world will work itself out — through God's love,' wrote one seventeen-year-old, recently." (67)

Report by **Damian Lundy, FSC**
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The book costs £2-95, plus postage. Copies from Darton, Longman, and Todd, 89, Lillie Road, LONDON SW6 IUD.

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02-E-05

RUN SCHOOLS OR FACE A CATASTROPHE

Understanding the situation

UNDERSTANDING THE SITUATION

Both catholic and protestant schools have been in the Camerouns for almost a century. From the very beginning of evangelization the missions opened schools followed by colleges.

The colonial administrators made the opening of a school a condition for opening a new mission. Though sent by a secular government in Paris to run the "Colony" for France, the High Commissioners of the Metropolis none-the-less made grants to denominational schools.

Each superior of a mission was at the same time director of his primary school and sometimes of the college. The Church regarded the school as the first place in which to preach the Gospel.

In 1948, a bishop asked the Brothers to run a Training College for Teachers. Other bishops followed his example and soon there was a considerable number of religious in the primary and secondary schools of the country. This was a period of glory for the denominational schools.

The situation changed in the 1970s. Religious personnel became scarce and the influx of students continued to grow in both primary and secondary schools. In the primary schools, lay people became directors and in the secondary schools Cameroun lay teachers form an increasing percentage of the teaching staff. The F.S.C. are the first to hand over the management of their schools to the Camerounais.

But in many cases the two phenomena, Camerounization and plethora of staff, are not organized but suffered as a necessary evil.

1) Many parish priests, where laymen have taken over, are no longer interested in the school where they no longer have any authority, Discipline, levels of study and results are in rapid decline.

2) Diocesan directors, often unprepared, neglect pedagogical leadership in favour of the administration of finances and of personnel.

3) The primary school teachers getting less and less help are now more and more overworked. In most schools the teacher pupil ratio is 1:60. The six year olds start their schooling in classes of up to 100.

4) The salaries of teachers in private schools remain static while the cost of living is constantly on the increase. Hence the loss of the best of the teachers to more lucrative posts. In spite of the efforts of the Church to obtain just salaries for the teachers all attempts at improvement have been blocked. It is the State which fixes the fees in the private schools and also the amount of grant. Moreover, the Teachers' Union is ineffective since it is affiliated to the one and only party.

5) The present schools in the Camerouns seem to be less and less adapted to the cultural context of the rediscovery of the ancient values proper to the country, of an expanding economy and of youth unemployment.

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SOME ATTEMPTS AT FINDING A SOLUTION IN THE DIOCESE OF YAOUNDE

In spite of the attempts by the Cameroun Episcopal Conference, the problems of salaries have never been solved. Hope springs anew with the new political regime under President Biya. The elementary principle of social justice, "equal pay for equal work" seems like a dream after 25 years of vexations. The effort to find sponsors for our schools has never given satisfactory results.

Since 1971, the Church has attempted to let parents and local people generally have their say, to let them take the initiative in educational and teaching matters. They were deprived of this right with the advent of the white schools. This is the School for Collective Advancement which the Brothers initiated at the request of Archbishop Jesus Zoa of Yaoundé.

Since 1973, the local Church, aided by International Organizations (Swiss Lent Action, CCFD) organized short courses of a month for its 1050 primary school teachers to improve teaching techniques and initiate them into leadership methods for their milieu.

At the same time, the Church also organized training courses in leadership for the local communities, courses not only for teachers but also for the responsible people in the neighbourhood, such as religious and political leaders, traders, influential planters, and agricultural and hygiene leaders, etc. To adapt evangelization better to the local mentality, catechists have perfected a method and catechetical text books in the traditional language and according to the needs of horizontal sharing (palabre) and a more meditative form of prayer.

To motivate the leaders in their function as Christian educators, days of recollection have been organized for the last few years, the themes being taken from the teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle for the Brothers. In 1982, the theme was, "Make no distinction between what concerns your employment and what concerns your sanctification". In 1983, "You are the ministers of God and the ambassadors of Jesus of Jesus Christ to the children confided to your care". As a result of these recollections, many of the teachers have expressed the wish to know the Founder of the Brothers better and to celebrate his feastday every year.

BUT IS THIS SUFFICIENT?

After decades of ineffectual effort to obtain a just remuneration for the teachers, is not running schools, in fact, conniving at a grave social injustice?

On the other hand, does not the handing of a school over to the State authorities risk depriving the little ones and those in remote parts, who have no voice, of their right to instruction? Have we made ourselves sufficiently clear about the teaching content and methods better adapted to the needs of the people?

Have we used efficacious means to make parents with no voice against authority more aware of their rights? What can still be done so that they do not rely on the Church in the struggle we share with them?

We have invested in courses and educational days for their training. What other means can we take for their continuing training?

The spiritual doctrine of De La Salle, their patron, inspires and stimulates our teachers. What can we do to share it with them and bring it within their reach?

There are still 50 F.S.C. in school in the Camerouns working side by side with many former pupils. How can they become better promoters of pedagogical, cultural and evangelical renewal?

The Brothers have been working in the Camerouns for 35 years. What do they know about their former students? Why do not the Associations of Former Students share in the preoccupations the Church has with the catholic school?

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02-O-01

INTERVIEW WITH BROTHER SUPERIOR GENERAL

From the beginning Brother Superior has encouraged and supported the publication of "Lasalliana" and follows its development with keen interest. We thought the moment had come to ask him to explain his reasons for encouraging our efforts and his interest in the project as part of the general Lasallian renewal movement.

1. "Brother Superior, you were present in Lyons in September, 1982, when the joint Institute - Lasallian Associations decided to produce the Lasallian leaflets, later to become "Lasalliana". From the start you strongly supported the project. Could you tell us what your motives were?"

Brother Superior: "The meeting to which you refer revealed, once again, a movement which is taking place in many areas where the Institute exists and is at work. It is the increasing number of people who feel affection and admiration for John Baptist de La Salle and his work and who want to get to know better the meaning of the Lasallian message for the world to-day.

It is only natural that persons and groups who share this interest should seek publications of quality containing serious studies which would deepen their knowledge and guarantee its authenticity. There are already many publications which provide reflections, information and commentaries on St. John Baptist de La Salle but the authors of these publications experience, themselves, the need for more ample and authoritative information on the Founder and his message.

To meet this need we formed a group of Brothers who, having a thorough knowledge of the Founder and easy access to sources, could write and publish regular articles for those who are interested and feel the need for such authentic information. This is precisely what the team responsible for "Lasalliana" is doing so I am happy to support and recommend their work and the aims they have in view."

2. "Brother Superior, we are now approaching the end of 1983. The Lasallian movement, comprised of lay people interested in the spirituality and educative practice of the Brothers, is spreading widely. How do you see the development of the movement?"

Brother Superior: "I consider this movement positive, relevant and urgent. Without exaggeration I think these qualifications justified. The development is positive because it is a sign of progress in the understanding of and respect given to de La Salle and also because it penetrates deeper into those layers of society associated with the Brothers.

I have had the opportunity of being present at the inauguration of the movement and have seen its development in many different parts of the world. I believe that in this development we can see clear signs of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

It is a relevant development because it co-incides with a movement becoming general in the Church — the growing awareness of the essential role of lay people as the people of God — a movement firmly founded on the teaching of the Gospel.

It is an urgent development because it is the only means of facing the immense tasks which confront and challenge us. How else can we serve the young and the poor, promote justice and find solutions to problems identical with those which inspired and called forth the founding zeal of St. J.B. de La Salle.

For all these reasons which I have stated more than once, I see in this movement a great motive for hope at this moment in the history of the Institute."

3. "What suggestions would you make so that after a promising start, the movement does not lose impetus and continues to give satisfaction to those who joined it?"

Brother Superior: "Briefly, I would limit myself to proposing what is of immediate application. We must take care to nourish the movement with genuine and precise ideas based on the inspiration and message that de La Salle left us by his example and in his writings. We must not invent a fictional de La Salle in

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place of the historic Founder. The first feelings of affection, spontaneous, empirical and emotional as they are, must be deepened, strengthened and supported by an exact and well-founded knowledge of the man.

We must also provide the members of the movement with opportunities for exercising their enthusiasm in a concrete way. Practical projects must be envisaged and planned to put into effect what Lasallian thinking and the Founder's teaching suggest for helping those in need and guiding youth along Christian social lines. A movement which confines itself to speeches and thinks that progress consists in rhetorical proclamations, is condemned to an inglorious demise. It has none of the characteristics of the initiatives of St. John Baptist de La Salle."

4. "Brother Superior, how do you see the role of 'Lasalliana' in this movement?"

Brother Superior: "I think the answer lies in what I have already seen of "Lasalliana" and its relation to the movement. To avoid being jeopardised, the movement should be given clear, dynamic ideas, of proven authenticity and in keeping with the reality which we are trying to get to know better. The achievements by which it will become known and strengthened must be based on sound principles inspired by truth. We hope that 'Lasalliana' will provide such ideas in plenty, together with motivation, data and facts capable of communicating the personality and thought of the Founder and capable, also, of suggesting initiatives in accordance with his teaching.

May 'Lasalliana' become a source of inspiration and courage by making known the spirit which should animate the movement and graft it more firmly to the venerable Lasallian tree."

5. "What recommendations would you give to the editorial committee and to contributors to 'Lasalliana'?"

Brother Superior: "The group is composed of competent people who have had a long and thorough formation. The manner in which they have already begun their work is evidence enough that they know what they are doing and are capable of succeeding in their task. If there is one point I would like to stress, it is that they develop a team spirit. That is the way to honour and put into practice the Lasallian motto, 'Together and by association'. It is the best way to ensure good results from an undertaking that we hope will be fruitful and enduring.

As a recommendation I would, also, express a wish that this enterprise just begun, will be continued with unflinching determination. One always has a doubt or a fear that an undertaking which begins with the highest hopes, may later become routine, less interesting, less inspiring and less rich.

As for technical advice I shall only say this: I have complete confidence in the ability and experience of the members of the production team."

6. "Could you suggest to readers of 'Lasalliana' how best to profit from it?"

Brother Superior: "I congratulate the readers of 'Lasalliana' who have made its acquaintance and that of its contributors from the moment of its first appearance. I know that a large number of Brothers were looking forward to such a publication to increase their knowledge of the Institute and deepen their understanding of the Lasallian spirit.

I would like them to welcome and use these leaflets as a means of extending their knowledge of, and increasing their love for, our holy Founder whose work they appreciate so much. As I have just said, they should use them as an instrument of work rather than as a means of satisfying their curiosity, however legitimate. 'Lasalliana' should not be too hastily relegated to the archives but kept within reach so that this collection of information may introduce them to the saint and his work. The leaflets should not be treated as work of erudition but as examples of witness to be carefully studied and from which conclusions should be drawn for the Brothers' own lives.

What I am saying is that the leaflets could, on occasion, be used as subjects for meditation and as an encouragement to greater dedication to the redemptive work of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

7. "In conclusion, Brother Superior, what relevance, in your opinion, has such a publication to the life of the Institute to-day? How does it relate to the Brothers' contribution to education in the modern world?"

Brother Superior: "I think I have already answered these questions in saying what such a publication means to us. Because of the crisis of identity which, in recent decades has troubled and continues to trouble so many congregations, including our own, we recognise more clearly than ever before that a thorough and precise knowledge of our Founder and his doctrine is the best guarantee of, and stimulant to, a renewal of fidelity and vitality.

That we may respond to the demands of our age to be inventive and creative, without compromising our fidelity to our spiritual heritage, the message of de La Salle must penetrate more deeply and take more definite shape in the minds and hearts of all of us who profess to follow him, as well as in those who wish to share in the action which his message inspires.

I sincerely hope that these leaflets may be of help to the thousands of people who seek a better understanding of Lasallian values and of the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

God grant, through the intercession of him who is our Father, our Founder and our Guide that these Lasallian leaflets may awaken a new spirit of generosity in favour of those whom St. John Baptist loved and served so well — the young and the poor.

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No. 3
1st June 1984

PRESENTATION

With this third Number we come to the end of the first year of publication of LASALLIANA. Throughout the year, the team responsible for the publication has been attentive to the reactions of certain readers who have been good enough to pass on their observations to us. We see in this a directive to continue with this work and to make certain adaptations arising from these observations.

The increasing number of subscriptions in each of the three languages is already a source of encouragement. We hope, however, that this increase will continue during 1984-85.

The collaboration of more and more authors is likewise an encouraging sign. Thus LASALLIANA can become an organ of expression for the Brothers within the terms of reference outlined at the beginning of its publication.

To synthesise the reactions received, we may say that they are all positive. Perhaps other reactions, more critical ones, were not sent to us?

The satisfaction expressed referred especially to the following points:

— The choice of headings which allows for a coverage of the life of the Institute as a whole.

— The richness in the content of the texts, even if the interest of each one of them varies according to the taste of the readers.

— The variety of the contributions, especially the contributions made by lay people.

— The brevity and the seriousness of articles adapted for very busy readers, with awareness of the constraints this places on the author.

— The ease with which the sheets can be used for purposes of meetings, seminars and even in the fostering of vocations.

— The practical convenience of the arrangement thanks to the type of codification chosen.

— Thus the readers can gain a better knowledge of the Founder and of the History and Life of the Institute.

Many express their wish for a successful continuation of the publication and to them we extend our thanks. As an answer to this wish we can say that the first number for next year is already well advanced in its preparation.

One Brother suggested that a list of titles that have already appeared should be published. This is an interesting suggestion which has been followed in the present number.

We see these encouragements also as a call to our vigilance and also as an expression of gratitude to our authors of the first numbers, a gratitude which we share completely.

This word of thanks is addressed also to all LASALLIANA readers and especially to those who have shown their interest in the publication by sending us their reactions.

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

NB: This third number marks the end of your first subscription.
You will receive, by separate mail, a subscription form.
The first three numbers can still be had at the ordinary subscription rate. Copies are available in the three languages.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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03-A-13

RHEIMS 1684. A COMMUNITY FOUNDED ON PROVIDENCE

> "At the end of 1682, it became apparent to M. de La Salle that Providence was calling him to take the schools in charge. And he realized that, having to arrive the first at the exercises he had initiated in his house and give good example to those for whom they were intended, he could not do that and at the same time be assiduous at the offices in choir. This his director could in no way approve for he required him to be most assiduous in his attendance".

These lines are taken from the first biography of the Founder by Brother Bernard. The third biographer, Canon Blain, repeats this more concisely.

> "It was apparent to him at the end of 1682, he himself says, that God was calling him to take care of the schools and that, having to be the first at the community exercises, he could not be as assiduous at the office as his director exacted of him".

Most probably both biographers have based themselves on the "mémoire des commencements" written by John Baptist de La Salle many years after the events. Both of them begin in the same way their account of two particularly decisive years in the history of the Community of the Christian Schools: 1683 when Canon de La Salle gives up his canonicate, 1684 when he distributes his personal fortune among the poor.

It was on August 16, 1683, that Abbé Jean Faubert, a priest hitherto unknown, takes his place in the chapter of the cathedral of Rheims instead of Canon John Baptist de La Salle. Such a change did not take place without strong and lengthy opposition from his family, his colleagues, his spiritual director. The Archbishop himself did not give his consent or else resigned himself to it in spite of all he could do to prevent it.

Now that he was more closely associated with the few teachers who lived with him, the abbé De La Salle did not stop there. Very soon he decided to get rid of his personal fortune and to rely henceforth on Providence.

Referring to this the three first biographers mention the Founder's hesitation, hesitation which could have been reinforced by the counsels of his friends who were often well intentioned. If he wanted to get rid of his fortune could not the former canon use it for the benefit of the teachers? Could he not think of "founding" a community of teachers as Nicolas Roland had "founded" the community of the Daughters of the Infant Jesus?

If one has doubts about the dialogue which Blain tries to recall forty years after the events, one can but feel the truth of the prayer which Brother Bernard seems to have taken from the above mentioned memoire.

> "My God, I do not know if I have to make a foundation or not. It is not up to me to establish the communities, nor to know how to establish them. It is you, my God, who know how it should be done and will do it as it pleases you. I do not dare to make a foundation because I do not know if it is your will, nor would I make any contribution to founding our houses. If you found them, they will be well founded, if you do not found them they will be without foundation. I pray you, my God, to make known to me your will as regards this".

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De La Salle once again perceived the hand of God in the tragic events taking place under his very eyes. 1684 saw a very severe winter and all the historians of the time describe the famine that followed as particularly serious and even murderous. The whole year and the winter which followed saw the poor flocking to the towns from the countryside. They came in great numbers, to Rheims especially, in the hope of finding some relief.

For the second time, La Salle gave up the guardianship of his younger brothers on August 16 of that same year. He left to them the house in the Rue Ste. Marguerite and various properties and incomes that he owned personally. On the orders of his director he kept £200 in order not to tempt God and distributed the remaining cash among the poor. Dom François Hélie Maillefer writes about this as follows:

> "This faithful steward was then seen to distribute in an orderly fashion and with discernment the wealth of which he regarded himself as the trustee. He examined the needs of each one in minute detail, provided for their needs, distributed bread and saw that it was distributed to the children in the schools, gathered together every day a large number of poor people whom he fed and sent away overwhelmed with his generosity after giving them sound advice according to their situation.
>
> He did more. He went into the homes to find the poor who were ashamed to lighten their distress and through his frequent alms save them from the shame of poverty.
>
> Those who were witnesses of his generosity were astonished at seeing a man so full of confidence in Divine Providence that he gave no thought to the morrow. Even the Brothers in the schools who helped him to distribute his alms could not refrain from showing their astonishment. He told them with his customary tranquillity that God was a good Father who never deserted those who trusted in Him, that they would never lack anything as long as they tried to please Him."

Rather than estimate the exact value of the alms he distributed in this way — about £40,000 according to Blain — we will examine the significance of this staggering gesture. In 18th century France, more so than in our days, the faithful who wished to perform some good work took care to assure the future by establishing a foundation properly so called. With respect for the memory of his director, Canon Roland, John Baptist took great care to see that the Daughters of the Child Jesus were well provided for, showing that this new community would not have to rely on the generosity of the people of Rheims.

Breaking with tradition, Father Barré in Rouen encouraged the mistresses in the charitable school to rely solely on Providence. It would seem that he induced John Baptist de La Salle to do the same. What is certain is that the priest of Rheims decided definitely and irrevocably on the second of these two attitudes.

It was in vain the archbishop, Charles Maurice Le Tellier, proposed that de La Salle should "found" his community. The former canon was all the more resolute since the all powerful prelate offered his generosity only on condition that the Community of the Christian Schools should remain within the boundaries of his archdiocese.

In 1690, when describing his Community to the ecclesiastical Superiors, De La Salle did not fail to affirm that "this Community is at present established and founded on Providence alone". His choice, taken in 1684, was therefore still valid six years later; it continued to be so during the whole life of the Founder. If he expected the parish priests and the charitable boards to finance the schools they established and asked the Brothers to run, he none the less expected the Community as such to have no other resources that those of Providence.

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03-A-14

THE KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS OF ST. J.B. DE LA SALLE (1)

A FEW STATISTICS

The number of manuscript documents written throughout and signed by John Baptist de La Salle, and known to be in existence, amounts to 65 (a total of 97 sheets of paper written on one or both sides). (A) 53 of these documents are letters, all of which except three were addressed to individual Brothers. (B) The remaining 12 are of a legal or administrative nature. In addition to the signed documents there are (C) 8 certainly written by the Founder but not signed by him. (D) 7 documents are known which were not written by De La Salle but to which he added brief marginal comments or amendments or supplementary information: five of these are also signed by him. And, finally, there are (E) 27 known manuscripts to which, in one capacity or another, he added his signature, but nothing more.

An outline survey of each of these categories now follows (in this and further issues of LASALLIANA) in the order listed, together with bibliographical references guiding the interested reader to ampler and more detailed information on the points made; the frequently occurring "CL" followed by a number refers to the relevant volume of the indispensable *Cahiers Lasalliens* series.

(A) THE LETTERS

All except two of the 53 known manuscript letters are preserved in the Archives of the Maison Généralice in Rome (AMG). They are stored between sheets of glass in brass frames, and are thus able to be read without the need to handle the fragile leaves: the frames are slotted vertically into grooved shelves in fire-proof, double-locked steel cabinets.

THEIR ADDRESSEES

49 of the 51 letters in the AMG collection are addressed to ten of the Founder's disciples: 19 to Gabriel Drolin, 10 to a Br. Mathias (about whose identity there is disagreement among the experts), 6 to Br. Robert (Denis Maubert), 5 to Br. Hubert (Gilles Gerard), 3 to Br. Denis (Jean Louis Guynand), 2 to Br. Joseph (Jean Le Roux), and 1 each to Br. Anastase (Antoine Paradis), Br. Barthélemy (Joseph Truffet), Br. Paulinus and Br. Severin (the identity of both of whom is uncertain). The remaining two letters in the AMG collection were both addressed to Louis Deshayes, a priest of Rouen who had requested Brothers for a foundation which duly materialised in nearby Darnétal.

THEIR CHRONOLOGY

All of these 51 letters cover a time-span of no more than 16 years and 8 months - from 30 May 1701 to 17 January 1718 (and were written therefore after M. de La Salle had reached the age of fifty). By a curious coincidence the two known manuscript letters *not* in the AMG collection were written, respectively, two weeks earlier and six weeks later than the two dates mentioned. The so-called "Durham Letter", addressed to an unnamed Brother, and found in 1955 in the library of the English Seminary of Ushaw, near Durham, is dated 15 May 1701. It is kept in London at the Provincialate of the district of England, and the story of its serendipitous discovery during the centenary year of the Lasallian presence in England can be read in the April 1956 issue of the *Bulletin des Ecoles Chrétiennes*. The date of the other letter not in AMG is 2 March 1718 (almost exactly a year prior to its writer's death). It was addressed to the Founder's brother, Canon Jean-Louis de La Salle at Rheims. The letter was discovered in 1969 in an "Etude" of M. Claude Thiénot, a Rheims lawyer, by Br. Leon de Marie Aroz who published it, in both fac-simile and printed form and with a commentary of absorbing interest, in CL 39 (1972). By permission of M. Thiénot, this precious manuscript is on display at the Hôtel De La Salle, the Founder's birthplace in Rheims.

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A lithographed fac-simile of one early letter exists and was published as long ago as 1908 in the March edition of the *Bulletin des Ecoles Chrétiennes*. This was the Founder's letter to the Mayor and Aldermen of Château-Porcien, written on 20 June 1682 (four days, therefore, before the momentous "exodus" of M. de La Salle — then aged 31 — from the family home in the rue Sainte-Marguerite to the rue Neuve). The original was discovered in January 1843 by the Archbishop of Rheims, Mgr. Gousset, and was retained in the archiepiscopal archives, but an enquiry in 1951 revealed that it was no longer there and that its whereabouts were unknown.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE LETTERS

The AMG manuscript letters have been photographed twice: first in 1948 when the set was made available to districts of the Institute subscribing for one; and secondly, with advanced photographic technique, by Br. Georges Ley of the district of North Belgium.

The contents of the collection may be read in each of the three languages currently in use for the Institute's official publications. They first appeared in French, under the date 26 January 1952, as No. 335 of the Institute's series of *Instructive and Administrative Circulars*. The circular was issued by the Superior General, Br. Athanase Emile, with an Introduction by him, but the edition of the letters it contained was the work of Br. Felix-Paul Vandamme. The latter was at this time already engaged on the preparation of a critical edition of the letters, and was putting the finishing touches to this when death overtook him at the early age of 39. His work, not as definitive as he would have wished to make it, but an invaluable critical edition all the same, especially if consulted in conjunction with his Circular 335 edition, was published by Ligel in 1954, with a characteristically graceful and informative foreword by the Institute's historian, Georges Rigault.

In 1952 Brother Clair Battersby added *De La Salle: Letters and Documents* to his three previous books on the Founder, thus completing a Lasallian tetralogy in English, elegantly produced in uniform format by a leading London publisher, Longmans Green.

And in 1962 the Pontifical Institute of St. Pius X in Salamanca published, as No. 4 in its distinguished "Sinite" series, a Spanish translation of the French critical edition, but adapted and edited in order to take account of new information subsequent to Felix-Paul's production.

THE QUANTITY OF MANUSCRIPT LETTERS

The 53 known manuscript letters represent, it need hardly be said, a mere fraction of the total the Saint must have written. Battersby's suggested figure of 18,000 may, at first sight, seem grossly exaggerated, but he argues it principally on the basis of the known statistics of the Society's personnel in the Founder's lifetime related to the article in the earliest known version of the Brothers' Common Rules (CL 25) requiring them to write individually to the Superior "at the beginning of each month" (and we have the assurance of his biographer and contemporary, Canon Blain (CL 7), that the Founder "was exact in replying to each". But even if we prefer the much more conservative estimate of "two to three thousand" suggested by Felix-Paul, the extant remnant looks pitiful and leaves us wondering what happened to the rest. It is true, of course, that we know of the existence and contents (complete or partial) of other letters of the Founder from his biographer Blain and from other copies preserved in AMG. Felix-Paul included all 35 quotations known from Blain only and 19 known from Blain and other sources. But, as Br. Maurice-Auguste Hermans, General Editor of the *Cahiers Lasalliens*, assures us (CL 10), none of Blain's quotations comes from the manuscript letters known to us — a tantalising fact which leaves us without a point of reference whereby to test the degree of confidence we may feel as to the verbal exactness of his quotations.

THE LOST LETTERS

Can we hope that more of the many lost originals will come to light? From Circular 335 we learn that 34 autograph letters were available for despatch to Rome in December 1845 when the Founder's cause of beatification was approaching the stage of the study of his writings. Since that date, therefore (bearing in mind the loss of the Château-Porcien letter), 20 more have been discovered — an average of approximately one every seven years, which would make the next discovery overdue by eight years! However, the first of the new discoveries accounted for a single batch of 10 letters (those addressed to Mathias) found in a loft of the presbytery of Pernes (Vaucluse) at some unspecified date between 1850 and 1856. Following that, single finds were made or notified successively in 1860, 1871, post-1871, pre-1888, about 1900, ditto, 1915, about 1920, 1955 and 1969. The usual gap between the discoveries has therefore been about a dozen years but since there has been one gap of 35 years, perhaps our next discovery is not overdue after all. What chance is there of finding a treasure-trove of several letters together? The late Fr. André Rayez S.J., in a celebrated article entitled "Etudes Lasalliennes" in the January-March 1952 issue of the *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, did not exclude the possibility: "I remain convinced," he wrote, "that there are texts still to be gathered together or discovered, as, for example, the letters... It would be a rare stroke of good fortune to find some packets of these..." And the Institute's leading discoverer of Lasallian documents, Léon Aroz, is likewise hopeful. Commenting on the 1955 and 1969 finds, he adds: "Others, no doubt, await the lucky touch of some researcher." (CL 40,I)

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03-A-15

THE SCHOOL CLIENTELE OF THE LASALLIAN SCHOOLS AT THEIR BEGINNINGS

The term "clientele", today used in business, meant in those days the group of people, most often poor, who enjoyed the protection and services of a "maître ès loi" or a "patron" who could defend their interests. It was inevitable that gratitude should give rise to duties on the part of this "clientele". The relation between "maître" and "client" was not that between master and servant or today's employer and workman or employee. It was certainly different to that which St. John Baptist de La Salle required between the teachers and those whom he called their "disciples" rather than pupils, but it was very akin since it was a relationship based on a service freely given, freely sought, and gratuitous.

In the 18th century schools were not much sought after by the poor because the instruction given seemed:

— rather useless for essentially manual trades;
— too long to acquire when one had to earn one's living at an early age;
— unattainable if one had to pay or if long journeys were required from the country to the nearest built up area;
— segregationalist, the poor being separated from the rich in schools which were free or in separate schools.

The employment of teacher in the elementary school was considered as a means of earning one's daily bread by those whom Canon Blain called "mercenary teachers", that is the writing masters and the masters of boarding establishments and the "small schools" (Petites écoles) who were organized in powerful trade unions having scant tolerance for any rivals. In spite of the law which obliged them to receive the poor gratuitously, they paid little attention to it. Diminishing the number of their non fee paying pupils seemed to them to be the way of improving the teaching given to the fee payers; refusal to accept ill-clothed children who were often absent for family reasons seemed to them to be a service rendered to the others, a service which the better-off families willingly remunerated.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE COMES TO FILL THE VACUUM

Not a school vacuum, for schools existed:

★ Colleges run by congregations or religious orders (Oratorians, Jesuits, Doctrinarians...) and colleges dependent on the towns or universities. But they hardly prepared for any other than a gentleman's career and were not adapted to the needs of the working classes, even when it was the rule that day students paid nothing, as with the Jesuits.

★ Elementary and middle schools run by the "Boarding masters and those of the Little schools" and by the "writing masters". They were relatively numerous since they admitted only a few children and were jealous of any concurrence. In Paris the local government had to intervene and forbid the opening of new ones at less than 200 metres the one from the other. But the poor were repulsed and hardly took the risk.

★ Charitable schools run by the parishes or by general hospitals for the children who were most deprived. But this gratuity entailed the trustees refusing to admit children not in need. The result was

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real social segregation. It was humiliating. Families who were not destitute avoided them. They preferred to pay the teachers, being ready to shorten their children's education when funds ran out.

But a vacuum as regards teachers' training establishments for:

★ The writing masters, experts in account writing, trained their own helpers or apprentices.

★ The teachers of the Little schools and the charitable schools had the benefit in Paris and certain big towns like Lyon (with Demia) of four annual meetings directed by the Education Officer or High Chancellor, who was the diocesan Director of the schools for the working classes. That was about all. They also were trained by a practical apprenticeship being in contact with the pupils and an older teacher.

★ The project of creating "teachers' seminaries" proposed by Chennevières and Démia was not realised till after those founded by Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Démia, moreover, in a printed notice and in an unpublished personal memorandum (an edition is now being prepared) refers to an example established before 1688 in Rheims by the Founder of the *Brothers of the Christian Schools*. He asked the authorities to facilitate the creation of similar training centres in Lyon and every French diocese.

THE FIRST OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE'S PUPILS WERE EDUCATED BY APPRENTICE TEACHERS ENGAGED IN THE WORKING CLASS SCHOOLS

★ In Rheims, Nyel recruited teachers to open a number of schools in the town and in the region. St. John Baptist de La Salle took them into his home to train them to a more ordered life: the habit of prayer, the use of free time to study the catechism and to prepare the lessons to be given, healthy recreation by excursions together.

★ As the numbers of the teachers increased, new recruits stayed for a while in the Rue de Courtrai to see first how this new community of the *Brothers of the Christian Schools* lived and to be initiated into the teaching methods. This was, then, a kind of novitiate-normal school which it is difficult to define exactly.

★ In succession to the uneducated people who at first came to Nyel there now came new personnel who had attended the colleges and sometimes had even acquired a good Latin culture as was the case with Gabriel Drolin and Henri Lheureux. Creative reflection was now superimposed on the *integral pragmatism* of the teaching methods previously used. The theological and spiritual training given by J.B. de La Salle, doctor in theology, completes the formation of those who are preparing to become *Brothers of the Christian Schools*.

★ To meet the needs of the countryside, La Salle establishes also the *Seminary for country teachers*. After four years of reflection, it became an established fact in Rheims in 1687 or perhaps already in 1686 in part of the present house of the Brothers in the Rue de Courtrai. The Founder defined by deed that such a teachers' seminary was an integral part of the duties which could devolve on the Brothers but also that these country teachers, qualified to spend some time in the *Brothers'* schools, did not belong to the Lasallian congregation whose rules provided for life in common as a constant support. The country teachers could live on their own and help the parish priests who had no curates. They were not forbidden the priesthood; it was compatible with their functions (example Antoine Forget who trained in Paris for six months under St. John Baptist de La Salle's direction and left for Canada to run the school of the Sulpicians).

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03-A-16

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN (1): A WORK CHARACTERISTIC OF DE LA SALLE

What would Don Quixote have been without Cervantes? What would Cervantes be without Don Quixote? In the great masterpieces of human genius author and work are one. The work is a portrait of the author and in it he continues to live and speak to mankind.

For the seeker, who wishes to discover the personality of the author, the surest way and the most rewarding sources of study are to be found in his representative works, whatever their nature. For this reason and because I consider the treatise on "The Duties of A Christian" one of the best works that have come from the pen of de La Salle, I believe I can find in it the characteristic traits of the rich and many faceted personality of the man from Rheims. I shall confine myself, intentionally, to showing how "The Duties of A Christian" throws into relief the triple dimension of de La Salle as Founder, Theologian and Catechist.

1. THE FOUNDER

Charism attains its full dimension in the Founders of Congregations. Each Founder exemplifies in a concrete manner one of the many functions in the Mystical Body. For de La Salle it was to be "the christian education of poor children through the school". Providence led him gently and progressively to the difficult but effective task of redemption of ignorant and abandoned children.

The path of renunciation was signposted by painful episodes from the moment he took over the direction of his infant foundation: the heart-rending break with his family; the "nonsense" of distributing his goods to the poor when both he and the Brothers were starving; the "burning of his boats" when he resigned his canonry...

Nevertheless, all this, however heroic, did not exhaust the charism of the Founder of the Christian Schools. His sons, the Brothers, and their pupils needed to nourish their spirit, strengthen their will, warm their hearts and enlighten their faith. It was for this reason and with this aim that the Founder, without having had even a remote preparation for such work, became by necessity and by his charism of founder, a schoolmaster and pedagogue who deserved to have his name inscribed in the history of universal education.

His biographers show him to us at different moments in his intense and busy life, sometimes replacing a Brother in the classroom for a catechism lesson, at other times writing treatises on pedagogy, catechetics and asceticism for the use of the Brothers. "After having established all the practices and customs of the community (1695-1698) he turned his attention to providing it with works useful to the Brothers and their schools... catechisms of several kinds, simple for the pupils, more advanced and of greater depth for the Brothers, and all accompanied by moral precepts and pious practices. These are the sources from which the masters of the Christian Schools draw their enlightenment in order to explain the great mysteries of religion" (Blain).

Maillefer, a relative of the saint, also affirms that he composed "several works of piety as well for the instruction of the pupils as for the use of the Brothers who were in charge of them."

To which work is he referring? By that time (1714) almost all the writings of the saint had been published, including "The Duties of A Christian".

Blain goes into detail: "After having established all the practices and customs of the community he turned his attention to providing it with works useful to the Brothers and their schools... catechisms of several kinds..." Surely one of those catechisms was "The Duties of A Christian". What is more, the charism of the Founder reaches out beyond the religious family circle to other educators, to their pupils and to the faithful in general. The author of the preface to the edition of 1727 writes, "This catechism, full of solid and holy instruction, has been composed by its pious author for the benefit of persons engaged in teaching those who are sunk in deep ignorance of the mysteries of our holy religion." The vicar general of the diocese of Rouen, in his approval of the "The Duties of A Christian" in 1796, declares, "This work seems to us to be well adapted to the instruction of children and useful to the masters who teach them as well as to all sorts of people."

Whether de La Salle intended it or not, the fact remains that "The Duties of A Christian" provided the Brothers, lay teachers and catechists, for over a hundred years, with a solid and efficacious aid and at the same time served as a teaching manual of the faith for hundreds of thousands of French children. That was a product of the charism of de La Salle the Founder.

2. THE CATECHIST

The catechetical role of de La Salle is a consequence of his charism as Founder. It is in the seminary of Saint Sulpice that we must look for his catechetical formation. There he learned from the lips of remarkable catechists (Tronson... and especially Baüyn) the pedagogy of practical catechesis. Besides the weekly conference Baüyn gave an additional one each month which the seminarists were free to attend. This conference was devoted exclusively to practical catechetics: one of the most experienced catechists explained the catechism in the presence of the students. Could this have been the origin of our catechism of "formation"?

It was said of him, "A man so zealous for the salvation and sanctification of children inspired a similar zeal in many priests who passed through his hands. The most illustrious of these were de La Salle and Grignon de Montfort".

The biographer, Maillefer, describes the Founder and Superior of the Brothers thus: "He passed from row to row, instructing the children in the principles of the Christian life, speaking to them gently and inspiring in them docility, attention and modesty by

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his affability. His reproofs, when necessary, produced fruit in the hearts of these young boys and a change in their conduct and manners soon became apparent. In a word he became a child among children. He enlightened their minds, touched their hearts, gave them the witness of his example and led them gently and spontaneously to a Christian "metanoia".

Could any catechetical method be better?

THE "PARENTAGE" OF "THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN"

Blain presents an image of the catechist of Rheims writing "catechisms of various kinds, simple for the children, more advanced and of greater depth for the Brothers". This statement makes it possible for us to speak of "parentage" of "The Duties of A Christian" in which all the sections have common characteristics. Here are some of them:

UNITY

Unity defines a family. In that of "The Duties" all its members share the same spiritual heritage. The style and vocabulary, taking account of the demands of adaptation, are transmitted from one to the other, as is shown by internal criticism.

HIERARCHY

Family bonds and relationships differ with the members of a generation. In "The Duties", from the first part, which contains nearly five hundred pages, to the *"Profession of Ten Articles of Faith which the Christian must know and believe"*, in one page, there is a grading of contents and methods to suit those for whom they are intended in conformity with the aim of each treatise. What is remarkable is their interdependence and mutual ressemblance.

ESSENTIAL MEANING

As the members of a family grow away from their roots secondary traits tend to disappear but basic traits remain. Here again, de La Salle stands out as an eminent theologian and catechist in his own time and by his vision of the future. In the *"Little Summary"* often used in the catechisms on the *Principal Mysteries,* the Commandments of God and of the Church are merely listed but in several questions the themes of Christ, the Church, the Sacraments, particularly Penance and the Eucharist, are studied. He summarises himself but retains the essentials of the Christian message. De La Salle is more a catechist and theologian than a moralist.

WORKS COMPLEMENTARY TO "THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN"

De La Salle says with the Apostle St. James, that faith without good works is dead; that we must practise the maxims of the Gospel; that we must live according to its teaching etc. For this purpose we have another catechetical work from the pen of de La Salle as a complement to "The Duties". It is sufficient to mention the chapter headings since we take it for granted that the reader knows the contents of the manual and the persons for whom it was intended: "Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass", "Method of Preparing for a good Confession", "Instructions and Prayers for Holy Communion", "The Public Worship which Christians must give to God", "Exercises of Piety and Spiritual Canticles".

Even reading the titles of these works is enough to fill us with admiration, respect and gratitude.

HOLY SCRIPTURE IN "THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN"

Revelation and Tradition constitute the leit motif of "The Duties". De La Salle is a master of Sacred Scripture. He venerates the Sacred Books and considers them as his first and principal rule of life... It is not surprising then that he uses them with consummate skill. In "The Duties" he employs them in various ways. Sometimes, but rarely, the scripture text appears verbatim, as when he lists the Commandments of Divine Law and reproduces the words of the institution of the Eucharist... Often he suits the biblical quotation to the text of "The Duties" as for example on the very first page which begins: "Jesus Christ saying in the Gospel that eternal life consists in knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent on earth..."

In the evangelical introduction to the Decalogue we read: "Charity comprises two things: love of God and love of our neighbour. This is what Jesus Christ means when He says that there are really only two Commandments which comprise the whole Law. At other times he is content to say succinctly: "As the wise man says"; "as Jesus Christ says in the Gospel..." Many pages look like a scriptural arabesque but without the slightest allusion to the text or authors from which passages are taken. The chapters on the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus are masterpieces of adaptation.

In the Lasallian catechism there are numerous pages where passages of Scripture are so employed that they give the impression of being the author's own thoughts. The ideas and biblical expression combine so naturally that they become beliefs and precepts for both the author and the reader of "The Duties of A Christian". If you omitted the passages referred to, many pages of the work would have no meaning. What would be left of the treatise "De Deo"? of the creation of the angels? More importantly, what would be left of the Mystery of Redemption?

With the skill of an artist matching his colours, de La Salle moves from one evangelist to another to paint the multi-coloured life of the Word Incarnate, dead and risen again.

The alpha and omega of "The Duties" are expressed in two passages which make direct allusion to the Holy Gospel. We shall finish our reflections with them. The catechism opens with these words which are a programme in themselves: "Jesus Christ says in the Holy Gospel that eternal life consists in knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent on earth. All that a Christian should strive for in this life is to know God in Himself and in all that He has made, and the Son of God made man and all He has done for our salvation, that is to say, the *Gospel*."

When de La Salle puts the last touches to the dome of the classical edifice of "The Duties of A Christian" he places there the living stone of the Word: "The principal effect that these prayers should produce in us is to lead us to *practise the maxims of the Holy Gospel*. It is also the greatest benefit we can draw from the knowledge (cf Prologue) of the Sacred Mysteries and the teaching of the Church."

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«THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN» (2)

03-A-17

3. THE THEOLOGIAN

For the composition of the nearly two thousand pages which make up his catechisms de La Salle needed tranquillity and time. His life as Founder and superior of the Brothers afforded him no such tranquillity and time. He was compelled to draw on treatises in use at the time and to adapt them to his purpose. In the choice he made and in his adaptations we can see both his sensibility as a catechist and his competence as a theologian. Let us examine briefly how he, a doctor in theology, drew his inspiration from these sources and at times surpassed them in his catechetical treatises. Let it suffice here to refer to four of his sources: Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, Claude Joly and Jacques Le Coreur. We shall deal with the first two later on.

CLAUDE JOLY

"The Duties of A Christian" of de La Salle follows so closely the catechism of the Bishop of Agen that we find the following evidence given at the time of the beatification of the educator from Rheims "Another edition, in continuous style, which we found in the same library and which bears the name de La Salle was printed in Rheims in 1779, that is, sixty years after his death. This book, in its contents, is similar to that of Monseigneur Joly. How did the Venerable Servant of God come to resemble so closely the Bishop of Agen? On the other hand, the author of the first life of the Venerable does not mention this book."

A close comparison between the bishop's catechism and that of the priest leads us to the following observation: John Baptist de La Salle used the work of Joly particularly in the composition of the part of his book dealing with moral principles.

In the treatise "De Praeceptis", the commandmants of God and of the Church, only eleven pages out of fifty-nine in "The Duties of A Christian" do not show a visible influence. There are, also, long paragraphs where the correspondence is almost verbatim. The chapters on Sin and the Virtues corroborate the resemblance between the two works. Only FIVE pages out of FIFTY-ONE do not bear the mark of Joly.

The influence of the Bishop of Agen in the treatise "De Sacramentis" is minimal, but once the subject of moral is touched upon, as for instance, in the conditions for making a good confession, the authority of Claude Joly is clearly evident.

The reason why the author of "The Duties of A Christian" followed so faithfully, and on the subject of moral, exclusively, the work of the bishop, is revealed by his own conduct. On numerous occasions he advised his followers not to get involved in deciding whether a sin was mortal or venial. The most they could tell their pupils was that it was serious.

Apart from the chapters which we have qualified as moral there is little to indicate the influence of Claude Joly. Of the THIRTY-FIVE pages taken up with other treatises, ELEVEN, most in the section "De Sacramentis", borrow only definitions, while the other TWENTY-FOUR draw from the source with great moderation.

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JACQUES LE COREUR

Is the name Jacques Le Coreur, priest, doctor of theology and confessor in the parish of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, that of the author of *"The Principal Duties of A Christian"?* Some evidence suggests that it is: In any case the catechism was written for use in the missions that the author gave to people who had made their First Communion. This explains why it contains four hundred and sixty pages and deals here and there with matters of casuistry.

The roles of Joly and Le Coreur in the work of de La Salle are complementary. The influence of Joly is most evident in the *section dealing with moral,* that of Le Coreur in "De Sacramentis", particularly. The contributions of the latter are more evenly spread throughout "The Duties of A Christian".

The first section of Chapter IV of "The Duties of A Christian" shows evidence of *"Principal Duties of A Christian"* in the more difficult areas of theology. The inspiration of Le Coreur is felt in two places only in the chapter "De Ecclesia" and then only in matters of theology.

The missionary priest rarely makes his influence felt in the treatise "De Praeceptis" and when he does it is only to provide a definition or a doctrinal passage of little importance.

It is in the seven sections on the Capital or Deadly Sins that the complementary roles of Joly and Le Coreur become more evident. De La Salle borrows verbatim from both for almost the whole of his catechism. Naturally the passages taken from one source and reproduced in "The Duties of A Christian" do not appear in the other. The only coïncidence of both is found in the section dealing with *other sins,* a sequel to the Capital Sins.

In the treatise "De Sacramentis", the influence of the catechist from Amiens on the Saint of Rheims is most evident. As we cannot follow them step by step we must be content with the following observations:

a) Le Coreur's authority is always evident in arguable cases or in matters of casuistry as for example, "If the damned retain or do not retain the sacramental character and why; who can communicate under both species? and why the ordinary faithful may not do so; when the priest may and should refuse absolution..."

b) For the ceremonies in connection with reception of the sacraments in general and in particular for Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage and especially for Penance and Holy Orders.

c) For definitions of the sacraments in general. The definitions of Confirmation, the Eucharist, under various appellations, and Holy Orders are taken verbatim from Le Coreur.

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03-A-18

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (2): «Live with the pupils the better to educate them"

In the second number of Lasalliana (paper 02-A-12) I gave a general account of "The Management of Christian Schools" in order to situate the work in the context of the 17th-18th centuries, at the beginning of the Institute.

Those few pages underlined the importance and interest of the text but without showing with precision the richness of its contents. That richness will be better shown by a more detailed study of some aspects of the work.

The first part will consist of a detailed account of the conditions under which the first Brothers or schoolmasters worked as regards time, accommodation and programmes. It is possible to reconstruct these elements fairly accurately from references scattered throughout the "Manuscript of 1706" and the "Edition of 1720" of "The Management of Schools". These two texts can be read simultaneously in the Cahiers Lasalliens, No. 24.

LARGE MIXED ABILITY CLASSES

The number of boys in a class was at least 50 and often more. The scarcity of schools, the rising demand of the urban working classes for education from the mid-seventeenth century and the undoubted success of the Brothers' schools were some of the reasons for the large classes.

More than by their numbers the pupils were characterised by their differences of background, origin and age. In that era compulsory school attendance was unknown and there was no fixed legal age for beginning or ending one's school career. Enrolment of a child in a school and the length of time he spent there were matters for the parents. The problem of when a boy left school is often referred to in different ways in the "Management" and you can guess that it was a source of constant worry to de La Salle and the Brothers who naturally considered that early leaving meant an incomplete and unsatisfactory education. From other indications in the "Management" and particularly from those referring to writing, which was taught after the age of ten and preferably before twelve, it can be deduced that the majority of pupils were between ten and twelve with extreme cases ranging from six to fifteen or over.

CRAMPED, AUSTERE BUILDINGS

Though we complain today of the lack of teaching space, particularly in the inner cities, nevertheless, we have buildings which are purpose built and sufficiently large and functional. This was not always the case in the early days of the Institute. The schools were usually ordinary houses adapted to the needs of teaching. The floor space considered suitable, as mentioned in the edition of 1720, varied from 25 to 35 square metres for the younger children and from 35 to 43 square metres for senior pupils.

When you consider the number of boys in a class you can form an idea of the space available to each pupil!

Within this space the furnishings were rudimentary: benches and boards or tables for lessons. There was little individual equipment beyond the bare necessities for writing, a reading book for the senior pupils and a catechism. On the subject of equipment you should re-read the last chapter of the edition of 1720.

Of course, such material conditions were not exceptional at the time. They were the lot of most schools for the working classes but they help us to realize to what extent the skill and authority of the teacher had to make up for the lack of teaching equipment.

AN OVERLOADED TIME-TABLE

"The Management of Christian Schools" does not provide a time-table properly so called for the whole day or the whole week but in reading from chapter to chapter especially of the first part we can glean enough fragmentary information to reconstruct an approximate time-table for the master.

The programming of certain activities such as spelling and Latin remains rather imprecise but the following approximation will give a good idea of what was done and when.

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Time-table for an ordinary week

	Monday	*Tuesday*	*Wednesday*	*Thursday*	*Friday*	*Saturday*	*Sunday*
7,30	Study of Catechism	Study of Catechism	Study of Catechism		Study of Catechism	Study of Catechism	
8,00	Prayer /Breakfast Writing	Prayer /Breakfast Writing	Prayer /Breakfast Writing	Customary school holiday except when a feast occurs during the week	Prayer /Breakfast Writing	Prayer /Breakfast Writing	
9,00	Reading	Reading	Reading		Reading	Reading	
10,00	Prayer Reflection	Prayer Reflection	Prayer Reflection		Prayer Reflection	Prayer Reflection	PRAYER
11,30	MASS	MASS	MASS		MASS	MASS	MASS
13,00	Study	Study	Study		Study	Study	CATECHISM
13,30	Reading in registers	Arithmetic	Reading in registers		Arithmetic	Reading	VESPERS
15,00	Writing	Writing	Catechism (1 hour)		Writing	Writing	
16,00	Catechism Prayer Exam. of Conscience	Catechism Prayer Exam. of Conscience	Prayer Exam. of Conscience		Catechism Prayer Exam. of Conscience	Catechism Prayer Exam. of Conscience	

The rigidity of such a time-table is more apparent than real. Many imponderable elements forced the schools to be more flexible: the customs of the parish, the number of pupils in the class, the natural rhythm of the seasons as well as fairs and other events of the local calendar.

The essential thing is to estimate the workload that this imposed on the Brothers or masters. In practice, each teacher spent approximately forty hours a week with the same pupils. This certainly allowed him to get to know each one personally and thoroughly.

We must add that the school year was also long: except for a few holidays scattered throughout the year and especially at Easter, the school holidays consisted of the month of September. We have then, to reckon with a school year of at least 46 or 47 weeks which was quite a lot when compared to the present school year in most countries. (It was approximately 280 days)

These figures help us to understand the references to fatigue and overwork, even to the illnesses of teachers and the consequent interruption in the school's work.

* * *

The organization of the school time-table illustrates one of the major and constant concerns of the Institute: to educate children one must be with them. "Children being under the care of teachers from morning to evening, they can teach them to live well".

This accords with the general concept of formation current in the eighteenth century: the child is an apprentice who must learn from a "master", as in all other trades.

It explains also why the terms "model" and "good example" are so important and so often used in the "Management" as means of formation. The master is the one who must always provide models and examples in school activities as in his own behaviour.

Because children, especially "children of artisans and the poor" as de La Salle so often recalls, do not find such models at home, it is essential to send them to a Christian school and to keep them there as long as possible.

* * *

School conditions as we know them, particularly in secondary schools and centres of higher education, are very different from those described in the "Management of Christian Schools". That does not absolve us, as individuals or groups, from asking ourselves the following questions:

1) "To live with the young in order to educate them". Is that important today?
2) Have we calculated the total number of hours we spend with our pupils? What conclusions do we draw from this?
3) Does this time help us to get to know them and help them in their development and growth?
4) What can we change in the internal organization of the school or in our own conduct to improve the situation?
5) If we do not know our pupils what meaning can we give to our vocation of Christian educators?

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03-A-19

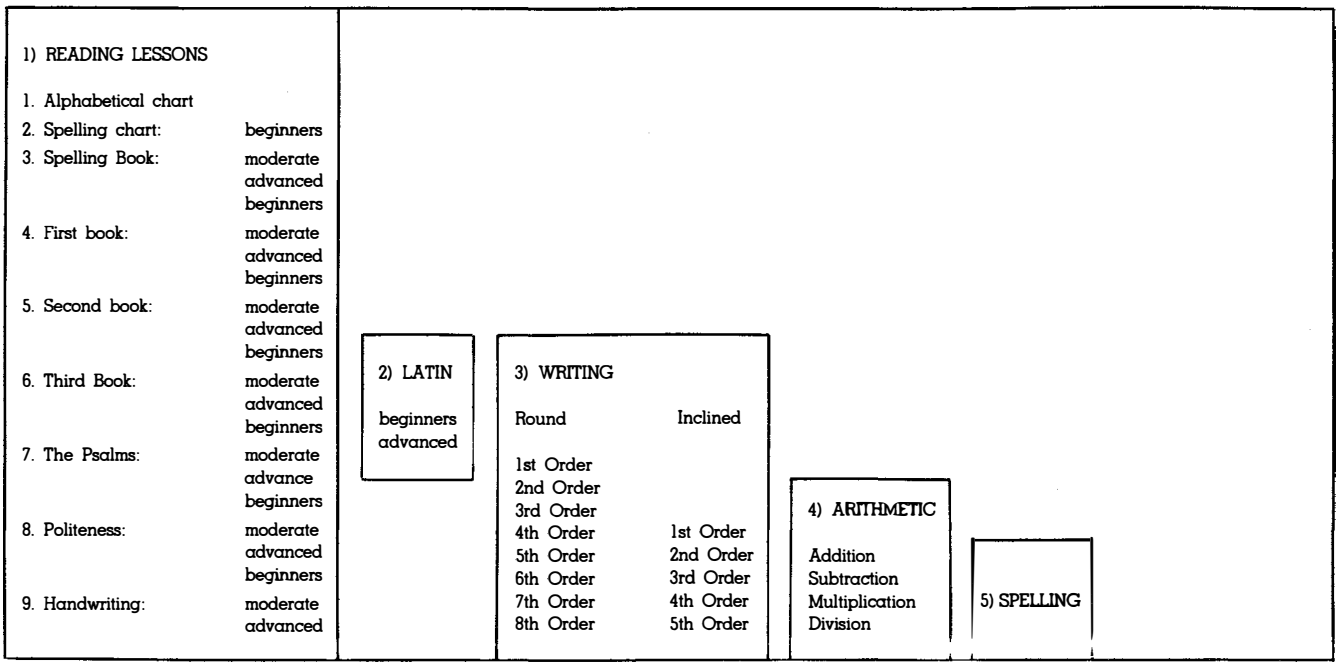
THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (3)
"Teaching made to measure"

One of the first essentials for the first Brothers with their large and heterogeneous classes was the organization of the time table and the programmes. The aim of the "Management" was precisely to propose actual methods of organization based on successful experimentation to inexperienced young teachers.

The following chart enables one to understand better how the different kinds of lessons were introduced and distributed and, therefore to give an idea of the normal school career of the pupil. It is immediately evident that the disciplines are introduced progressively one after the other while the new pupil devoted the greater part of his time to reading and the various religious exercises prescribed for the school.

PLAN FOR SCHOOL COURSES

Plan of School courses in the conduct of Schools



N.B. *In reading:* "All pupils, at all stages, except those reading from the charts, will be divided into three sections: 1st beginners, 2nd moderate, and 3rd advanced and perfect in that lesson."

"There will however be only two sections in 'Politeness'. The first will be those who make errors in reading it, the second those who make none". "All the pupils in the three sections on the lessons will however read together without discrimination or discernment, as the teacher will tell them".

READING was, therefore, the first initiation into school life. And the Management of Schools in no way differs from the customary practice in 17th century France. Some primary schools, indeed, offered only this teaching. Others added arithmetic but rarely handwriting which was the monopoly of the "writing masters", and this explains the difficulties M. De La Salle had with this corporation.

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LATIN. "The book in which they will learn to read is the book of Psalms; only those will be admitted to this lesson who can read French perfectly". This sentence recalls the important revolution which De La Salle introduced into the schools by having the child learn to read in his mother tongue.

WRITING. Because of the instruments in use at that time, this art demanded a long and difficult apprenticeship. "The children must be able to read perfectly in French as well as in Latin before beginning to write". "Arrangements will be made so that children do not learn to write before the age of 10". "If however a child should have reached the age of 12 without having started to write, he can start writing lessons before learning to read Latin providing he read French well and correctly.

ARITHMETIC. Arithmetic will be taught only to those who have started on the fourth stage of writing in the round and the second inclined and it will be the Director or the Inspector who appoints them to these lessons as well as to the others.

SPELLING. The teacher of handwriting will take care to teach spelling to those in the seventh stage of writing in the round and the fourth inclined, and the Inspector of Schools will pay attention to this.

SIMULTANEOUS TEACHING BUT DIFFERENTIATED

Such an organisation of the time table enables classes of homogeneous groups of pupils to be constituted for each of the subjects taught.

Within these groups there was real mobility each month when the changes of "Orders" or "Lessons" were made.

A class must therefore be seen not as a group of pupils doing the same work together but as a collection of distinct groups coexisting together and working simultaneously for secular subjects. The class became as one for catechism, prayers and religious offices. These groups were differentiated by the level of knowledge acquired and by the individual rhythm of progress.

The varying number of pupils in the classes and in the groups, differences in age, and sometimes dates of admission to the school were so many factors leading to suppleness and diversity in these groupings.

If we are to compare this kind of class with what we know of modern teaching practice we must refer to what is known as "subject level homogeneous groups" to be seen in some schools. We can thus note the modernity of some of the concepts put forward in the Conduct of Schools.

THE TWOFOLD OBJECTIVE OF ORDER AND EFFICENCY

Strictness in progress and in the division of the children into the different Orders and Lessons allowed order to be established in the classroom. With the large numbers of pupils involved this was a necessity. It was also, no doubt, a means of avoiding having to have recourse to the "corrections" in use in the schools of the times and to which the Management refers at some length.

Order also allowed efficiency to be attained in a simultaneous teaching practice which was relatively recent in the 18th century in primary schools and which the Brothers tried to systematize from the very beginning. This is illustrated by a passage from a recent book. "General History of Teaching and Education in France" (Paris 1981):

> "Besides the priority given to French, which was more or less exclusive, other pedagogical innovations explain the success and efficacy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Established in towns and always in groups of two or three, they are thus able to divide their pupils into classes and different groups according to their level. The homogeneity thus obtained enabled the individual method to be dispensed with by occupying all the children in a group in the same activity. This "simultaneous" method experimented with in the 16th century had already developed in the 17th century in the east of France where in the schools of Pierre FOURIER there were three levels in reading: that of the alphabet, that of the printed book, and a higher level where the pupils learnt to read manuscript registers... But it was with the Brothers of the Christian schools that the method was systematically applied at all levels of apprenticeship to the rudiments". (*Various authors,* Vol. II, pp. 440-441)

* * *

Besides efficiency and order, this organization shows that attention is paid to the person of the child for it allows his abilities and progress to be taken into account. It is a personalized approach to teaching.

Assuring order and efficiency is also a means of showing the respect one has for the child and especially for the poor who have no time to lose in inefficient schools.

Differences in age also permitted the employment of mutual aid among the pupils. Generally speaking one can see a tentative effort at mutual teaching.

It is not perhaps the actual methods of organization in which we are interested today, but we can look into the essential and lasting educational orientations they imply.

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03-B-11

FIFTY YEARS OF THE "RIVISTA LASALLIANA"

At fifty years of age a man's life reaches its highest point of maturity. For a review, fifty years represent the work of four generations of editors. This is the case with "Rivista Lasalliana", a quarterly review of pedagogical formation and information published by the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Italy.

ITS ORIGINS

Brother Goffredo Savoré founded the "Rivista Lasalliana" in Turin in 1934. He was then fifty years of age and at the height of his activities as educator, writer and scholar. He gathered round him a group of Brothers in their thirties as collaborators and editors of the review. The "Rivista Lasalliana" should, therefore, be considered in the context of the District which produced it. Seen thus, it was a communal effort and a high point in the cultural history of the Province.

ITS AIMS

The basic plan which set out the aims of the "Rivista Lasalliana" and directed it on its way, not always without difficulties and obstacles, served as a guide in the choice of subjects treated and gave pride of place to Lasallian studies and articles of a pedagogic and educative nature.

You can read the guiding principles in the articles of foundation of 1934. "The aim of the 'Rivista Lasalliana' is to serve as a review of religious and professional formation for the Brothers. This objective is to be attained by a thorough study of the life and teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle, of the life and work of the Institute and of the teaching of the Church, especially in the field of asceticism. Among the means to be employed is a deeper study, in the light of modern experience, of the principles, methods and factors which influenced the pedagogy of de La Salle and his disciples with a view to avoiding being trapped in an unthinking routine."

ITS CONTENT

It has always specialised in Lasallian themes, treated in their broadest sense. Consequently it publishes articles on pedagogy, philosophy, moral theology and asceticism under their historical, theoretical and practical aspects. It pays particular attention to the study of the traditions and methods, both organizational and didactic, of our Institute with a view to their formative value.

Studies and articles fall under the following general headings:

— Lasallian Studies.
— Lasallian Literature.
— Lasallian Texts.
— Ascetical and Mystical Writings.
— Catechetics.

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— Methodology and Teaching.
— Pedagogy and Philosophy.
— Review of books published in the Institute or works relating to it.

COLLABORATION

At first collaboration was limited to what the Brothers themselves could provide but was gradually extended to the Lasallian educative community by inviting contributions from lay teachers, parents and university professors who shared the Lasallian outlook. This collaboration produced richer and deeper insights into Lasallian culture and the review became the "property" of the entire educative community.

This collaboration should not be limited to the review but should become an integral part of the professional responsibility of teachers and educators in all our institutions.

DIFFUSION

Very soon the "Rivista Lasalliana" went beyond the confines of Lasallian institutions and found its way into religious, pedagogic and educative centres as well as into the faculties of religious studies and pedagogy of Italian and foreign universities, libraries and the publishing houses of similar reviews (Approximately fifty, thanks to the exchange system between reviews).

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

In recent years the need has become acute to keep pace with contemporary realities which speak a new language and talk in terms of a new culture produced and conditioned by modern technological progress. This "aggiornamento" must be achieved without betraying the principles on which the review was founded. With this in mind the review, formerly reserved to the Brothers, has enlarged the circle of its readers to include lay teachers, lay educationalists and pedagogical research workers. It tries to present the pedagogical insights and spiritual teaching of de La Salle in a manner which appeals to modern readers.

The language used has, consequently, to be adapted to the experience of modern society without regard to distinctions of class or culture. Basing itself on this principle the review has taken on a more flexible character, better adapted to concrete reality.

In keeping with this new outlook it invites competent contributors to write on.

★ Different experiments in the religious and educational fields as lived at various levels within the framework of the Institute.

★ Education today examined in the light of the teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

★ The creativity shown in educational experiments which requires theoretical structuring.

★ Recent thinking on the organization of teaching within the framework of current pedagogical development.

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03-B-12

SAINT PIUS X INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED CATECHETICAL STUDIES

A SHORT HISTORY

The Saint Pius X Institute for advanced Catechetical Studies was founded by the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on 12 October 1955. The Sacred Congregation Religious approved it and declared it Pontifical on 25 March 1960.

Under the patronage of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, the Sacred Congregation for Seminaries and Universities raised its academic status by incorporating it into the Pontifical University of Salamanca on 18th April, 1965, and declaring it part of the theological faculty, under the title of The Pontifical Institute of Religious Sciences, with power to award the Baccalaureate and Licenciate of the Institute. In 1965 a Board of Governors was formed composed of Visitors who had student Brothers at the centre.

By the decree "Sacrae Catecheseos" of 18 April 1965, the Institute was incorporated in the Theological Faculty under the title of "The Saint Pius X Institute for Advanced Catechetical Studies" and subjected to the statutes of the said faculty besides its own statutes.

The academic year 1977-78 saw it transferred to its new site in Madrid, a move which had become necessary for various reasons. The negotiations with the ecclesiastical hierarchy for this move had painful results. It was granted on condition that the courses were reduced and the Baccalaureate or basic course in Theology were suppressed and the centre limited to the second grade: licenciate in two years.

THE INSTITUTE'S OBJECTIVES

From the beginning the Institute proposed objectives which are still valid today. *a*) The training of experts in the Catechetical Sciences. *b*) Producing people qualified to educate in the faith in state and private schools at all levels. *c*) The training of research workers in the disciplines more directly connected with Catechesis and Education. To attain these objectives, the Institute includes fundamental and scientific studies of the Human Sciences, of Theology and of Catechetics which are necessary for teachers of the faith in all places where the Church is to be found.

THE BROTHERS' CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS

From the very beginning, the Saint Pius X Institute has required a great effort on the part of the Spanish Brothers. On speaking of effort, the question of expense immediately springs to mind, but one must also consider the great strain of providing a group of Brothers for the running and for the academic responsibility of the centre.

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Many a time it has been asked whether the effort was worth while. Economically no. But yes in all other respects. Many are the Brothers who have studied at Saint Pius X and whose pastoral and catechetical activities are significant in their respective regions. Numerous also are the members of other religious orders who have passed through our classes. And perhaps we have obtained other benefits none the less real for being less evident such as new thinking on the theological studies of the Brothers, a re-evaluation of our mission as educators in the faith, a re-vitalization of our own catechetical and pastoral charism, etc.

We complain about the present situation because there are not many young Brothers studying at the Institute. Times of crisis are not inducive to large numbers. In spite of everything, the quantity and, above all, the quality of the Brothers is quite representative and their option for catechetics and pastoral work is unmistakable and specifically Lasallian.

The Brothers of C.E.L. (Spanish Lasallian Centre) follow a course of both theology and catechetics. This is an additional motive for hope and a renewed consciousness of our efficacy.

THE ACADEMIC AND CREATIVE ASPECT

In this Institute, besides the academic courses, we direct our attention definitely towards creativity. Our vitality as an Institute depends on our creativity. Realising this, we take account of the catechetical needs of the moment so as to provide suitable answers. It is thus that various courses have been inaugurated: courses for the qualification of teachers of religion, correspondence courses in theology and Catechetics, school for the training of parish catechists, summer courses, various sessions throughout the year, etc...

We try, through our review "SINITE" as well as through the other publications of Saint Pius X Press, to make a modest contribution to a service of catechetical and pastoral reflection and action.

All this means that the spirit of this educational community of professors is always open to current catechetical thought, to the directives of the authorities and, above all, to the needs of those who devote themselves to one or other form of catechesis. Besides this, I think that the long years of work of the Saint Pius X Institute have contributed to creative thinking as regards catechetics, have taken the lead in the doctrinal and practical aspects of catechetics. Having considered anthropological catechetics and catechesis of experience, we have written books of religion on these as a basis, and provided catechetical directives for the education of children and young people in the faith.

The problems we have to face and the uncertainties which disturb us are numerous. But what is clear to us is our mission within the Church, the fact that we are able to meet the urgent need of training catechists, of educators in the faith, of leaders in the evangelizing action of the Church. We are committed to it and we hope that many others will undertake this task with enthusiasm.

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03-B-13

THE LASALLIAN STUDY CIRCLE DISTRICT OF OTTAWA

The Lasallian Study Circle (Centre d'Etudes Lasalliennes, C.E.L.) of the District of Ottawa is the result of a resolution proposed at the last district chapter which asked the Brother Visitor and his Council to organise a renewal course for the Brothers, who so wished, based on a rediscovery of the Founder and his letters.

The first year, 1982-83, sixteen Brothers took part in C.E.L. In 1983-84 the number has risen to twenty. Likewise a number of young men who are more or less interested in the religious life joined the circle.

The C.E.L. calendar provides for six meetings during the school year, one Sunday a month from November to May. The Circle terminates its activities usually about the 15th of May when we celebrate the feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle over here.

Each session of the Circle follows the following pattern: the explanation of some Lasallian theme, 30 minutes; group discussion for 30 minutes followed sometimes by a plenary session. All the meetings end with a prayer followed by a reflection and a Celebration of the Word, about 20 minutes, and a community meal.

One Brother was responsible for introducing the subject during the first session. Three confreres took on this responsibility during the second.

The following are the subjects studied during the first year:

11) The Crises in the Life of De La Salle.
2) The Lasallian Vocation: Tending to Perfection through fidelity.
3) The Brother's Ministry as De La Salle Saw it.
4) The Spirit of Faith according to De La Salle.
5) The Founder's Place in my Religious Life Today.

During the discussions, the participants explored the following themes:

★ Discovering De La Salle's attitude when faced with a crisis. What personal application can we derive therefrom?

★ Try to discover what our fidelity should be, based on the "Considerations about our State and Employment".

★ Rediscovering what Saint John Baptist de La Salle says about our ministry in Meditations nos. 93, 193, 195 and 201.

★ Discussion about the Founder's teaching regarding the spirit of faith. How do we practice this today?

This year the members of C.E.L. have all agreed to make a study of the LASALLIAN PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT as the general theme under the following aspects.

1) The Place of the School in the Lasallian Project.
2) The Specific Object of the Lasallian Project: THE FREE SCHOOL.
3) De La Salle as the Trainer of Educators. How De La Salle Trained the First Brothers.
4) The Broad Outlines of De La Salle's Training of the First Brothers: Dialogue - Community - Commitment.

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5) De La Salle and the discernment of Vocations.
6) De La Salle's Writings.

Such is a brief outline of the very modest effort in our district to nourish the devotion and interest of the Brothers in the Founder on the one hand, and, on the other, to shed Lasallian light on our apostolic life today.

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03-B-14

THE APOSTOLATE OF URBAN YOUTH IN AFRICA

Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly, Secretary to "African Encounter and Collaboration", continues to deal here with the problem of youth which is one of the principal preoccupations of the Church in Africa. R.C.A. is an organization for collaboration between the Conference of African Bishops and the Superiors General of Congregations working in Africa. The last number of "Lasalliana" contained an article on the Apostolate of Rural Youth. This is the other half of the picture, the Apostolate of Urban Youth.

I) THE FACTS

First of all there is the huge proportion of young people resulting from a spectacular population explosion. Africa has a young population, being composed, for the most part, of countries with 45 to 50% of the people under 15 years and about 55 to 60% under 25.

Besides the numerical importance of the young there are two additional factors: the rapid urbanization of Africa which sees mushroom cities spring up at an alarming rate and the exodus from rural areas which, together with urbanization, affects mainly the young.

Several causes explain this fact which it would be interesting to study in each sector of the population.

The African urban population is composed of young people. A typical example is Nairobi where 78% of the inhabitants are under 30 and, of these, 30% are between 15 and 20 years of age.

II) CATEGORIES OF YOUNG TOWNDWELLERS

★ Educated young people. This is the largest group comprising pupils of primary and secondary level and the students from whose ranks comes the challenge to established institutions. This group has benefited most from the work of the Church.

★ Young Workers. These are people who can fend for themselves but who are often exploited because they have no work contracts. No trades union looks after their interests. The Church is still seeking a means of helping them.

★ The young unemployed or job seekers. Coming from the villages or "shanty towns" they seek casual work to survive. They are the "Parking Boys" or "Carry your parcel, Ma'm Boys" of the large cities. They are not only left to their wretched lot but are mistrusted because of their misdeeds.

★ Groups of young people brought together by ethnic, cultural or regional ties. These groups play the part of traditional age groups.

★ Young people in public service: army recruits, police recruits, civil servants. We could add to these the younger members of the single political party, a phenomenon common in Africa.

★ Juvenile deliquents. Delinquency among the youth of the rapidly expanding cities is a major problem. Alcoholism, drug abuse and prostitution are on the increase.

QUESTIONS. Are there other such groups of young people in the city or town where your Community is at work? Which group is most at risk and what would you propose to do in order to help its members?

III) ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS OF URBAN YOUTH

A) Urban youth has many desires and aspirations, not all of equal value.

★ They want to enjoy to the full the benefits of modern civilization. That means a comfortable life symbolised by a well-furnished home, a car and plenty of money and they will go to any lengths to get them. This desire to enjoy the comforts of modern life does not take away, however, a certain nostalgia for traditional society which appears to them a lost paradise and which they would like to see revived. Community spirit is still strong amongst them, and if many students aspire to a respectable position it is because they want to be in a position to help the family and social group.

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★ They want to have a profession or a trade in order to find work. Diplomas are often over valued in the struggle for professional status, but it frequently happens that because the school is ill adapted to African needs many young people find themselves without any practical training. The qualified young person knows very well that personal worth is not enough and that he must win the favour of the personnel manager in the traditional manner. Once employed he must turn a blind eye to corruption, otherwise he risks finding himself in the unemployment queue. In the face of such difficulties the young person does not know where to turn.

★ Young people seek justice and freedom. In general, they support the objectives, often praiseworthy enough, of the party in power in their country but feel that in daily life the fine speeches about progress and justice are rarely put into practice. This leads to frustration. It is the students who show most daring in expressing their aspirations for freedom and justice.

★ Openness to and desire for a spiritual dimension. There is in the African soul a strong inclination to mysticism. Large numbers of young Africans belong to the existing religious system with its multiplicity of sects which have sprung up everywhere. To this is added a tendency to go back to ancient traditions and cultural habits.

★ Demand for a Church more congenial to the African soul. Accusing the institutional Church of having compromised with the colonial regimes, some young Africans consider it a factor in their alienation. They do not feel at home in a Church which preaches a morality so foreign to them and so demanding. They would like the Church a little less clerical and much more simple, less associated with the great and more in sympathy with ordinary people...

B) Needs of the young. Parallel with the aspirations of young people there are real needs which a realistic apostolate should try to meet.

The R.C.A. report examines some of these needs. We shall merely mention them:

— need for family solidarity and assistance;
— need for an education which is adapted to the milieu and a preparation for living;
— need for responsible adults who will serve as leaders and examples in social life;
— need to understand the Christian faith better and to express it in terms of their own culture;
— need for a basic ecclesiastical community, a Church of the people of God, more committed to the struggle for justice.

IV) HOW ARE THESE NEEDS TO BE MET?

The answer to this question concerns several sectors of the apostolate. The most relevant of which are:

★ *Catechesis.* Several initiatives have been taken in this field by different local churches. However, it must be admitted that the level of religious knowledge leaves much to be desired. This points to a lack of basic Christian formation and poses the following questions:

What is the content of the catechetical syllabus and who is responsible for drawing it up? What part do parents and former students play in this particular apostolate? Is there coordination or dispersal of efforts among those whose duty it is to educate young people in the faith whether in the school or outside of it?

★ *Education through the school.* There is a need to re-examine the work of the schools in the light of the present crisis in the African educational system. In face of the pressure for diplomas which favours individual development and becomes a divisive factor in society because it encourages an elitist mentality, it might be well to give more thought to the suggestion of a school for collective development. This means:

— taking as objective the advancement of a whole group rather than preparation for diplomas;
— encouraging a sense of community betterment;
— emphasizing the role of parents and community leaders.

★ *Extra-mural education.* There is a lot more that can be done in this field:

— development of all the means of promoting informal education such as: youth movements, discussion groups, social awareness groups, use of radio and television to encourage the emergence of Christian leaders capable of contributing to the betterment of African society;

— more attention to the poor and emarginated: living among them and creating, in collaboration with them, forms of collective education leading to the formation of sharing communities.

Other initiatives have still to be taken in favour of children in unsuitable homes, of the unemployed and of the children who roam the streets of African cities and towns.

The apostolate of African youth as proposed by R.C.A. has a close resemblance to the educational apostolate of St. John Baptist de La Salle who took many steps to meet the needs of urban youth in his own time. Did he not provide a home for the young Irish boys, the sons of those exiled with King James II? Did he not open a Sunday school for young sailors in Calais, a residential school for the sons of middle class parents and another for the "libertins et indociles" whom we would call today juvenile delinquents?

Following in the footsteps of de La Salle his disciples are today trying in different ways to meet the manifold needs of the young people of Africa's towns and cities.

What new initiative can your Community take here and now?

Bro. Vincent RABEMAHAFALY
General Councillor
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03-B-15

LA SALLE-CIENFUEGOS: SOLIDARITY PROJECT

De La Salle College, Santiago (Dominican Republic), has 1350 students, sons of upper and lower middle class families. Cienfuegos is a township of 20,000 inhabitants, for the most part poor and emarginated.

We shall describe here the methods of organization and animation of the project, an account of which appeared in the first number of "Life of the Institute Today", page 58.

I) AIMS OF THE PROJECT

1) Direct contact with the poor and their cultural background in order to find out their values, their problems and their expectations so as to share with them our spiritual and cultural heritage.

2) Dialogue between our educative community and the people in the slum area in order to analyse the causes and consequences of their poverty and to help to remedy them by initiatives in popular education.

3) Evangelization of our educative community through contact with the poor and sensitivity to the demands of justice which must result from such contact.

4) Education in social responsibility and Christian commitment to the struggle for justice and the advancement of those on the fringes of society.

II) PREREQUISITES FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE POOR

1) Christian motivation: evangelical attitude of openness and availability.

2) Basic information on the concrete problems of the township and on the general psychology of the inhabitants.

3) Direct contact with the people and cultivation of lasting friendships which will be mutually beneficial on the human and spiritual planes.

4) Attention to external factors which could create barriers such as dress, means of transport, language, topics of conversation etc. (There must be no condescension)

III) MAIN LINES OF PASTORAL ACTION

1) Awakening of self-awareness among the poor. General uplift through education.
2) Organization of the community through the training of leaders particularly among the young.
3) Coordination and integration of the activities of the educational, social and religious elements in Cienfuegos.

IV) PASTORAL WORK FOR AND WITH THE PEOPLE OF CIENFUEGOS

1) Facilities already provided:

★ A dressmaking shop (1979) with 15 sewing machines, run by a lady volunteer and one instructress.
★ A school for typists (1981) with 15 typewriters and an instructress paid by the project organisers.

2) Occasional Activities

★ Literacy campaign, provision of books, and medicine for the dispensary.
★ Cultural activities by groups of students from the College, such as plays, concerts etc.

3) Help provided for the people's own efforts

★ Advisors to help the youth groups.
★ Trainers for sports teams and teachers for help with basic education.

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V) ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

1) The Pastoral Team

Animation of the project for justice to the poor of Cienfuegos is the work of the Lasallian educative community. To animate means to maintain motivation in the pastoral work, to organise, coordinate and evaluate it on a permanent basis. This is done by a team of three lay people and one Brother who meet weekly and who are financed by the College.

Methods of animation employed in the College include:

— systematic catechesis on justice and commitment to the poor;

— diffusion of information among the educative community by means of college news sheets, circulars, posters and talks;

— organization of class groups such as Justice and Peace etc.

2) Cor Unum

This is a movement organized by the students of the College to arouse interest in and provide funds for the project. There are at present about 500 members among students from 5th year primary to 4th year secondary level. They donate 25 cents each on 25th of every month.

3) Justice and Peace

This is a movement of recent date. It is comprised of young Christians who commit themselves to the promotion of justice in their own lives and in the society in which they live. The movement is not confined to Lasallian circles but the student members provide a guarantee that the project will be maintained when they leave college. They form teams or "communities" in each class. Each member tries to make a concrete contribution to a project for justice. They meet periodically for prayer and reflection under the guidance of a member of the Lasallian educative community (Brother or layman).

Their pastoral activities are aimed at the practice of justice:

— in their personal relations with God and with others;

— in family relations with parents, members of the family and employees and neighbours;

— in school in their relations with teachers, companions, ancillary staff etc.

4) Youth and Cultural Centre - May, 1973

This is a concrete realization of the ideals of the project which began on 22nd December, 1978. It is an external sign of the Lasallian determination to be present among the poor. It is a meeting place for several youth organizations and for adults who find there people anxious and willing to encourage and advise them. There they can form lasting relationships and find means of self-improvement.

The embryonic library has already got all the books required for the Baccalaureat (School Certificate). These were donated by 4th year students of the College.

By means of loud speakers, "Radio Youth" keeps the people of the township informed. Two projects have their headquarters in the centre:

a) "Women in Action" – a programme for education in health, hygiene, domestic economy etc. conducted by a lady teacher.

b) "Youth Encounter" – an organization for literacy programmes, help with school work, children's choirs, theatricals etc.

V) DIFFICULTIES

1) People move away from the township. Lack of communication (there is only one telephone). Poor means of transport. Roads are impassible in wet weather. 70% of the people have neither water nor electricity. 60% are illiterate. Promiscuity and its results are widespread.

2) On the part of the institutional Church there is mistrust, gossip... and SILENCE.

3) From outside the township there is pressure from political parties who want to make capital out of the inhuman condition of the people and to manipulate them. There is absolute indifference on the part of the Government to the social problems of Cienfuegos.

VI) RESULTS

We are still sowing... When we discuss the situation among ourselves we feel we are moving in the right direction but...

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03-B-16

YOUTH VILLA: PASTORAL CENTRE

Youth Villa had its origin in the desire of the Brothers of the District of Québec to make a direct contribution to education in the faith especially of young people but also of numbers of adults. It is, in a way, an answer to a simple question: "We can no longer teach school, what are we to do?"

We must point out that in Québec, as in the rest of Canada, control of schools has been out of the hands of religious congregations for the past twenty-five years. The state has established a system of education which is modern, free and open to the whole population from nursery school to university.

Though the public education system is officially Catholic (A bill to be introduced in parliament proposes important changes in this matter) and religion is taught in all state schools, except where the parents demand exemption for their children, the pupils do not always receive a Catholic formation of high quality. This is particularly the case at secondary level, between the ages of 12 and 17, where the students have little opportunity to question and clarify their beliefs and no place for meaningful religious celebration or exchange of opinions, with the help of competent adults, on the problems posed by modern society.

The "Youth Villa" is intended to be just such a place. It is not a perfect answer to the problem but it has been in existence for the past 13 years and is known, appreciated and encouraged by the bishops of our local church. This comprises the residents of the city of Québec and its surroundings, approximately 750,000 people. Though about 12,000 young people and adults come to the Villa every year there are many who have still to get to know it.

It has been in operation since 1971. It replaced an animation centre which the Brothers had established some years before on the grounds and in the building of the former juniorate of Ste. Foy. You could almost say that, without the name, the pastoral centre already existed there, because when the house at Ste. Foy was sold, its pastoral activities continued at the Villa from October, 1971.

The present building had been acquired three years before as a new juniorate but it soon became evident that the juniorate system no longer fulfilled its purpose. It was no better than a good boarding school. It was finally closed in 1971. The pastoral centre occupies the building and gives a new "vocation" to the house.

The Villa, had, therefore, never been a Brothers' school nor a retreat house attached to a school. Besides, the Brothers of the District of Québec have had no schools for the past twenty years. Nor is the Villa a house of formation. Briefly it is this: a place where young people (and sometimes adults) from schools and organizations in the region can come for days, evenings or week-ends of reflection. As Brother Bruno Blondeau, its principal founder, wrote, "The pastoral centre is a service offered by the Church to families and schools through the Brothers of the Christian Schools". That objective has not changed though the manner of providing the service may change according to circumstances.

As I mentioned before, the students of all schools (private or public) have religious instruction periods provided for in the school timetable and the services of a pastoral animator (school chaplain). If a teacher decides to ask permission from the school authorities to take a group of pupils to the Villa it is because he personally believes that what they will do there will help them to deepen their faith, to express it or in some cases to rediscover it. All the groups that come during the week are brought by teachers (mostly lay people) who have confidence in us. Without them we would have no direct contact with the school population.

Since 1978 a completely new team animates the centre. For this purpose a Brother was withdrawn from a state school and two lay people employed as animators, partly because there were no Brothers available and partly because we wanted to form a mixed team with different life experiences. If we decided to put so much effort into forming a team of animators it was because a study done by some Brothers connected with the centre had shown that it was necessary if the work was to continue. The Brothers as a whole agreed and it was with their moral support that the new team set to work in September, 1978. The team included a Brother interested in faith education of adults and a Capuchin Father who acted as chaplain to the Community. Since then the team has been expanded to include three Brothers together with, for this year at least, two clerical students who are completing their theological studies at Laval University.

The Brothers' Community at the Villa occupies a considerable part of the building and is composed of a number of Brothers, some of whom are retired. These Brothers, working full-time or part-time provide important support for the animators by looking after the meals, doing repairs, improving the building and grounds, doing the secretarial work and keeping the accounts.

The pastoral centre comprises two sections: an animation team, composed of Brothers, lay people, and a priest and a community of Brothers who look after the material needs of the centre.

Quite recently, December, 1983, the centre published a brochure for the benefit of those who might wish to avail of its services. (These, we must add, are not completely free) The contributions of groups cover about 20% of running costs. The rest is made up by the District.

I shall give below the complete text of the brochure as it describes accurately the present position:

OBJECTIVES. Through its work the centre wishes to contribute to the pastoral work of the Church particularly in the field of the education of the young in the faith.

It provides help for pastoral animators, parents and catechists who ask for its services. It is also open to groups of adults in search of the faith.

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ACTIVITIES

— Days of recollection every week for secondary school students.
— Days of intensive preparation for Confirmation.
— Evenings and week-ends for Scripture study groups.
— Meetings of adult groups for study of the faith.
— 24 hours of recollection and silence.
— Animation in schools and parishes.
— Meetings of groups and movements connected with the pastoral ministry.

The animation of the days of recollection is generally done by the centre's animation team which prepares programmes adapted to particular groups.

METHODS. Basing our concept on the fact that young people have the faith and that they want to deepen it and make it grow we offer them themes for reflection and activities suitable to their age. In this way we invite them to receive Jesus Christ as the Good News for people of today.

Means: activities and reflection, workshops and sharing sessions; Celebration of the Word, of Reconciliation and of the Eucharist; Moments of relaxation.

THE ANIMATION TEAM. The work of animation is carried out by a qualified team composed of religious, lay people and a priest. All have been approved by the bishop of the diocese. Several religious provide essential services.

A COMMUNITY. The Brothers of the Christian Schools direct and maintain the institution. It is for them a way of carrying out the work of faith education among the young begun by their founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle.

ENVIRONMENT. Situated on the banks of the Saint Lawrence, half way between Cap-Rouge and Saint Augustin, the Villa provides an ideal environment of beauty and tranquillity conducive to the recollection required for any serious reflection. The site is enchanting at all seasons of the year.

INSPIRING DECOR. The principal meeting place is without doubt the "Jardin". It is, par excellence, a place for interior recollection. It calls for silence. It creates silence. It is decorated with real trees, dried, with their leaves, as well as with some remarkable pieces of sculpture in wood which are thrown into relief by concealed lighting. Off this hall are rooms for small groups, arranged in varied and original ways. One of these rooms, "La Source", is reserved for private prayer. (End of quotation from brochure)

I stressed above that the teachers and school pastoral animators are our only contacts with the school-going population. It is thanks to them that groups of students, both boys and girls, particularly from secondary schools, can come to the centre. That remains true.

As from this year an important group of children will leave the school environment for religious instruction. They are the pupils of the sixth class i.e. children of 11 to 12 years old who are finishing primary school and who are preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Up to now this preparation was done during school hours.

The parish, through the local committee for preparation for Confirmation, will bring these children to us for days of instruction and reflection on the meaning of Baptism and of the new sacrament they are going to receive. This preparation will occupy the animation team during February, March and part of April. If we devote so much time to it, it is because the demand is so great. Not less than seventy groups of children (40 to 55 at a time) will follow one another at the centre for days or evenings of reflection and instruction. Some parishes ask the school authorities for days off school so that the children can come to the centre from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Others, who cannot come during the day, arrange to come between 3.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. and often later because the centre is occupied.

Others again come in the evening or on Saturdays because they do not want their children's initiation into sacramental life associated with school. (Everything leads us to believe that this movement will become more popular in the near future.) Who brings these children? It is the parents through a committe established by the parish. The parents must, in effect, take precise and positive action to have their children prepared for the sacraments. They must make application to the parish, bring the child with them when making the application and guarantee a follow-up.

In this way the parents will play a more active role in the preparation of their children for Confirmation. The Villa had already taken the initiative in this matter by insisting that a minimum number of parents accompany the children, at least one parent to eight children. This was, indeed, a happy initiative: it gave parents an opportunity of seeing the kind of catechetical instruction the child received and a chance to experience a day of recollection. ("It was for us a real retreat" they often tell us) And lastly it made us known and appreciated as catechists. (We can barely meet the demand. And that without any advertising.)

This period of intense work with children finishing primary school is all that we can do for them. Our principal work is with young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who, according to what we were recently told by a specialist, are in a "pastoral desert", by which he meant that little was being done for them on the pastoral plane.

Of course the pastoral centre is much more than what I have described above. Let me say in conclusion that its programme is open, flexible and continually adapting itself to the pastoral needs of the young so as to be able to answer to their real needs which cannot be other than spiritual.

Our fidelity to St. John Baptist de La Salle is shown by the interest we take in and the priority we give to the faith education of the young. We carry out our work in a spirit of faith for none of us can cause faith to spring up in the heart of others nor can we measure the fruits of our activities. We work in a spirit of humility because our programmes and methods of today may not be suitable in three to five years' time and knowing, at the same time, that there may be better or more urgent work to be done. Lastly, all our activity is inspired by charity. We try to live charity. It is what we propose to those who are "humble of heart".

Bro. Florent GAUDREAULT
Centre de Pastorale des FEC
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03-C-09

CATECHESIS IN OUR LIFE

1) FAILURE OF THE "CATECHISM"?

For many long years the immense treasures of CATECHESIS was reduced to the CATECHISM due to historical circumstances, to a book containing a short summary of the Christian doctrine, of the principal truths of the Christian faith, presented in the name of the ecclesiastical authorities, to be memorised by means of question and answer. The term also serves to remind us of a systematic organization and time table aimed at the communication and assimilation of this summary. The whole being destined above all for preparing children to receive the sacraments of Christian initiation.

Catechism thus applied took no account of the social and cultural changes in the world such as the conquests of science, the process of secularization, pluralism, atheism or oecumenism. It consequently took no account either of the changes in the Church itself, of the fact that the structures which produced and crystallized the catechism were those of the Church of the Middle Ages, of the Counter Reformation of the 16th Century or of colonial Christianity. Catechism is not suited to the complex realities of the 20th Century, soon to become the 21st, because its horizons, its content, its methods, its language, and the point of view from which it starts and to which it wishes to arrive are no longer suited to the context of the modern world. Learning by heart a summarized Thomist doctrine of the principal truths of faith does not lead to conversion, does not meet the needs of modern man or present day challenges and does not commit man to the transformation of the world.

The failure of the catechism and the consequent search for the true meaning of catechesis are the result of profound biblical, spiritual, theological and pastoral renewal on the one hand, and, on the other, of the demands resulting from social, economic and cultural changes which affect man and the community in their very being, their way of organizing themselves and of acting, and their destiny.

2) SEARCHING FOR THE MEANING OF CATECHESIS

A knowledge of the first five centuries of Christianity is fundamental for the understanding of the true meaning and significance of catechesis. The circumstances which obliged the Christians to organize themselves clandestinely into communities of faith, of brotherhood and hope, led to the main preoccupation being with adults. Option for Jesus Christ was a gesture of radical human liberty responding to a gratuitous call of God and entailing a recognized risk of martyrdom. The change in life style, from the religious point of view, (abandoning the gods, pagan customs and attaching oneself to Jesus Christ and his plans) led to a social change (the establishment of a different kind of community, giving testimony to Christian values, a challenging of political and religious systems, etc.).

When describing the primitive Christian community, the Acts of the Apostles (Acts, II, 4... IV, 35) enumerates the basic elements of true catechesis. They are the doctrine of the Apostles, prayer, the eucharist, witness to the resurrection, brotherhood which unites the community, the sharing of gifts and possessions, infectious joy. That is to say that CATECHESIS IS A COMMUNITARIAN PROCESS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION, using divers means, WHICH LEADS TO THE CHRISTIAN'S PROGRESSIVE COMING TO MATURITY IN THE FAITH SO THAT WITH JESUS CHRIST HE ASSUMES CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD, AS AN ACTIVE MEMBER, in communion and participation WITH THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH.

Over the last few years the Church has thought long over the need for a new kind of catechesis. The current of biblical, patristic, liturgical, theological, anthropological and pastoral renewal traced out new paths during the first half of the 20th Century and led to the Vatican II Council which brought about important renewal "ad intra" and "ad extra" to the Church. Catechesis did not lag behind on this path. Without overlooking the significant progress in catechetical research and reflection which preceded the Council, especially in international Congresses and Weeks, one must refer in the first place to the Council documents themselves (1962-1965) the international Week in Medellin (1968), the International Catechesis Congress (Rome, 1971), the General Catechesis Directory of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy (1971), the Synod on "Evangelization" followed by the apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi" (Paul VI, 1974), the Synod on "Catechesis" (1977) with its "Message to

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the People of God" followed by the apostolic Exhortation "Catechesi Tradendae" (Jean Paul II, 1979), the Puebla Document (CELAM, 1979), a whole series of declarations by the bishops of different countries on the Renewal of Catechesis following all these proceedings.

3) SOME NECESSARY CHANGES IN CATECHESIS

a) *As regards those who practice it.* It is the Christian community itself which is responsible for the education in the faith of those who compose it.

The *family* is the first community, the little "domestic Church", in which our Lord is imitated and honoured and where Christian values are assimilated in the context of words, gestures and actions and confirmed by the living testimony of the parents. The *Community of the Church* bringing the faithful together in the faith and in action, nourishing them, convincing them, organizing them and pledging them to the service of God and of the community with the aim of transforming the world. The *Catechists* are called and sent by the community to carry the word of God and of the Church, the cooperators with the family: people who participate closely in the life of the community, having an extensive culture and an intense spiritual life. They are the primary witnesses of Our Lord and his message. They lead those who are catechized to participate in the development of the catechesis and in the progress of the community.

b) *As regards those who are the object of catechesis.* This is the Christian throughout his life, especially as an adult, for he has the power to influence decisions in society. Hence, besides the strictly doctrinal ideas of the Church, the adult tries to organize his life, his family, his profession, his participation in the destinies of society: in this respect he challenges the real Church of which he does not always feel himself an integral part, but rather a passive member. It is to this freedom that the renewed catechesis gives priority. While granting its due place to the catechesis of children who are easily malleable because they are receptive but not always capable of discernment, the Church needs to channel the best of its energies in favour of adults and, logically, of young people.

c) *As to its content.* This is the Bible, the great and permanent manual of catechesis, since the whole of Christian Life depends profoundly on the Word of God who summons, judges, challenges and sends (DV 8, 21, 24, 26). The great themes of the Christian faith always remain the same, but they are studied and lived in the framework of the preaching of salvation in the "kerygma" within the community of faith and commitment and in the actual human situations of the present moment. If these conditions are lacking, the content remains within the context of doctrinal "synthesis" without any effect on personal, community and social life.

d) *As to method:* the various psychological and pedagogical methods are useful in the process of education in the faith if they are suitably adapted. They must, however, follow the methodical principles of CHALLENGE or interaction, that is to say: a mutual and efficacious relationship between life with its ever occurring problems and formation in the faith, which provides solutions based on revelation or argues the experiences of life by pointing out directions. Without this actual confrontation between THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE and the FORMULATION OF THE FAITH, conversion or liberating action will be difficult even if the well-tried methods of SEE, JUDGE, ACT are used.

4) WE, LASALLIANS, AND CATECHESIS

Be convinced personally and community wise, about the MESSAGE OF SALVATION (The person of Our Lord, his teaching, his mission) and make it reverberate (catechesis comes from Kate-echeo to make to echo), by making it vibrate till it enters the fibres of our being, converting and transforming us (conversion-metanoia), till it overflows with actual signs of mature faith (community-koinonia, liberating service-diakonia; liturgy, etc.) which is the continuing process of Education in the Faith which renewed Catechesis proposes to bring about. Not only does it radically modify the traditional "catechism" for children, it places every Christian in a continuing situation of being catechised as well as an agent of catechesis and an educator in the faith, because of his place in history and the requirements of the communitarian process.

To be Lasallian is to live in the spirit of faith and apostolic zeal: "Signum Fidei", in brotherhood: "indivisa manent". Therefore, to become this SIGNUM FIDEI, this sign of faith as proposed by De La Salle, every Lasallian must assume for himself and others a radical catechesis: A COMMUNITARIAN EDUCATION IN THE FAITH WHICH IS CONTINUING, PROGRESSIVE, ORGANIC, ORDERED and SYSTEMATIC, always aiming at ever-greater maturity expressed in actual and specific signs of a change in life style, in human relationships, in the construction of society and relationship with God, sights fixed on the plenitude which will be manifested in the Eschatology.

Called by God to a vocation and quite specific mission among the people of God, "CHRISTIAN EDUCATION", the Lasallian is intrinsically a CATECHIST, an AGENT OF EDUCATION IN THE FAITH, through his testimony, his word, his personal and community activity. From this point of view his zeal is creative in opening the paths, by all means possible, to the prophetic SIGN of denunciation and annunciation, taking as reference the inheritance of the Christian faith in confrontation with the social, economic, political, cultural and religious realities which have to be transformed so as to be in harmony with the divine plan of a fraternal, united and just society.

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"THE SCHOOL GOES TO THEM"

03-C-10

The purpose of the Gabriel Drolin Association may best be summed up in its own statement of objectives, "In view of the number of young people regarded as failures, the Association has for object the creation and putting into practice of teaching methods designed to reduce backwardness during school and formative years."

The Association began with a meeting between Brother Pierre and the teachers newly assigned to the special classes for reluctant or backward pupils in an area of high rise flats at Garges les Gonesse.

In the course of his twenty-two years' teaching in primary schools in various parts of the region Brother Pierre had been able to consult leading members of the teaching profession. His availability, due to the fact that he was teaching in a private school, led to his accepting a completely new post. He was assigned to the education of children of families of no fixed abode. There he learned from the inside the real problems. Faced with the illiteracy of the children he initiated a program of action to make the parents aware of the need for instruction. His qualities as an educator were given full scope.

He was asked to supervise the introduction of new teaching methods at Garges les Gonesse for a full school year. He was then asked to extend the scope of his action to other areas, hence the formation of the Association.

Let us go back a little. An educational aids system had been provided to help young people and adults. A large team of monitors had been recruited. The sector dealing with itinerants had done some research and introduced new methods.

In the early stages, teaching was based on the practical experiences of daily life not on literary textbooks. After two years' experience each monitor was asked to write a summary of the methods employed with beginners in reading. Little by little an original method was developed and published under the title "At last I can read and write". Requests for training in the system came from outside the area. Teachers and educators became interested and asked us for further publications: a critique of reading methods in common use, an explanation of some of the other means of helping beginners. The booklet "How to learn to read" went through three editions and was used in the national literacy campaign of one foreign country.

Our preoccupations at national level soon led us to call on government departments concerned and our document entitled "A real educational service for itinerants" with its twenty-six proposals helped to make the general public aware of the problem. As a result, official studies were made such as: "Education of the children of Gypsies and Nomads" 1981, and "Sixty Proposals to counteract insecurity and poverty", 1980. These official reports show evidence of the experience we gained during thirteen years of dealing with the problems.

The awareness of the public authorities encouraged us to invest in additional personnel and more mobile classes.

The Association has established several mobile teacher units and has persuaded the authorities to allocate money for the payment of voluntary teachers. At first it was the Brothers who, because of their experience in school, were appointed to these posts. We must now enlarge these teams which set out each morning to teach the children on the city's outskirts who cannot yet attend ordinary schools. The teachers of project "The School Goes To Them" are happy — happy because of the joy of those "kids" who cannot understand why teachers should want a vacation.

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The Catholic education authorities are becoming interested in our methods and have given priority to our project, "The School Goes To Them" in their training programme for teachers of itinerants in 1984 and 1985.

In January, 1984, we launched the "Campaign for 1,000 scholarships" in reading, with the help of a teaching aid which has proved very stimulating: "A Reading Licence"... Yes, a folder in three sections with one, two or three stars to encourage the learner-reader to work for a scholarship that entitles him to buy the books of his choice. The campaign organisers are hoping to provide a fund of 500,000 francs.

The learner-readers want more, so other teaching aids are forthcoming. A remarkable method of teaching numeracy has come from an outstanding teacher, Sister Marie de Vendée. Training periods are also provided by our Association.

A system of writing, a method of division, certainly, but above all a dynamic pedagogy — a pedagogy of success... and 40 propositions to be learned (not merely to be read).

In conclusion, let us quote a passage from Jacotot (1836), University Professor who challenged hidebound teachers.

"Look for the poor, the ignorant. Take them from their corners and the ignorant will soon show you that they are the same kind of creature as Lagrange and Pascal and that there is but one and the same human intelligence."

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03-C-11

PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY THE LASALLIAN NATIONAL COMMISSION (Brazil)

The Pastoral and Pedagogical Committee of the District of Porto Alegre had asked the Lasallian National Commission for advice on the practical application of Lasallian pedagogy in the circumstances of today. The first intention of the Committee was to study the characteristic traits of Lasallian pedagogy as experienced by the Brothers, lay teachers and former students of our establishments at national and continental (Latin American) level.

A circular under two headings was sent out:

1) What are the traits that characterize Lasallian educative practice?
2) Suggestions for the realization of the work proposed.

The circulars were sent to 80 Brothers in the two Brazilian Districts and in Latin America, to 49 teachers in the two Districts and to 5 former students.

On reception of a satisfactory number of answers, the team appointed by the National Commission for the study of Lasallian pedagogy met to study and analyse the answers. It was agreed that, in view of the nature of the answers received, the work should be divided into three parts:

a) drafting an introduction to the basic objectives of Lasallian education;

b) elaboration of a series of principles which at the beginning envisaged the following: general principles, community and social principles, educative principles, principles of pedagogical practice and training;

c) account of educative practices corresponding to each of the above principles.

The results of this work were submitted to a group of Brothers and Lasallian educators as well as to a large number of former students. The group studied the principles proposed, rewrote them and provided a series of educative practices relating to each principle.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Lasallian education is characterized by its Christian outlook and its insistence on an evangelical spirit of fraternity. It proves its loyalty to the Church. It engages in the task of reforming society with a view to bringing about the Kingdom of God.

PRINCIPLES

1) Lasallian education aims at the formation of the whole human person considered as the centre of the educative process.

2) Lasallian education is education for freedom and undertakes to work towards this end.

3) Lasallian educative practice is engaged in continual self renewal in order to meet change.

4) Training and development of the critical sense is an essential factor in Lasallian education.

5) The Lasallian educative process is one of participation and communication.

6) Lasallian educative action is characterized by its care to plan and organize its programmes in accordance with its principles.

7) According to de La Salle, the value and dignity of the educator spring from constant effort.

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8) In Lasallian thought, the educator is a minister of God's Word.

9) Solid formation of the educator, evident in his life and work, is indispensable for the work of Lasallian education.

10) The Lasallian educator gives priority to the most needy.

11) Preference for the poor should be evident in every Lasallian educative initiative.

12) Lasallian education makes a synthesis of faith, culture and life.

13) The Lasallian educative mission is undertaken as a community effort and gives preference to:

a) education in the family setting;
b) formation of community leaders;
c) attention paid to the school personnel;
d) follow-up of former students;
e) effective and significant presence of the Brothers;
f) integration into the educative community of pupils, parents, educators, management, personnel and former students.

14) The Lasallian educative community is open to the wider national and universal communities. Consequently:

a) it analyses the reality of which it forms part;
b) it confronts it with the ideals of the Gospel;
c) it undertakes to transform it.

15) The Lasallian educative process is characterized by a spirit of friendship and fraternal esteem between teachers and taught.

16) Esteem, understanding and welcome for people are characteristic marks of the Lasallian educative style.

17) Attention to the emotional and affective development of students is an important factor in Lasallian education.

18) Lasallian education announces Jesus Christ and His message.

19) Education in faith is an all-embracing process which involves the participation of the entire educative community.

21) Pastoral care of the young and fostering of vocations have a quite exceptional importance in Lasallian educative action.

22) The Lasallian school is characterized by the quality of its teaching, its serious formation and the continual renewal of its programmes.

23) The teaching and training given in Lasallian schools are aimed at preparing the students for life.

24) In the teaching and formation he gives his students the Lasallian educator takes account of individual differences, respects the personal rhythm of each, stimulates and shows appreciation of individual effort, tries to adapt his teaching to the level of each individual and pays special attention to the slow learner.

25) The Lasallian educator tries to make learning and training as appealing as possible... His aim is the formation of the individual.

26) Art, music and sport are given an important place in the school curriculum.

27) Preparation for work and development of the scientific spirit are constants in the Lasallian school programme.

These principles, and suggestions for their application, were sent back for further study, additions and suggestions, to those who had answered the first questions.

A member of the national team was asked to compare these principles with those laid down in the Management of Schools and other Lasallian documents in order to find a sound basis for and enrichment of the principles which are to guide all educative action in Brazil.

They noted deficiencies in popular education which is given priority by the District of Porto Alegre. These deficiencies will be made good after the Latin American meeting in Lima in July, 1984, which has made popular education its theme.

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03-D-05

THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

Thinking about the content of this article I asked myself several times what would interest the readers of LASALLIANA from the pen of a Lasallian who has lived in close contact with the Brothers' Institute for the past fifteen years and who has been responsible for animation at local, national and international level.

I think I can give a satisfactory answer to the question by expressing in the simplest way possible the problems I have come up against in recent years and by reducing them to the one great problem which affects our structures at all levels.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Since the World Congress of Buenos Aires (1972) there has been a real "leap forward" in the quality of our Associations, thanks to the generous action of those responsible who have transformed themselves fundamentally. I can say, without shadow of doubt, that with few exceptions our Associations throughout the world have taken on an effective ecclesial dimension. This is confirmed by the existence of leaders who have put aside questions and problems in order to promote the restructuring, in a Christian sense, of our Associations.

This silent, assiduous action has often passed unnoticed. Our new Associations, struggling with daily problems, attract little attention.

What is lacking, blatantly lacking, in our Associations is the presence of a considerable number of convinced Lasallians, of a number of carefully chosen members who would exercise an apostolic influence. In effect, you can accomplish little with politeness and friendliness which is all we have had up to the present. It is, in fact, absurd to expect a dozen or so people, no matter how well intentioned, to act in the name of thousands of members who are potential animators but who are little concerned about the social, charitable and religious programmes put forward.

Something very different is expected from a Catholic Association in the '80's. But where can we find convinced Lasallians if the Lasallian schools which educated them to university level failed to communicate to them the missionary zeal which should animate every believer. Does the Lasallian project, theme of so many learned congresses, symposia and conferences, really animate the students? Does it produce alumni anxious to respond to the manifold needs and demands of the Catholic laity? How many of them do so? What initiatives have been taken by Lasallian schools to form, in the Lasallian spirit, their lay teachers, their co-workers, their former students who are willing to help and their friends and sympathisers?

These are disturbing questions the answers to which would take us far beyond the limits set for this article.

WHAT CAN BE DONE: THE STUDENTS

They constitute the largest part of the Lasallian Family and are the prime object of the Lasallian Educative Project.

The pupils spend a considerable period of time at the Brothers' schools and by the very fact that they attend Catholic schools they demand something more than mere cultural and scientific formation. This is also what the parents think when they choose for their children a school having specific ecclesial connotations. Whether they did so for convenience or from conviction is secondary to the fact that the Catholic school must not betray the ideals on which it was founded.

This preamble might appear unnecessary, but entire classes of pupils at Lasallian schools do not have a Brother to teach them or have one as a teacher only, not as a Lasallian educator, because of a certain "fear" or reluctance to talk on spiritual themes or of the consecrated life.

Every former student has in his memory and in his heart a special place reserved for one or two Brothers whom he regards as having played an important role in his formation. These Brothers are scarcely ever remembered as teachers, however brilliant, but rather because they found time and ways to talk about life, about its problems and risks, its joys and deceptions and of how to look upon them in the light of Christian faith. That is the first message that the young expect from a religious. That is the path of faith, the development of personality that parents want for their children when they choose a Catholic school.

FORMER STUDENTS

Let us not forget that they are as numerous as the actual students. A document from the Superior General says, with reason, that the participation of former students can develop from politeness and friendliness to forms of active

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engagement, both material and spiritual, for the support of the Brothers' work. This is an important principle which risks remaining at the theoretical stage if situations are not created to allow former students, who so wish, to take on precise responsibilities within the framework of the Brothers' institutions. Like all committed Lasallians, like the Brothers themselves, the former students require specialised formation.

Their generosity can be availed of only if the communities of Brothers show themselves willing to accept a precise pastoral programme for lay people, which in present circumstances is an objective to be aimed at and certainly not an actual reality.

We must make special mention of the younger people who finished their studies at a Lasallian school a few years ago, and of those who are now in their final year. This is fertile ground which must be developed each year by Lasallian formation courses organized by the Districts or by the Associations. This would allow us to add, each year, to our Associations, new elements formed and perfected in the Lasallian spirit and would be very different from the haphazard way our Associations have been formed up to the present — with the inevitable results.

We should pay similar attention to the formation of leaders. They cannot be improvised nor can they continue to take responsibilities for which they were not prepared, especially in view of the precise programmes which we want the new Lasallian Associations to put into effect.

THE PARENTS

They are the Brothers' first collaborators while their children are still at school but the situation changes radically when it comes to the wider Lasallian community because parents are generally taken up with their work and their families. Besides, it is difficult for some of them to keep up their interest in the Lasallian world when the children have left school.

Even among this group of lay people there are some who are available and who are acquainted with the founder and his spirituality for reasons which were, perhaps, more practical than idealistic. We must find a place for these Lasallians also and help them on the way to spiritual perfection through a specialised formation.

LAY TEACHERS

For a long time past they have outnumbered Brothers in Lasallian schools but interest in their vocation has changed little. A school can continue to be Lasallian if somebody takes the trouble to provide Lasallian inspiration for the work of these educators. This is generally confined to attendance at a congress or symposium from which they return disappointed because they find the meeting too academic or the themes treated, too theoretic.

Consequently, it is necessary to give thought to the on-going formation of these members who are so important to the educative community, if we want the Brothers' school to remain Lasallian in spite of the continuing diminution in the number of Brothers. In this way the educative possibilities of the school will be increased and it will acquire all the connotations of a Catholic school.

Lay teachers could also become members of Signum Fidei or undertake other forms of activity animated by Lasallian spirituality. One could envisage many possibilities for this group of people, certainly, but it is pointless to entertain illusions and to hope that all this will happen spontaneously. It is the fruit produced by a well considered on-going formation.

* * *

How can all this be brought about? Can it be done or is it merely utopian? An old Latin dictum said, "Everyone is the artisan of his own destiny". How does a Community of Brothers set about creating around itself a community of Lasallian lay people thoroughly formed? How does it give them a suitable on-going formation?

It is necessary that:

1) The Community be amenable and if not, it must be made aware so that every attempt at action will not be met with insurmountable and tenacious resistance.

2) A Brother be appointed Assessor or Animator of the Lasallian Family who will take charge of the on-going formation of former students, teachers, parents, Signum Fidei and of all those who seek access to the message of the Founder. This Brother will also ensure the integration of these Lasallians in the school and extra-mural structures of the institutions concerned and follow them step by step in their development.

From these principles it follows that:

a) The Brother will not be "lost" to the school or to the Community. On the contrary, he will bring to the school better qualified helpers and collaborators. It is not a question of freeing a Brother from school but of employing a Brother for the school.

b) The Brother must have special qualities. You cannot impose this work on somebody who does not want it. You must, on the contrary, assist the Brother who, by his natural talents is qualified for the work, by easing a too heavy work load or by relieving him of it completely in the case of large institutions. (This applies also to a large number of potential Lasallian animators.)

c) Following from what has been said above, the choice of the Brother should be as carefully considered as that of a Director or Bursar, given the wide field of his possible activities.

All this is feasible. It is not utopian but it requires precise decisions. These could be taken at Community level but it would be much more significant if they were studied and proposed at the level of Provincial and General Chapters.

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03-E-06

THE IDENTITY OF THE BROTHER OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Paper given by Brother Alain HOURY, Visitor of Paris,
to a Plenary Assembly of the French Episcopate at Lourdes, November 1983

The following text was composed for the Plenary Assembly of the French Episcopate in November 1983 at Lourdes.

The introduction to the study of the dossier "Religious life and the missionary prospects of the Church in France" was to be made by two religious men and two religious women. My contribution, as agreed with the other interested parties, would dwell on the links between the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the profession of the teacher-educator, and on the lay character of our religious life.

The twelve minutes for which the text was written, and distributed to the bishops, were reduced to six and I had to condense it on to both sides of a single sheet.

This kind of text, midway between one giving testimony and a theoretical explanation, because of its brevity, inevitably leads to omissions and rather brief summaries. It is not so much interested in recalling the important points which make for the originality of the Brothers' religious life not only in the Church but also in comparison with most other forms of religious life.

Underlining these differences does not mean being in opposition to them but realizing the gift which is made to us, for the Church and the world, in following St. John Baptist de La Salle.

* * *

Address delivered at the Conference of the French Hierarchy, at Lourdes, November 1983, by Brother Alain Houry, Visitor.

Today here are 1,700 Brothers of the Christian Schools in France. Their median age is 62 years so we are faced with the problem of ageing personnel. I can not continue my present work (e.g. looking after a number of schools for which we have responsibility) if I do not look to the future by involving myself in the ministry of vocations. That requires that I make plainly understood the originality of the religious life of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. For if what we are does not correspond with what we do then it is impossible to understand either the one or the other.

Few religious live their lives so closely associated with a precise task. "The end of the Institute", wrote the Founder, in the original Rule, "is to give a Christian education to children and it is for this purpose that we keep schools."

You see from this that the apostolate of the school (and particularly of the Christian school) is an essential element of our religious life even though the field of apostolic action is much wider.

We believe that in the relationship between teacher and pupil, in the educational process, fundamental principles are involved — the salvation of the young person and the building up of the Church. Our work as teachers and educators is not just a means of sharing in the world of work and justifying ourselves in the eyes of our students. It is in doing this work that we show to young people that through us they can find salvation both temporal and eternal.

To consecrate yourself for life to the education of the young presupposes that you experience God in so doing. This is what inspired the first Brothers to reshape the schools of heir time and make them accessible to all. It could be said that the criterion of the authenticity of our experience of God is the progress of our work.

Our work becomes for us the substance of our religious consecration (Declaration 48,2). The spirit of faith and of zeal, characteristic of our institute, leads us to exercise our profession of teacher-educator in a contemplative manner, avoiding any dichotomy between our religious life and our professional life.

"Make no distinction between what concerns your state of life and your sanctification", recommended St. John Baptist de La Salle. For a Brother, his work with young people and his spiritual life are one and the same. This is far removed from the so-called two objectives of the apostolic religious life.

It is important to make people understand that a profession can be a path to perfection.

Our manner of consecrating ourselves to the young implies, for us, a real bond between culture and faith. The Brother dedicates himself to the education of the young and helps them to attain, through culture, their full human

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potential (GS 53) (Declaration 13,5). He seeks, with his young disciples, to Christianise the cultural milieu in which they live. He is a teacher who is also a witness — an elder brother who lives with them.

St. John Baptist de La Salle quitted his aristocratic and ecclesiastical milieu to become part of the culture of schoolmasters and their pupils. This is how he and his Brothers "left the world" by accepting fully the Gospel which challenged a system that approved the practical exclusion of so many young people.

Could we do the same thing to-day? I believe that a law which would prevent the Brothers from getting to know the living conditions of their students and from speaking to them as Christians in the course of the day, would scarcely be conducive to the fulfilment of their catechetical ministry. Such would be the case where religion became an optional subject in the school curriculum. The living tradition of the Institute "has always sought to unite closely the work of evangelization and that of civilisation and access to culture (Declaration 40,2). "Our world", said the Chapter of 1966, "needs witness given at the very heart of profane realities and the lives of men, by persons who know and love God as a living person." (Declaration 11,14)

In view of what I have said, you will not be surprised if I now stress the lay character of our Institute. We remain unambiguously lay religious. This was our deliberate choice from the beginning and it was calmly restated, after mature reflection, by the last two General Chapters, held since the Second Vatican Council. In no way do we wish to form part of the hierarchical structure of the people of God.(1) Why? "Community exercises and work in school demand the whole man", said our Founder (Memoir on the Habit).

"The whole man". St. John Baptist de La Salle was concerned all through his life with the problem of the use of time. Because he could not be completely faithful to his duties in the Cathedral Chapter and at the same time see to the consolidation of his first community, he resigned his post as canon of the cathedral of Reims, a post very useful to the Church. He had often to defend the originality of his foundation against those who wanted it incorporated into the juridical and pastoral framework of the time.

As lay religious, we are, in a way, witnesses to a very modern ecclesiology. We have inherited from our history an instinctive distrust of any ministry which proceeds from an a priori position. The manner of my own intervention is an illustration arises from the fact that we are called first to live, in order to see later how our life fits in with the pastoral plans of the Church of France. Pastoral care of the young may not, in certain sectors, have always been given due priority but that did not prevent us from feeling ourselves truly part of the Church in our dedication to the young: the call of Christian families was not lacking.

May I, as a religious superior, be permitted to remind our bishops that it is not fitting for a community of Brothers (or Sisters) to be unable to participate in the Eucharist on week days. A parish Mass at 9.00 a.m. is out of the question for those who practise a profession. Proper conditions are required if we are to carry out our pastoral mission.

I must also say a few words on the Brothers' educative service to the poor and on their community life. Community is based on a common mission. Community life means a life of sharing, of prayer and much more besides.

The community can, by its own dynamism, create new forms of service to young people in difficulty. Often the work is similar to that carried out by other agencies. Sometimes we must invent, create and find time to do such work outside our normal work. And if the needs of France are great they must not make us forget the appeal of the young Churches.

is with this in view that we insist that the formation of every young Brother in France must include a period of, at least, two years in a Third World country. Such an experience of the international character of the Institute (four fifths of the Brothers are not French) and of the extent of the world problems which we face, helps the young Brother to enter more readily into the missionary designs of the Church of France.

However, we do not define ourselves, primarily, by what we do nor by the pastoral services we render. Religious life has its own inherent value and significance as a sign and this implies a fundamental poverty and independence of productive activity. More than in their work, I believe in the silent presence of the Brothers. "God loves you", they seem to say to the young, "and the proof is that we are among you because it is He who has sent us to you."

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(1) Brother Vincent Ayel in the session, "How to initiate into the religious life to-day."

* After the renewal Chapter of 1966-67 two main texts express the Institute's concept of its vocation:
— The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World to-day.
— The Rule and the Constitutions (while awaiting definitive approbation).

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03-E-07

THE BROTHERS IN TURKEY

Since the Brothers first went to Turkey in 1841 to teach the children of poor Christians, their situation as well as that of the Christians living there has changed utterly. The Ottoman Empire, "the sick man of Europe" was replaced after the first World War by a Republic, ultra nationalist and lay. The Brothers' Institute, which at the turn of the century was rapidly increasing in numbers, was able to send, over a period of years, up to three hundred Brothers to Turkey. After the expulsion of the Brothers from France in 1904 establishments such as St. Joseph's at Kadiköy expanded to such an extent that they could employ eighty Brothers. Several dozen schools, mostly primary, were opened throughout the country. These were supported by the secondary schools which included one boarding school.

Following the peace treaties, exchanges of population between the Christians of Anatolia and Muslims living in Europe, and the return of many Europeans to their countries of origin, led to a decline in the number of Christians who now form only 0.4% of the population as against one third under the empire. Muslim children replaced Christian children in our schools which had acquired a reputation for excellence.

Since primary education was nationalized we are left with only three secondary schools which serve the children of well-to-do parents. The Brothers have got older, some have died and others have returned to France to resume their apostolate, interrupted in 1904. The last Brothers to come here were those from Bulgaria when the Communists seized power there in 1948. Since then our numbers have steadily decreased until only twelve remain to run three schools: one in Izmir and two in Istanbul. The boarding department of one of the latter has now been closed and the other handed over to lay teachers.

The Brothers' work is confined to these schools which are dependent on the Ministry of Education for their programmes (Franco-Turkish), their intake (decided by the Ministry of Education on the results of competitive examinations), and for their fees which are their only source of income. Under such constraints the Brothers follow their usual policy of running the schools under the supervision of a Turkish deputy Principal while they take charge of departments or teach certain subjects. By taking on excessive work loads a small number of Brothers is just about able to keep the schools open, but it is obvious that 12 cannot do the work of 80, and locally recruited staff, despite their good will, cannot compare with Christian laymen such as, for example, you find in France.

Other forms of work have been tried in recent years such as that in the Popular Education Centres (a unique creation of Atatürk in the 30's but now closed following the troubles which almost led to civil war in 1980) and in the University of Istanbul (in the advanced school for language teachers). This work, though promising, has been suspended. Last year, for one term, a Brother, together with an Assumptionist Sister, was invited to give a course in French to a group of young teachers in the faculty of Islamic theology — an interesting experiment in a reputedly closed milieu if ever there was one!

These restrictions have discouraged those who are on the spot and dissuaded others from coming here. In 1980 Brother Superior General had to take a firm stand before 500 Brothers meeting at Beauvais to prevent the French Brothers from abandoning completely this sector. On

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the contrary, he encouraged them to reinforce the Brothers still in Turkey with these words, "It would be a disgrace to abandon a sector because conditions are difficult. That is precisely where we should be."

If, indeed, one is not discouraged by the lack of immediate and spectacular results and if one believes in sowing in order to reap then it is not difficult to see the importance of such work (that of the Brothers and other foreign religious who work in schools and hospitals and who witness by their faith and service of others to the goodness of Christ).

There is first of all the simple work of the school, valid here as elsewhere, in the development of intelligence, mind and heart, work of the first importance to the numerous young people of a poor country and the basis of its long term development. The work of former students, now in key positions in every sector of the nation's life, gives proof of this. None of them is to be found in the ranks of migrant workers in Europe. On the contrary, their initiative provides work for their fellow countrymen at home.

Then there is the daily silent mixing of Muslim, Jewish and Christian pupils, though the latter are becoming less and less numerous. The bonds of friendship thus created lead naturally to the disappearance of misconceptions and prejudices, source of so much conflict in the Middle East between those who believe in the same God, and prepare minds for a life in common where differences are accepted and respected.

Finally, this work has other moral and spiritual aspects. Our disinterested service causes the Muslims amongst whom we live and work to regard Christians in a more favourable light. In the eyes of most Muslims Christians are the western heirs to the Crusaders, dominating the world by their technology (a technology which Muslims must learn from them), infidels who have betrayed their own religious message and whose morals are degraded like those of the tourists seen naked on the beaches.

When they meet Christians who are genuinely willing to serve them and whose morals are above reproach their suspicions are allayed and give place to respect and sympathy leading to close collaboration in work and eventually to serious dialogue even in matters of religion. This is always on condition that we show a total respect for them as persons and for their faith. Any form of proselytism is quickly detected and instantly rejected. On the other hand, an attitude of genuine love which sees in each person the image God has put there, encourages that person to express himself freely and to speak of problems which worry him and which we, ourselves, could never introduce.

At the beginning and, perhaps, for a very long time, "we must not so much *talk* about Jesus as *be* Jesus present in the midst of them" according to the well-known formula based on the mystery of Christ's life in Nazareth: thirty years of prayer, silence and ordinary life to prepare for three years of public ministry. This is true, no doubt, of many kinds of evangelization but is absolutely necessary in a Muslim milieu. Thirteen centuries of stormy relations between Muslim and Christian and the multiple snares posed by inherited ideas and vocabulary such as "Trinity", "Son of God", "Prophet", "Transmission and alteration of the Scriptures"... have created a veritable mine-field. It is a wise precaution, before entering into serious dialogue, to be aware of our lack of vocabulary to express our concept of God.

It rarely happens, though it is becoming more frequent, outside our schools, that certain people pursue to the end their quest of Christ. Then the problem of helping such people arises. This is a very delicate matter because of the difference of mentality, the hostility of the milieu and the traditional reluctance of Christian communities to accept them. This is part of the unforseeable that cannot be written into a work contract and that requires great discretion. But we can all try when we know that, in any case, God has gone before us and invites us to follow in His footsteps.

"Follow me... you will see greater marvels yet" (John 1,50).

Bro. Robert JEAN

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LEARNING FROM THOSE WE TEACH

03-E-08

PRAYER

It is you, Lord, who made me a human being. You did so that I might know and love you. Everything around us is meant to serve us and to bring us closer to one another and to you. But we are slow to understand your goodness and wisdom and slower still to do what you require of us. Yet in spite of our reluctance, our blindness and our rebellion you multiply your appeals, your gestures of pardon and encouragement... Praised be you Lord, for what you have done for us.

I believe, Lord, that it was you who asked me to change communities in 1970. I came to Beauvais where I was welcomed by nine Brothers who worked in an agricultural college. At the beginning it took me some time to grasp what was expected of me in the formation of students who had come here to follow a five year course in engineering. So, although I was a teacher in the school I had, myself, to learn like everyone else who changes occupation. I had to try to establish relations with the other teachers. I consulted books and tried to be attentive to the reactions of the students. You, Lord, kept me from being discouraged while I learned from others. Thanks, Lord, for the prayers and advice of those who helped me. Pardon my stubbornness and rash judgement of others.

There's another thing I want to recall, Lord. It was the suppression of compulsory religious instruction for the boys of the first cycle. The need I had to learn from others made me too sensitive to the negative criticism of religious instruction by a large number of students. It produced a crisis which we solved as best we could. The passage of time together with more experience has made me realise that we lack the human formation in depth and, perhaps, the intense spirituality needed to give a religious education rich and accessible to all- believers and unbelievers alike.

In the years that followed I was tempted to doubt my usefulness in that school. In fact the greater part of my time was not spent in making you known. Only a very small number of students came for religious instruction. Little by little and thanks to conversations, community meetings, reading etc,. I came to understand how my way of life could be the bearer of a message capable of awakening in young people the desire to seek you. In this way I realized that we could teach by example, by our mode of life, and that we would be imitated in our search for God. That is why, when we cannot speak explicitly of you because of the hostility of men or of our own deficiencies you ask us to be still more vigilant in cultivating attitudes which speak very clearly of you. Grant Lord, that we may be ever more prepared to let your light shine through us.

I want to thank you also, you who are always so anxious for our good, for having allowed one of my students to make me acquainted with an association in the town of Beauvais, a group of young and not so young people who collected scrap after working hours. I became a pupil of that student who introduced me to the Association of Youth for Mutual Aid and Development (AJED). That was in 1972.

The following year it was decided to devote part of the funds raised from the sale of the scrap to helping families in the region who received no aid from the social services, public or voluntary. I was asked to take charge of this work with the help of a full-time worker for the Association. In this way I came into contact with families in all kinds of difficulties: homelessness, unemployment, illness, death or desertion of a partner, alcoholism...

In company with other members of the Association I spent many an evening listening to men and women who tried to make us understand something of their situation as emarginated, as rejects from the affluent society.

About two years later Yvon and Marie-Thérèse, members of the Association, told me about an appeal for help made by the Parish Priest of the parish where the school is situated. They had been deeply touched by the priest's appeal for a family living not far from us in an "emergency" housing estate. That priest had taught Yvon and Marie-Thérèse. They contacted the family and gradually became aware that they needed to learn a lot before they could deal positively with the problems they encountered.

Within the AJED we formed a little study and action group for just that. About 1975 we thought we should get to know the area where the family lived. Studying reports of visits made to families in trouble, discussing them with social workers, and with advice from the Movement for Aid to All in Distress, founded by Fr. Joseph Wrésinsky for the "Fourth World", we prepared ourselves for over a year before venturing into the "transit" estate.

You know, Lord, that we hesitated for a long time before making a move. We had heard so much about the people in the estate: "They're a crowd of good for nothings". "They spend their time drinking and fighting" – "They live at public expense" etc...

Then one day, doubtless urged on by yourself, Lord, we went to a vacant lot in the estate. It was January, 1976 and snow had fallen. I was with Yvon and Marie-Thérèse and two Brothers from the school, Claude, a teacher and Jean-Marie, a student. We arrived there like the members of ATD when they organise what they call a cultural pivot or street library. We had two worn carpets which we put on the ground, some books, some games and puzzles, paper and pencils. In a short while children gathered around. Some read with us for a while, others played games or tried the puzzles while others drew. We continued each Saturday to the following June. The numbers of children increased and we gradually became accustomed to their aggressiveness which became intense towards the end of the session. They tore the books and stoned us as we left. On Saturday evenings we made a report on the day's work.

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In the year that followed, under your guidance, Lord, we continued our efforts to learn from our contacts with the children and their parents. We were also helped by the experience of the members of the ATD movement. While learning from the children I think we were acting a little like you, Lord. We came closer to the poor children of the estate which we visited. It was because we were willing to learn from them that they began to do as we did and to learn from life what it is right to do and not do.

Later on, in collaboration with the Municipal Library, we organized a lending library for the children, giving each one a library ticket. Gradually the number of readers reached 110. In this way we got to know the families of the children better and a little later were happy to find adults asking to borrow books also. Was this not a kind of school? In the process we became aware that some of the adults could not read or did not understand what they read. Lord, should we not do something about that also?

With the help of the students of the agricultural college we organized workshops and excursions for the children on Wednesday afternoons. I have just found, Lord, what a student wrote in November, 1977:

"I ask myself what is the point of going to these slum areas to visit people of no importance in socalled 'transit' or 'emergency' townships around Beauvais which at most form only a tiny part of the 'Fourth World'. Still that is how a team of eight or nine students have passed their Wednesday afternoons since the All Saints holidays." It is difficult to know what urges them to give their time to children who have no other school but the street.

"My first impression was favourable thanks to the welcome of the children who were at once surprised to see us, curious, suspicious, outspoken but also amused. What struck me later was the aggressiveness of these children among themselves and towards us. They swear at each other and at us. They fight and try to appear tough... I believe this is due to the lack of affection in their lives. These children need to feel loved by someone and not to be treated as misfortunate rejects of society".

Reading between these lines written by a student called Etienne, one can guess that there is for him, and certainly for others, a call to learn from these poor children whom they have encountered:

"I believe this experience to be beneficial, not on the intellectual plane but because of the psychological effects it has on us. It lets us see a world totally different from the one in which we live. It shows the absurdity of two worlds which are unaware of each other's existence and yet live side by side. On the other hand it makes us realise that we are the privileged few, that we are the lucky ones, that we must change our way of life which rejects them because they do not belong to our milieu. Besides, it takes us out of our egoism and narrow-mindedness."

If these students have been able to stick to this work for one, two, or three years, in the case of some, it is perhaps, Lord, because you placed in their path people who had learned and had taught them something.

In 1977 we tried to make a methodical study of the population of the "transit" township which we visited each week. With the help of a lady Counsellor in social and family welfare we learned that the great majority were French citizens, that 38% were under 18 and that 55% of adults earned no wages.

We also carried out a study in the schools of the neighbouring residential area by contacting the Principals and the teachers. We found that of 137 children from the residential sector 122 were in normal classes and 15 in special classes, that is classes for those who were retarded, lacking motivation or disruptive. On the other hand, out of 58 children from the "transit" township 19 were in normal classes and 39 in special classes. Lastly, in one of the schools in the area we learned the following facts concerning children from the "transit" area:

— at the beginning of school, that is, in the preparatory department, 3 children out of 16 are retarded. None are above average;

— at the end of the preparatory stage 9 out of 10 are retarded by one, two or three years.

These figures strengthened our resolve to do something to remedy this injustice. Perhaps it was you, Lord, who inspired us to act, for you said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice..."

In the months that followed, our plan of action took shape. It consisted in offering to the children who wanted it a period on one day of the week between 5 and 7 o'clock in the evening for revision of the work they had done that day or the previous days in school. We became aware, early on, that we could not limit ourselves to school work. Quite a lot of educational work could be done through games, conversation, mimes etc... As soon as we learned that we could use the time in a flexible manner and for a variety of activities we began to speak of A.D.S.-evening activities. We could find no more precise term. We did not want to speak of remedial classes or school work so as not to remind the children and their parents of scholastic failure. With about 50 children helped by 40 adults I think we are providing individual attention for children who are seldom listened to at home and who feel out of place in an ordinary school.

It seems to me that an adult is able to influence and educate a child to the extent that he or she is prepared to learn from the child as a human person. This is a necessary condition for the development of the full human potential of both the child and the adult.

In short, the discovery of our inability to help the young and not so young of the "transit" township compelled us to learn from others and to realise that this basic attitude is an important factor in our approach to the task of educating children.

In 1980, on the initiative of a student who had kept in contact with a group of young people in the township, an association was formed and registered. In 1981 Philippe arrived in the Community. While completing the second year of his novitiate he gradually came into contact with the 120 families of the township. You permitted him, Lord, to understand better through these contacts the nature of the call you addressed to him and to others. Like others before him he learned from the people he met. Because of his presence and help the management of the "Maison du Quartier" (Neighbourhood Centre), recently built by the Municipality, was confided to our association.

In this building, which is meant to be a place of welcome and sharing, the parents meet on Thursdays for social, cultural and domestic sessions. On Mondays and Tuesdays children with reading problems come for help. A workshop for adolescents is in operation on Wednesday afternoons and on Friday evenings a group of young people hold their meetings there. There is still plenty to be learned. I am thinking particularly of those who recently broke into the building during the night and damaged it.

Through joy and suffering Lord, you cease not to offer your light and your strength that we may continue to combat injustice, bring others to you and be a symbol of the Church which brings together your children who are scattered, excluded, sick and in misery.

Lord, grant that we may learn from others so that we may be always your disciples and bearers of your Good News to the world.

Bro. Gonzague RUBAT du MERAC
Institut Supérieur Agricole
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Nº 4

1st October 1984

PRESENTATION

Lasalliana No. 4 marks the beginning of the second year of publication. The editorial team wishes to thank you for the interest and confidence you have shown by renewing your subscriptions. We hope that the second year's numbers will give you equal satisfaction.

At the start of this new series it seems appropriate to recall the purpose of Lasalliana as it was first presented. These leaflets are addressed to a mixed readership of Brothers and lay people, to all those who wish to get to know better and to live the charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

The essential aim is, therefore educative and apostolic. Each leaflet can become an instrument for reflection and work. This is why we prefer texts which are short and easy to read. Because of this contributors are compelled to choose subjects and sometimes to condense them in order to suit the format of the leaflets unless they prefer to write a series of articles on the same theme. We are well aware that this is often demanding and frustrating for them. Occasionally we have to take the difficult and delicate decision to cut texts which are too long.

Our contributors do not pretend to be specialists but their articles are always interesting, enriching and stimulating. Obviously we do not expect that all the articles will interest all our readers equally. That depends on many factors. But we hope that out of the twenty articles in each edition some will attract the interest and attention of most readers.

These articles are not written solely with the individual reader in view. They are essentially instruments of work, the contents of which can be:

— thoroughly studied for a better understanding
— discussed and developed in certain of their aspects
— enriched by personal experience and additional research
— studied in the light of local conditions
— put into practice in actual situations.

This underlines the fact that the leaflets are addressed more to groups than to individuals and that they can be read and studied in common as, for example, in study circles, at teachers' meetings, District sessions and retreats, community meetings, at meetings of parents, former pupils, Lasallian associations and in houses of formation, etc.

We think that it is by work in common that certain difficulties in understanding, especially for readers not well acquainted with Lasallian origins, tradition and aims, can be overcome.

With best wishes to our contributors and readers for a happy and successful year,

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

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04-A-20

FIRST TAKING OF THE HABIT: RHEIMS (Winter of 1684-85)

"This habit has been worn for the past five years in five different towns in the dioceses of Rheims and Laon".

These lines are taken from a memoir written by M. de La Salle during the winter of 1689-1690. It is the text which for some years past we call the "Memoir on the Habit". Written entirely by the Founder himself, it is possible to date it from the following lines:

"For almost two years now the Brothers of the Christian Schools working in Paris have worn this habit and nobody during this time has made any complaint except Monsieur le Curé de Saint-Sulpice who has recently objected in rather strong terms".

So, the habit that the Brothers wear in Paris is no longer to the taste of the parish priest who employs them in the schools of his parish, the famous parish of Saint-Sulpice.

Several other passages in the memoir show clearly that the parish priest wanted the Brothers to dress as priests. At the very least he wanted them to wear the long clerical cloak. That is what M. de La Salle believed he could not accept.

He, therefore, wrote this memoir to justify his decision in the eyes of his ecclesiastical Superiors. In his opinion it was not a question of some detail of clothing, of adopting one kind of cloak rather than another. What was at stake for the Founder was the very identity of his Community which was misunderstood and, perhaps, threatened.

To read his plea — it really was a case for the defence — gives us some very interesting information concerning the early years of the "Community" and especially the circumstances and motives which led the "Community" to adopt a distinctive habit.

In the early days, the schoolmasters gathered around M. de La Salle, wore a waisted coat like other laymen and were distinguished from them only by the white rabat. In winter time they were unprotected from the cold, whether in their houses, their unheated schools or in the streets. To protect themselves from the cold the schoolmasters adopted the cloak which was then common in the Champagne region.

"What serves as a mantle", the memoir continues, "is a cloak without collar or buttons on the front, fastened at the top by a large hook on the inside... Such cloaks were then in use and were considered very suitable, useful and comfortable for the schoolmasters, especially those who had to teach outside the house or in parts of the city at some distance from the house in order to convenience the children. The schoolmasters use this cloak as a mantle in the streets and as a house coat in winter in the classrooms and in the house".

If we can believe Canon Blain, the advice to adopt this cloak was given to the Founder by the Mayor of the city of Rheims. What is beyond doubt is that the choice made by M. de La Salle and the schoolmasters was dictated by practical considerations.

With cloak and coat the outward appearance remained that of a "secular". However, for the past two years the Community of schoolmasters had gradually distanced itself from the "world". In the Rue Neuve they really lived the "life of religious". This led the masters to exchange the coat for a kind of "short soutane".

"The habit of this community is a kind of soutane which comes down to mid-calf. It is without buttons and fastened on the inside with hooks from the top to mid-way down the front. From there down it is sewn. The sleeves come down to the wrists and are fastened with hooks which do not show".

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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It is perhaps astonishing to see the insistence with which the Founder dwells on certain details: "without buttons", "A large hook on the inside", "hooks which do not show". Such insistence is, however, significant. Ecclesiastical as well as civilian fashion required a lot of buttons down the front of soutanes and coats, on the sleeves and on the facings. The buttons had to be of quality and were often ostentatiously luxurious: precious metals, mother of pearl or, at least, silk. External hooks could also serve as a pretext for sophisticated ornamentation.

On the other hand, monks, mendicant friars and other regulars insisted on the fact that their habits were fastened by cords or other means and without ornaments. If he could not present the dress of the Brothers as a "regular habit" — today we would say a religious habit — M. de La Salle insisted on letting the ecclesiastical authorities of Paris understand that the Brothers lived as religious and considered that they should dress in a manner befitting their state as "persons withdrawn from the world".

That first taking of the habit in the winter of 1684-85 was meant, precisely, to witness to this fact. Before their pupils, before the parishoners of Rheims, Rethel and elsewhere the Brothers, wearing this habit, "professed" their membership of a Community which was not to be confused with any other. Neither ecclesiastic, secular nor regular — in the sense in which the Church understood these terms — the disciples of M. de La Salle insisted on their identity as Brothers of the Christian Schools.

"Since (the adoption of) this habit", states the memoir, "a person has no other idea when he asks for admission but to join a Community and remain there for the rest of his life. He does not know what it is to ask for wages and considers himself happy to be accepted. It is the habit alone which produces these effects".

The "Memoir on the Habit" is preserved in the Archives of the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. For over a century several biographers or historians of the Institute have reproduced longer or shorter extracts from it. The complete text, in modern spelling, can be found in "Cahiers Lasalliens" 11, pages 349 to 354.

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THE KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS OF SAINT J.B. DE LA SALLE (2)

(B) THE OTHER DOCUMENTS WRITTEN THROUGHOUT AND SIGNED BY M. DE LA SALLE

Of the 12 manuscripts, other than the Letters (surveyed in LASALLIANA 3), written throughout and signed by our Founder, 7 are in AMG, 3 are in the municipal archives of Rheims, 1 is in private ownership also in Rheims, and 1 is in the archives of the Département Seine-Maritime in Rouen.

THE FORMULA OF VOWS, 1694

The first, in chronological order, of the AMG collection is the Formula of Vows, personally composed by M. de La Salle for the ceremony of the first perpetual vows in the history of the Institute (leaving aside the secret "heroic" vow of 1691), the ceremony which took place at Vaugirard on Trinity Sunday, 6 June 1694. The formula, contained on one side of a sheet of paper 14x17 cm, would seem to have been written out by the Founder to serve as a model for transcription by the copyist for the occasion, Brother Michel-Barthélemy Jacquinot. The latter made thirteen separate copies of it, leaving blank spaces for the individual names, closing lines and signatures to be added personally by the Founder and by the twelve Brothers chosen by him to pronounce with him these first perpetual vows of association, stability and obedience. The "model" formula ("one of the most precious relics left by Saint John Baptist de La Salle") (CL2) is preserved between glass in a frame similar to those in which the letters are kept. The historical context of the formula has been fully explored by Br. Maurice Hermans in CL2, and the same authority has demonstrated its place in the young Society's progress towards canonical status, in CL11. An illuminating discussion of it as a "parole-force" in the Founder's faith-journey can be found in CL45, a work of Br. Miguel Campos. A curiosity of the manuscript, as such, is that it does not contain the addition "Roman Priest" after the signature, despite a statement of Canon Blain to that effect (CL7).

THREE "OBEDIENCES"

Next in order of time are three "obediences" addressed to Brother Joseph, Jean Le Roux, already mentioned as a recipient of two of the extant letters. By these three documents the founder appointed Br. Joseph, first in 1708, then in 1709, and again in 1711, to visit certain named communities, of which the Directors were instructed (in the first of the documents) to "receive the aforementioned Brother in the aforementioned capacity (of "Visitor") and to make known to him all that takes place in their house". The significance of these three brief, formally-worded mandates in the administrative evolution of the Society has been shown, again by Br. Maurice Hermans, in CL11.

THREE ACTS OF CESSION

The remaining three AMG manuscripts in this category reveal the Founder, with a consciousness that he had not long to live, disposing of property held in his name, in favour of his successor, Br. Barthélemy (and, therefore, in favour of the Institute). On 11 August 1718 — less, that is, than nine months before his death — he wrote out and signed, in duplicate, a formal cession (to "Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, charged with the general

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conduct of the schoolmasters known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools") of his library which, according to Blain (CL8), he had transferred from Paris to Saint-Yon, Rouen, which had been his residence since December 1715. The fact that this library was (in Blain's words) "quite well stocked with books" recalls the assurance of the earliest biographer, Br. Bernard Dauge, that the Saint used the annual income of 200 livres which, in obedience to his confessor, he had withheld from the distribution of his fortune to the poor, for his journeys, for the upkeep of the chapel, and for "furnishing his library with books for his own use and that of the community" (CL4).

Three months later, on 14 November 1718, he drew up a formal bequest to Barthélemy of "all the furnishings of the house of Saint-Yon". This and the previous duplicate document have been published in full by Br. Leon de Marie Aroz in CL26. All three manuscripts were to receive specific mention with their dates, confirming their validity, in the Testament of the Founder, dated 3 April 1719, which is also reproduced *in extenso* by Br. Aroz in CL26 (but only according to an ancient copy, since the original is unhappily lost).

THREE DOCUMENTS RELATING TO M. DE LA SALLE's ROLE AS EXECUTOR OF NICOLAS ROLAND's WILL

Three manuscripts preserved in the municipal archives of Rheims were written throughout and signed by M. de La Salle in fulfilment of his responsibility as co-executor of the will of his friend and spiritual director, Canon Nicolas Roland. They relate specifically to that part of the will which entrusted him (and a joint-executor, Nicolas Rogier) with the task of "securing, in its own situation and place, the establishment of the house and community of the Daughters of the Holy Child Jesus, together with the means needed to bring this about... not ceasing until the purpose is fully achieved." In a *Cahier Lasallien* (No. 38), devoted entirely to the life and foundation of Nicolas Roland, Br. Leon de Marie Aroz has shown, with abundant documentation, how seriously, and with what efficiency, John Baptist applied himself to the task thus imposed upon him by Roland's will. Three of the nineteen documents adduced by Br. Aroz in this monograph are the manuscripts we are considering. All three are reproduced in fac-simile and in transcription, with detailed annotation by the learned commentator.

Particularly impressive among these three manuscripts is one headed: "Statement of all the goods, houses, properties and investments yielding revenue, belonging to the Community of the Holy Child Jesus..." It consists of ten pages of the Saint's small, compressed script, itemising in meticulous detail the property and goods held by the Sisters at the time of Roland's death. The provision of such an inventory was a necessary step in the process of obtaining the letters patent which would give Roland's foundation legal recognition. Interestingly, not only is the document written throughout by M. de La Salle, but his signature alone appears at the end of it and not that also of the joint-executor, Rogier, who was a year below the legal age of majority (then 25) and who seems to have left all the initiatives to John Baptist — himself only 28 at this time.

The second of these three documents is a form of contract renting a property of the Holy Child Sisters situated at Beine to a local farmer. It fills a single page and is written throughout by M. de La Salle but in the name of the lessee (it begins: "I, the undersigned Archambault Pierre, farmer...") whose barely decipherable signature is appended alongside the Saint's customary "De La Salle".

The third manuscript is a brief statement of twelve lines, dated 18 February 1682, in which the Founder undertakes to indemnify personally the Sisters for any financial loss they might incur from a contract entered into, on his advice, three years earlier. It is a curious piece about which it would be interesting to know the underlying story.

TWO MORE LEGAL STATEMENTS

The document in private ownership (that of the Rheims lawyer, M. Thiénot, mentioned in another connection, in our previous article) is a private deed, dated 21 October 1699, whereby John Baptist authorised his younger brother Pierre, then a Counsellor at the Presidial Court of Rheims, to bring to a conclusion "in whatever manner he deemed suitable" a matter of a debt long owed to the Saint. It was a gesture of confidence in Pierre, whose distinguished career and noble character are portrayed by Br. Aroz in CL39, where the document here referred to may be found reproduced in fac-simile.

Finally, in this category, there is a formal attestation by the Founder, dated 11 December 1717, to the effect that certain investments in the city of Rouen belonged in reality to the Brothers of the Christian Schools and not to himself, even though the four contracts concerned had been made out in his name. The small document, some 120 words in all, has a significant place in the early history of the Institute. A month after its writing, the property of Saint-Yon, until then only rented by the Brothers, became available for sale. The price asked was 15,000 livres, and the sum of 6,000 livres realised by the Community on the strength of this attestation of M. de La Salle made a substantial contribution to this sum. Saint-Yon was to remain the Mother House of the Institute until 1771. The text of the document, of which the original manuscript is in the keeping of the Seine-Maritime Archives in Rouen, is reproduced with annotations by Br. Aroz in CL26. (*To be continued*)

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THE CLIENTELE OF THE LASALLIAN SCHOOLS AT THEIR BEGINNINGS (2)

THE SECOND CATEGORY OF PUPILS IN DE LA SALLE'S SCHOOLS

Children from the more prosperous social classes

★ To begin with it was only the poor, the sons of uneducated people, of the ill-clad, who filled the gratuitous classes of the *Brothers*. It was primarily for them that the Lasallian community had been established (Cf. Med. for Christmas).

★ To begin with, their lice, bad smell, their rough manners, vulgar language, kept the children of the so called "decent" families away.

★ La Salle changed this situation with their training in good manners, in politeness. All were attracted to the classrooms, lice disappeared, repulsion gave way to a kind of astonishment and then to curiosity.

DISAPPEARANCE OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION

★ The better off families (craftsmen, small business people) began to prefer the Lasallian schools to those of the Writing Masters and the Teachers of the Little Schools. They there found an efficient training to:

— self control and obedience to parents;

— render service and to assume responsibility (participation of pupils in classroom offices, visits to the sick and to be absentees);

— a speedy and conscientious apprenticeship to reading, writing, arithmetic, the duties of a Christian towards God, towards oneself, towards others...

★ The results were a series of court cases, acts of vandalism by the Masters of the Little Schools and the Writing Masters who wanted to keep in their paying schools all the children who could afford it.

★ Court inquiries did indeed show that there were pupils with the Brothers whose parents were well able to pay fees: two doctors, a master wheel-wright, a master locksmith, a wine merchant, a grocer, a goldsmith, restaurateurs.

★ La Salle, however, never gives way and will never give way when it is question of the gratuity of the schools and a gratuity which refuses to close its doors to those who are in a position to pay. His schools remain open to all... even the rich because he refuses to humiliate the parents who are poor by asking them to furnish proof of their poverty, because he sees that the poor need to mix with those who are less poor while still at school to enable them to acquire a more cultured vocabulary and more elegant manners than those in the milieu from which they come. He therefore leaves the control of resources to the parish priests, when he cannot avoid the pressures of laws with which he does not agree.

★ This pressure by professional groups hostile to the free access to gratuitous teaching of rich and poor of whatever social class for fear of competition and a comparison of their results was to pursue the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian schools during the whole of the 18th century and to be continued in the 19th to arrive at its zenith in 1886 when they were forbidden to run communal state schools and in 1904 when they were forbidden to run any school in France. It is still this pressure by certain unions which leads the French government to refuse financial assistance for the poor which they need if they are to choose for their children a Christian school rather than a non-paying secular school.

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CREATION OF COURSES FOR ADULTS

★ The general rule at the time of St. John Baptist de La Salle and his successors in the 18th and 19th centuries was for the children of the lower classes to learn in a short while at school the indispensable elements required to enter an apprenticeship.

It quickly became evident that further study was needed if one wishes to advance in his profession: bookkeeping, technical drawing, arithmetic, the elements of science, intelligent spelling.

Hence adult courses were inaugurated from the very beginning during the workers' leisure hours and sometimes on a Sunday, always with plenty of time available for the Christian training of adults whose short period at school had prevented them from acquiring it, and always in such a way that those who wished could express their Christian faith in prayer.

★ Courses for adults have never been completely abandoned by the Institute.

CREATION OF SCHOOLS FOR YOUNG DELINQUENTS

★ The science of amendment is given in the "Conduite des Ecoles" and in the counsels to a new teacher. Brother Othmar Wurth's study is an admirable testimony.

★ The boarding school of St. Yon was a detention centre, in other words a psychological centre for the correction of young delinquents. La Salle agreed to it because it was destined for the morally most disadvantaged.

★ Later on similar establishments were accepted by the Institute in different parts of the world. The young people are received in them after a court order. In order to follow in St. J.B. de La Salle's footsteps, the Brothers must be able to organize the regulations, create a brotherly atmosphere between the Brothers and the prisoners, let them share in the responsibilities as one can begin to trust them more, bring them gradually into contact with other people and follow them up when they have left the establishment.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ST. YON BOARDING SCHOOL FOR FAMILIES OF MEANS

★ The success of the schools for the working classes led the well off families who lived at a distance from the town to ask St. J.B. de La Salle to open a boarding school for their children. The saint agreed pointing out that it seemed that God allowed such a request to furnish the financial solution for meeting the urgent need of a Training Centre for the Brothers. There were thus two conditions required if such a boarding school was to come within the normal activities of the Institute:

— there must be only a small number to prevent too many Brothers from being assigned to them to the detriment of the schools for the working classes;

— the school itself must be gratuitous, with only the boarding being paid for.

★ It is obvious that the studies could and should be more extensive in such a boarding school since the children remained there longer and the professions for which they were destined exacted a greater degree of knowledge and culture.

★ The different general chapters have continually ratified this outlook and it was only in 1904, as far as France is concerned... that the legal suppression entailed the closing or abandoning of the small schools which were not so well supported by the "power of money", while the bigger boarding schools continued by virtue of those same powers which were capable of maintaining them in spite of the laws which ended up by disinheriting only the poor.

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THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN (3): DE LA SALLE HIMSELF

A writer in the seventeenth century had a very different concept of literary proprietorship from that which forms the basis of modern laws of copyright. It was quite common to find paragraphs, pages and even whole chapters taken from other authors without the slightest acknowledgement. De La Salle was no exception. As one of his commentators writes, "He took spiritual nourishment from wherever he found it". Nevertheless, thanks to his wide knowledge of theology and catechetics, he was able to use his sources with such skill that it is difficult to tell what is his own from what he took from them.

THE FAITH

Most catechisms of the Founder's time, faithful to Bellarmine, stress the objective aspect of faith rather than personal adherence to the message and its Author. De La Salle, without neglecting the *"fides quae creditur"* stresses the *"fides qua creditur"*.

In his Meditations we frequently find the concept of faith as a personal commitment. In "The Duties of A Christian" he gives us this beautiful definition: "Divine faith is a virtue which leads us to believe, with submission of mind and heart, what God has revealed and with steadfastness all that the Church proposes to our belief". Who could fail to see in the expression "submission of mind and heart" the binomial subjective-objective: the faith which enlightens us and the faith to which we adhere? We also find in his definition God who speaks and the Church which guarantees the message.

In "The Duties of A Christian" Part II, the definition of faith leaves no room for doubt as to its dynamism and is far removed from the objectivist definitions of most catechisms of the period. Here it is: "It is to believe that God is good, that He is our last end and to put all our confidence in him". Adherence to a person; confidence in a person, without restriction, absolutely. In another part of the "Duties" he stresses the vital commitment that the faith demands from believers. "It would be useless for Christians to have the faith and to believe in the eternal truths that Jesus came to announce and that the Church proposes to their belief if their faith were not animated by charity and accompanied by good works".

THE LAW THAT SAVES

I point out elsewhere that in "De Praeceptis" de La Salle follows Joly closely. The reader may well ask in what then the Founder's originality consists. It is in the foundations on which he bases the precepts of Sinai. Here as in Chapter XVI of the Rule he draws from Saint Augustine and more so from Christ Himself. In thirteen pages redolent of the Gospel he affirms with the Apostle that Love is the fulfilment of the Law. In the introduction to "The Duties of A Christian" we find a resumé of the links between charity and the commandments. "We are in this world only to love God and we have religion only to the extent that we love Him. We cannot please God without loving Him and this love of God is so necessary that it is He alone who can help us to keep his commandments in a Christian manner and who can give and preserve the life of our soul, for it can live only in so far as it possesses grace and charity. This is what led St. John to assure us that he who does not love God remains in death, that is to say, that he is before God as one who is already dead".

SIN

Many catechisms, contemporaneous with "The Duties of A Christian", confine themselves to pointing out the relation "Sin - Commandments" because "God gave us these in order to avoid those". De La Salle, on the other hand, introduces personal relationship into the concept of sin.

Evil, the enormity and ingratitude of sin, can only be understood in the contemplation of Christ on the Cross. In the prelude to the story of the Passion in "The Duties" we read these words, "The principal reason for the coming of Christ into this world having been to suffer and die for the sins of mankind" and at the moment when the curtain comes down on the drama of Calvary, "That is what Jesus Christ suffered for love of us. He could have avoided all that suffering and that shameful death. One drop of his blood would have sufficed but He offered himself voluntarily to make us understand the enormity of sin and to show the excess of his love for us..."

De La Salle considers sin not only as a legal transgression or as an evil inflicted by the sinner on himself, but as a NO addressed to the God of love, as a gesture of contempt for the sufferings and merits of Jesus Christ. In a word, a refusal of the call of God to supernatural communion. That is the concept of sin, and not any other, that Divine Revelation has transmitted to us.

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THE SACRAMENTS

The fact that the treatise "De Sacramentis" takes up almost the whole of the first half of "The Duties of A Christian" — two hundred pages to be precise — justifies the opinion that the work is more theological and dynamic than moralising.

The catechisms of the eighteenth century, following Bellarmine, accustomed us to considering the Sacraments more as means of fulfilling our duties than as sources of grace and holiness. De La Salle, on the contrary, puts the emphasis on the sanctifying grace that they produce. The pre-eminence given to grace is evident in the long prologue by which he introduces the Sacraments and in which he shows how grace depends, essentially, on them.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE SACRAMENTS

In dealing with the relationship between the sacraments and Jesus Christ many of the catechisms mentioned did so in a rather superficial manner, confining themselves to the institution of the sacraments without entering into the essential bonds and the actual dependence of the signs of salvation on the One Mediator. "The Duties of A Christian" shows in sober language and with theological precision the triple relationship that the sacraments have with the person of Christ. "It is Jesus Christ who is the author of all the sacraments of the New Law, having come on earth to sanctify men and having won for them many graces and merits by his death. He found means of applying his graces and merits to them through the sacraments He instituted for this purpose. It is He, also, who produces them in time and who is their first cause. The men who administer them are, as it were, only the instruments though they are the dispensers of the mysteries, for as St. John says, it is He (Christ) who baptizes."

THE SACRAMENTS IN THE CHURCH

The theologian from Rheims does not forget and wants his readers to know that the sacraments are given *in the Church,* "dispensatrix of all the merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ." It is she who, in accord with Holy Scripture, decides in matters concerning the sacraments... establishes or changes, when she judges it necessary for the faithful, this or that ceremony.

Not only are the sacraments given *in the Church* but they are given *for the Church,* "for they are very necessary for the good of the Church because of the effects which they produce..."

THE SACRAMENTS AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

By means of the sacraments the life of Christ is communicated to and developed in the souls of the baptized. "It is by Baptism that we are engendered in Jesus Christ. By Confirmation we receive strength and an increase of grace. It is by the Eucharist, as by spiritual food, that our souls are nourished. Penance heals our souls, wounded by sin; Extreme Unction takes away the remains of sin and gives us a special strength... Holy Orders gives power to the ministers of the Church to govern it. Marriage is for the procreation of children and for bringing them up in the love and service of God."

CEREMONIES OF THE SACRAMENTS

The detailed explanation of the liturgical ceremonies — those most holy ceremonies, most worthy of respect and capable of inspiring devotion... and of instructing the faithful — together with the attention given to the sacraments in the life of the Christian, places "The Duties of A Christian" in a class above most of the French school catechisms of the seventeenth century and clearly shows its originality.

Though the ceremonies, of themselves, add nothing to the essentials of the sacraments "it would be a great sin to omit them without necessity because they were handed on to us by tradition". This is the reason why the Church so frequently urges pastors "to explain them to the Christian people" in the knowledge that understanding of the ceremonies contributes much to the reception of the sacrament. Such instruction will obviate a magical concept of the rubrics since "these graces are only given in view of their faith and devotion and not in virtue of the ceremonies", though he does admit that some ceremonies produce grace in virtue of the prayers of the Church.

The insistence of de La Salle on the spiritual meaning of the ceremonies in the life of the Christian is remarkable. For example, the ceremony of putting salt in the mouth of the person to be baptized "is to mark that, freed from all corruption, he receives Divine Wisdom which gives him a taste for spiritual things and for the practices of a Christian life".

PRAYER

The ninety pages consecrated to the *second means* of obtaining the graces necessary for salvation speak eloquently of the role he assigned to it. The definition he gives of prayer is of the best catechetical vintage: "Prayer is an application of the mind and an elevation of the heart to God to worship Him and to ask for all the things we need for our salvation." He employs, once again, the terms *mind and heart.* Before asking we must adore, thank and offer ourselves...

In four closely reasoned pages he analyses and comments on each element of the definition, bringing out his precise concept of the theme on the theological and catechetical planes.

The writings of the Fathers of the Church are the most abundant source of the treatise "De Oratione". Chrysostom, Augustine, Ambrose... lend their spiritual authority to the filial relations and dependence of man in relation to God the Father. It is these same authorities whose works illuminate the Meditations of the saint.

It is on purpose that I omit two themes in which the originality and theological depth of de La Salle surpass in breadth and quality the treatises of the period, including the sources from which he drew his inspiration: they are Jesus Christ and the Church. The limits imposed by this article preclude consideration of such doctrinal richness. Perhaps we shall deal with them on another occasion. What I have shown proves sufficiently that de La Salle deserved the title of Doctor of Theology, conferred on him by the University of Rheims, and that he did honour to that institution.

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THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN AND PRESENT DAY CATECHESIS (4)

Like the prophets, every founder of a religious family is called by God, with a charism for the men of his time and for future generations. Because of this twofold mission, his message in the Church contains transitory components and others which transcend time and space. A quick glance at St. John Baptist de La Salle will confirm this statement.

After three centuries, the Brothers, his sons, continue to obey his command: "Go and teach". His writings had the validity and the vigour of a "norm" for his contemporaries and yet his message still today inspires texts which respond strictly to the "signs of the times". Proof of this can be found in chapters I, II and III of the Rules in which he describes one after the other, the identity and the need of the Institute and the threefold spirit which should animate its members: the spirit of faith, of zeal, of community (God - the pupils - the Brothers). It is also seen in the personalist and personalizing pedagogy of the *Conduite*. The dignity and individuality of the person, enhanced in the light of the Gospel in the *Règles de la Bienséance,* proclaim it as also do the DEVOIRS I, the key and the paradigm of the "generation" of De La Salle's catechisms. Is this book of any interest to catechists according to Vatican II? I will try to give a summary of its aspects which are still suited to our times and which express the theological thought behind it.

THE SOURCES

De La Salle quotes at length from the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the traditions of the Church. The number of quotations speak for themselves: Genesis 38 times, Exodus 11, Deuteronomy 13, Ruth 1, I Samuel 4, II Chronicles 1, Tobit 6, Judith 1, I Maccabees 1, Job 1, Psalms 25, Proverbs 1, Wisdom 2, Ecclesiastes 6, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 2, Daniel 3, Joel 1, Habacuc 1, Matthew 140, Mark 16, Luke 60, John 58, Acts 24, Romans 15, I Corinthians 17, II Corinthians 4, Galatians 3, Ephesians 10, Philippians 1, Colossians 2, I Thessalonians 2, I Timothy 8, II Timothy 1, Titus 1, Hebrews 9, James 11, I Peter 2, I John 7, Apocalypse 4. (I do not think this is exhaustive).

The Holy Fathers. St. Augustin 48 times, St. J. Chrysostom 33, St. Ambrose 14, Tertullian 14, St. Cyprian 8, St. Thomas 8, St. Gregory 6, St. Jerome 4, St. Bernard 3, St. Cyril 3, St. Basil 2, St. R. Bellarmine 2, and *once:* St Denis, St. Ephrem, St. Evariste, St. Isidore, St. Leo, St. Nicholas, Pope St. Pius V, and Theodoret.

JESUS CHRIST

In the "Devoirs", one finds JESUS Christ as the central figure and, as a living breath, the HOLY SPIRIT, who is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. I will limit myself to quoting the titles of as many chapters on the person of Jesus Christ as one could find in the "Devoirs": Jesus Christ Redeemer, Jesus Christ Saviour, Jesus Christ Mediator, Jesus Christ Priest, Jesus Christ Head of the Mystic Body, JESUS CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL: the Master, Jesus Christ of the poor, the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus Christ Model of the Christian, etc.

The life of Jesus Christ as presented in the "Devoirs" gives an admirable summary of the four Evangelists... We could sum up the leitmotif of the "Devoirs" in the following words: "The faithful are the members of Jesus Christ and, to be considered as such, they must be *united to him through charity*".

THE CHURCH (Body of Christ)

The chapters on the Church in the "Devoirs" are, I think, the Saint's richest and most original. While most of the catechisms of that time stressed the "juridical" aspect of the Church, the "Devoirs" declare: "There has always been a Church even before Jesus Christ". It differed from the present Church in that it "was not composed of a visible society of faithful, as... now"; but the essential constituent elements are the same in both cases: faith and the

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anticipated merits of Jesus Christ by which God saved the believers of that time "united to God by the faith and the charity which animated them".

Here is the definition he gives of the Church: "It is the society of all the faithful whether living or dead, who are all united in Jesus Christ". Can anything better be said and in fewer words?

THE LAW OF LOVE

The treatise *"De Praeceptis"* is De La Salle's least original work, but it is redeemed by the moralism of its source (Claude Joly) in the THIRTY introductory pages to the Decalogue. In it, with the Gospel in hand, he leaves no doubt that, for him, the first and principal rule is the Gospel, that is to say "the law of love": love of God above all things, and the love of one's neighbour for God's sake.

SIN

De La Salle transcends the relationship between sin and the commandments. He introduces the personal aspect of sin into his Catechism: "The principal reason for Jesus Christ coming into this world being to suffer and die for the sins of all men...". "This is what Jesus Christ suffered for love of us..." but he offered himself willingly to make us realize better *the enormity of sin, to show his excessive love for us.*

De La Salle, therefore, does not see sin as a simple transgression of the Law of God, but as a NO which the sinner opposes to the love of God, as contempt for the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

THE SACRAMENTS

The catechisms of the Saint's times look on the sacraments *as a means of performing one's duties* rather than *as a source of grace.* For the Saint of Rheims, on the other hand, the sacraments are SOURCES OF SANCTIFYING GRACE, *means of uniting us intimately with Jesus Christ.*

a) Jesus Christ and the Sacraments

"Jesus Christ is the author of all the Sacraments"... "It is he who produced them in time...", and again: "It is He who baptizes".

b) The Church and the Sacraments

"The Church is the dispenser of all the merits and satisfaction of Jesus Christ"... Not only are the Sacraments given *in* the Church: "She establishes or modifies such and such a ceremony when she judges it to be necessary for the good of the faithful...", but they are also given *for* the Church: "They are very necessary for the good of the Church because of the different effects they produce...".

c) Sacraments and Christian life

Through the Sacraments, Christ's life is propagated in the Christian. De La Salle knew it and wanted those he catechized to know it; for this purpose he quotes a long passage from the Catechism of Trent: "It is by Baptism that we are begotten in Jesus Christ; by Confirmation we receive strength and an increase in grace...".

Space is too limited to make even a short reference to the originality and riches of the Sacramental Ceremonies in the "Devoirs".

PRAYER

Catechism must end in prayer: put those catechized in relation with the Father. It is for this reason that the "Devoirs" ends with a treatise *"De Oratione".* EIGHTY pages of the highest evangelical quality form the apex of De La Salle's catechetical edifice. We will close with the precious definition which he gives of prayer: "Prayer is an application of *our mind* and an elevation of *our heart to God,* to render Him our respect and to ask him for all the things we need for our salvation". Before asking: *adore, thank... render honour.* Always the same binomial: *spirit-heart: thanks-love.*

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04-A-25

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (4)
"A rigorous learning process"

In leaflet 03-A-19 I described the teaching given in the first schools of the Brothers and how the five subjects were introduced, one after the other, beginning with reading which formed the initial stage of the child's education.

A careful study of the "Management" shows the methods used and the characteristics of the training given. The following are among the most important:

STAGES IN LEARNING

It seems to me that we can easily distinguish the principal stages in the process by which the child mastered the elements of the programme.

★ **A "Model" is put before the child:** You find this in the different subjects taught: pronunciation and articulation in reading, headlines written by the teacher on the pupil's copybook for writing, and the copying of passages to teach spelling... You will notice, in reading the "Management" that the importance given to the concept of "model" in the school was similar to that given to the concept of good example.

★ **Imitation of the model by the child.** When necessary, the model was repeatedly placed before the pupil if he failed to grasp the meaning or to get the spelling or pronunciation right. For this the teacher called on the assistance of other pupils and only intervened himself when none of them could give the correct answer.

★ **Assimilation of the model,** through a series of exercises and constant repetition until the matter was thoroughly learned. There is repeated insistence in the "Management" on the perfection required in this learning process and on the perseverance necessary to succeed.

If the difficulty was too great for some pupils the teacher had to break down the matter into the simplest elements and repeat them as often as necessary until the pupil had mastered the whole subject bit by bit.

★ **Formation of habits and reflexes,** until the action of reading, writing or calculating became automatic. Today we would call it acquiring "know-how". But the acquisition of these habits was always accompanied by careful explanations so that the child understood what was asked of him and what he was required to do. In other words he learned intelligently.

★ **Finally the learning process ended with an evaluation,** of what had been acquired. This we shall deal with in the next leaflet.

NATURE OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

As shown in the five stages described above, we find here a form of deductive learning. It was current in 17th and 18th centuries and accorded with the ideas then prevalent of the relation between teacher and pupil and the concept of authority.

In school the pupil found himself in a situation comparable to that of an apprentice who, as in the case of all trades, bound himself to a Compagnon or Master in order to learn the trade through contact with him. This is why de La Salle insisted so frequently on the need for the teacher to master thoroughly what he was to teach to the pupils so as to be able to set them an example in everything.

This concept of teacher-pupil relations as an apprenticeship is a very ancient one which goes back to Aristotle and which can be reduced to its three principal elements: Repeated actions form habits and habits help us to practice virtue.

If we come to a period closer to the beginnings of the Brothers' schools we can find some astonishing resemblances between phrases used in the "Management of Schools" and some of those found in the "Discourse on the Method of Correct Reasoning and of Finding the Truth in Science", published by René Descartes in 1637.

The ideas of Descartes became very fashionable among the cultured classes of 18th century France and we cannot exclude the possibility that they inspired other works. One could make a comparative study of phrases and sentences in the "Management" and in the Cartesian rules (analysis, synthesis and enumeration).

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STIMULI TO LEARNING

Nowadays theories of learning insist on the stimuli which encourage children to learn. We shall try to distinguish those which appear in the "Management of Schools": what encouraged the pupils to learn?

Throughout the text, and not only in the first part, we can find stimuli which I shall classify in two categories:

Explicit Stimuli:

— the child wants naturally to go to school and learn if the parents put no obstacle in the way,
— to encourage him, the school offers him a warm welcome which is in itself a stimulus to learning,
— the teacher is asked to give the pupil personal attention and affection especially if he is in any difficulty,
— his efforts and his progress are regularly noted and rewarded,
— explanation always accompanies the teaching to ensure intelligent learning,
— the teacher gives verbal encouragement and urges him to learn,
— a programme and rhythm to suit his personality gives him confidence.

Implicit Stimuli:

— the immediate correction of mistakes,
— the help of more advanced pupils,
— confidence created by success,
— solid effect of the model and of good example,
— regular evaluation of results,
— monthly change of group or section,
— wall posters urging pupils to work.

THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSED

Lasallian schools were explicitly established for a modest social class, that of "artisans and the poor". Their purpose was, on the human plane, essentially utilitarian. They set out to give their pupils the minimum of knowledge necessary to enable them to manage their personal and professional affairs. That meant finding a trade or occupation and succeeding in it thanks to what they had learned in school.

This after-school objective is explicitly mentioned in several places in the "Management of Schools" and determined the choice of certain exercises in reading, writing and spelling as well as of problems in Arithmetic.

Within the class, the organization of work aimed at efficacy: the acquisition of what would today be called basic knowledge and useful skills.

The pupils could become competent in specific occupations, for the ability to read, write and do calculations was still sufficiently rare in the France of that time to make those who had such ability a kind of privileged class.

CONCLUSIONS

What is striking in the "Management of Schools" is the rigorous organization of the learning process. There are in it some modern concepts. Knowledge of the learning process is more advanced in the 20th century than it was in the 18th and we use a different terminology, but when we get down to concrete reality I find certain things in common, for example:

— the need for thorough assimilation of the subject matter before moving from one level to a higher one,
— the recognised importance of work stimuli,
— the importance of repetition of basic facts,
— insistence on precision and clarity of models,
— positive reinforcement through immediate correction of mistakes,
— frequent and regular evaluation of knowledge acquired,
— explanations given to ensure intelligent learning.

We must not exaggerate these comparisons. But neither must we forget that the 1706 Manuscript of the "Management of Schools" was the work of Brothers whose formation was limited. That they were able to formulate, in such simple terms, such essential elements proves their wealth of experience. It shows also what can be done "together and by association".

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04-A-26

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (5): IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

Modern pedagogy gives considerable importance to evaluation of results and of the knowledge and skills acquired. And rightly so, for it is a means of finding out the precise nature of the learning process and the efficacy of the conditions in which it is carried on. Methods of evaluation may vary with the school situation and take on forms more or less complex according to the nature of the knowledge and skills acquired.

The importance of evaluation has been confirmed by the appearance recently of the science of docimology, or evaluation of what has been acquired.

Such refinement is, obviously, not to be found in the "Management of Schools" but I think it interesting to look at the evaluation system proposed therein.

QUESTIONING AND CHECKING

Reading through the first part of the "Management" we can distinguish five forms of questioning or testing during the learning process.

★ Questioning during the Course of Work to make sure that the pupils understand what they are learning. We find several examples of this in the passages devoted to arithmetic, spelling and training in sharpening the pens (quills). This attention to understanding by the pupils is continuous in the "Management". From among various passages we could quote let us take this:

> "The Master will the insist that the pupils, whose spelling mistakes he has corrected, rewrite the work neatly at home making the corrections he has indicated, and he will check when next he corrects their exercises that they have, in fact, done this work". (p. 74)

★ **Questioning to Stimulate the Pupils.** This is for the purpose of finding out if the pupils are paying attention to the lesson and profiting from the efforts of their companions.

> "The Master will, from time to time, question some of the pupils following the same lesson to make sure they are attentive and that they understand". (p. 71)

★ **Questioning at the End of the Lesson** to check the extent of acquisition and comprehension:

> "When a pupil has learned all the lines of the alphabet chart, before beginning the syllables, he will continue to the end of the month to study the entire alphabet of which he will be required to read all the letters at random, in order to ascertain whether he knows them all; and he will not advance further until he knows them perfectly". (p. 26)

★ **Monthly Revision** before promotion to a higher grade or section.

> "In order that no teacher may be mistaken in regard to the fitness of his pupils for promotion, all the teachers will examine, towards the end of each month, on a day fixed by the Brother Director or the Inspector of Schools, those pupils in all grades and in all sections who should be ready for promotion at the end of the month". (p. 21)

★ **Monthly Test:** At the end of each month the tests arranged will allow the teacher to find out in the grades and sections:

— those who are fit to move to a higher level
— those whose attainment is doubtful
— those who are not ready for promotion.

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The final decision is left to the Inspector of Schools who carries out another test if he thinks it necessary. In order to prepare the pupils for this final test the teacher will give them a quick preliminary test.

> "The teacher will give to each pupil proposed for promotion a lesson to study to see if, in fact, he is ready for the section to which he is to be promoted. If the change is to take place in the afternoon he will do so that morning. If in the morning then he will give the test the previous afternoon". (p. 23)

MONTHLY PROMOTIONS

★ Attention to the individual and to the group

Frequent change was a powerful stimulant to the pupil who was regularly informed of his progress and his capabilities. Encouraged in this way to keep working and to do better, he was in a position to keep his parents informed of his progress. This was the individual aspect of the evaluation.

But the change over to simultaneous teaching in the Brothers' schools called for attention to the group-class. The group could be enriched and stimulated by the presence of pupils normally capable of promotion to a higher level but whom it was desirable to retain for the sake of the others. This called for a delicate choice between the legitimate interests of the individual and the desire to help the group.

> "The teacher will take care, some time before the day on which the promotions are to be made, to inform those pupils whom the Brother Director or the Inspector has agreed not to promote — either for their own good, because they are too young, or for the good of the group or grade, in order that there be some who can support the others. They will do this in such a manner that these pupils will be content to remain in the grade or section where they are".
>
> They will persuade them by means of some reward, by assigning to them some office, such, for example, as Head of the Class and making them understand that it is better to be first or among the first in a lower grade than last in a higher grade. (p. 23)

★ **An Important Arrangement**

These frequent and regular promotions introduced an important element of mobility into the internal organization of the classes since each class contained several sections or grades. It was important to keep account of these different changes in order to follow the progress of each pupil in the school. In the large classes of the time that meant heavy additional monthly work for each teacher: lists of "Changes of Section" and lists of "Changes of Grade".

The "Management of Schools" gives model lists to ensure uniformity of procedure among the teachers.

Opposite the name of the pupil, the date of his admission to and promotion from the section or grade was entered. The teacher also entered on the list some remarks concerning the behaviour of the pupil: how often he came late, if he were absent without permission, if he did not know the diocesan catechism.

All this information was collated by the Inspector of Schools. We have already noted the key role he played in the decisions to promote or not promote pupils.

CONCLUSION

No official examination, no entrance examination to another scholastic establishment, no external standard obliged the Brothers to carry out these monthly evaluations, the organization of which imposed a heavy and complex task on the teachers.

That can be explained and justified, and it is important to say so, only by the dual objective of care for the pupil and for the effectiveness of the teaching given: care to keep the child regularly informed about his work and progress as well as the desire for efficiency so that parents might have no reason to complain of the school or to think that their children were wasting their time there.

By its frequency and its extension to the whole process of learning, that system of evaluation became continuous. Is that not what we consider today the most satisfactory system?

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04-A-27

THE PRINCIPAL MYSTERIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY AND CATECHESIS OF ST. J.B. DE LA SALLE

"You lay the foundations for the building of the Church when you instruct children in the mystery of the most Holy Trinity and the mysteries accomplished by Jesus Christ when he was here on earth." *Seventh Meditation for Time of Retreat,* Loes translation p. 66.

This quotation may be taken as programmatic for this short article, for the catechetical aspect of it at least. In it St de La Salle incidentally and unselfconsciously states what he understands by the term, the Principal Mysteries. We might compare the answer of a traditional catechism to show the closeness of the parallel: "There are two Principal Mysteries of religion: 1st, the Unity and Trinity of God; 2nd, the Birth, Death and Resurrection of Christ our Saviour." (*Australian Catechism,* 18th ed. 1962; this catechism derives largely from the *Maynooth Catechism,* itself closely related to well known French catechisms of the 17th and 18th centuries.)

It is significant that in the very opening pages of the *Meditations for Time of Retreat,* de La Salle reminds the Brothers that they are "administrators of God's mysteries" (p. 47). Elsewhere he sums up their catechetical mission as being "to provide children with a Christian mentality and to teach them the mysteries and doctrines of our religion" (p. 60).

Further, he reminds them that "there are a number of doctrines which are absolutely necessary for us to know in order to be saved" (p. 51). These doctrines are in fact those of the Trinity of Persons in God and the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God.

THE BROTHERS' SPIRITUALITY

St. de La Salle makes no express attempt to base the Brothers' spiritual life upon the contemplation of the Blessed Trinity (indeed the present *Rule* seems much more explicit on this point; cf. Chap. 10, art.j). But it is clear that he presupposes such a basis. Even a cursory reading of the *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts,* more especially those meditations devoted to aspects of Christ's redemptive mission, make it quite clear that the Brothers' spiritual life is to be based upon a deep awareness of the object of their faith and of the practical lived consequences of such faith. This is simply what *the spirit of faith* is: the Brother *believes* with all his mind and all his heart what the Church teaches in her Creeds and catechisms (cf. Meditation No. 5: Sunday in Octave of Christmas, Battersby translation 1964 ed. p. 26) and he lives his life accordingly.

St. de La Salle could easily make his own what Pope John Paul II said recently when speaking of Christ's redemptive mission: "We must have our minds and hearts open to receive this manifestation (of Christ) which is not meant to be so much a knowledge of the mystery of Christ as our *immersion* and our absorption into it" (O.R. 23 Jan. 1984, p. 3, col. 3; emphasis in the original).

FROM THE BROTHER'S SPIRITUALITY TO HIS CATECHESIS

The union between the spiritual life of the Brother and his zeal as a Christian educator is so close that each not only sustains the other but each finds its natural expression in the other. This is commonplace in the thought of St. de La Salle; but it finds explicit expression in his Meditation for Trinity Sunday: "(This mystery) is the more adorable for you as you are obliged to teach it and make it known to children who, like you, are by baptism consecrated to the Most Holy Trinity. They bear the marks of this consecration in their soul and to this adorable mystery they owe the unction of grace which has been applied to their soul" (Battersby, p. 202).

THE PRINCIPAL MYSTERIES IN THE BROTHERS' CATECHESIS

One of the injunctions of the *Rule* as I learnt it was that, of the total time to be devoted to catechesis — four and a half hours a week — one half-hour of the Sunday school session was to be devoted to catechesis on the Principal Mysteries. Though perhaps conceived mainly in terms of revision of knowledge already imparted and assimilated, nothing in this prescription of the *Rule* would exclude an ever-deepening and, as we would say today, an "interiorising" of these Mysteries by both Brother and pupil.

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And perhaps of at least equal importance as this weekly return to an explicit recall of the Principal Mysteries would be the careful insistence on reverence in making the Sign of the Cross, in bowing the head at the Gloria Patri, in teaching oneself and then one's pupils to relish rather than to avoid the formal trinitarian conclusion which characterises the liturgical prayers...

DOCTRINAL OR PRACTICAL EMPHASIS?

It must be admitted that in the *Meditations for Time of Retreat* St. de La Salle's manner of referring to the doctrinal aspects of catechesis is somewhat disconcerting: much of what he says might be read in a dismissive sense. He seems sometimes to imply that knowledge of "the truths that are purely doctrinal" is of less importance than that of "the practical truths of the gospel". (Or does this impression derive more from the translation — Loes — than from the original? Concerning the expression "truths that are purely doctrinal" Br. Loes explains in *Appendix C* that this is his paraphrase for what seems to me to be a rather different expression.)

It would, however, be quite false to the mind of our Founder so to force the contrast, which he makes for his own reason of emphasis, to make it sound like the equivalent of the contemporary opposition of orthodoxy to orthopraxis. (Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae* No. 22)

What St. de La Salle has in mind is simply the ageless truth that, to be effectively salvific, faith must be *living,* that is animated by supernatural charity (cf. Loes p. 60). For, if faith without works is dead, so are works without faith. One must believe and one must do; and one must both believe and do at the same time: there is no room for choice. "It is useless to play off orthopraxis against orthodoxy: Christianity is inseparably both." (*Catechesi Tradendae* No. 22)

For St. de La Salle faith and morals are inseparable: "Contradicting the morality preached by Jesus Christ is quite as dangerous as attacking His doctrine, for the loss of faith generally results from depraved morals." (Battersby, p. 27)

Any conflict, then, which we may seem to discern between "the purely doctrinal truths" (Loes), which would obviously include the Principal Mysteries, and "the practical truths of the gospel" would exist rather in the contemporary mind than in the mind of our Founder.

PLACE FOR TEACHING THE PRINCIPAL MYSTERIES IN CONTEMPORARY CATECHETICS

It seems to me that the contemporary orientation of catechetics leaves little place for catechesis on the Principal Mysteries.

First, this orientation is — excessively — anthropocentric. It starts with man, "starts with where the pupils are" — a principle not wrong in itself — but often it seems to have no desire to transcend that starting point. But surely one of the essential objectives of catechesis should be to draw attention to God and away from oneself?

Again, it is excessively socially-oriented: it seems to be too much concerned with man and his moral problems, with the structures of society, and too little with faith-knowledge of the world of divine realities, especially of the mystery of grace operating through the sacramental economy; and of the world of divinely assured certainties made available to us in the Church's magisterium.

I am sure that I could use Pope John Paul's Exhortation on *Catechesis in Our Time* (*Catechesi Tradendae,* 1979) to illustrate my contention that the basic programme of catechesis at every level should be the Creed, an approach which would permit of limitless deepening if one so wished (Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae,* Nos. 28, 59, 61; more especially for the Principal Mysteries, Nos. 37, 38, 48).

The depreciation of the doctrinal aspect of catechesis in favour of what, for the sake of brevity, I am rather unwillingly calling the moral dimension, derives mainly from an inadequate concept of faith: a concept which underplays the part of the believing mind and exalts the part of the trusting heart. Space does not permit me to explain myself further. I have done so at length elsewhere.

For myself, reading the *Meditations* of St. de La Salle and any others of his writings, I note how *serene is his faith:* there is no evidence anywhere of reticence, of hesitation, or of suspended judgment, concerning anything proposed by the Church; his faith is co-extensive with the total content of the teaching of the Church (cf., again, Battersby p. 26). And from this serene faith follows a clear and consistent practice, clearly exemplified in loyalty to the Church's teaching.

CONCLUSION

Let me ask the question St. de La Salle puts to his original readers: "Have you studied well all these truths up to the present and are you thoroughly committed to their making a strong impression on the minds of these children? Have you regarded this responsibility as the most important in your work? From this moment take the steps to make it your main concern to teach perfectly the truths of faith and the practical maxims of the holy gospel to those who are entrusted to you" (Loes, p. 63).

It seems to me that for ourselves personally, as Christians and as religious, it is question of our once more coming to recognize that "the fundamental act of religion (is) the adoring acceptance of the sway of mystery in dedicated love". (Rahner, *Theological Investigations IV* p. 61; Eng.tr.) On such a contemplative basis the Brothers can build an appropriate catechetical mission. All zeal stems from, and is conditioned by, supernatural faith.

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04-B-17

LA SALLE FOUNDATION FOR NATURAL SCIENCE (FLASA)

In answer to a request from the editorial committee of "LASALLIANA" I shall try to give an account of how the La Salle Foundation for Natural Science achieved, in practice, the educational aims proposed at its inception.

FLASA has just completed twenty-five years of uninterrupted work in the service of important sectors of the population of Venezuela which were emarginated and discriminated against both socially and economically. Starting from zero twenty-five years ago, the Foundation today has four centres of activity. Three of these are situated in different parts of the country, at Margarita on the coast, at Guyano and at Cojedes Boconó in regions with varying natural resources to be exploited. The fourth centre is in Caracas. It is the headquarters of the Foundation and houses the central administration as well as the scientific staff who direct the work of the other centres.

The Foundation had its origin in the La Salle Association for Natural Science, an institution which has been in existence for forty-four years and which was due to the efforts of high school students who channelled their scientific curiosity into the study of the fauna and flora of Venezuela. Today the Association continues to render useful service to the country and its young people. It was during the course of their researches that these students became aware of the backwardness of many communities and the poor economic conditions in which they lived. This was due to the obsolete means of exploitation of natural resources in use. They were incapable of competing on the market with those who applied industrial methods to production and benefited from advanced technology.

The proposal to create the La Salle Foundation to improve conditions in these communities delighted Brother Ginès, its Founder and first President, and his zealous and faithful collaborators, for the action of FLASA would be inspired by the humanistic and philanthropic ideals of the Natural Science Association. He was all the more pleased as this orientation towards the poor and the disinherited was in line with the thinking of Saint John Baptist de La Salle who found similar conditions in the France in which he exercised his apostolate.

All its accumulated knowledge and acquired experience was to be put at the disposal of the communities which were gradually to come within the sphere of influence of FLASA. Education would, unquestionably, be the best means of attaining these objectives. For that reason we set about establishing technical high schools leading eventually to the setting up of University Institutes of Technology such as the Institute of Navigation and Fisheries at Margarita, of Industrial Technology at Guyana and of Agriculture and Stock Raising at Cojedes.

Today the student population of FLASA's institutions numbers 4,000.

In the statutes of the Foundation (here we must underline the general principles which inspire the philosophy underlying the ideals of FLASA) it is specified that this Institution "conceives education as a socialising process which respects individual character and which is achieved by assimilation of ancestral traditions together with a scientific and academic formation". This process is aimed at a better all-round development of persons prepared to respond to the needs of their social milieu and to share in its democratic way of life.

In accordance with this concept fourteen Educative Principles were drawn up as a guide to the daily realization, in each of the centres, of the ideals of the Foundation. Their formulation was the outcome of the educational experience gained by the directors of FLASA who wish to see them adopted not only in their own centres but also in the national education system.

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These principles which faithfully reflect the philosophy of our Founder were, together with the practical means of applying them, laid down by the Administration in a document entitled "FLASA and Education". They are as follows:

1. Education is an evolutionary process which requires continual study and revision.
2. Participation of all members (teachers, administrators and workers) in the planning of school life, in the development of the institution and the evaluation of results so that all may understand that it is a collective undertaking based on continuing mutual co-operation.
3. Recognition of the fact that each individual has a specific personality with distinct physical and psychological characteristics which must be taken into account so that the pupil's growth and social formation (in the family and in society) make take place in accordance with the ideals of human solidarity.
4. Acknowledgement of the adolescent's need for and right to guidance in taking responsible decisions and in finding solutions to problems arising from social and professional relationships.
5. Strengthening of national identity by means of an education integrated into the oral tradition of the community whether local, national or Latin-American. Revitalization of craft training in order to rediscover the traditions of the people and to make a positive evaluation of the cultural heritage, created by earlier generations, which is at the base of these traditions.
6. Concept of school life in its totality as a series of experiences and effective stimuli that help students grow to understand the problems of social life, the standards and principles on which it is based and the responsibilities and duties which it implies.
7. Provision of experiences, activities and basic knowledge so as to discover and meet the interests and needs of students, to promote the full development of their personalities, to train them to think and to give them an opportunity to acquire an aptitude for action and a resolute attitude in the face of their natural and historic disadvantages.
8. Development of the abilities and skills of the students through activities and practical knowledge so that they may be able to use them effectively in the world of work thus making their training in trades a preparation for future productive work. In this way we hope to forge a link between the training we give the students and production in the local community.
9. Activities, experience and knowledge provided for the student should be chosen and adapted to suit his biological, intellectual and emotional development on the one hand, and on the other, account should be taken of the requirements of a nation striving for its own transformation and development.
10. Techniques adopted in carrying out a scholastic programme should be in accordance with the modern concept of education which stresses the complete development of the pupil's personality.
11. Scientific evaluation of the results of the educative process requires not only an assessment of the degree of knowledge but also of the forms of individual and social conduct that the student acquires and adopts during his period at school.
12. The modern concept of school discipline is that of a dynamic process of harmonious development of the personality of the student, of a conscious, considered and voluntary acceptance of a system of values. This presupposes an adequate understanding of social behaviour, emotional balance, acceptable habits and desirable attitudes.
13. The collaboration of parents, friends and public representatives, when well organized, can be an excellent means of finding solutions to the educational, socio-economic and health problems of the students, can enrich the life of the Institute and spread its influence to other sectors of society and can continue and make known its educative work.
14. The overall formation of the student should help him to find his place in the community and to identify with it. It should stimulate him to continue his education beyond the period of formal schooling and fit him to play a part in the development of the La Salle Foundation in his own locality and in the country at large. The teaching staff of the Institutes should also share in this process of continuing education.

The educational planning by which the Foundation puts its philosophy into practice has been so efficient that the success of its system of teaching and training is an established fact and the best guarantee of the validity of a method inspired by the humanist and Christian ideals of its authors.

Yesterday's students, today taking an active part in the productive life of their communities are the best proof that the La Salle Foundation has achieved its educational objectives and is ready to put itself at the service of Venezuela.

Bro. GINÈS, President
Apdo Correo 1930 - CARACAS - VENEZUELA

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04-B-18

THE "HARAMBEE" SPIRIT

The Brothers from the New York and LINE districts came to Kenya in 1958 at the request of the local Bishop to staff Kamwenja Teachers Training College. For the past 25 years they have been responding to the needs of the local Church in a variety of apostolates including teaching in Government and Church schools, junior seminaries, pastoral institutes and youth centres.

The late President Jomo Kenyatta led his Kenyan people to independence in 1963 with the rallying cry "Harambee" - "Let us work together". His idea was that when the community sees a need they join together to solve the problem. Whether they give of their labour to re-build a neighbour's house gutted by fire or contribute cash to construct a dispensary they are acting in the Harambee spirit. Perhaps no-where has this been more exemplified than in the field of education. Although the Government devotes 16% of its budget to education, it is far too little in a country where more than half the people are under 19 years of age. Today Government maintained schools are far out-numbered by "Harambee schools" schools built and maintained by the local community.

One of these Harambee schools, run by the Brothers, is Rongai Secondary School in the central part of Kenya. The town and the school take their name from a Masai word meaning narrow, which describes the stream flowing on the eastern boundary of the town. Here, for the past eight years, seven different Brothers have laboured. Before independence the area was part of the "white highlands" of the Rift Valley. Now these European farms have mostly been broken up into small shareholdings and have passed to African hands. The land is poor; the people are poor.

As St. La Salle sought out the poor of his native city to lead them to God, so the Brothers, although not yet native, "are associated together to engage in educational work for the service of the poor" at Rongai. The late Brother Charles Henry stated that "the vocation of the Brother obliges him to enter fully into the movement of renewal and reform of the school... to an effort that is continuous in order to assure the quality of the education he imparts and the perfect adaptation of its program, its methods, its objectives". This, then is what we are trying to achieve at Rongai.

At a first glance, Rongai Harambee School might not appear much different from any other secondary school. Students dissect grasshoppers in the lab, struggle with English grammar and move from class to class at the clanging of the bell which, incidentally isn't a bell at all, but a two metre section of railway track! Our students do well in the National exams, but this is only what one expects in a Brothers school. It is after the time for formal lessons, however, that the real Harambee nature of the school becomes evident. The Brothers have instilled into the students that it is their school and it is up to them to keep it going — teachers and students working together. And they do!

In a country where white-collar jobs are becoming almost non-existent and 95% of the population is involved in agriculture, the students have to learn the dignity and necessity of farming. On top of a college oriented curriculum we teach agriculture and every day after school everyone gets his hands dirty. On our 2 hectare "shamba" our 200 boarding students practice intensive farming, using irrigation and lots of manure. They grow almost all their own food: maize

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and beans, spinach and bananas. They keep about 100 pigs and grow canna to feed them and make all the pig food in our own mill. Every Saturday they slaughter a pig for Sunday dinner. Twenty boys care for 200 rabbits. Every few weeks 30 of them appear on the menu. Two men are employed to do the cooking, but they are helped by the students who grind the wheat and maize into flour, peel the potatoes and cut the fire wood that fuels the stoves. We have one maintenance man, but most of the jobs from painting to plumbing are handled by the students, who are responsible for the upkeep of the buildings. We have just built a woodworking shop and some students will be taught carpentry.

One of the Brothers helps the students prepare the weekly liturgy in the school and organizes an annual retreat for each class. On Sundays, our students, together with the catechist, arrange the parish liturgy.

After four years at Rongai Harambee Secondary School our boys leave us. We hope they have learned the meaning of "Harambee" and that they are now ready to face the world as self-reliant Kenyans and Christian gentlemen.

Bro. Stephen CREAGH, FSC
Rongai Secondary School
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04-B-19

A PUBLISHING HOUSE SERVING A COUNTRY'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

SHORT HISTORY

In 1972, after 12 years of independence, the Government of Madagascar accelerated the process of breaking with the school organization inherited from colonial days. This was especially noticeable in the Malgachisation of programmes and the use of the national language for lessons. At the same time, great efforts were made to extend schooling to secondary level by the opening of colleges and grammar schools in the principal towns of the country.

To meet this development and these changes new and adapted school books and documents had to be created. The authors were offered an important and exciting task.

Bearing the needs of their pupils in mind, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were the pioneers in this work, thus rendering eminent service to teachers and pupils, and therefore to the whole educational system.

From 1970 onwards a group of Brothers, realising the need for adapting their teaching to the local situation, set to work. The beginnings were modest and the means precarious: installations in a school in Tananarive, the printing of books and magazines by Roneo. Divers contretemps moreover tried the courage and tenacity of the pioneers.

However, the reputation of the first editions quickly spread beyond the bounds of the Brothers' schools and orders flooded in from all over the country. In 1971 a new educational review appeared, "TSIRIM-PAHAZAVANA," thanks to the cooperation between Brothers and laymen. This was the first and only one of its kind to be produced in the country, with one edition for primary schools and another section for secondary level.

DEVELOPMENT

This initial success led to and enabled the buildings to be extended and the FO.FI.PA to be produced. A small building was therefore erected to house the activities and the equipment as well as a small community of Brothers.

From 1975, FO.FI.PA obtained legal status as a publishing house. As such its books are printed in town and they assure the promotion and sales. Only Roneo work is now produced in the house.

Success and good management have gradually made possible the investments needed to avoid calling on the district for help. Assistance from SECOLI and MISEREOR made up what was lacking from local resources.

PRESENT PUBLICATIONS

With reduced man power, 2 Brothers and about 40 employees, FO.FI.PA continues publishing:

- — school books for all education levels, primary, secondary and higher,
- — pedagogical reviews, primary and secondary,
- — reading text books,
- — guides for rural development, hygiene, culture, civilization.

In short, all subjects taught are covered by these books, often with a choice between a number of authors. The 1984 catalogue contains over 360 titles for teachers and pupils, without counting a few novels and books of research and analysis not meant so much for school.

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Among these publications special mention might be made of publications which are specifically Lasallian as well as district reviews and papers. In particular we should mention:

★ Translation into Malgache of:

— Maillefer's Life of St. John Baptist de La Salle.
— That by the Abbé Courtois.
— Pedagogy by Brother E. Gabriel.
— The Conduct of Schools.
— The Meditations for the Time of the Retreat.
— The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher.

★ The publication of books written in Malgache:

— Life of St. John Baptist de La Salle by Ratovoarison.
— Life of St. John Baptist de La Salle by Rasamoela.
— Life of Brother Raphael Louis by Brother Louis Robert.
— Life of Brother Raphael Louis in pamphlet form.

★ Life of Brother Raphael Louis in French by Brother Concorde Marie.

To these must be added booklets and pamphlets for the liturgy, for singing, and other texts of the Church in Madagascar.

TEACHERS RETRAINING SESSIONS

From 1970 the initiators of the FO.FI.PA were in demand throught the country for the continuing training of teachers especially in the field of mathematics and the structural approach to the Malgache language.

These requests have persisted and FO.FI.PA continues to offer training opportunities for adults:

— evening classes for candidates for the Baccalaureat,
— pedagogical courses for teachers preparing their professional qualifying exam,
— correspondence courses in pedagogy,
— residential courses in pedagogical leadership in provincial towns and rural agglomerations.

The aim in all these activities is service for all in the good Lasallian tradition.

CONFIRMED SUCCESS

There are now similar organizations in the country offering healthy competition. We think, however, that FO.FI.PA is still very much appreciated for its solid courses, the quality of its publications and its organizational precision.

It is a constant encouragement for the management and all who cooperated in this work.

TO CONCLUDE

We have recently received more encouragement:

★ In 1983 the District Chapter recognized the efforts made by FO.FI.PA and thanked them.

★ More recently, in February 1984, Brother Superior General during his visit to the country said how much he appreciated the work being done and hoped to see the installations increased and transferred to respond better to the demands made on it. He congratulated the personnel for the family spirit and encouraged it to make it even closer.

We think that these wishes could be fulfilled more easily through twinning with a similar organization in another district with an exchange of ideas and techniques and perhaps a kind of sponsorship. Any suggestion on these lines would be very welcome.

Bro. RAZAFINDRAKOTO
FO.FI.PA - Faravohitra
TANANARIVE 101 - MADAGASCAR

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04-B-20

LASALLIAN INITIATIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES (1)

One of the realities which makes the Philippines unique among her Asian neighbors is the fact that she is the only Catholic nation in Asia. As of 1983:

Total Population	51,500,000	
Catholics	43,100,000	(83.8%)
Priests	4,954	
Brothers	475	
Sisters	7,074	

Sixty-six percent of the total population is 25 years old or younger, and 13.5 million are actually in school. Only a small portion is enrolled in diocesan or parochial schools, or in schools run by religious. The 1983 Catholic Directory published the following enrolment figures for Catholic schools:

School/Level	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Tertiary*	*Total*
Diocesan	164,692	412,363		577,055
Religious	163,157	186,464	320,552	670,173
				1,247,228

In a country where education is highly valued by the people as a means for economic improvement and social mobility, and which the local Church considers essential in her role of forming the minds and consciences of her members, the Brothers are constantly challenged to respond to these urgent educational needs. In 1911 nine Brothers: 5 French, 3 Irish, and 1 American, started classes for 125 Filipino students in Manila. In 1984 there are 46 Brothers: 30 Filipinos and 16 non-Filipinos, conducting classes on various levels in seven Lasallian institutions:

Level	*Primary*	*Secondary*	*Tertiary*	*Total*
Number of Students	6,731	5,753	10,529	23,013

There are presently 838 lay teachers and administrators in the different schools owned and operated by the Brothers.

On May 15, 1984 the District opened a new community in a leprosarium in Tala, a small town just north of Manila. Three Brothers are teaching in a private school which is supported by a private foundation set up to provide a free education for the lepers and their children. The Brothers continue to be asked to open new foundations or to take over others. They face the same problems which confronted Canon Roland, the canon of Rheims who eventually became St. La Salle's spiritual adviser and providentially encouraged him to involve himself in education. Canon Blain's description of the dilemma facing Canon Roland and De La Salle is just as valid today: "He had to find teachers, both men and women, capable of instructing the young well and of bringing them up in piety through example as well as through their words. The problem was where to find such teachers, where to discover disinterested, zealous and pious persons fit to carry out a task of this nature. To expect them to come down from heaven already prepared and ready to undertake this task successfully would have been to take pious illusions for realities."

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Via Aurelia, 476 – 00165 ROMA, Italia

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Undoubtedly one solution continues to be that of fostering vocations to the Brothers' life. Our Brothers continue to exert their efforts in this. The District presently has 6 novices and 17 young men in various stages of pre-novitiate formation. Since the majority of our lay teachers are women, and a number have expressed interest in joining a Lasallian Sisters' congregation, we have also invited the Lasallian Sisters of Our Lady of Guadalupe to start a community in the Philippines. Two Sisters auspiciously arrived in Manila on May 15, 1984. They will also be able to respond to the vocational interests of many of our female students and alumnae.

RENEWAL WITHIN OUR INSTITUTIONS

Recent initiatives have focused on renewing our apostolic efforts both within our institutions and beyond them. This report highlights the former, especially that of sharing the Founder's spirituality and faith-perspective with those with whom we already share responsibilities in the education field. The District is confronted with the reality that Philippine education will continue to be a cooperative mission with our lay faculty and administrators, our students and their parents, our alumni and other members of the local Church and community. In light of this we have sought to bring about greater involvement and understanding of the other members of the school community regarding their vocation as "ministers of God, co-workers with Christ, ministers of the Church" in the work of Christian education.

The situation the District is responding to, is similar to that experienced by Brothers in many other districts. The 1981 Intercapitular Meeting of Brothers Visitors observed this trend and among the major recommendations they presented were: to make our work more pastoral; to be more open to the lay teachers working among us with the goal of their greater integration within the framework of our common mission and responsibility; becoming more truly "brothers"; and deepening our Lasallian roots. We have been fortunate in implementing these tasks because of the predominance of Catholics in our country, and especially, the presence in our midst of many sincere, dedicated and committed teachers.

On the concrete level we have taken the following initiatives.

PARTICIPATIVE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTITUTIONAL MISSION STATEMENTS

The different groups: faculty, students, Brothers, alumni, administrators, parents, etc., are given the opportunity to participate in the formulation and implementation of the "mission statement" of the school or institution. In essence this statement embodies the general and specific goals or objectives of the educational community vis-a-vis the needs of the students, the local community, the country, the Church etc. Very often the process is long, but the involvement of these persons serves as an important learning experience for the participants. It entails the sharing of perspectives regarding the goals of education, not only in terms of personal and national criteria, but also in reference to the vision of the Church and St. La Salle.

REORGANIZATION OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

While retaining legal control of the institutions, steps are being taken to allow more "voices" to be heard regarding the formulation and carrying out of policies and directions of our existing institutions. Each school has formed a board of trustees with a membership that is not limited to the Brothers. The larger community is represented by members chosen from among alumni, parents, the clergy, educators and professionals in the local community. Lay administrators are appointed to positions formerly occupied by Brothers. Their participation in these policy-formulating and direction-setting bodies allows for the development of the mutual commitment and interaction which gives life to the school, the Brothers' community and the local community.

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04-B-21

LASALLIAN INITIATIVES IN THE PHILIPPINES (2)

ANIMATION OF LAY ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY

By necessity as well as conviction, our schools have implemented the appeal of the 1966 General Chapter that "lay teachers should be completely involved with the whole life of the school: with catechesis, apostolic organizations, extra-curricular activities and administration." (Declaration 46,3) What our Brothers identify as a more urgent need is that of sharing with our colleagues the mission and apostolic ideals proposed by St. La Salle. We already share the work and educational responsibility. There is also the critical necessity of integrating them into the mission and spirituality which we have received as a precious Lasallian legacy. This spirit and vision we want them also to be able to call their own.

One initiative was to offer the ideals and program of the association of the *Signum Fidei*. The initial response has been enthusiastic. After a year of preparation under the guidance of Brother Victor Franco, eighteen teachers from the primary school in La Salle Green Hills consecrated themselves in February, 1984 as Signum Fidei members. In addition to regular meetings, retreats, Bible discussions, prayer and Lasallian conferences, the members volunteered their services to open and maintain a nursery school. Now thirty children of the poor receive free instruction every year to prepare them to enter primary education. The parents of these students are also given guidance regarding proper nutrition and health care for their children. Other teachers from other departments and schools have signified their interest in the association. Two members have volunteered to spend a year teaching in our schools in the rural areas where their expertise and experience are benefiting other teachers and students.

On a district-wide level, a series of Lasallian Seminars was implemented during the schoolyear 1983-1984. This series consisted of four half-day seminars conducted for each quarter of the year. The seminars were attended by members of the faculty of all our schools and conducted by a team of eight Brothers. The following topics were discussed:

a) The Evangelical Itinerary of St. La Salle
b) The Lasallian Concept of a Christian School
c) The Founder's Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher
d) The Ministry of Teaching as Seen in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.

The series of seminars was a preparation for, and will be capped by, a three-day workshop on the Lasallian charism handled by Brother Miguel Campos. In each of the schools the activities, readings, and the culminating workshop are aimed at deepening in our lay staff and the Brothers their awareness of our common Lasallian charism and spirituality. So far the results show that on the part of our co-ministers and co-workers, such an awareness and understanding of the nobility and importance of their vocation as an apostle to the young strengthens their commitment and allows them to situate their "occupation" within a broader, more spiritual context. The activities have increased their enthusiasm for their personal ministry, and drawn the faculty members one step further in the formation not only of a community of learners, but also of believers.

These initiatives have also increased our colleagues' understanding and appreciation of the Brothers' vocation. Brother Cecilio Hojilla has gone around the different La Salle schools conducting retreats at the request of the teachers. As Vocation Director he noticed that with increase in interaction between the Brothers and our religious and lay co-teachers, the latter have become more enthusiastic promoters of the Lasallian vocation among their students.

The Brothers also recognize that the material needs of our lay teachers continue to be a burden, especially since salaries can barely keep up with rising costs of living. Almost all our teachers on the

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primary and secondary level are female because it is very difficult for male breadwinners to maintain their families on a teacher's salary. Most schools try to improve salaries. Brother Rolando Dizon, President of La Salle Green Hills, took the initiative of setting up a housing association which was able to acquire bank loans for buying, developing land, and providing low-cost housing for teachers and employees of our schools and those of other religious congregations.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS FOR ALUMNI AND STUDENTS

Other initiatives have been directed towards our students and alumni, especially their personal involvement in projects for the poor and working class. These projects complement the existing programs in our schools such as fund-raising for scholarships, catechetics, and "exposures" to the needy and their social condition. In De La Salle University an alumnus, Miguel Luz, has gotten the help and support of Brother Andrew Gonzalez, the University President, in his work as head of the university's Center for Social Concern. He has succeeded in getting students to volunteer their services for a few weeks to a whole year, working or teaching in one of our rural schools. On the same campus, another group of students have organized themselves into a group to offer their talents in conducting peer-counseling and leadership-training seminars for students in secondary schools for the poor and middle class in the Greater Manila area. In La Salle Green Hills, Brother Augustine Boquer has encouraged the school's popular singing group and band in giving concerts to raise funds for needy parishes and schools. In La Salle Bacolod the college students help out in the city jail, the home for orphans and the aged as part of their theology program.

SUPERVISED SCHOOLS

The Brothers receive many requests to open more schools notwithstanding our refusals because of our lack of manpower and the prohibitive costs of building or running a school. In the Philippines the government does not subsidize nor give aid to privately-owned schools. In this situation the Brothers have developed an alternative — that of supervising schools. A contract is made with a company or a diocese in which the Brothers agree to supervise a school or school system. On its part the company or diocese agrees to provide the material needs of the school, the salaries of the teachers and administrators, the costs of developing and maintaining the school, a stipend for the Brother who will supervise the school. The Brother Visitor assigns a Brother who will visit the school regularly; supervise its operation; recommend the appointment of teachers and administrators; draw up the school's short- and long-range plans. The Brother assigned runs the school(s) as the other La Salle schools.

At the present time Brother Robert Scheiler is completing his assignment as supervisor of the diocesan schools in the diocese of Iligan in Mindanao. Brother Martin Simpson is supervising several schools: one owned and operated by a company which runs a copper mine; another which mines phosphates; another which belongs to a lumber company. While these schools may not have the permanent presence of a community of Brothers in their midst, nonetheless the Brothers strive to share with them the essential Lasallian ideals and practices. The Brothers, lay teachers and administrators of the other La Salle schools extend their help and expertise to the personnel of the supervised schools, e.g. by visiting these schools and conducting workshops or giving seminars. The faculty and administration of the supervised schools also visit the other La Salle schools for seminars and observation trips.

TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION

In the evolution of these initiatives and programs the involvement of the Brothers as individuals and as communities has led to a deeper clarification and identification of our role in the Philippine situation. With our growing number of lay faculty and administrators, the greater involvement of other members of the larger community in our school, and the continuing increase of students who flock to our schools — there is a deeper conviction that we share with many persons the charism of being "ambassadors" to the youth. In this context we see the relevance of our role as "the animating force of the school to which it gives life and direction according to its mission." (Declaration 48,6) These initiatives have had their share of difficulties and problems. But they are also the occasions for unfolding the rich meaning of our faith-commitment to be "Brothers" to our students and colleagues, and the depth of our vow to work "together and by association".

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04-C-12

CATECHESIS IN GREECE

ORGANIZATION OF CATECHESIS

The modern catechetical movement in the Catholic Church in Greece was started about 1956 by a group of catechists (priests, religious and lay people) of the Archdiocese of Athens. These catechists, recently trained in catechetical institutes in France and knowing the great advances made by the French catechetical movement, decided to translate and adapt a series of manuals in Greek.

The "new pedagogy of the faith" with all that it implies made its appearance in Greece. A catechetical commission under the direction of the local episcopal conference was officially established on 17th June, 1965. From that date onwards a general interest began to make itself felt: catechists were trained, new textbooks were introduced into the schools and parishes and, as was to be expected, the first clashes occurred. Some questioned the new methods, others the content of the programme, others still the efficacy of both programme and methods...

Despite these suspicions the Commission went ahead with its work, sometimes stressing the need to employ scientific methods in catechesis, at other times paying more attention to the content of the programme, but always careful to produce a work which was not simply new but answering to the demands of faith, respectful of tradition and adapted to modern needs. After ten years' labour the Commission has succeeded in producing a series of books for children and catechists which have met with general acceptance and appreciation. After the books for children came others for adolescents and older students. These also are excellent productions. Though there still is room for improvement and renewal we can confidently say that something of value exists in the matter of catechetical textbooks and among teaching personnel in Greece.

For some years past the two most important dioceses have each a Catechetical Commission while the others have appointed animators for the work of catechesis. Once a year the Commissions and Animators meet to exchange views on the difficulties of the task, to learn of new publications, to study the evolution of catechesis and plan for the future. They also pray together and share the joys and hopes of a difficult apostolate.

WHERE CATECHESIS TAKES PLACE

In state secondary schools obligatory religious instruction is given by specialist teachers while in primary schools such instruction is given by the local schoolmaster. Catholic students do not attend these classes, except in villages with a large Catholic majority. The parish priest normally instructs Catholic children.

In private Catholic schools the students have religious instruction at the same time as Orthodox students have theirs. Priests, Brothers, Sisters or Catholic lay teachers take charge of their religious formation. Methods differ but an effort is being made to get away from mere instruction and develop a climate of growth in faith more open and more appealing.

In the parishes. Catechism classes are held once a week. These classes have a more ecclesial character and are aimed at a more definite commitment of the students to the local church. In many parishes there are also youth groups. Their meetings provide occasions for the religious formation of the members. There are no specialised groups such as the J.E.C. and J.O.C. in Greece.

In families. The family still maintains a generally Christian atmosphere which is shown by its adherence to certain religious practices, customs and habits. Popular religion holds a greater place in the lives of the people than Christian practices enlightened by faith.

SOME ASPECTS OF CATECHESIS IN GREECE

The following are some of the characteristics of catechesis in Greece:

Catechesis of a minority: Many instances recall the little communities of the early Church: the numbers, the places themselves and the problems are reminiscent of that era.

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Traditional character of catechesis: The influence on Catholic children of their Orthodox friends is clearly evident in their attitude of "tradition - repetition - withdrawal". They lack the dynamism that western Catholics normally exhibit. The rather infrequent catechetical meetings are not always able to counteract this tendency. Nevertheless many catechists have the will and energy to go against this current.

A catechesis to be developed: A priori it is difficult to live Catholicism in an Orthodox country. In the minds of most Orthodox people Catholic: western i.e. French or Italian. Orthodox: Greek.

It is difficult for any non Orthodox person to have him or herself accepted as Greek. This is due to certain historical misunderstandings and the mishandling of Greeks by the West. For Catholics in Greece the future must follow a path which clearly shows in the Church diversity in the expression of the faith and acceptance of the contribution of other Churches to the work of evangelization. Dialogue with the Orthodox Church has still to be developed.

A catechesis which awakens faith. If the traditional character of catechesis makes it look rather out of date it must not blind us to the efforts being made to question and change it... Modern developments and the problems which they create demand a different style of life and thought. A desire for a more intense life of faith is making itself felt. Reflection and study groups are being formed which adopt a mode of life and expression free from abstractions.

A non clerical catechesis. More and more lay people are taking part in catechesis for children and young people. What is encouraging in this movement is that it is taking place, not in the sectors where priests and religious are few but where, objectively, there are sufficient priests for the work. In this movement we must stress the role of religious.

Ecumenical catechesis. Although the understanding of the Mystery of Christ and His Church is identical in the Eastern and Western Churches and the remaining differences arise from different and legitimate interpretations, nevertheless, we cannot, in the immediate future foresee collaboration between the Churches in the matter of catechesis. The reasons are:

1. The Catholic Church, very much a minority, must not allow itself to be absorbed by the Orthodox but must preserve its identity. Hence the (Roman) Catholic Church's reservations concerning everything connected with Eastern tradition.
2. The Orthodox Church, very much the majority, presses with all its weight on the small number of Catholics and is reluctant to enter into dialogue with the Catholic Church. Sometimes it puts obstacles in the way of dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Greek Government in order to maintain its position as the Church of the majority.

Between these two extremes there is a wide area of possible collaboration. Paths have been traced and efforts made towards greater mutual understanding. Hostility is giving way to a climate of mutual confidence.

LASALLIAN CONTRIBUTION TO CATECHESIS

The Brothers' schools are centres of catechesis in Greece. In the parishes the Brothers, and lay teachers trained by them, contribute to the animation of various catechetical groups. The Brothers are also in the forefront of publication of catechetical books and teaching material.

Some of the Brothers have been invited by local churches to take an active part in the organization of catechetical work in the dioceses.

SOME STATISTICS ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GREECE

Population of Greece	10,000,000	inhabitants
Catholics	40,000	inhabitants
Number of dioceses	11	
Catholic Educational Establishments	23	
Catholic students in these establishments	1,316	
Orthodox students in these establishments	10,340	
Children catechised in parishes	2,000	(appx.)
Archdiocese of Athens	25,000	faithful
Diocese of Syros	7,000	faithful

Bro. F. VARTHALITIS, FSC
National Secretary of the Catechetical Commission of Greece
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THE SCHOOL OF ST. J-B DE LA SALLE (1): INTRODUCTION

04-C-13

EDUCATOR AND SAINT

He was certainly not an educator first and a saint afterwards. A master of pedagogy, he was also a past master in the art of guiding souls in the ways of the Spirit. Yet for more than two hundred years he has been better known as an educator than as an ascetical writer.

"If we did not dwell at some length on his educational achievements we would fail to understand fully the man and would, in fact, overlook the most original characteristic of his sanctity, and that which has made his influence so widespread" (1).

De La Salle was a born director, a sure guide, an organiser who could bring to fruition the precise ideas conceived by a lucid mind. Wherever he went, he left things in order and did away with routine. He was a creative genius well in advance of his time.

Rigault makes clear the attitude of de La Salle when he undertook to have Nyel's foundations in Rheims accepted: "The first step, by no means timid, but circumspect, of the future organiser of primary education" (2).

His role did not consist in sitting in a classroom teaching children though he did this occasionally (3). That does not prevent us from recognizing in him a man who had an outstanding knowledge of people and knew how to make himself acceptable to them. He had a perfect understanding of the human heart. On one occasion he remarked that he had only to hear a person speak a few words to know what that person was. His manner of governing the Brothers and the psychological notes he has left us in his writings show that he knew how to handle people.

We can more easily imagine the saint in an attitude of prayer than as a traveller and writer. He was an extraordinarily active man who had to impose on himself a rigid spiritual programme for the days when he found it impossible to pray with the community (4).

The day was not long enough for de La Salle, he needed hours of the night for writing (5). He has left us almost three thousand pages of writings in which we find an almost equal proportion of ascetical elements and of those of a pedagogical or educational nature.

Rather than by observing or copying other educationalists or religious legislators, de La Salle drew his inspiration from the experiences lived each day both by himself and by the community, reflecting in each line the limpidity of his soul, his exigent and practical mind in regard to himself and others which sought to lead people to the transcendent but also wanted them to live it in the present.

He undertook nothing without invoking the light of the Holy Spirit so that his Meditations are for the teacher a manual for action and, at the same time, a spiritual guide which aims at forming his spiritual personality at the deepest level.

His teachings are well thought out and expressed in precise terms with the aim of strengthening the Brother in his vocation as a teacher. It is the father encouraging his son. De La Salle has no doubt that in forming the souls of his disciples he is at the same time forging the spirit of the Christian school. What preoccupies our Founder is the desire to see the school "well conducted". (An expression already well-known in Lasallian circles.) This meant that it should be:

— a source of edification by the competent way in which it was run,
— attractive to the pupils,
— a place of formation for the minds and hearts of children,
— a place of preparation for life and in the art of living,
— concerned to form children in the faith and to good habits.

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Lastly, de La Salle shows his interest in the success of the school by his insistence on the constancy of the teachers. In his writings, as in his life, de La Salle does not try to attract attention to himself by making a lot of noise. On the contrary, he gently influences our minds and souls as we gradually enter into dialogue with him (7).

His style is that of clear reasoning which draws its conclusions from lived experience. He wants us to be saints as well as good educators, prepared to die, if necessary, in the service of our ministry (8).

DE LA SALLE, A MAN OF HIS TIME (9)

We cannot, of course, ask de La Salle to solve all the problems of today for us. He is neither an oracle to give an answer to every question nor a yoke to carry on our shoulders as a burden we must bear.

A man of his time, he bears the marks of the paths he has trodden. Nevertheless, he has had inspirations of a universal character and we must recognize that, in his capacity as Founder, God intervened in his life for the good of the Society he was called upon to found. He had other inspirations limited to the era in which he lived, to its culture and to the places where he carried on his work: regulations, influences, recommendations in his letters, etc.

We recognise the universal inspiration which goes beyond time and place when:

— he speaks of the spirit of the Institute, the spirit of faith and the spirit of zeal,

— he bases our whole life on personal and community piety,

— as master of the spiritual life, he recommends the presence of God as a means of tending to perfection,

— he points out that Christian education aims at the development of an evangelical attitude in the person involved in and with society,

— as an eminent educator he tells us to transmit a deep human culture as a basis for the formation of a Christian personality (10).

We are invited today to return to the sources, not to copy slavishly, but to discover what were the principal forces and motivations which caused him to act and which constituted the leaven which permeated his work which was destined to spread throughout the world. That means possessing within ourselves the charism of the Founder.

Our Declaration leads us along this path when it urges each one of us to make the spiritual principles which inspired our Founder part of his own life.

De La Salle was in advance of his time in many respects. By penetrating himself with the spirit of the Gospel he sought and found man in what he has of the eternal.

"M. de La Salle? He is a volunteer of progress, of continuity of development, an enemy of school segregation, a pioneer of learning through French, of personalized education and of monthly evaluation" (11). "It was in thinking about the progress that could be made that he broke with routine and brought to perfection methods which had been employed before his time" (12).

NOTES

(1) Ravelet: St. J-B de La Salle, p. 345 (an article by Rigault added to the biography)
(2) Rigault: General History of the Institute, T. 1, p. 345.
(3) The Saint had taught class in Rheims, Grenoble, Avignon and Vans (cf. Rigault, T. 1, pp. 366 and 374).
(4) "Rules which I imposed on myself" (Cahiers Lasalliens, No. 8, p. 319).
(5) Brother Bernard (Cahiers Lasalliens, No. 4, p. 20).
(6) Rigault, T. 1, pp. 329 and 549).
(7) Luis Diumenge: El Amor en la Doctrina de San J-B de La Salle San Pio X, 1971, p. 43).
(8) Meditation, No. 155 (St. Cassian).
(9) Cf. Diumenge, p. 43. Sauvage: Catechèse et Laïcat, p. 47.
(10) Discourse of Brother Superior General at opening of General Chapter, 1976.
(11) Léon de Marie Aroz, Cahiers Lasalliens, No. 40/1, p. 6.
(12) Rigault, T. 1, p. 541. Refer to Management of Schools. Rigault mentions this, p. 562 and following pages.

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THE SCHOOL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE (2)
A school for the most needy

DE LA SALLE, A MAN FOR OTHERS

For de La Salle the service of the poor was not just an ideal but a way of life. He experienced in his own flesh what it was to be poor and to be treated as such. He made himself poor: a man available to others.

To become so he had had to renounce his canonry, dispose of his property — something not done at the time, according to Blain — and subject himself to community life for some forty years.

De La Salle had not far to go to meet the poor: he had them with him in the person of the Brothers. He had to begin with a rescue operation: rescuing them from ignorance and from the contempt in which schoolmasters were then held; settling them in their employment and inspiring them with love for their vocation as teachers.

Besides poverty of spirit he also experienced poverty in his body. In Vaugirard they had scarcely enough to eat. That house has remained the prototype of extreme want and of the most generous fervour. The Brothers lived joyfully in almost absolute poverty. They were following in the footsteps of a real giant of holiness and generosity of spirit. The saint had no need to urge the Brothers on, he had rather to restrain them. Some of them died young. The local people called the house the "little Trappist Monastery" (2).

In this climate of detachment and fervour the Brothers did not consider the words of their father exaggerated when he told them, "You are obliged by your state in life to love the poor since the task you have is to devote yourselves to teaching them" (3).

De La Salle always sought to take the most perfect path in order to do what was most pleasing to God. The voice he listened to was not that of the flesh or of nature but that of the Spirit who manifested himself in the calls made on him: priests who joined him, missions he preached, the reform school he opened at Saint Yon at the request of his friend, M. de Pontcarré. Louis XIV himself, who saw in the organization of primary education a powerful instrument for combatting Protestantism, sought the help of de La Salle whom he aided, for his part, by according him a form of protection and official recognition. His successor granted the Letters Patent later (4).

Much is said today about protecting the worker, about living among the people... Nobody took as great an interest in the people as did de La Salle. He must be ranked amongst those who tried to rescue the children of the poorest classes from the abject situation in which they lived. One of his principal preoccupations was to prepare them for a stable employment which would enable them to make a living. The instrument he used to attain this end was the provision of popular education to which all had access. In addition he provided secondary education at Saint Yon for the children of the better-off.

If he established boarding schools (the first was in Guise) and if his disciples opened more later on, they did so with a view to supporting free schools for the poor.

THE BROTHERS WERE FOUNDED TO TEACH THE POOR

The words "poor", "poverty", "indigence" abound in the vocabulary of de La Salle throughout his writings. Poverty is a constant preoccupation with him.

He wanted and he established free schools. That does not mean that the poor alone attended them. They were open to all. Nevertheless, as we read in the Rules, it was the poor, above all, who were to fill the classes.

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That meant: the sons of workers who, though employed, had no professional qualifications (artisans) or worse still, the poor who had no steady work and had to be content with casual labour (5).

Those who attended the Brothers' schools were the children of the poorer classes. By improving the profession of teaching and teaching methods, while at the same time giving the school a "soul", the master, de La Salle, created among the sons of the workers and their families a current of hope which enabled them to face life with a degree of optimism.

Throughout the Institute we have heard anew the unanimous voice of the Brothers (and it is a sign of vitality) demanding that their lives be dedicated to the most needy, putting them, as did de La Salle, at the centre of the work in which they are engaged.

The Regional Chapter of Spain and our own District Chapter, in their reports and proposals, are in complete accord with this general feeling, when they define, with precision and in the spirit of the Declaration, those amongst us who are the poor and most needy today.

Here is how they define them: Today's poor are the people who live their lives on the fringe of society, those without work, those who work for a wage which does not cover basic family needs. The poor are those who live in inhuman conditions of poverty, hunger, violence, illness, social emargination, or who are physically or mentally handicapped. These are the people who have particular need of our assistance (7).

We work for the most needy when:

— we teach backward pupils who have little ability;

— we try to raise the cultural level of parents;

— we try to find jobs for school leavers so that they may continue to lead the Christian lives begun at school;

— we give of our time, our strength and our person to make up for the lack of parental love and understanding and of faith (8);

— we want to speed up adaptation of our collective life style to the material standards of the milieu in which we work and of the educational establishments of which we have charge (9);

— we share our goods with others;

— we encourage the elite groups which we direct to make common cause with with the poor and promote the training of: urban and rural leaders, social organizers and animators, trades union leaders among the workers.

Our documents evidently follow the lines of the Founder's charism. However, the fact of having a clear vision of the ideal does not necessarily mean that we completely identify with it. What has changed in our way of acting is perhaps that we are unwilling to give up the comforts and security that modern life offers. Materialism has influenced us.

We find it easier to talk for an hour about the poor and their needs than to endure their presence for fifteen minutes. We must begin by living the reality of each day with a heart and spirit poor in the sight of God and in the presence of others. Let us follow the example of God who acts gratuitously, bestowing His gifts on us in abundance and with generosity. In school the Brother co-operates with God in revealing Him to his pupils and in being, himself, a GIFT to them.

NOTES

(1) Blain, T. 1, p. 216 (CL 7).
(2) Rigault, T. 1, p. 254.
(3) Meditation 173,1.
(4) Role of Louis XIV, Boarding school for Irish boys. Calais school for sailors' sons and sailors on shore. At Boulogne-sur-mer he gave them land to build a school. Prison established at Saint Yon. Cf. Blain, T. 11, p. 71 and T. 1, p. 367. Rigault, T. 1, p. 41 and T. 5, pp. 267-273.
(5) Poutet Y., T. 1, p. 105.
(6) Declaration, 28,2-3; 28,1; 13,4; 31,6; 34,4.
(7) Boletin de la Asistencia, No. 60, pp. 263ss (1975).
(8) Rules 86.
(9) Declaration, 49,1.
(10) Rules, 6bc.
(11) Declaration, 31,6.
(12) Meditation 196, 197.

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THE TENDERNESS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
A characteristic beloved of children and young people

GENERAL SITUATION

Lebanese youth has been deeply marked by the fires of war during the last nine years. Family, school and social life has been disrupted. Besides, Lebanese schools differ so widely as regards ideology, cultural level and moral and religious standards that those of the Brothers must give evidence of very special values if they are not to be regarded as just a few among many others without any distinguishing characteristics. If Lasallian schools in the Lebanon have a high reputation it is due more to comparison with others than to any intrinsic merit they may have. But the prestige of the Brothers' establishments among both Christians and Moslems is beyond question. There are, of course, defects in the system and the atmosphere in which we work is far from favourable, yet the student educated in the Brothers' schools considers himself privileged in comparison with his peers in other schools.

As child and adolescent, the student moves from class to class and, one way or another, acquires knowledge and develops a certain spirit which, without being necessarily Lasallian, is not far removed from it. This is due, in large measure, to the fact that the Brothers still form 8% of the teaching staff.

PARTICULAR SITUATION

At all times and more particularly in conditions of continual war, pupil and teacher experience a special need of affection and understanding. Thinking particularly of the pupil, I can affirm that he expects from me, a De La Salle Brother, much more than I give him. Worried by the constant threat of violence, deafened by the explosion of missiles and of hatred, stricken directly by the deaths of his loved ones or indirectly by those of his neighbours, and disheartened by an insecure future, he must find a motive for living. Only adults who have a living faith and a hope proof against all trials, can give him confidence. Nothing is more reassuring than a love which resembles that of God. But the daily worries of parents, the indifference of those who should sympathise with and help him, the display of luxury by some people, fear, life in the shelters and internal tensions in families destroy this love or render it rare or unhealthy.

A PASTOR'S TENDERNESS

By speaking to a Lebanese child or young person of the goodness of St. John Baptist de La Salle and by giving him tangible proofs of it in your relations with that person, you open up to him ways of calming his nerves and warming his heart. He is moved and attracted by the serenity of the saint when he realizes all the depth of love in his life and work. I must show him de La Salle as a man who had a motive for living, love for young people and care for their salvation. He will then raise his eyes to the Good Shepherd who never deserts his flock even when he sees the wolf coming. The image of the Good Shepherd so moved our saint that he frequently returns to it in his Meditations.

> "They should manifest great tenderness for the souls confided to them so that anything which might be capable of injuring or wounding these souls will call for their attention. In this manner the sheep will love the shepherd and be pleased in his company since they will find therein their repose and their relief." (33rd Meditation, 2nd point)

One would think that this text was written for me, today, in my position as a Brother in the midst of young Lebanese, victims of so much violence. The grace to love more is the grace, par excellence, of my "today", a grace which must increase in my heart through prayer to the true shepherd of the flock.

THE BROTHER AS SACRAMENT OF LOVE

> "Picture Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep, puts it on his shoulders and carries it back to the flock; since you take his place, consider yourself obliged to do the same."

Like Jesus, John Baptist de La Salle "had pity on the people (the children) without a shepherd" and from all appearances, left in the hands of mercenaries. This is, unfortunately, the case with the youth of Lebanon. Extremist ideologies pretend to offer salvation to man.

> "Having sacrificed his life for theirs, to make them good Christians and worthy sons of the Church, he asks nothing less from his brothers." (175th Meditation, 3rd point)

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How many faces are brightened by the Brother's smile, his welcome, his attention, and his kindly word which is none other than the word of Jesus who speaks through his mouth. The respect and affection given to the child helps him to become more aware of his dignity as a younger brother of Jesus. This in no way affects the firmness required for a good Christian and human education. A boy who feels unloved will respond unwillingly to our approaches. Distrustful, he closes up and submits only under constraint. He "recognises the good shepherd" by his kindly manner, divines the noble motives which make him act and trusts him without complexes. On the other hand, he quickly unmasks the mercenary behind the most subtle disguises. The great test is love. He feels it and is not deceived. His confidences reveal much on this matter.

I am judged by the love which makes me worthy of his attention and admiration, in which case I become for him a bearer of the Good News and a model to imitate. I awaken in his heart a desire for truth and love, for openness and intimacy with Jesus Christ.

> "You have poor children to teach every day. Love them tenderly after the example of Jesus Christ". (111th Meditation, 2nd point)
> "The greater the tenderness you show for the members of Jesus Christ and of his Church, the more wonderful will be the effects of grace which God will produce in them."
> "The salvific action of God in their regard is expressed first and above all by the tenderness of his gratuitous love of which the Brother becomes for them the visible sacrament". (Announcing the Good News to the Poor, p. 327)

In the "Management of Schools" de La Salle recommends that "a new teacher should always have a joyful air, a calm expression and an outward appearance which suggests a solid character, full of kindness" (Management of Schools, Brother Anselme, p. 308). That is because in the eyes of the pupils the Brother is the ambassador of Jesus Christ, the one who writes his letter on the heart of the young. This noble mission demands a lot of patience and much tenderness.

> "You must consider the obligation you have to win their hearts as the principal means of getting them to live in a Christian manner." (111th Meditation, 3rd point)
> "Do you avail yourself of the affection the children have for you to attract them to God?" (101st Meditation, 3rd point)

DISCIPLES

A pupil becomes a disciple when he has formed a real bond of friendship with the Brother in whom he finds a model to imitate. He will have for him a loving respect which will lead him to seek his guidance in time of trouble or when he has a serious decision to make. The Brother, for his part, will direct his disciple to the one true Master, source of all tenderness. "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of heart... Come to Me all you who labour and are heavy burdened and I will refresh you".

As a brilliant teacher the Brother may dazzle the pupil's mind, as an expert organiser he is not without influence on young people, but with a warm heart he has a deeper impact which lasts beyond school and influences the life of the person and his future relationships.

AT WHAT PRICE?

Such an attitude of kindness demands as much from me as it did from St. John Baptist de La Salle: a spirit of faith and zeal, self abnegation, the generous gift of myself. Far from being merely a question of temperament or a hobby, it involves my honesty, my authenticity, my fidelity and my consecration. It is not enough to know theoretically about the love of the Founder for young people, I must be in a position to draw that love, and the manner of speaking about it, at its source. I must employ the same means as he did: meditation, the Eucharist, Penance, interior life, living with young people in order to get to know them and allow them to discover through personal contact how much I am interested in them and how much I love them with a strong, pure love.

A witness only is credible; a witness to Someone who is not distant like a character from history, but who becomes present through my relations and reactions. I must be able to experience his presence within me and in the young person to whom I speak so that "it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me". "His Spirit alone can touch hearts". "He asks this miracle of me and helps me to perform it", according to St. John Baptist de La Salle.

THE COMMUNITY

The witness of kindness is also an obligation for the Community. My personal role retains all its importance but it can be neutralized. Serious, continuous and concerted action on the part of the Community is necessary to inspire in the young reflexes of confidence in each Brother. A warm homely atmosphere must be created in our educative communities. Is not this the only way to contribute to "the work of God" in the souls of the Lebanese boys who attend our schools?

EXPERIMENTS IN AWARENESS

With this end in view we undertook, three years ago, to sensitize our lay collaborators to the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Organized courses, extending over two years and illustrated by films and films strips etc. were attended by over two hundred of our lay teachers. To encourage their participation we paid them for the time involved. Several of them did not conceal their satisfaction at discovering a patron and father in their educative mission. In the schools certain relationships have shown a decided improvement as a result of these courses.

It is but a beginning and the first step of a very long journey.

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04-D-06

ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE HERE AND NOW

FIRST, LET US FACE REALITY

The experience of St. J.B. de La Salle shows that before developing theories, regulations or programmes it is necessary to:

a) change our attitude as regards things and people: conversion;
b) examine reality to discover what God, who is there present, requires of us;
c) act conformably to these attitudes, that is to say, in "the spirit of faith".

The same invitation has been given to us in our own day by the Second Vatican Council, the Declaration on the Brother in the World Today and by the Latin-American bishops at their meeting in Puebla in 1979.

IN TODAY'S REALITY WE FIND GOD AND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Our sub-continent is faced with countless problems. The situation is all the more distressing as it concerns a supposedly Christian sub-continent with a large Catholic majority.

Among the most pressing problems we must underline:

1) those pertaining to the biological needs of people: drinking water, physical health, food, work, housing and clothing;
2) social needs: family life, solidarity, sharing cultural advantages;
3) spiritual needs: strengthening of religious practice, improvement and intensification of evangelization and of catechesis;
4) cultural needs: a higher cultural level, preservation and development of local cultures, creation and development of new and better social attitudes, of better patterns of social behaviour, institutions for the safeguarding of our cultural heritage, more advanced scientific and technological research;
5) the conception and realization of an integrated social system which could create a future more just and more worthy of human beings;
6) the crying need for education (more than 30% of the population are illiterate) and the pressing demand of the people for the recognition of and respect for their human dignity.

All these needs combine to create among the people of the sub-continent a tendency towards a general attitude of fatalistic submission, or lead to ever increasing explosions of irrational physical violence.

On the other hand, due to present-day international interdependence, we are subjected to the impact of technologically more advanced civilizations. This impact is intensified by the rapid growth of cities and the development of the mass media. It is evident in a new disintegration of our cultural identity, a growing tendancy to imitate Herod and the diffusion of ideologies such as the capitalistic consumer society or the military totalitarianism of left and right. Side by side with these ideologies we see the spread of laicism and nihilism. The result is the increasing number of people who are indifferent to religion or who become adherents of non-Catholic groups or join esoteric sects.

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THE TEACHING OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, HERE AND NOW

Axiology teaches us that one of the dimensions of "value" consists in answering a physical, psychological, spiritual or social need. In order, therefore, that a value system of principles and criteria (Lasallian thought, for example) may not remain at the level of theoretical speculation it must answer real needs and give to the existence of individuals and of groups a greater significance than that offered by alternative systems.

It seems to me that such is the case with the teaching of John Baptist de La Salle as regards our sub-continent. Let us examine it more closely:

1) Preferential Option In Favour Of The Poor. The teaching of de La Salle was confirmed in Latin America by the pastoral decision of the bishops of the Latin American Episcopal Conference who urged us at all times and on every occasion to make an option in favour of the poor. Such an option has all the connotations that the concept has held in Lasallian thinking from the beginning and which was directed in the first place towards, bio-psychological needs, but also towards those of a socio-cultural and spiritual nature.

In this field we still lack many Lasallians genuinely involved at every level and in every position in society.

2) Education. This task is a priority for us in the case of children (as in the time of St. J.B. de La Salle) but also in the case of other age groups. The Latin American bishops also urged us to make a preferential option in favour of the young.

That is why we consider the prophetic role of education, characteristic of our Institute, particularly important and necessary in our sub-continent.

I would go farther and say that education must be expanded to reach more sectors of the population, even those at the highest level.

We think that every Lasallian, whatever his condition, should educate himself in order to educate others, and that we must, like St. J.B. de La Salle, begin by educating the educators themselves.

3) Complete Development of the Human Person. The basic aim of education is the development of the human person in all his dignity.

Catholic education aims to educate the whole person in the transcendent light of Christ's teaching. The Lasallian concept aims at the complete development of the person from a view point, at once theological and pedagogical. This concept was formulated especially in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat.*

The teaching of St. J-B. de La Salle gives us a perspective which is perfectly adapted to a real respect for and a true development of the human person. In effect, a thorough understanding of de La Salle's teaching leads to the creation of conditions which make for a personalized education which helps the person to grow and develop, and in which the individual takes responsibility for his personal development as well as for that of the society in which history has placed him.

4) Fraternity as an Effective Means of Communion and Participation. Extreme attitudes of subservience or violence cannot be eliminated from society unless there is a real possibility of participation and solidarity amongst all classes. Such a climate is a necessary condition for mutual recognition of the personal dignity of each one and of the greatness and weaknesses inherent in the human condition. Such recognition is, in turn, the basis of mutual understanding and the human foundation for true brotherhood.

What is more, Christian brotherhood, which makes us all equal as children of God and unites us in his love, does away with servile submission as well as with irrational violence.

5) The View-point of Faith. To see things in the light of faith gives a greater dimension to human and temporal values both for the welfare of man and of society. The viewpoint of faith, an essential point in Lasallian teaching, gives to our option in favour of the poor, in favour of education, of the human person and of brotherhood, a content, a value, a dynamism and an appeal which are truly supernatural. Understood thus, the viewpoint of faith becomes essential if we are to face with hope our situation at this moment in our history.

The teaching of St. J.B. de La Salle, therefore, provides, here and now, a real answer to the sufferings and hopes of the Latin American people. If it is not effective it is not because it lacks power to transform, power which it has in abundance, but because the men are wanting who could incarnate it and apply it with decision, integrity and fidelity.

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THE BROTHERS' COMMITMENT TO THE POOR OF HAITI

CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY

— Though it has a climate that could easily make of it an earthly paradise, Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world.

— The population is 83% rural. In the towns 80% of the people live in a state of destitution or near destitution. In rural areas the situation is even more deplorable. 94% of the people live in conditions unfit for human beings.

— The state of health of the people is among the worst in the world. Infant mortality is as high as 150 per 1,000 births compared to Haiti's two neighbours: the Dominican Republic with 43 per 1,000 and Jamaica with 22 per 1,000. 60% of the people suffer from malnutrition.

— An estimated 85% of the population are illiterate. In the towns 89% of children of school-going age get some education but in rural areas only 26% go to school. 50% of children in the towns finish primary school whereas only 4% reach that stage in rural areas. Children are taught through the medium of French but in recent years there is a movement to introduce Creole into the schools.

The country is mountainous with only one seventh of the land suitable for cultivation. Wealthy townspeople own the fertile valleys while the peasants are forced to eke out a living in the barren mountainous areas. At the economic level things are no better. Industry is concentrated in the towns (90% of it in Port-au-Prince). Only two thirds of the rural population earn more than $40 a year while about 3,000 families in Port-au-Prince have an income exceeding $100,000 a year.

SOME HISTORIC LANDMARKS

1974: The first Brother arrives on l'Ile de la Tortue. He can expect no reinforcements from Montréal since the novitiate was closed in 1969. Soon he is given charge of the school of the Palmists. In the Autumn, however, two Brothers come to his aid, one from Guadaloupe and one from the Cameroons.

1976: After an unsuccessful attempt in the north east two Brothers begin work in Fatima, a poor quarter of Port-au-Prince.

1977: The Brothers are asked to take over St. Joseph's school from the Brothers of Christian Doctrine of Ploërmel who are leaving Port-au-Prince.

1978: Two new Brothers replace the Brothers of Christian Doctrine in Saint Louis du Nord.

1980: The de Montfort Fathers ask the Brothers to take over the secondary school which serves as a junior seminary.

1982: Two Brothers form a community together with two young teachers who express a wish to become Brothers. This is the beginning of a formation centre.

1984: Next September will see the opening of a novitiate with three novices: two Haitians and a Canadian. Three postulants and seven aspirants, who live in, together with fifteen aspirants who live at home, are preparing to enter the novitiate.

Balance sheet. After ten years there are twenty Brothers, six communities and a promising intake of recruits.

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"GO FORTH FROM THE LAND OF YOUR KINSFOLK AND FROM YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE TO A LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU" (Gen. 12,1)

Brothers heard that call of God. They left home at an age when most people are thinking of retirement or of a less exacting occupation. They gave up a life which was, perhaps, too easy, well paid posts and comfortable security, to go to a country which, from the material point of view, is among the most deprived on the face of the earth. They heard, more or less clearly, the cry of a people, "poor, afflicted and oppressed" (Dt. 26,7). They left a country where for years the Brothers have been questioning their identity and their mission for a land where the situation is similar to that experienced by St. John Baptist de La Salle in Rheims or Paris and which caused him to write, "The working class and the poor being usually occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their families cannot give their children the needed instruction nor a suitable Christian education". (Common Rule and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools)

In the social conditions described above we can easily understand how the Brothers rediscovered their identity and their sense of mission in all its actuality. "All disorders, especially among the working class and the poor, usually arise from their having been, in childhood, left to themselves and badly brought up. It is almost impossible to repair this evil at a more advanced age because the bad habits they have acquired are overcome only with great difficulty, and scarcely ever entirely..." (Ibid, 1,6).

In such circumstances, political and economic solutions seem doomed to failure as long as the exploitation of others remains engraved on the hearts of Haitians. Real change, whether political, economic or social can only be brought about through a change of heart. As long as Haitians fail to recognise one another as a brother to be loved and helped rather than as somebody to be used to one's own advantage, then all reforms are worthless.

The principal reason for the Brothers' presence in Haiti is, "to give a Christian education to children by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and by inspiring them with Christian maxims".

"ONE COMMITMENT LED TO ANOTHER WITHOUT MY HAVING FORESEEN IT FROM THE BEGINNING" (Blain I, 169)

That is how the Institute began in France. That is how it began in Haiti. A series of circumstances led the Brothers to commit themselves beyond what they had envisaged and, perhaps, beyond the dictates of prudence. As in the case of St. J.B. de La Salle, "God who orders all things with wisdom and sweetness and who does not compel the will of man, did it gradually and imperceptibly". (Ibid.)

In spite of initial hesitations, in spite of misgivings each time a new initiative was considered, the Lord guided the Brothers "suaviter ac fortiter" in the path He wished them to follow. Primary schools, literacy centres, co-operatives and a trade school were all undertakings forced on the Brothers by the circumstances in which they found themselves.

When the first stage was completed there remained the question of priorities. These have now been established. The first priority is the formation of teachers to provide for children and adolescents educators sufficiently committed to their mission to resist the attraction of large centres or foreign countries. With this in view great attention is paid to the pastoral ministry of vocations in order to provide a future nucleus of young men who are prepared to dedicate their lives to the service of the Lord by helping their brothers to escape from the modern forms of slavery which oppress them.

As there is a great need for evangelization of the young we are trying to establish a "Faith School" where, besides strengthening their own faith, young and not so young people will commit themselves to the work of catechesis in the different schools of the towns.

If the Brothers wish to work for the very poorest they must, without abandoning it completely, move away from the well-beaten track of academic education to devote the greater part of their energy and resources to starting trade centres for training in simple trades which young people can practise in their own locality or which will help them find work in production centres.

The Brothers hope that the future Haitian Brothers will be able to gather round them other teachers with whom they can share their ideal of educative service of the poor in schools which draw their inspiration from living Lasallian tradition.

If the Canadian Brothers can call forth and form a first generation of Haitian Lasallians then their stay in Haiti, however short, will not have been in vain.

Bro. Richard DUPONT, FSC
Director of the Novitiate - PORT-DE-PAIX - HAITI

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04-0-02

MIGUEL FEBRES CORDERO, TODAY

Some may think that a saint from the last century is a museum piece or a useful instrument for maintaining an unjust and oppressive status quo. The holy Brother Miguel Febres Cordero has nothing in common with such a picturesque but misleading caricature.

From 1854 when he first saw the light in the Andean city of Cuenca, Ecuador, to 9th February, 1910, when his soul sought the peaceful abode of the Father of all men, one could say that, lovingly and tirelessly, he built up "a personality of extraordinary unity and coherence. This, in fact, is what characterises the saints more than anything else."

This unity is the antithesis of diversity. It forms a single texture, a vital synthesis. "How", asks Brother Miguel, "can you call 'Life' an existence without the love of God?" That is how he proposed to live and that is how he experienced the full human development which requires that we identify with people of flesh and blood. He expressed his thought clearly: "Jesus called himself the Son of Man and so identified himself with all humanity that He considered as done to himself the good or evil done to men. 'Whoever receives one such child in my Name receives Me'."

His life found its unity by centering itself on the existential love of God for mankind; the love of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of the Amerindian. What is striking in Brother Miguel is his fundamental coherence: he lived what he believed and loved to do so. The living God, Father of all men, came to meet him. Miguel accepted the challenge:

> "Since you want me for yourself alone
> I give myself to you without reserve".

He lived the demanding experience of the God of nations and took mankind seriously. Nothing remained for him but to devote himself indefatigably to spreading the Kingdom among men. His intellectual interests, the appealing work of catechesis and the daily grind of teaching, even for an expert educator, all formed part of his religious sense of existence.

It cannot be denied that the strong personality of Miguel speaks to the Latin-American of today. He made a notable contribution to the strengthening of national sentiment in Ecuador. He was interested in the rich tradition of the people and played an effective role in developing our literary culture. He appreciated the value of certain forms of speech of our people and defended them on grounds of semantics and philology as well as by appeals to common sense. He wrote popular songs which contained plenty of sentiment but also expressed with impeccable style deep spiritual concepts.

The Latin-American Church has opted for the poor. Miguel was happy in the midst of children, many of whom were poor. It was the latter that he preferred. On the occasion of a First Communion ceremony he noted, "Many of the children are poor but on this day their hearts are of gold". His example spoke eloquently of his respect for the humble. It was a factor in mutual understanding and encouraged reciprocal service and a closing of the ranks against egotism. He zealously cultivated human solidarity.

As a plant seeks the light so Miguel sought the truth and defended it with firmness in spite of his natural reserve and childlike humility. In the face of danger this frail Brother showed none of the fear experienced by others and demonstrated the courage and sang froid of the man who has learned self control and has unshakeable confidence in God. This was the case in Quito during the Liberal Revolution of 1895 and during the tragic week in Barcelona in 1909.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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Miguel lived and worked within a social, cultural and religious structure derived from the colonial system and the Council of Trent. One cannot, therefore, expect from him post-conciliary theories and attitudes. The Theology of Revolution and Liberation Theology had not yet appeared nor had jet planes and modern information systems. It is clear, nevertheless, that his critical mind and creative personality did not stick rigidly to the path of routine.

An insatiable desire for change and renewal drove him to strive for a total and permanent conversion which would liberate him from the idols and oppressive structures which are the consequences of sin. His intimate and private life reveals this much more than his community and social life, limited as it was by the conventions of the time in which he lived. The saints have all endured such limitations. In spite of them the basic orientation of his life is a constant invitation to surmount such limitations.

Far from allowing himself to become alienated, he never fled from reality whether in Quito or in Europe. With love he contributed his share of hard work and personal influence to the construction of a world less unjust and more human. He perfected the educational system, wrote school text books which were of real value and inspired by love of country and opened the way to new educational thinking amongst us.

He was an effective force in the cause of democratization and devoted himself with intelligence, wisdom and a sense of responsibility to the causes considered just in the context of his time. His love for his country led him to struggle day after day for its greatness and prosperity.

Son of America, he was by that very fact a son of Mary. Brother Miguel is no museum piece. For every Amerindian he is a living encouragement in the daily struggle for improvement.

His motto could well have been. "Excelsior! Always higher! Always farther! For God and for Mary in the midst of my people!"

Brother Oswaldo RUALES, Visitor
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No. 5

1st February 1985

FOREWORD

This number begins with a reminder that this is International Youth Year and with an appeal to make it a year of special activity in the service of the children, adolescents and young people for whom we work.

This appeal is, of course, not really necessary because you, readers of Lasalliana, are already well aware of the event. It seems to me, however, that we cannot pay too much attention to it.

There are many ways of serving the educational interests of the young as is shown by Lasallian activities throughout the world. The first four numbers of Lasalliana helped to give some idea of the diversity of these activities.

In this number also you will find examples of the creativity and commitment of Lasallian communities (Brothers and lay people) in the five continents:

* In Africa: articles on implantation of the Lasallian Community and on the College of Tounouma.
* In America: an article from a lady teacher in Argentina.
* In Australia: Beaudesert Boys' Town and the apostolate among the Vietnamese refugees in Australia.
* In Europe: The Brothers' work among the poor and the marginalized in France and Belgium.

These are only a few examples from among many.

Together with the description of activities which are signs of vitality there are also articles for reflection which carry over from one number to the next:

* on the aims of our commitments to the young. There are, for example, the leaflets on the "Lasallian School" and the Signum Fidei movement.
* on the meaning of the activities undertaken: You will find the first two leaflets of a short series devoted to the "Lasallian Educative Ministry" and to the "Lasallian Leader".
* on the common element in the original inspiration which we find in the thought, the action, the spirituality and in the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle. As always, the first leaflets are a recall to this inspiration.

If the classification of the leaflets and their division under the different headings of Lasalliana appear rather artificial it is interesting to note that from one issue to the next you find:

— a striving for fidelity to the initial charism,
— reflection on the quality and authenticity of the experience lived,
— renewed attention to the condition and needs of young people.

These few considerations seem to me to be particularly appropriate at the beginning of the International Youth Year.

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

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05-A-28

THE KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE (3)

(C) DOCUMENTS WRITTEN BY THE SAINT BUT NOT SIGNED

The third category in the classification of our Founder's known manuscripts which we have proposed for this outline survey, comprises eight documents written throughout by him but not bearing his signature. Five of these are held in AMG, and of these the most important is the document known as the *Memoir on the Habit* - an apologia he wrote in defence of the distinctive garb the early Brothers had adopted when critics, notably M. Baudrand, parish priest of Saint-Sulpice, wished him to change it in favour of normal clerical dress. The manuscript is self-evidently the Founder's draft (with numerous corrections and alterations) of what presumably in its final form was presented (signed, no doubt) to M. Baudrand; unfortunately, this fair copy has not come down to us. Brother Maurice Hermans has discussed in CL 11 the importance of the draft we possess, assessing it as more than an exposition of the reasons in favour of retaining the habit as it was: it was also "a judicious reminder of the conditions of the Community's existence and of the status to which it believed itself able to aspire".

The first historian of the Institute to give due treatment to this important document was Frère Lucard in 1882, and since then it has been published in full four times: by Jean Guibert in his *Histoire de St. Jean Baptiste de La Salle,* published in celebration of the Saint's canonisation in 1900; by Georges Rigault in Tome I of his nine-volume *Histoire Générale* of the Institute (1937); by Brother Clair Battersby, who included it (in the original French as well as in his English translation of it) in his 1952 volume *De La Salle: Letters and Documents;* and by Brother Maurice Hermans who presented it as the first of his *pièces justificatives* in his doctoral thesis *L'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes à la recherche de son statut canonique: des origines (1679) à la bulle de Benoît XIII (1725),* published in 1962 as No. 11 in the *Cahiers Lasalliens* series. The Memoir has not so far been published in facsimile, though Brother Léon de Marie Aroz has included a photograph of its first page (there are eight in all, the eighth containing only a few lines) in CL 40 Vol. 1. Bro. Maurice has promised (in CL 11) a facsimile reproduction of the whole text in a volume of the *Cahiers* in preparation. (Readers of LASALLIANA will have perused with interest Bro. Maurice's paper on the Memoir in the last issue, 04-A-20).

Another unsigned manuscipt in the Founder's hand, preserved in AMG, is a single, undated page traditionally referred to as a "preface to the *Collection of Different Short Treatises",* though, in fact, it did not appear in any of the known twenty-two editions of the *Collection* (since it had not appeared in the *princeps* of 1711) until the penultimate one of 1932. The mention in this brief text of "a small volume" and "this little book" no doubt led to its traditional identification, but Bro. Maurice Hermans, who published the text in CL 15, has there convincingly argued that the original destination of the two paragraphs, "at once doctrinal and exhortative", which make up the "preface", was either to introduce the book of *Rules* as a whole or, "more probably", to serve as an exordium to Chapter II of the *Rules,* "On the Spirit of this Institute". If the latter, it was discarded in favour of the "solemn and vigorous" introduction which made its appearance in the Founder's 1718 revision of the *Rules* and was maintained, textually unchanged, down to the final of the thirteen known published editions of the *Rules,* that of 1947 (Cf. CL 25).

The remaining three AMG pieces in this category are merely transcripts of brief texts, not composed by the Saint. Two of them provide the earliest known example of the Founder's handwriting (apart from three mere signatures). Both are dated 27th July 1671 (when he was just turned 20) and are transcriptions of the recognised Latin formulas then in use to testify to a student's "assiduity" in attending his theology courses at the Sorbonne on (in the present two cases) the Incarnation and the Blessed Trinity. Presumably students could prepare their own certificates in this way to save the time of their tutors, who simply validated them by appending their signatures (though John Baptist had already, the previous year, received similar testimonials of assiduity at the University of Rheims, written throughout and signed by two of his professors there, Michel de Blanzy and the Irish Dean of the Faculty, Daniel Egan). The third piece is a translation into French of the permission in Latin given to the Founder by the Archbishop of Paris, Louis Antoine de Noailles, for the celebration of Mass in the chapel of the novitiate at Vaugirard; it is dated 27 March 1697. The presence of such manuscripts as these last three in the central Archives of the Institute illustrates the appositeness of the remarks with which Bro. Aroz introduced his outline history of the Generalate Archives in CL 40 Vol. II: "The Archives of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools trace their origin to the foundation period of the Institute. It is possible, indeed, to affirm, quite objectively, that it was the Founder himself who gave them their start...".

The three written but unsigned manuscripts of the Founder not held by AMG are all in the Rheims Municipal Archives. They were discovered there by Bro. Aroz who published them in facsimile and in transcription, with notes, in CL 38: all three, in fact, relate to M. de La Salle's period as executor of Nicolas Roland's will. Two of the pieces, dated 30 March 1679 and 24 August 1680, are forms of contract leasing two properties belonging to Roland's Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus. The legally worded document, written (because presumably composed) by M. de La Salle, bear the signatures only of the respective lessees. The third document is a financial evaluation of the Sisters' properties, drawn up in August 1679 at a preparatory stage of the signed inventory of all their goods compiled and completed by October of the same year (cf. LASALLIANA 04-A-21).

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(D) ADDITIONS TO EXISTING DOCUMENTS

7 manuscripts are known, not written by the Founder but bearing additions in his hand; five of these are held in AMG and three of them also carry his signature, as do the other two documents held elsewhere.

A passing reference has already been made (cf. 04-A-21) to one of the AMG pieces, the Formula of Vows transcribed (from the Founder's master text) by Frère Michel-Barthélemy Jacquinot and completed by M. de La Salle with the insertion of his full name in the text and the addition of the concluding words: "... all my life, in testimony of which I have signed, done at Vaugirard this sixth day of June, feast day of the Most Blessed Trinity, of the year sixteen ninety four. De La Salle".

Among the other formulas of vows bound into the same booklet as this one of the Founder are those of two disciples who pronunced their vows later than the original twelve, Frère Paul (Pierre Raimbault) and Frère Grégoire (François Cortier): both of these pages have brief additions (unsigned, but unmistakably in the Founder's hand) recording the dates of the deaths of the two Brothers, 29th October 1695 and 29th July 1700 respectively.

The letter of authority, dated 4 December 1716, which Frère Barthélemy carried with him when he made his tour of all the houses in view of the forthcoming general assembly of 1717, carries this addition of the Founder, with his signature: "I am in agreement with what the Brothers have resolved above, and with the day, month and year there indicated". And the remaining AMG manuscript in this group provides us with the chronologically latest known writing of the Saint, being dated 17 February 1719, less than two months, therefore, before his death. It is a signed statement added to a transcript by F. Barthélemy of the Founder's document of 11 August 1718, already referred to in category (B) (cf. 04-A-21), ceding possession of his library to his successor. The brief addition merely authenticates Barthélemy's copy.

To the present category belongs one of the most striking of the discoveries of Lasallian documentation which we owe to the researches of Bro. Léon de Marie Aroz. The Founder's 1676 *Report of the Guardianship,* found by him in the *Archives départementales de la Marne (dépôt annexe de Reims)* on 24 September 1964 ("a lucky day for the researcher!" comments Aroz) and published in 1967 in four successive volumes (28-31) of the *Cahiers Lasalliens,* series, comprises 460 pages. The *Report* is presented in the stylised handwriting of a professional scribe, but Bro. Aroz has identified fifty-four pages on which corrections or marginal comments have been made by M. de La Salle personally (proof, observes Aroz, that he had "read, re-read, completed, corrected" the pages of the report before submitting them). His signature appears only once, namely on the penultimate page.

Finally, there exists another fairly extensive legal document of twelve pages, a report of financial transactions made by a certain Edme Lapinte on behalf of two sisters, Agatha and Marie Blondel, both members of Nicolas Roland's community. The date of this document, 16 September 1678, shows that it was drawn up within the period of M. de La Salle's executorship of Roland's will (dated 23 April 1678). Hence it is not surprising to find substantial marginal annotations in the Founder's handwriting on five pages of the report, together with a concluding signed statement that the report had been duly drawn up in his presence. The document is published in CL 38, in facsimile and transcription with notes by Br. Aroz.

(E) SIGNATURES ONLY

Our final category consists of 27 documents bearing the signature of the Founder, but nothing more in his hand. Four of these are in AMG and, of the other twenty-three, eleven are in Paris (National Archives), eleven in Rheims (six in the municipal archives, four in the annexe of the Marne departmental archives, and one in private ownership) and one in Rouen (Seine-Maritime Archives). This and much other information about the documents concerned is conveniently available in CL 41, Vol. I, since the author, Brother Aroz, had the happy idea of appending to that work a chronological inventory of all the 99 known signatures of the Saint (97 of them on original documents, the other 2 on facsimile copies). He was prompted to do this, he tells us, by questions frequently put to him by "people eager to know even the least details of the particular circumstances of the Founder's life". The inventory is introduced with a two-page descriptive analysis of the evolving characteristics of the signatures at the successive stages of the Founder's life, and then a detailed description is given of each of the ninety-nine signatures, from the boyish, painstakingly-written "Jean baptiste dela Salle", appended to the baptismal certificate of his brother Pierre for whom John Baptist, then 15 year old, was godfather, to the final "De La Salle" of the 68 year-old Founder, referred to above.

Introducing his list, Bro. Aroz disclaims any intention of offering in his commentary a graphological interpretation of the signatures. But it may be mentioned, as a matter of interest, that a graphological analysis of the Founder's handwriting was, in fact, published in 1952 in an Italian work entitled *I Santi dalla Scrittura.* The author, Girolamo Moretti, a Franciscan priest and expert graphologist (his text book, *Treatise of Graphology,* had reached its 7th edition by 1952) presents an analytical commentary of a specimen page of manuscript of each of fifty-eight saints. The author was aware that the handwriting put before him was in every case that of a canonised saint, but the identity of the saint was not made known to him. The book reproduces each specimen passage in facsimile (that of our Founder comes from a 1706 letter to Brother Hubert) and each is followed by a study of the writer's psychology as evidenced simply by the handwriting shown. It is an interesting exercise, to say the least, to weigh what graphology has to say about the temperament and character of M. de La Salle against what one knows of him from his life and writings.

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05-A-29

REFERENCE LIST OF QUOTATIONS

contained in the writings attributed to St. John Baptist de La Salle

The Lasallian Studies Centre received, last March, a work entitled "Reference List of Quotations in the Writings attributed to St. John Baptist de La Salle". The author of this work writes the following brief introduction:

Research on the passages containing a quotation has been carried out for all the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle with a view to publication in the Cahiers Lasalliens. The exception is the "Exercises of Piety performed during the day in the Christian Schools". Those researched are: The Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer, the Meditations, the Collection of Short Treatises, Instructions and Prayers, the Rules of Good Manners and Christian Politeness, the different manuals on the Duties of a Christian, the Management of Christian Schools and the Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

For each of the writings studied the work gives, in the left hand column, the quotation and in the right hand column, the reference with indications as to where to find it. For quotations from Holy Scripture the reference gives only the name of the sacred book with chapter and verse. (Jerusalem Bible). For non-biblical quotations (the Fathers of the Church and different authors) the text is given with the reference at least when this is possible. It is given in the original (Greek or Latin) because this is what the editions used have done and also to avoid being drawn into problems of translation.

At the end of the work a thirty page table has been drawn up of the works and authors cited with corresponding indications for the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, of the page and line where the quotation appears. A four page table for recapitulation gives the numbers of the references according to the works and authors cited and according to the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Research has been facilitated by the works (or editions of the Meditations) of Brothers Luis Varela, Brother Anselmo A Balocco, Brother Michel Sauvage and Brother Miguel Campos. However, these works deal only with some of the writings of de La Salle and are interested only in quotations from Sacred Scripture, especially those from the New Testament. The present work deals with all the writings of de La Salle and includes all the authors cited by him.

The method employed to find the references of quotations not given in the writings studied (these are the more numerous) was to have recourse, for Holy Scripture, to the tables which indicate where a given passage can be found from the principal words it contains. For the Fathers of the Church I used the indices at the end of Migne's volumes on Latin and Greek patrology. For the other authors I used manuals of bibliography and library files.

A certain number of quotations from the Fathers of the Church and other authors are almost identical with the texts from which they were taken. But many others are only approximate. It often happens that the quotation is not clearly evident in the sentence and that the author's text is often modified... This was common practice in 17th and 18th centuries. The notion of literary ownership and copyright was practically unknown. Writers had little scruple about using other writers' ideas or incorporating them in their own thought while modifying their expression. We have now become more respectful of literary creation and more demanding as to the manner of borrowing from the texts of others.

I had to search a long time to find the quotation of St. Jerome in the Meditation for the First Sunday of Advent (MD 6,21), permeated as it is by fear of God's judgement. "He (St. Jerome) says also that being, as he was, completely covered in sin he hid day and night for fear that he might be told, 'Jerome, come forth', and that he might be made to pay the last farthing". Eventually the following text was found

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in the letter to Florentius (P.L. 22, 336) "Ego cunctis peccatorum sordibus inquinatus, diebus ac noctibus opperior cum tremore reddere novissimum quadrantem. Sed tamen qui Dominus solvit compeditos et super humilem et timentem verba sua requiescit, forsitan mihi in sepulchro jacenti dicat: Hieronyme, veni foras". (As for me, stained by all the filth of sin, I await trembling night and day to pay the last farthing. However, since the Lord looses those who are bound and lets his Word rest on the one who is humble and who trembles, it may be that He will say to me who lie in the grave of my crimes, "Jerome, come forth" — a reference to the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11, 42 - 44 - You can see that the meaning is different in the text of the patrology from that in the Meditation. The person who has recourse to quotations sometimes does so from necessity but often also to embellish his discourse, to illustrate it by pious examples which give it force or make it more agreeable. This, however, is a danger — orators and writers often fall into the the trap of forcing an example or misusing a text to give weight to their own arguments.

It is not possible to deal in a few lines with a work of six hundred pages involving more than five thousand references.

Among the writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the one least burdened with quotations is the Management of Schools, but the historians tell us that this work is above all the fruit of the reflections of the Founder and of the most experienced and responsible Brothers in the Institute.

Quotations from Holy Scripture are by far the most numerous. The catechesis expounded in the Duties of a Christian is founded on the Gospel. The spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle in the Meditations is inspired mainly by the Gospels and the teaching of St. Paul in his epistles. The Rules of Good Manners and Christian Politeness make more than fifty references to Ecclesiasticus or the Book of Ben Sira the Wise: "The wisdom taught by Ben Sira comes from the Lord. Its principle is the fear of the Lord, it forms youth and brings happiness". (Introduction to the Book of Ecclesiasticus in the Jerusalem Bible).

More than seven hundred references are made to the Fathers of the Church and other writers (56 names counted). The Fathers most quoted are: St. Augustine (129 times), St Chrysostom (59), St. Ambrose (31), Tertullian (28), St. Jerome (27), St. Bernard (27), St. Cyprian (14), St. Thomas Aquinas (14), St. Cyril of Jerusalem (11), St. Gregory, Pope (11). We must also take into account the place given to Conciliar declarations, particularly those of the Council of Trent (168 quotations), often textual, especially in the Duties of a Christian.

In view of the numerous quotations from Holy Scripture and from ecclesiastical writers a question springs naturally to mind: What kind of formation was given to the Brothers to enable them to use them? The historians of St. John Baptist de La Salle tell us that many of the young men who sought admission to the Institute were uneducated and that the first preoccupation of the Founder was to give the Brothers the kind of formation that their state and their work required.

Some will ask themselves what is original in writings where borrowed elements, so to speak, fill almost every page. Such a question would have astonished de La Salle himself. "Nowhere does he try for complete originality" writes G. Rigault (History of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. T. 1. p. 446). His main preoccupation is the Christian education of children and the formation of those in charge of them. He wishes to provide the teachers with the work tools they need for their own spiritual culture and for carrying on their work. If he finds works treating of subjects which interest him he borrows without scruple, as was the custom of his day. Besides, it is only when you are content to juxtapose borrowed material that you show lack of originality— St. John Baptist de La Salle quotes or borrows following a train of thought which guides him throughout a page or a Chapter. His ardent soul is often revealed in the kind of questions he so frequently asks the Brothers in the Meditations, or in the stringent conclusions he is forced to by a reflection inspired by a text taken from the Gospel or from an epistle of St. Paul, a page from St. Augustine or St. Chrysostom.

The work presented above is far from being complete or perfect. All the references have not been found. Others are merely approximate. The work undertaken was wideranging and to complete it a considerable number of books had to be consulted. Others, perhaps, will take it as a starting point for further research, more precise and more effective.

Brother A. ROCHE

N.D.L.R. The original work of Brothers Adrien Roche is in the Bureau des Cahiers Lasalliens in the Generalate. A copy of the same work is in the Institute Archives, also in the Generalate.

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05-A-30

THE MEDITATIONS FOR THE TIME OF RETREAT AND THE DIRECTED RETREAT (1)

This is the first of two articles on the suitability of the *Meditations for the time of Retreat* for use in a directed retreat. To facilitate treatment of the subject I will divide the material into three sections: the place of retreats in the early history of the Institute; a brief discussion on the nature of spiritual direction and the directed retreat; the use of the *Meditations for the time of Retreat* in the directed retreat. In this first article I will discuss the first two elements listed above and in the next issue of LASALLIANA the third and concluding aspect of the subject.

RETREATS: LASALLIAN TRADITION

The retreat has always held a revered place in the spirituality of Saint John Baptist De La Salle and consequently should hold a special place in the spirituality of the Brothers. Many of the great decisions affecting our foundation and ongoing development have been made in the context of a retreat. As early as 1681 De La Salle began to make an annual retreat with the teachers, using his own home as the place. From these retreats came the formation that resulted in the teachers becoming the first Brothers. The retreat of Ascension Thursday to Trinity Sunday 1686, culminated in the pronouncement of the vow of obedience for the first time. Retreats were important enough for De La Salle to purchase the property of Vaugirard for this purpose. Removed from the urban center the Brothers could devote themselves to needed rest, relaxation and prayerful reflection. The first of the ten day retreats to be held at Vaugirard took place from October 8-18, 1691. The importance of the retreat of May 30 - June 6, 1694 cannot de overemphasized, from it came the first draft of the common rule and the first perpetual vows pronounced in the Institute by De La Salle and the twelve principal Brothers. The content of these early retreats and their result seem to indicate that the Brothers came together to seek the presence of God and to discern how best they could respond to what God was asking of them.

The personal experience of De La Salle was also marked by the importance of retreat. We know that he was very faithful to the annual retreat as well as seeking other times for extended prayer. De La Salle made a retreat of thirty days with the Carmelites in 1706. During his personal crisis about 1713 he also made a retreat of forty days at the monastery of Saint Baume and spent extended days of prayer on the Mountain at Parmenie.

Noteworthy also is the importance De La Salle gives to retreats in his writings, especially the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*. Besides this spiritual classic, the *Collection* also contains an extended section detailing material to be prayed over during the annual retreat. In the *Rule* of 1705 part of chapter thirty-six (articles 11 - 21) is devoted to the annual retreat. De La Salle encourages the Brothers to pray with the Scripture and on the duties of the school. He indicates that the morning spiritual reading on each successive day of the retreat is to come from the *Gospel of Matthew* chapters five, six and seven followed by the *Gospel of John,* chapters thirteen to seventeen. He seems to suggest that the morning mental prayer should be made on these chapters and says very definitely, that all mental prayer after noon is to be made on the duties of the school. De La Salle sees the retreat as a time of extended prayer in which the Brothers are invited to consider the quality of their apostolic life in the two-fold context of Scripture and the duties of educational service.

In both the writings of De La Salle and the practices of the early Institute the Brothers are invited to come together to discover how God is present among them and how they are responding to what God is asking of them. Both the writings and the practices reflect the three constant elements in any authentic expression of a Christian spirituality: a desire for God centered in Christ; a willingness to live a life of ongoing conversion; and a life-style marked by simplicity and prayer based on the maxims of the Gospel.

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All of this is well summarized in a letter of De La Salle to Brother Barthelemy written toward the end of the Founder's life: "It seems to me that what I desire in prayer is that God make known to me what he wants of me and that he put me in the dispositions he would like me to have".

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF A DIRECTED RETREAT

Spiritual direction is concerned with directly helping a person with his/her relationship with God. The person is helped not so much to understand the relationship better, but to engage in it, to enter into dialogue with God. Spiritual direction focuses on what happens when a person listens and responds to a self-communicating God. Perhaps an illustration from Scripture will be helpful. In the first chapter of the *Gospel of John* is the marvelous story where the disciples of John meet Jesus for the first time (John 1:35-39). John is talking with several of his disciples when Jesus appears on the scene. John immediately recognizes Jesus and points him out to his disciples with the words, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" In this instance John functions as a spiritual director by helping his disciples to recognize Jesus in their midst. As Jesus leaves the scene, two of John's disciples leave John and follow Jesus. Down the road a bit, Jesus turns to these two disciples and ask, "What are you looking for?" Notice the question is one of desire, one of life. The two disciples respond with a question, "Teacher, where do you live?" Also a question full of life. Then Jesus invites them into relationship with him, "Come and see". So they went and spent time with him talking about, no doubt, their life experiences. This is what spiritual direction is about. One person helping another person to recognize how God is present in his/her life and to follow him. We can define spiritual direction then as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him/her and to respond to this personally communicating God. To help another grow in intimacy with God and to live out the consequences of this relationship. The focus in spiritual direction is on experience, and specifically, on religious experience, i.e., any experience of that other person we call God. Moreover this experience is viewed not as an isolated incident but as an expression of an ongoing personal relationship God has established with each one of us. Relationships develop when the persons involved pay attention to one another. We make an assumption based on Christian tradition that God is always faithful to his part in the relationship; that God is always paying attention to the other person.

It is important to make a few clarifications here. Spiritual direction is an act of accompanying another person; a walking with another person. It is not telling another person what to do, or imposing in any way on the freedom of the other person. The primary relationship is always between God and the other person; the spiritual director is a privileged companion. The role of the Spiritual director is to help the other person focus always on the Lord. Spiritual direction is not counseling; it is not psychotherapy; it is not pastoral counseling. While each of these have their place in our experience they are not to be confused with spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is about that relationship that is mine with the Lord and that manifests itself primarily in the activity we refer to as prayer. Spiritual direction is a process that helps a person clarify what is happening in his/her prayer life. In this process a spiritual director does two things: the director helps the person to pay attention to God as God reveals himself in the person's life and the director helps the person recognize his reactions and decide on his responses to God.

A directed retreat is a retreat in which one enters into a spiritual direction relationship with another person for the duration of the retreat. Instead of conferences and spiritual exercises, the person spends his/her day in silent prayer an solitude with the Lord. Once a day the person meets with the director to share the experience of the prayer and to allow the director to help him/her clarify how the Lord is present and what He may be asking of the person. From what the person shares the director may make suggestions about looking at certain patterns that seem to be developing in the person's life, or he/she may make no suggestions at all. The director takes the experience of the person as the person gives it.

The normal movement in a directed retreat is the foundational experience of a God who both loves us and forgives us. We first experience a God who is constantly offering himself in relationship regardless of the sinful condition of the person. From this initial experience one moves to contemplate this God incarnate in the world in the presence of Jesus and to open oneself to the invitation of the risen Lord to come follow him. This experience is repeated many times over the course of a person's life. In a directed retreat this experience may be experienced very intensely because of the atmosphere of constant prayer. However, there is no pattern to be expected in the experiences of a directed retreat since the Lord leads each one differently The only expectation one may have in a directed retreat is that the Lord will reveal himself.

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SIMPLE ATTENTION AND THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

In *Explication de la Méthode d'Oraison,* St. La Salle presents a method of prayer which at first seems to be excessively elaborate and unnecessarily systematic. On closer examination, however, it turns out to contain in itself a wide variety of options which can be used to adapt, abridge or finally to disregard the entire method altogether. Rather than outlining a rigid format of prayer, *Explication* provides the Brothers with a means to "do something" during the time of mental prayer until "prayer" begins to happen within them; that is, until they can become sensitive to recognizing and giving themselves to the Spirit. Among the suggestions which St. La Salle mentions in *Explication* to help the Brothers respond to the Holy Spirit during the time of mental prayer, one seems to be particularly significant to the Founder; namely, the prayer of *simple attention.*

St. La Salle describes *simple attention* as the way which "belongs to the stage of proficients" and we must include the saint himself in this category. From his writings and life style we have every reason to assume that some form of *simple attention* was part of the prayer of the Founder particularly during those nights when, according to his biographers, he was completely absorbed in prayer. Also he most likely anticipated that the Brothers themselves would attain to this kind of prayer if they remained faithful to their vocation. Finally, and most importantly, the prayer of *simple attention* was significant to the Founder because of its intimate connection to the spirit of the Institute, the Spirit of Faith.

Simple attention, St. La Salle writes, "consists in being before God with a simple, interior view of faith that He is present..." It "consists in remaining (in this presence) with a profound interior respect..., a spirit of silent worship, of love, of admiration, of gratitude and thanksgiving, of self-abasement and a heartfelt desire to unite oneself with our Lord...". In *simple attention* "we remain in this attitude of worship and adoration, without reasoning nor expressing ourselves... in formal acts, and simply holding to a spirit of pure, devout and affectionate attention".

Although St. La Salle may have been influenced by the Carmelite school of spirituality, and in particular by St. John of the Cross, in naming this way of prayer *simple attention,* there can be no doubt that his description of it was based on his own experience. Since his personal style was to rely on his own experience as the basis from which to teach the Brothers, it is unlikely that he would have even mentioned simple attention if he had not personally experienced it. Nor is there a compelling reason why he would have included the description of this way of prayer in his practical manual of mental prayer unless he knew from experience that *simple attention* was a form of prayer to which the Brothers themselves would quite likely be drawn. He refers to *simple attention* as a prayer style which is a "great grace" but which is available to "many souls". John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila seem to estimate in terms of months rather than years, the time that it might take for faithful religious to be gifted with this particular form of prayer.

St. La Salle assumes that if the Brothers remain faithful to the practice of prayer they would gradually no longer need to occupy themselves with the numerous "acts" which the *Explication* describes, but move to a form of prayer in which there were fewer but long-continued reflections, and then to a state where they would "simply collect themselves interiorly, direct their thoughts to the presence of God, and very quickly find themselves fixed in this holy exercise". Thus, they would come to experience *simple attention* to "the presence and the action of God", during at least some of this time of mental prayer. Specifically, St. La Salle suggests that, within the time of mental prayer, the Brothers might experience the prayer of *simple attention* "for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, more or less".

By describing the 'time-frame' of *simple attention* in this way, St. La Salle situates it within the overall time alloted to formal mental prayer. However, it is apparent that he anticipated that the influence of *simple attention* would flow over into the daily lives of the Brothers. In describing the second part of mental prayer, the consideration of the subject matter proper to the mental prayer — in this case a particular virtue — St.

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La Salle remarks that "this method of *simple attention,* when accompanied by the proper dispositions, attracts the soul gently and effectually to the practice of the virtue...". The flow of prayer over into daily life comes from the gentle attraction for good which the soul feels in the experience of the prayer of *simple attention.* This attraction to the practice of virtue is the result of "remaining in the presence of our Lord" with the disposition of "worship and adoration, without reasoning... simply holding to the spirit of pure, devout and affectionate attention". From the prayer of *simple attention* practiced during the time of mental prayer comes the gentle attractive force empowering the Brothers throughout the day to practice the "virtue which has been the subject of our mental prayer".

The connection between *simple attention* and the cultivation of virtue is not, therefore, so much the result of a pious strategy calculated during the time of the mental prayer or even of a firm resolution adopted as a result of the prayer. Rather the connection is found in the perduring gentle attractive force for good which flows from the awareness of the presence of God and which now begins to replace our attachment to self will. This attractive force arising in the time of *simple attention* becomes the force of the Spirit to motivate our daily actions.

Although St. La Salle's example is specific to the practice of "a virtue" it is clear that the Founder is alluding to the overarching influence which this gentle attractive force will exert on all the activities of daily life as a result of the experience of *simple attention.* Implicitly here is the interrelatedness between *simple attention* and the Spirit of Faith, for this attractive force flowing from the awareness of the presence of God experienced in the prayer od *simple attention* is at the heart of the Spirit of Faith.

As described by St. La Salle, this gentle attractive force has two aspects: that of adherence to God and that of detachment from self. He names them "purity and detachment", and describes them as empowering the Brothers to "look on creatures only in their relation to God" and "without any particular view or any reference to self".

These characteristics of the gentle attractive force for good flowing from *simple attention* are the characteristics of the Spirit of Faith. St. La Salle anticipated that the Brothers would bring to their daily lives the attractive force for good which they experienced in *simple attention:* the attraction to "look on creatures only in their relation to God, and consequently appreciate in them only what is of God". This attractive force flowing from the experience of *simple attention* in mental prayer is the attitude called Spirit of Faith when it relates to the daily lives of the Brothers. For St. La Salle, the Spirit of Faith is *simple attention* "in action".

During the formal time of mental prayer, *simple attention* to the presence of God is explicit: the mind and the imagination are filled explicitly with images of God or are explicitly opened to God. In the daily experiences of life, the Spirit of Faith does not necessarily fill explicitly the mind and imagination with God's presence, since frequently they must be occupied explicitly with the task at hand. But the prevailing attitude is the same in both *simple attention* and the Spirit of Faith: in both there is "a spirit of silent worship, of love, of admiration, of gratitude and thanksgiving, of self-abasement", of "thinking only of Him and what concerns His service and acting for Him alone". Basically, the Spirit of Faith is, in the context of the daily lives of the Brothers, what *simple attention* is in the context of the time of mental prayer.

One indication, therefore, by which the Brothers would know that the Spirit of Faith was developing within them would be that the gentle attractive force for good they experienced in themselves during the prayer of *simple attention* was the same attitude which they now found in themselves in their relationship to the events of daily life. They would begin to experience "gratitude and thanksgiving", rather than being judgmental in their relationships with persons and events; "a spirit of silent worship" rather than greed or self-aggrandizement; "self-abasement and a heartfelt desire to unite oneself with our Lord" rather than a desire for success, vindictiveness, or avoidance of pain, in the face of the daily tasks and struggles of life. In short, they would find themselves more and more led by "a strong and supernatural affection" for virtue and more and more able to "overcome with ease, the opposition of our vicious nature". At the same time they would find themselves less and less under Jesus'criticism of Peter: "Get out of my sight, you satan!... You are not judging by God's standards but by man's".

It seems that St. La Salle anticipated that the Brothers would be enlightened by the prayer of *simple attention* to look upon everything with the eyes of faith; that they would be empowered with the courage to do everything for God; and that they would receive the capacity to attribute all to God. And that this growth in the Spirit of Faith would come about not through some personal clever strategy or series of resolutions, but by that gentle attractive force for good which flows from prayer of *simple attention.*

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05-B-22

IMPLANTING THE LASALLIAN IDEAL IN AFRICAN CULTURE

1984 Session of the Lasallian African Union

Last August the Lasallian African Union held its fifth session since 1975 in the Senior Seminary of Koumi, Burkina-Faso, on the theme of inculturation of the Lasallian Community. It brought together about twenty Brothers from the different French speaking Districts of the African Region (RELAF). A twenty page report gives the essentials of the business discussed during those few weeks. With the approval of Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly, General Councillor, and of Brother Dominic Samne, Regional President, we give the following summary of the report.

The Lasallian Community from its origins.

Starting with the "Meditations for the Time of Retreat", Brother Miguel Campos helped the participants to reflect and meditate on the Lasallian Community as it was from its beginnings:

— a community inspired and supported by the living Word of the Gospel,
— caring for the most abandoned,
— with the apostolic objective which is attained through the ecclesial functions exercised by the Brothers,
— a community with living structures capable of maintaining it and enabling it to attain its end,
— a community which organizes itself as a corporate body and chooses Superiors to guide it towards its objectives in fidelity and hope.

Brotherhood and evengelization.

Father Sidbé Sempore, O.P., dealt with this aspect of community during the third week. Forms of community exist in traditional society (village, family, clan) supported by structures designed to preserve the values by which they live. How do we regard these communities in the light of the Gospel and what can we, or should we retain from them to help us to live the evangelical brotherhood recommended to us by Christ who has given us this mission?

Conclusions

During the first three weeks Brothers worked in groups or in general assemblies. Gradually facts emerged, questions were asked and discoveries made. Thus a consensus was arrived at and convictions were formulated in the form of a profession of faith as follows:

We, Brothers of Africa,

— assembled from 3rd to 31st August, 1984 in an ordinary meeting of the Lasallian African Union,
— having reflected, meditated and prayed during this time on the community of service founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle and on African society and its values,
— aware that the implantation of our religious family in Africa must take place through the assimilation of these values, purified and enlivened by the Good News of Jesus Christ, believe in John Baptist de La Salle as someone human and accessible and inviting each Brother to become so;

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— who urges us to make him alive today, here and now, in our conversion to God and through the mediation of the poor,

— whose God is a mysterious God, not to be domesticated, surprising, showing himself in events, taking us by surprise, intervening at the moment we least expect,

— who, through his Brothers, together and by association, answers the call to a mission of salvation in favour of African youth,

— who invites us to be faithful to his charism, to keep it alive by interpreting present reality in the light of the Gospel,

— who invites us in the diversity of races, ethnic groups, cultures and languages, of life styles and apostolic commitments.

For the Community we believe:

— that it is the living God and the action of God that creates the Community. It is God who called us, and our Community is born of Divine Providence. If we exist as a Community in Africa it is thanks to that Word and to the action of God.

— that a Community is composed of persons having each his culture, his formation, his nationality, his character...

— that the Word calls the whole Community to renewal through a permanent conversion of its members and a disinterested love.

— that in Community difficulties have always existed. Instead of dividing they should stimulate each one to pardon, to understand, to practice patience, to be indulgent, to practice mutual charity...

— that the Community should be attentive to the individual Brother, making use of his talents in the sharing of responsibilities, teaching him to respect differences and helping him to live "together and by association".

— that the Community Project, established and formulated by all its members, is the appropriate and efficacious means of assuring the vitality of the Community. It should be evaluated and revised periodically.

— that the Community is called upon to be open to its milieu by agreeing to share its goods with the poorest of the locality. It is by committing ourselves to the struggle against poverty that we live the poverty of the Gospel.

Special attention should be paid to Brothers in difficulty:

— the isolated, the ill, the timid, the emarginated... The Community must try to really know the members of its family.

— that the Brother is called, not for himself but for others. His mission is to announce the Gospel in the footsteps of, and with the charisma of de La Salle, whose mission was the Christian education of youth. God has confided young people to us for their salvation. We are therefore workers for the Kingdom.

— that in the face of materialistic ideologies and a civilization fascinated by possessions and action, the search for solutions to the problems of African youth is urgent and compels us to live to the full our spirit of zeal in action and prayer.

— that because of our efforts to adapt our community life in order to respond, in an evangelical manner, to modern needs and because of the kind of relations we cultivate with those we encounter, and because of our life style, our ministry and our ideals, we can attract young people.

— that the life of prayer is an essential dimension of the life of a Brother, that it is in renewed Community prayer that the Brothers tell Christ of their apostolic needs and receive from Him light and benediction, and that the Brother who neglects his spiritual life is no longer Lasallian.

— that the source from which de La Salle drank has not dried up and will never cease to satisfy the thirst of his sons throughout the ages.

Lasallian African Union
August, 1984.

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TOUNOUMA: A COLLEGE FOR THE PEOPLE

In De La Salle College, Tounouma, students generally do well in the examination for the Baccalaureat. But does the Baccalaureat serve any purpose today?

It is, in fact, true that this diploma is no longer considered essential for entrance to a profession. The successful student is the one who has acquired a certain amount of knowledge in the subjects studied: Literature. Mathematics, Science, both natural and physical, History, Geography, etc...

But has he really assimilated this knowledge so as to be able to use it effectively in daily life?

On leaving college he soon discovers that, after completing his secondary school course, he no longer knows how to use his hands and that he is less prepared for life than the mechanic down the street who repairs motorcycles or the young girls in the store who sell peanuts.

To find a professional post he has no other solution but to keep on accumulating diplomas, at the univerity, if he can gain entrance, or at some other educational establishment. So, is the time spent in college lost and is his early life wasted?

Certainly not. But we must qualify the initial question by the statement that, while the Baccalaureat is not of direct use, you cannot get far in present day society without it. That is one of the reasons why countries maintain and develop secondary education.

Formation of personality

We all know that the knowledge acquired during the twelve to fourteen years spent in primary and secondary schools quickly evaporates on leaving school. That is why we think that the secondary school should:

— train students in the art of learning,
— train them to work on their own,
— develop in them a taste for knowledge and
— inculcate a degree of humility in face of what has yet to be learned.

It is not a question of deprecating the acquisition of knowledge and the accumulation of diplomas, for this is the duty of every educational establishment.

On the other hand, the school has an important social dimension. A school is, of course a building of bricks and mortar, but it is, above all, a team composed of teachers and taught. The quality of relationships within the team condition, to a large extent, the academic result. At Tounouma we think that a school which functions well should become a centre of radiation in the immediate area and in the region as a whole. When we possess something we must share it generously, particularly if the area in which we work is deprived.

At Tounouma we have walls so that those who feel themselves imprisoned may escape to the outside world. But in those walls what counts are the doors, always open to those who wish to enter or leave. You may judge for yourself.

The College is an educational establishment for secondary education which aims at providing educated Christian leaders for the country and for the Church but we try to go a little farther.

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A literacy centre

For the past ten years we have made our students, girls and boys, aware of the problem of illiteracy. The literacy rate in this country is one of the lowest in the world.

Every evening, from 6.00 to 7.30 p.m., we take in about 250 adults from eighteen upwards. These are taken care of by sixty monitors, all students of the second cycle, under the guidance of five teachers. They are divided into six categories: A, B, C, D, E, F. Occasionally four or five out of group F take the Certificate of Primary Studies examination, but our aim is less to prepare them for examinations than to give them sufficient knowledge to face the problem of finding employment.

Basic Technical Training

With a view to giving additional technical training, we initiated, ten years ago, a section for home electricity and a section for motor maintenance. This is, of course, a modest beginning but it is an effort to give our students a better chance of finding work, and for those already employed, a chance to improve their skill.

As most of our students are either unemployed or unpaid apprentices or, at most, poorly paid shop assistants or labourers, we do not ask much in the line of fees. Text books, electrical equipment and motor engines and parts are paid for by friends of the College.

A socio-cultural centre

Another important extra-mural activity of the College is caring for the children of the area during the long summer holidays from July to September. Under the direction of two Brothers, some fifteen senior students organize football leagues for more than 2,000 children. Football is very popular in Burkina-Faso. This activity is less a pastime than an effort to break down religious and ethnic barriers. The results, so far, are encouraging. Our sports facilities, especially our football pitches, are at the disposal of local adults and townspeople during the holidays when the students are away.

Five years ago we set up an open air cinema cum theatre which can accommodate about 2,000 people. There, most of the Diocesan Christian Youth events take place. The aim is always to instruct, to educate and to evangelize.

A catechetical centre

One of the Brothers, with the help of a group of senior students, gives religious instruction to the primary school children of the parish on Saturday afternoons. Primary schools were nationalized in 1969 with the result that there is practically no religious instruction given in them.

We could, in addition to the above activities, mention the meetings of the Focolari group, the National Union of Christian Youth, and parent groups which meet every Monday.

Conclusion

It is true that the College of Tounouma prepares students for the Baccalaureat as a matter of professional obligation on the part of the teaching staff. But, at the same time, it tries to form young people who, at the end of their academic studies, will feel themselves more human and more at liberty. The out-of-school activities mentioned above contribute, we believe, to their human and Christian formation.

Brother Louis Le Labourier, FSC.,
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BOYS TOWN, BEAUDESERT, Queensland (Australia)

Editorial note

The pastoral care of delinquents or of children at risk has a long history in the Institute since those first young gentlemen whom the Founder accepted in Saint Yon. It is not surprising that a man concerned about children left to themselves from morning until night because of the occupations of their parents, should have been deeply concerned about other children and young people who were seen to be "far from salvation". This, too, has been the concern of generations of Brothers down to the present day. It is true that, in a number of recent instances, the Brothers have had to give up some such works because of the extreme demands of government agencies, or because of greater financial responsibility assumed by the state. There are, however, a number of instances where the very governments which dismantled a whole network of such institutions run by voluntary bodies have now turned again to the Brothers to ask them if they would resume such work.

The Boys Town described in the following article is the second establishment with this name which the Brothers of the Australian District have founded. While the first now continues under another name and under different direction, Boys Town Beaudesert has become nationally known. The subject of two different television documentaries in the past decade, it has attracted much generous support from a wide range of charitable bodies and individuals. It is a Brothers foundation in a deep sense, for the priest co-founder, Monsignor Owen Steele O.B.E., was himself one of the first pupils of the Brothers in their very first Australian school. For him, Boys Town was the realisation of a dream which he felt could only come true if there were Brothers to direct the work. Many generations of Brothers have spent their summer holidays, or large sections of them, "helping out" in Boys Town. The work remains one of the priority tasks of the Australian District in its service of the poor.

We are grateful to the present Director of Boys Town for the following impressionistic account of the work accomplished there.

THE ALL-ABSORBING WORK OF BOYS TOWN

It isn't easy to write about the boys of Boys Town. I much prefer to try and forget about our problems — the boys' problems. For all that, our work with delinquents is all-absorbing, intriguing, rewarding. In spite of all that goes wrong, perhaps because of all that goes wrong, I and all my staff are powerfully drawn towards these problem boys.

I spent part of today at the Brisbane Children's Court where these baby-faced "crims" go on trial. It is a modern building where so many do so much for the disturbed souls of these sad-faced youngsters.

A girl, 13, peers through the thick corrugated glass door in a stainless steel partition. She is in a cell in an airy and well lighted basement. She seems to symbolise the clouded perspective in which these kids see life. For them the worthwhile things in life are the dangerous thrills, the fun of the streets, drugs, the unwholesome friends, the bent way of life.

In adjacent cells other juveniles sit and wait. Some are isolated. Others are in groups. In a control room an attendant presses a button and one of the cell doors is electrically opened. A boy emerges and is led upstairs along carpeted corridors and ushered into a large well ventilated room. The magistrate salutes the duty solicitor and invites the boy to sit down. Another session of the Children's Court has begun.

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The session is a procession of breaking and entering, damage to property, prostitution and all that goes with it. These are only the external symptoms of the greater evils that lurk beneath — the lack of love, the neglect, the loneliness.

Billy is bent as his father was bent, as some generations before them were bent. Billy has never known God or Faith. All through his short life - childhood, teens, his Dad's been nicking things and Billy knows it. Every minute of his life his Mum or step mum has been close to the bottle.

Because of his father, or mother, Billy knows others of this breed. They are his father's friends, and the children of his father's friends are his friends. This is his only world. Everything, everyone he comes in contact with is bent - without Faith, without hope. At marriageable age who is going to marry Billy other than one of his own class? It's a self perpetuating cycle and who knows that better than Billy. He will continue to live in his own tight community and he likes it that way.

His offspring will be of his own kind. They will be taught, and they will believe, that criminality is both normal and desirable.

Of course there are exceptions. A small number of our boys are from good families. Decent people who seem to have done a fair thing by all their children. They love their children and stand by them but they cannot like some of the things their children do.

In another level of society the double standards of adults are to blame for the plight of young people who suffer from homelessness, lack of love, drug addiction, pornography and sexual abuse. What do youngsters say of the hypocrisy of the older generation who heavily indulge in the "old drugs"while we young people are not supposed to touch the "new drugs".

There are no locks or bars here at Boys Town. A lot is done for them here and we hope they will stay. Sometimes they don't. But we usually know where to find them — rap dancing or just idling in the Mall. Maybe in the Valley where redlight areas abound. There are greater dangers there. When we have found them, they don't deny that they are doing harm to themselves. They come back home with us — but they find it hard to turn their backs on what they see as the fun of the streets.

The methods we use at Boys Town are not new. We aim to do a kind of "break and enter" — break into the cycle of quasi criminal activity and implant within the seed of Faith, Hope and Charity for what is it that makes a man good or evil but what he believes?

By presenting normality we aim to put the boys in conflict with the situation in which he was brought up.Tasks within the range of their ability are presented to the boys as opportunities to succeed and so build up confidence.

The boys live in cottages in which cottage-parents, supported at all times by the Brothers, simulate good family life. The boys are taught to share, to respect the rights and property of others. In the cottage they experience love, security — and good home cooking.

We have our own registered secondary school. Study is encouraged. A little work around the cottage is mandatory. It is a contribution to their "town" community. Just a little public worship and, we hope, a deep knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We persist in doing these things. We forgive to seventy times seven times.

Not a little satisfaction comes to us from many of our "old boys" who constantly express their confidence and gratitude by making the trip out to Beaudesert or otherwise keeping in touch, telling us of their successes and sometimes of their failures.

I take this opportunity to salute the many institutions similar to ours in all parts of the world. We salute their staffs who use methods very similar to ours in devoting themselves to "remedial work" for boys and girls who seem born to be victims.

Last week it was one such boy who, at a picnic, found a wallet containing $ 250. Michael handed it in because "the owner will need it".

Brother Paul SMITH
Boy's Town
P.O. Box 4
BEAUDESERT, Queensland 4285
(Australia)

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05-B-25

WORKING AMONG THE INDO-CHINESE STUDENTS: A CONTINUING MISSION

During the first half of 1975, the Republic of South Vietnam was invaded by the Northern Communist Vietnamese who took control of the entire country. At the same time, its neighbours to the West, Kampuchea (also called Cambodia) and Laos, fell to the Khmer Rouge and the Pathet Lao respectively. Indo-China came under total control of the Communists. This event resulted in the departure of hundreds of thousands of refugees to other parts of the world in search for freedom.

Since 1975, Australia has been generous in accepting Indo-Chinese refugees for resettlement on its soil. Even though Asian immigration is not new to this country and Australia's experience with refugees goes back to the immediate pre- and post-war years and the 1950's, the sudden and massive influx of Indo-Chinese refugee children into Australian schools has brought many problems for the teachers who have to teach them, and particularly for those who are not familiar with or not prepared for the situation.

On the other hand, it has been and still is a source of anxiety and fear for these children who have been uprooted from their homeland and transplanted into a totally new environment. Moreover, unlike the immigrants who may return to their homeland if immigration is seen to be a mistake, these refugees have to accept that they may never return home again. Whether or not their new environment is pleasing to them, they must make various adjustments resulting from many conflicts:

EMOTIONAL CONFLICTS

The experiences of war and recent memories associated with the trauma of escape, confrontation with pirates, danger of death, deprivation, and separation from loved ones, have left their imprint in the form of introverted personalities, unstable behaviour, and unfriendly or distrustful attitudes.

The changing role of parental authority is a confusing factor which often causes emotional conflict and insecurity. It is possible for children to be left without moral support from their parents who themselves are facing many difficulties in adjusting.

Resulting from such a sudden change of life style, loneliness, homesickness and isolation are daily problems which greatly affect the development of these children who become vulnerable to stress and psychological breakdown.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICTS

Conflicts are likely to arise when cultural and social backgrounds differ. If Indo-Chinese children are to live up to the expectations of both their parents and teachers, it is likely that they will experience conflict. Within their own culture, these children are expected to be obedient and respectful to elders, passive, modest, to do well in school and to study. At school, they are taught to be well behaved, polite, respectful to teachers, quiet, passive, formal in their approach and hard working. However, at school in Australia, they are expected to be polite, self assertive, independent, active, to ask questions, to volunteer answers, to participate in group discussions, all of which in many ways are in conflict with their own cultural traditions.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Via Aurelia, 476 – 00165 ROMA, Italia

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EDUCATIONAL CONFLICTS

Most Indo-Chinese children, being used to the teacher centered method of learning, tend to work the passive way by listening, watching and imitating. In Australia, they become confused when they have to learn independently and select their own subjects when at secondary level. Encountering such a situation, they often feel a lack of self reliance, self confidence, as well as difficulty in decision making. Worse still, teachers sometimes label them as "passive", "quiet", "unco-operative", "backward", so that they tend to ignore them and not give them the attention they need.

The language barrier is a big handicap for Indo-Chinese children. Although on arrival each child is entitled to three to six months of intensive English language teaching either under the New Arrivals Program or at the Catholic Intensive Language Centre, their knowledge of the language is insufficient for them to cope with studies particularly at secondary school.

AN INITIATIVE OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

In 1982, in order to help alleviate some of the above problems, the Catholic Education Office in Sydney took the initiative of employing me as Liaison Officer for the Indo-Chinese Students working in 300 primary and secondary schools within the Archdiocese of Sydney.

I am attached to the Multicultural Education Program within the Special Purpose Programs which receive special funding to assist in the education of migrant children.

As Liaison Officer for Indo-Chinese Students, I am responsible to the Co-Ordinator of the Multicultural Education Program for developing and maintaining strategies designed to facilitate the integration of Indo-Chinese students into the catholic schools of the Archdiocese.

My duties are:

1) To assist teachers with the planning and implementation of programmes appropriate to the needs of Indo-Chinese students including:

(I) the provision of cultural and linguistic background information.

(II) the organisation of translators and interpreters as requested.

2) To establish contact and liaison with the following groups:

— Indo-Chinese communities,
— Migrant Centres/Hostels,
— Relevant Commonwealth and N.S.W. Education Departments,
— Catholic Immigration Office and Welfare organisations,
— Catholic Education Office personnel, Regional and Central.

3) To liaise with the Language Reception Centres regarding the placement of children in Catholic schools and educational continuity from the Centres to the schools.

4) To provide information about the existence and nature of Catholic schools to Indo-Chinese parents and to assist interested parents with enrolment of their children in Catholic schools.

5) To assist in gathering and collating statistics relevant to Indo-Chinese children.

6) To assist in inservice education courses as required.

7) To carry out other duties as assigned by the Diocesan Director of Schools.

It will be apparent that my work revolves around people's problems, many of which must, even after concerned effort, remain unsolved. As long as Australia accepts Indo-Chinese refugees there will be a need for a continuing mission to these people.

I personally obtain much fulfilment from being closely in touch with Christ's poor.

Brother Nicet Liem Vo. F.S.C.
Catholic Education Office
38 Renwick Street
LEICHHARDT, N.S.W., 2040
AUSTRALIA

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05-C-16

LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (1)

Note: In August, 1984, six hundred Brothers from the United States/Toronto Region gathered at St Mary's College, Moraga, California, for a week of prayer and reflection on the meaning of the Brother's vocation in the United States and Canada today.

Brother John JOHNSTON, Vicar General, presented a major paper on LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY. While the focus of the paper is clearly addressed to the Brothers themselves, the general orientations have relevance for all Lasallian Educators throughout the world.

LASALLIANA will publish excerpts from the address, slightly edited by the author, in successive editions.

Opening remarks

Never in my life have I had a year and a half to prepare a forty-five minute talk! But never in my life have I spent as much time reflecting on the myriad issues associated with LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY. Preparing these remarks has been a blessing, because it has forced me to clarify my positions and to structure the expression of my thoughts into a forty-five minute format.

Brothers, since this convocation is an assembly of the United States/Toronto Region, this talk should have both US districts and the Toronto District in focus. But the considerable differences between the countries of the United States and Canada render impossible a single point of reference. Maintaining a dual focus, however, is not feasible. The basic point of reference, therefore, will be the United States of America. Nevertheless, I think that most of what I have to say is relevant to the situation of the Institute in the Toronto District today.

A Search of Living Men

The DECLARATION tells us that it is as living men that we must discover how fidelity to our Lasallian charism can be lived in the present time (Declaration 7). I have asked myself in recent years if we are really judging, deciding and acting in the United States as living men. I have questioned whether we are really faithful to that dynamic stance which the 39th General Chapter consciously adopted in 1966-67. Our delegates made courageous decisions at that chapter, as well as at the First US Regional Chapter in 1968 and subsequent District Chapters, decisions that replied to concrete situations demanding clear, unambiguous responses. I think that most of those decisions, perhaps not all, were wise, in that the time and conditions required them.

Letting Go

I am not particularly concerned now about assessing that past. I am more concerned that we be just as creative, dynamic, and bold today. Sometimes, I fear that we are locked in, frozen, paralysed by decisions of another day. Are we living too much on past investments? Investments made not only fifty years ago, but also fifteen years ago. Permeating these remarks this morning will be a plea for openness, detachment, for a spirit of "letting go" not only of that Institute of 1960 which no longer exists, but also of that Institute of 1970 which no longer exists, an Institute the story of which is ancient history to the young men in this gathering today.

Towards a Common Understanding

But that remark should not lead you to expect anything remarkably creative and revolutionary from me today. On the contrary, I think that the elements for a creative revitalization of Lasallian Educational Ministry are known to all of us. But to make better sense out of these elements we need a less nebulous and more functional model of Lasallian Educational Ministry. Under the umbrella of such a model, we can find the order and direction for which we crave; without it we have confusion, frustration, demoralization, and polarization. We have to have a common

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understanding of "who we are and what God expects us to do" (Fiddler on the Roof), a common understanding which we consciously embrace and to which we commit ourselves in association.

A Recognizable Ministry

The topic assigned me — LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY — implies that there is in fact such a recognizable ministry. I believe that there is — or at least that there should be and can be. As a catalyst in our search for what that something is, I'll present some responses to four questions: Lasallian Educational Ministry: BY WHOM? WHAT? FOR WHOM? HOW? The questions are closely interrelated, so much so that I find it impossible to begin where I would prefer to begin: with the FOR WHOM? I must begin with BY WHOM?

LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY: BY WHOM? THE VOCATION OF THE BROTHER

Part 1

Central to an effective and functional model of Lasallian Educational Ministry is a common understanding of the BY WHOM? this ministry is to be exercised. When we operate out of fundamentally different images of what a Brother is, our presuppositions and mutual expectations become so diverse and communication so painful that we are inclined to avoid conflict and opt instead for a spirit of "amicable toleration" — the equivalent to a commitment to the status quo. Certainly a healthy diversity in living the Lasallian vocation is a rich blessing. But if we are to achieve any significant degree of unity in this diversity, we must have a common understanding of who the Brother is and what he is all about.

De La Salle's Image of the FSC

De La Salle's understanding is clear. God, in His Providence, that is to say, in His love and concern for poor and neglected youngsters, kindles a light in the hearts of certain persons, calling them to respond in association to these needs. The Brother is such a man, called to be minister, ambassador, co-worker with Christ in freely chosen celibacy, poverty, obedience, and service of the poor through education; a man vowed to this commitment all his lifetime, trusting that God will be faithful. He is a faith-filled and prayerful man, a community man, a zealous man.

De La Salle's imagery is apostolic. In the sixteen meditations he prepared for the Brothers to use during the important time of the annual retreat, he speaks of zeal an astounding forty-six times. He consistently refers to the young as those "God has confided to your care".

An Apostolic Model

This apostolic model of consecrated life, for a long time ignored because it did not readly fit into 19th and 20th century theologies of consecrated life, was vigorously embraced by the 39th General Chapter.

That this General Chapter option for an apostolic model of a consecrated life was a repudiation of the "monk-who-also-teaches" model with two separate ends, one primary, the other secondary, is well known. But we cannot presume that Brothers are now operating out of this General Chapter apostolic model. Many of us, I suspect, are consciously or unconsciously living out of models which are not Lasallian. One such model suggests a new form of dualism: personal growth through the living of the three traditional vows and spiritual exercises as the primary end; and the service of others as a separate and secondary end. Another places its primary focus on the living of community life or on witnessing to fraternal love, with the service of others a separate and secondary end. Later we'll talk about models of association that cannot be reconciled with the Lasallian model of association. There is no question here of right model and wrong model. It is a question of which model we, through our General Chapters, have embraced.

Apostles, not just Teachers

But there is a second consideration concerning our image that is equally important. We are called to be apostles in virtue of our religious consecration, not just teachers. We are to be excellent teachers, yes, but more than that. We are to be loving men, concerned for young people, yes, but more than that. We are to be evangelizers. We are called to be zealous men. Zeal is of the essence of our vocation. And let us not confuse zeal with professionalism. We must, of course, be professionals, but zeal is more. Zeal involves an ardent desire to help young people grow in the spirit of Christianity.

Brother John JOHNSTON
. Vicar General
Rome.

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LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (2)
THE BROTHER IN ASSOCIATION

So far, Brothers, our focus has been the image of the FSC as an individual. Let's adjust that focus: the first Brothers experienced themselves called to live their consecration in association with men united by a conscious sharing of the same ideal, expressed in and through a strikingly original manner of living the Gospel. They vowed association for the purpose of teaching the poor gratuitously. This vow of association was in a sense a vow of identity: it answered the question: who were these men living this new life style?

This association had teeth in it. The men committed themselves to one another for the service of the poor. They vowed obedience to the group and to its representatives. They promised to go wherever they were sent and to do whatever they were assigned. They vowed stability, even if obliged to beg alms and live on bread alone.

To Live in Society with...

Association is a precious tradition among us. We live it on the international, regional, district, and community levels. We hold that it is a constitutive element of our vocation. Our commitment to association has no less teeth than that of our early Brothers. We also have committed ourselves to one another: "to live in society with!" We have promised to go wherever we may be sent and to do whatever we may be assigned by the body of the Institute or by its superiors.

Perhaps what I have just said sounds naive. But it is in fact the way we describe ourselves every time we renew our consecration. There have been changes in our process of assigning and being assigned, but the bottom line is still the same: availability: "Here I am, Lord; send me".

In the last twenty years we have become increasingly aware of our responsibility to participate more actively and directly in determining how our gifts and talents should be used in the service of others. Institutional needs have gradually yielded to the personal needs of the Brothers as priority criteria. Inevitably, tensions have developed around district commitments and personal preferences.

Nevertheless, there are considerable differences in assignment policies within the region. A number of districts have worked creatively and with success to reconcile district commitments and personal preference. Some others, in practice if not in theory, grant individual choice. In some districts Brothers are challenged to consider specific needs before they choose their apostolate; in other districts this practice is less common. A considerable number of Brothers choose to stay where they are. A smaller number choose new apostolates, in existing schools or outside them. The tendency is for districts to become a composite of the individual choices of the Brothers. The possibility of corporate planning is quite limited. It seems clear that we are

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operating out different models of association. We lack a common understanding of and commitment to working "together and by association".

Availability

Our Institute model — go wherever we are sent, do whatever we are asked — is not the only feasible model for religious institutes. But it is the one we have freely choosen as an international body. It is the model to which all of us committed ourselves. In essence it means that we agree to work together and by association to implement, in a structured and coordinated manner, a district plan which we make our own. Certainly we have the right and even the duty to make known our interests, preferences, and judgment relative to our suitability for specific tasks. Certainly also we can and should bring initiatives for new possibilities to the Visitor and District Council. What matters is that we are available, available to be challenged and to consider seriously the needs of the district and even the Institute internationally. The bottom line is that the Visitor has the last word, which is more than a formalistic rubber stamp. That power the Institute gives the Visitor is a responsibility demanding sensitivity, concern, and utmost respect for the human person, a responsibility for the exercise of which the Visitor is strictly accountable.

Association — that commitment freely made to one another for the sake of mission — must be built on mutual trust and self-sacrifice. An association of loving persons freely committed to the same ideal is a group with power — legitimate power at the service of the Lord and of the Church; a power to do really worthwhile and significant things.

Brother John JOHNSTON
Vicar General
Rome

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05-C-18

THE SCHOOL OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Personal attention to the pupil

1. The Brother's abnegation

Children are, at every moment of the day, the centre of interest of the Lasallian educator. Self abnegation is his favourite virtue.

We do not have to go out into the street to make ourselves known. The pupils themselves are our best propagandists.

"Each day the Brother of the Christian Schools fulfils his task, a monotonous and obscure but sublime task which demands a degree of heroism and lots of love".[1] This silent and modest work is the leaven of the mass. Fine speeches are above the heads of the children. Their power of attention is limited but not their instinct to observe and imitate. They are immediately conscious of our dedication and generosity, of our state of mind and of our manner of living. It is impossible to avoid, day in day out, the critical observation of the pupil. Though he does not understand things in the way we do, he understands them in his own way but that does not prevent his grasping, by intuition, the essentials.

In school the Brother transforms and models his pupils. His own personality is the principal agent of this transformation. It is not so much subject matter and methods which impress but his own personality which gets across to the pupils:

— his patience which prevents him from giving way to ill humour when he has to correct a pupil (cf. Letter No. 37, 7-8).

— his self control which makes him even tempered so that the pupils have no difficulty in approaching him at any time. (Letter 58, 15).

— His tenderness towards all. A love which is not weakness but dedication and assistance, especially to those who are in most need. (Letters 11,15 and 55,16).[2]

De La Salle insists that the school be always well run. His Management of Schools is a model of its kind and shows his attention to detail. Nothing escapes his regulations which aim at making effective the efforts put into instructing and educating the pupils. His spiritual inspiration enlivens and stimulates his pedagogy. If children come to de La Salle's schools it is not only because they are Christians and poor, it is also because the Brothers are competent teachers. We must not forget the care with which he prepared the Brothers who taught in the Sunday schools of Saint Sulpice and in the boarding school of Saint Yon where higher courses were provided. These were the forerunners of what are called today modern secondary schools.[3]

Our present documents recall the directions followed by our Founder and his Brothers when they remind us that whatever their nature or level "the Brothers' schools are characterized by the quality of the education and formation given in them". (Declaration 45,2). Farther on (No. 48) new demands along the same lines are formulated:

— value the teaching vocation, that is to say, recognise and appreciate their identity as men consecrated to God for the service of others,

— continue and develop their spiritual and cultural formation,

— educate their students to the realities of the ever changing world in which they live, teaching them not to fear change but to live with it while judging, criticising and assimilating the values that the modern world offers.

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2. Attention to the individual pupil

This is another marked characteristic of the Lasallian school, today as formerly. Let us look first at what was the traditional practice and then we shall glance briefly at today's practice.

The simultaneous method used by the Brothers in their schools was applied to the group in general, without, however, losing sight of the individual pupil. This is what happened when:

— it was pointed out that each pupil's progress should be noted. As the programmes were graded, the pupil had to pass a test before moving on to the following "lesson".[4] St. John Baptist de La Salle says in Letter No. 56, "They must not change from one "lesson" to another if they are not ready for it. If you don't pay attention to this they will learn nothing". In this matter de La Salle did not follow the example of the Collège des Bons-Enfants where pupils were automatically promoted every year. He went farther in taking account of the nature of the child who was to be promoted as soon as he was judged capable in reading, writing and arithmetic, etc.[5]

— the saint advises the Brother to pay special attention to the backward or less gifted children. (He himself did so on every occasion).[6]

— he looks into the reasons which could cause pupils to absent themselves from school. He considers the part of the Brother as well as that of the family or social circumstances. If the Brother does not gain the affection of his pupils, if he presents a dour image or if he is too severe in his corrections, the pupils will not become attached to the school. It is by his affability of manner rather than by harshness that he will attract them.[7]

— the pupils share some of the responsibilities of the teachers: they mark the list of absentees, recite the prayers, visit the sick; there is an almsgiver, distributors and collectors of books... For each of these offices the Founder writes a chapter in the Management.

De La Salle studies the individual child so as to be better able to guide and lead him with success. It should be one of the principal preoccupations of those consecrated to the education of others to get to know the child and to learn what motivates him. In effect, some require gentleness and patience while others have to be urged on. (Med. 33, 1).

In this matter the Management could be considered a model of care for the individual child. It studies:

— the character of each one
— his qualities and defects
— his intellectual and moral development
— his basic inclinations
— his habits and his relations with the members of his family in so far as they help or hinder his progress in school

For de La Salle there is no distinction to be made between the dedication the Brother should have to his pupils and the vigilance he should practise over his conduct. He draws attention to the fact that before thinking of correcting others he should consider the example he himself gives both in and out of school, realizing that pupils imitate the example of their teachers. (Cf. Med. 202, 3 and 91,3).

On all the points mentioned there is continuity between what was done formerly and what is done today. We have the evidence in the Documents which are in accord with the evangelical thinking of the Founder. (Cf. Declaration, 45 to 48).

Brother José Luis HERMOSILLA
Antequera, Malaga
Spain

Notes:

[1] Rigault. Histoire Générale de l'Institut, tome II, p. 217.
[2] Spranger E. El Educador nato, p. 71.
[3] Sauvage. Catéchèse et Laïcat, p. 681. idem. Annoncer l'Evangile aux pauvres, pp. 270 ss.
[4] Cahiers Lasalliens 24, pp. 273, 21.
[5] Poutet Y. Le XVIIe siècle et les origines lasalliennes, tome I pp. 29 et 145.
[6] Blain. Vie de Monsieur de La Salle, tome II p. 101. Cahiers Lasalliens 8. Cahiers Lasalliens 24, pp. 188, 21,53.
[7] Cahiers Lasalliens 24, pp. 185 ss.
[8] Cahiers Lasalliens 24, p. 236.

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SIGNUM FIDEI (1)

INTRODUCTION

Signum Fidei is a movement inspired by the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle. It responds to an interior desire for evangelical perfection which involves the whole life of the person who accepts the call of the Lord. As this call is heard in a Lasallian context, the commitment, because it is Lasallian, will be to an educative and, more particularly, to an evangelizing apostolate.

SIGNUM FIDEI asks from the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools its support and, in return, offers its help, as a priority, to the Institute's "apostolic projects".

A short historic outline

During the 1970's, Brother Charles Henry, Superior General and Brother José Pablo, Vicar General, in the course of their visits to different sectors of the Institute throughout the world, became aware of the desire of some lay people for closer ties with the Institute in its work and in its spirit. The repeated expression of this wish and the fact that it came from such diverse sources strongly impressed the Superiors who asked Brother Paulus Adams, then Assistant, to undertake a study of this movement which was still uncertain of itself.

Helped by Brother Manuel Olivé, he began work on the project and soon results began to show. A small group of Lasallians accepted the idea with enthusiasm and, together with the two Brothers, set about constructing the framework and establishing the basic principles of a movement of Lasallian spirituality for lay people.

In November 1975, a group of five laymen and two Brothers drew up directives for the "Life Style" and "Consecration" and chose a name for the new fraternity which had come into being. It would be called Signum Fidei.

On 5th June 1976, during the General Chapter in Rome, and following the Perpetual Profession of six Brothers, eleven members of Signum Fidei pronounced their Act of Consecration in the presence of the capitulants who were deeply impressed and who, at the close of the ceremony, gave a cordial accolade to the newly professed Brothers and to the Signum Fidei members without distinction.

With God's help the new Signum Fidei fraternity has continued to develop. By the time the next General Chapter assembles in 1986, 400 Signum Fidei members will have made the Act of Consecration, dedicating themselves to the service of God, of the Church and of the Institute, in favour of the poor and especially of the young.

Consecration

This is the starting point of the new fraternity. The person who wishes to join Signum Fidei wishes to give himself to God. It is a true consecration of his whole being and his whole life to the greater glory of God and for the benefit of those in most need.

Constitutions of Signum Fidei

These are contained in the "Life Style" and in the "Consecration". We would like to underline the three main characteristics of the fraternity: Realizing that everything is a Grace, in accordance with the teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle who says, "Make no distinction between the duties of your state and what concerns your sanctification"; Joy which is a gift of the Holy Spirit; the Presence of God which gives meaning to our life and to our work.

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Interior life

Christ calls us to a greater intimacy with himself. This is of the highest importance and requires great care on our part. The apostolate is but the outward expression of this divine life. The means proposed by Signum Fidei for sharing the divine life are:

Daily prayer at a fixed time; attention to the presence of God throughout the day — a truly Lasallian practice and a means of bringing God into every activity of our day and of our life — Sacramental life in order to live the Christian life in all its fulness and with all the sacrifices it entails.

Apostolate and evangelization

Signum Fidei, the sign of the faith, is for others. It cannot be confined to the pursuit of personal sanctification. It gives itself to others, to all who suffer and especially the young.

The Signum Fidei member will adopt an "apostolic project" which will demand time and perhaps money but, above all, love. Teachers and the school; parents and their families; the Association and its animators, all will be the object of his love. He will be "a sign of faith" to all with whom he comes in contact. But it is especially the children and poor youths who will be the object of the zeal of the Signum Fidei member who will give himself to them without counting the cost and with the utmost generosity.

How to become a member of Signum Fidei

A period of preparation is required before making the Act of Consecration. During this time the candidate will study the "Life Style" and the formula of consecration. He will be initiated into the duties of his new state and of the apostolate which, according to his means, he will adopt as his "apostolic project". He will find a member or a Brother who will direct him in his new commitment to the Lasallian way of life of the Signum Fidei. He will join with other members in prayer and work and, if possible, in the same "apostolic project".

Two years are usually sufficient for this preparation but the period may be prolonged or curtailed by agreement with the Brother or Signum Fidei member who "accompanies" him.

Finally, when the time is ripe, the candidate will arrange with the fraternity and with the local Brothers' Community the date when, at the Offertory of the Community Mass, he will make a public Act of Consecration by reading the accepted formula.

It is desirable that the Act of Consecration be made with a certain degree of solemnity and in the presence of Signum Fidei members and Brothers who wish to participate in the ceremony.

A natural sympathy will unite the new member with the Brothers and with the other Signum Fidei members with whom he shares the Eucharistic liturgy, prayer, fraternal discussions and finally the family meal.

Signum Fidei Prayer

"Heavenly Father, in your divine Providence, you have also chosen me to be a sign of faith in the midst of a world filled with confusion and doubt.

Awaken in me and in all the members of Signum Fidei a deep spirit of faith and zeal for an apostolic commitment which, after the example of St. John Baptist de La Salle, will inspire others to consecrate their lives to Christian education.

Bless the work of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. May we all, supported and animated by the Spirit of Love, become more and more "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world", especially for the poor and those farthest from salvation.

Receive, o Lord, into your glory, our brothers and sisters who have gone before us with the sign of faith and who sleep the sleep of peace. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ your well beloved Son. AMEN."

Bro. Manuel Olivé
Via Aurelia 476
00100 ROMA
(Italia)

Bro. Paulus Adams
rue des Tanneurs 161
1000 Bruxelles
(Belgium)

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SIGNUM FIDEI (2)

LIFE STYLE OF THE FRATERNITY

I. EVANGELIC VOCATION

a. The Holy Spirit has called us to be ambassadors of Christ and dispensers of His Word according to the charism of St. J-B. de La Salle.

Our mission is to reveal to the world the love of Christ for the poor and especially for the young by means of evangelization founded on the person of Jesus Christ and on the response to the Good News which He has announced.

This presupposes a close intimacy with Christ our Saviour which Signum Fidei members will try to acquire and develop.

b. Attentive to His call we offer ourselves to the Church for its "edification". We are "infinitely" attentive to all that comes to us from her through our Holy Father, the Pope, and our bishops. This sense of the Church strengthens our faith and informs the apostolic project which we wish to carry out in full ecclesial communion.

II. THE SPIRIT OF OUR FRATERNITY - SIGNUM FIDEI

a. The spirit of our fraternity, inherited from our Holy Founder, is the spirit of faith and of zeal.

b. The spirit of community throws into relief our resemblance to the Brothers of the Christian Schools with whom we feel fraternally united.

III. THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

a. Faith makes us live the love of the Father revealed in Jesus Christ, dead and risen again, and instilled into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Faith gives us a new perspective. We see men and events in their reality: men in order to help them to realise their vocation as sons of God; events as sent by God Himself.

Faith helps us to discern how we act in prayer, in the choosing of our apostolic project, in our search for God's will in our Signum Fidei fraternity.

Faith stimulates us in the evangelical service which Christ inspires us to undertake. Through faith we know that He lives in our hearts and is present amongst those who gather together in His name.

b. As Signum Fidei members we animate our lives and our activities with the spirit of faith, we seek God in all things; we regard everything with the eyes of faith; in our actions we turn to God and finally we attribute all to Him.

c. Each day we set aside a fixed time for prayer and meditation on the Gospel in order to meet Christ and to accept with docility what He communicates to us in the silence of the heart. Through the Gospel, read, meditated on, prayed, Christ communicates his personal message to us to make us understand our vocation and to help us to fulfil our commitments. Exchanges of experience with our fellow members of Signum Fidei assure coherence.

d. The life of the Presence of God directs and fills our day. We try to put God at the centre of our lives. With this living, loving presence which radiates through our work, our rest and our family life, we "make no distriction between the duties of our state and the matter of our sanctification" because we do all to please Him.

e. We live this Presence in a particularly intense way and in intimate union with Christ in liturgical and sacramental liturgies. We share daily in the Eucharist Sacrifice and in the liturgical prayer of the Church, if possible in community, in the spirit of the liturgical seasons which we are careful to celebrate.

f. Our Lady is for us, members of Signum Fidei, our Queen and Our Mother. We worship her with filial devotion. Every day we pay her special homage: the rosary and the angelus. Her total "Yes" to God inspires our total giving of ourselves so that He may live in our hearts as He lived in that of His mother.

g. St. J. B. de La Salle is our Father and model. We all want to acquire his spirit, to study his life and his writings, to share his charism and his spirituality. That is why we are anxious to find all the documents which could help us and why we appeal to the Brothers to assist us in our Lasallian path.

h. Each evening, members of our fraternity spend some time in the presence of Our Lord to evaluate their day and to examine their fidelity to their vocation. That is when they recite this "simple prayer" and ask the Lord to send his Spirit on them and on their brothers and sisters in Signum Fidei.

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IV. THE SPIRIT OF ZEAL

a. The love of Christ which urges us on is expressed by our zeal to evangelize and this desire makes of each of us a sign of faith; a Signum Fidei in the midst of the world.

God has need of us as signs of faith, capable of revealing to all, and particularly to young people, His love and His message. It is in Him that they will find their happiness, their Christian fulfilment and the motives for trying to create a society more just and more humane.

b. We wish to manifest and to share the riches of Christian life with which God has gifted us, through evangelizing activities, an "apostolic project" in our own area, thus making concrete our collaboration in God's creative and saving work.

c. It is of the highest importance that each member define his "apostolic project" in conformity with possibilities, that he cooperate practically in the work of the Redeemer and that he devote himself constantly and creatively to his "project" while seeking the help of other people in its realization. The realization of the "apostolic project" is a witness to our faith and zeal for the service of the poor and the marginalized — those dear to our Founder and to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

d. The Signum Fidei apostolate is clearly Lasallian: we all try to exercise an educative influence in the widest sense of the word i.e. in the sense of evangelization. All of us, whoever we may be, wish to be "signs" for our own milieu.

e. When it concerns the interests of the Gospel the members form a team or the nucleus of a larger group to carry out a major project or to animate in a Christian spirit other activities.

f. These are the attitudes that our zeal inspires, making of each of us a messenger or, in a manner of speaking, the message itself — joyful and simple:

- — total availability to announce Jesus Christ directly,
- — love for all, especially the poor and the young,
- — desire to help others — groups or individuals — to live as Christians,
- — friendly acceptance of assistance to our brothers in Signum Fidei to discern the will of God in their lives and in their "projects",
- — a positive and encouraging attitude to the young, to parents, to teachers and to co-workers to whom we offer our help and our faith.

On hearing this message, people — especially the young — will understand and accept the wealth that the Holy Spirit brings to all who believe in Him.

V. THE SIGNUM FIDEI COMMUNITY

a. In the Lasallian tradition each Signum Fidei member will seek to join with other members to form little communities where they will meet regularly to live their faith and to share their successes and difficulties.

Together in community we escape from ourselves to throw ourselves into the work of establishing the kingdom of God in our area: in the district, in the parish and preferably in a Lasallian enterprise.

b. All the members of the same region or country form a fraternity at regional and national level. We like to meet regularly in a spirit of joyful brotherhood to rejoice together at God's presence amongst us and to exchange views, reflect and pray as a community. Here we plan our common apostolic project while mutually enriching and encouraging each other and discerning, with the help of the members, the best means of advancing in the spirit of faith and zeal.

c. Each year we make a few days' retreat, in community if possible, to deepen our understanding of the meaning and requirements of our vocation and to reaffirm our gift of ourselves to God and our zeal for the success of our "apostolic project" whether personal or community.

d. At the beginning of the different liturgical seasons we try to find time for reflection and reading so as to enter, with the Church, into the spirit of the mysteries commemorated.

e. Our community greeting, after invocation of St. J. B. de La Salle is: "Live Jesus in our hearts. For ever!"

VI. SIGNUM FIDEI CONSECRATION

a. The members do not make vows properly so called. Instead the Consecration binds us to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. Our poverty consists in moderation and simplicity after the example of Christ; our chastity, in the care we have to live strictly according to our state, and in the dedication of our affective life to the love of God; obedience in the acceptance and fulfilment of the "Life Style" we have embraced and in the willingness to follow the advice of our brothers in Signum Fidei, in mutual love, while striving for evangelical perfection.

b. Following a period of preparation we make our Consecration in response to the call of God. It is, at the same time, the starting point of our new life, dedicated to His service in the edification of the Church, according to the charism of St. J. B. de La Salle.

We call it "Consecration" because it is for us the confirmation of our consecration in baptism and because it fully expresses the meaning of our giving ourselves to the Blessed Trinity. We like its resemblance to the Brothers' formula of vows which was composed by the Founder himself. And we look on it as a prayer, perfectly suited to the beginning and ending of our day, and one which renews daily our membership of the Signum Fidei fraternity.

c. Each year we renew our Consecration either privately or in community. There is nothing, however, to prevent a member, after several years in the fraternity, from making his consecration for three years or for life, after careful reflection and on the advice of his spiritual director.

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THE JOY OF LIVING FOR THE SERVICE OF OTHERS

It is always difficult to put into writing and to share with others what, in a certain sense, concerns the most intimate part of our lives. This becomes easier, however, if it helps other people and if it tells them of the joy to be found in serving others.

I am a lay teacher in a hamlet far from the provincial capital of Jujuy. I am married and am the mother of five children. In my life I have experienced a wonderful conversion like that of St. Paul. The instrument of my conversion was a man who, by the example of his life, opened up for me new perspectives: the realization that I am a teacher of love and laughter, the bearer of a message, filled with wonder each day by the simple hearts of children, in short, a Christian teacher because I am a Lasallian teacher.

THE DISCOVERY OF DE LA SALLE AND HIS CHARISM

In a sense I discovered God and de La Salle at the same time, after a life from which God was completely absent. My indifference was suddenly dispelled by a sense of need which was connected with the founding of a Lasallian school for the marginalized in a poor district of the province of Jujuy in the north of Argentina. I took on this work after resigning from my previous post. Without my seeking the present situation, this sense of need became a reality in my life.

The discovery of God came with the discovery of a teacher and of his dedication, his service, his humility and his gift of himself. Discovering de La Salle meant discovering the possibility of doing now what he did long ago. Thus it was that the Gospel passage "Suffer them to come to me" became the inspiration of my professional life.

In the depth of my heart I was anxious to get to know de La Salle better, and as I penetrated deeper into his charism my spirit opened out as if liberty had given it wings. My pupils were not just children whom I happened to be teaching, they were material to be moulded into a new creation, young lives bringing a sense of wonder into my life. I felt a sense of responsibility as a co-creator in the work of the Lord where it is the person who matters not just the instruction given.

The pupils of the school, very poor, badly nourished, poorly clothed and lacking in education, made the task difficult. The hours of class were not long enough. I had to give a little more of my time. From day to day the formation meetings became more demanding. It was at that point that I entered on the way of de La Salle with little daily renunciations and with the difficulties experienced in the formation session of the educative community. To work together in a spirit of fraternal love presents difficulties for which, as de La Salle knew, prayer provides the answer.

Looked at in this light, inadequacies, sufferings, misunderstandings and even discouragement all become sources of joy because de La Salle experienced them also. All these things strengthen the will and are part of service.

One experiences a thirst for knowledge which is not simply a matter of professional duty but a new aspiration: teaching is a way to sanctification and happiness. The school yard is gradually transformed, the sad little faces light up with smiles and the silence gives way to joyful chatter. The Brothers bring their tenderness to all and the lay teachers make a new discovery: that of having been the bearers of happiness to others. What joy de La Salle had brought into my life!

THE DISCOVERY OF FAITH IN THE FAMILY

The charism of de La Salle is gradually becoming part of my life and the little sacrifices made in the service of my school become less painful. I see them as a necessary part of my work. Priorities are appearing in my scale of values. To be born to a new life and to be true to myself are among the first.

De La Salle comes also to the family in the person of little Peter who is poorly clothed and who suffers from the cold, of John, a real little devil, or of Mary who cannot learn the vowels. We share their sufferings and their needs. In this way we grow in faith in the midst of our daily occupations. My work is not just my own, it is that of us all. De La Salle is not for me alone, now he is for us all.

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I read his life to my family, proud of having so important a friend and proud of my profession as a teacher. In this way the Lasallian family becomes a reality. The laughter of my pupils forms a chorus with that of my own children and they are always asking of my husband, José.

However, there is something wanting. I feel an urge each day as I get to know the Founder better, to give myself more and more. As a result we work better, or rather, we live more fully during catechism lessons, at parents' meetings or outings, etc.

THE URGE TO GO TO THE MISSION FIELD

De La Salle puts before us the daily effort: preferential attention to the poor. We must try continually to form a synthesis of faith, culture and life. One's sense of need becomes more and more pressing. In the midst of the joy of discovery and of forming a wonderful community come renouncement and separation. The Claretian priests ask our help and we have to leave all. Once again the words of de La Salle stimulate us and show us the path to follow: "I ask you, O my God, to make known to me your will in this matter. What should decide my choice? the greater glory of God, better service of the Church, my own perfection, the salvation of souls? The same voice that called me here seems to call me elsewhere. It is true that the hand of God, which placed me where I am, can take me away from here".

Thus we were asked to leave all we had built up. It was not "our" work. It was God's work. But if the call of the Lord is pressing, that of his servant is also: go to the poor, to the needy, to the marginalised, "leave all and follow me".

By his life de La Salle speaks to us of Providence, of abandonment... and we find the light and the motivation to act. We have, therefore, left all; friends, school, etc. and have gone. How sad the leave-taking was! The same voice that called us here asked us to leave. We had to begin anew.

How we upset the Lasallian community! The new beginning was not easy, but Christ needs courageous, dedicated Christians, free to talk of freedom, poor to speak of humility, disinterested to speak of the gift of self, gentle to speak of gentleness, confident to speak of hope.

It is what de La Salle says, "Reanimate your confidence in his infinite goodness and do him the honour of trusting yourselves to him without worry about the present or fear for the future, thinking only of the present moment in which you live".

Brothers, that is how I live and though I am not in a Lasallian school I feel more Lasallian than ever in my new life. If God is in my heart here is where he wants me to be among the poor and most needy.

THE REGION WHERE I WORK

The Lord asked us to go, to leave everything and to abandon ourselves to providence in a little village on the high plateau, Abra Pampa, at an altitude of 3,400 metres and at a distance of 230 kilometres from the provincial capital, Jujuy. It is lonely and inhospitable, with intense cold and constant winds.

The village is made up of houses with mud walls and thatched roof and a street of trodden earth. The winter is severe. Poverty brings each day its quota of humiliations. Loneliness and wind are our sole companions and the silence needs continual getting used to.

The people are, for the most part, illiterate, subjected to marginalization and exploitation. They are the "Coyas", descendants of the Incas of the country, silent and almost impenetrable, accustomed only to suffering.

Here as in other places poverty is the mortal sin, hunger crucifies Christ every day, illiteracy is the common lot, children have never learned to smile, here is where labourers are needed for the harvest!

DE LA SALLE MORE ALIVE THAN EVER IN A SCHOOL

This is how the Lasallian star continues to shine in my heart and in that of my family, opening up new paths and bringing new smiles. I explain to people that it is still possible to love, that we are seeking solutions to their problems. In this way life, the Gospel and love enter the community.

At present I am teaching in a government school where there are no Brothers but where de La Salle is more alive than ever. Yes. He is here also! They knew nothing of de La Salle but the desire to share in this service existed unsuspected. The Lord had need of us here.

We form here a really fine Christian community where children are given first place. In addition, catechesis attracts volunteers. We read the writings of de La Salle, share the knowledge of him that we have gained and draw courage and enlightenment from it.

This year, with the help of two lady teachers from the school, we are organizing a course in Lasallian spirituality and we are trying to put it into practice in our daily lives.

We are thus opening up avenues of hope. I pray God to send more labourers to the harvest where we are most needed. We have need of Christians of courage, daring and disinterestedness. God will provide the rest.

Señora Eva Maldonado de Torremorell
Casa Parroquial - Abra Pampa
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THE LASALLIAN LEADER

In our associations, the leader — the person among us who accepts with generosity and a sense of responsibility the task of animating our groups — possesses, as a Lasallian, certain traits and characteristics which are easily recognisable. This is true in almost every case.

VOCATION

Our leader (this is his first characteristic) is certain that he has been called to the work of de La Salle, which is God's work. The holy Founder, the history of the Institute, the living witness of the Brothers urge him towards his specific vocation: the work of evangelization of youth in the family and in the school.

SHARED FAITH

His second characteristic, faith, is the base and foundation of his vocation. It was, perhaps, the Brothers who taught him to live the faith, not as a treasure to be kept to himself but as wealth to be shared joyfully with others. He did this as a child at home and at school and he does so now in his fraternal relations within the Association.

AVAILABILITY AND ZEAL

This is the third characteristic. Loving deeply the task for wich he has assumed responsibility he fulfills it with a constant zeal and complete availability, surrendering himself humbly to the movement of the Spirit. "I trust you, Lord", "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard".

STYLE

All this presupposes, without any doubt, a style, a manner of acting, a way of understanding things, a manner of being. Our leader is or, at least tries to be, simple in his relations with others. He is at ease with their culture; he is guided by faith; he is tenacious in his efforts; prepared for all occasions and situations; he is not easily discouraged; he seeks out those in need and offers a brotherly hand. He offers, he gives, he accepts, he shares, he understands, he hopes.....

HE IS AIDED BY GRACE

But, you will say, if we could find such a person, gifted with so many admirable qualities, should we not put him in a glass case? No. I assure you. There are thousands like him, full of Lasallian charism, generous, available, faithful, devoted to the Lasallian cause in which they remain united. And what of their ability, aptitudes, effectiveness? "Chosen by God they act according to the graces received from Him". Open to the Spirit, "the Spirit himself inspires them what to say" and enriches them with gifts and abilities. I know such a leader, with his personal limitations and lack of time and means. Completely dedicated, he felt forced to act, trusting that God would make up for his deficiencies. The result was a work of high quality accomplished with utter disinterestedness.

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SERVICE

What are the fields of action and practical aims of the Lasallian leader and who are the beneficiaries of his services? The Lasallian world provides many outlets for such energy and good will once they have been accepted and canalized. These outlets are to be found in education centres, the Associations and all concerned with them, schools, youth, family, teachers, social work, missions, vocations, etc. There are different tasks and diverse ministries which all have their source in the common evangelizing mission which unites the members to the Institute.

INTEGRATION IN THE INSTITUTE

This must be regarded as fundamental. In effect, the activities of our leaders as well as all individual and group activity undertaken can only be justified if they are — at their own level — connected with the work of the Institute, in intention and in fact. As for the Associations connected with scholastic centres, we could make a long repetitive list of frustrations, wasted efforts, unfinished projects or projects which were badly carried out because the plans were not integrated in the overall programme of the centre and because there was neither understanding nor agreement with the Directors and Communities of the establishments concerned.

MATURITY AND DISCERNMENT

We must demand these qualities from our leaders and ourselves. Older groups, filled with nostalgia and memories and acting under the guidance of the Brother "in charge", have now reached maturity in associative and apostolic action. Their energies must be integrated into the general programme of the educative communities. If not, we shall again experience frustrating difficulties and misunderstandings.

The same mission unites us all in de La Salle: work for the Brothers, with the Brothers, inspired by them and, needless to say, counting on them.

Mixed commissions are today a source of considerable value which we must use and whose great possibilities we must put to work. Thanks to them and, perhaps to them alone, will it be possible to set up and co-ordinate programmes, projects and responsibilities accepted by our leaders. These latter have made clear their availability, no longer for random and occasional roles as in former times but for formal and permanent engagements in the service of the apostolate. Today more than ever we need the concentrated efforts of all. From those responsible we expect attentive consideration and judicious discernment so as to integrate and profit from their availability.

FULLNESS AND CONSECRATION

Besides the educative community there is the religious Community which guides it and infuses it whith Lasallian life. Over and above maturity there is fullness. This is the process which urges our leaders to aspire to something more: to live to the full the spirituality of de La Salle. They love the apostolate and, in their desire to identify with it, seek to go beyond their own vocation by imitating the Brothers in their religious fidelity.

These are the "Signum Fidei". They respond to God's call "by a full acceptance" and "by consecrating themselves to Him in the accomplishment of their mission". They draw courage from prayer and "by making no distinction between the duties of their state and the affair of their salvation". They live the apostolic project they have adopted and offer us the witness of their lives for they are firmly convinced that they must "render an account of those who have been entrusted to them".

Symbols of faith, bearers of new hope.....

José Antonio de Lózar Gómez.
MADRID, Spain
(Former President of the Lasallian
World Federation)

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PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF YOUTH IN TURIN

1. Turin: a city in crisis

The city of Turin with its industrial zone forms a metropolis of one and a half million inhabitants which underwent a radical transformation in 1980. Fr. Sorge, S.J. describes it as an epochal crisis. Turin's main industry — the manufacture of motor cars — has suffered the consequences of the energy crisis and especially of the introduction of modern technology such as the use of "robots" in the production process. A fall in sales coupled with the introduction of new technology has caused a serious drop in employment, the social consequences of which are relieved only by recourse to unemployment payments.

The following figures give some idea of the situation: In four years, from 1980 to today Fiat-Auto has seen the number of its employees fall from 140,000 to 99,000 (of whom 15,000 are not working but are paid by the state). A further reduction of the labour force to around 60,000 is forecast for 1986.

Turin which, during the 60's and 70's had so much work available that a surge of uncontrolled inmigration into the city took place, is now suddenly faced with a grave unemployment problem. There are today nearly 55,000 applicants for jobs and a large number of these are young people in search of their first job. Employment is, therefore, the most urgent problem today, a source of agonizing worry especially for school leavers who risk a long and humiliating period of unemployment.

Marginalization is another disturbing problem, particularly the marked increase in the number of drug addicts. There are more than 10,000 of them in the urban area and the numbers are rising particularly in the 15 to 18 age group. This modern plague of society whose roots are ethical as well as social and cultural, affects all the districts of Turin. Two areas, however, stand out: the well-to-do residential area of the upper class and the working class zone of the proletariate and the immigrants. In other words, the worst affected are the sons of the wealthy and of the poor, while the middle class seems to have greater resistance, thanks to its stronger family ties.

2. Escape through drug abuse

According to the report published by the Commission of Inquiry set up by the Turin City Council and representing all political and social interests, the escape from society through the use of drugs seems to be the result of deep ethical and cultural differences or of the present conditions of economic and social unrest.

The crisis which affects the economic structures of Turin also produces a tendency towards despondency. A marked decrease in the number of marriages and births is evident while the number of those living alone has greatly increased. A large sector of older people lives practically cut off from the rest of the population. There is risk of a wide generation gap appearing in society.

In such a crisis situation we must consider all the causes. If we take account only of the economic aspect we shall have a very limited view of the situation.

There is also a cultural crisis and a crisis of values. The deeply rooted positivism of the two main cultural streams (laïcism with its origins in liberalism, and Marxism) is not able to provide an adequate answer to a completely new problem which surpasses the kind of thinking current at the beginning of the century, and because of which Turin is still represented by the dialectical contrast between Agnelli and Gramsci, between rising capitalism and the worker movement, under the control of the Italian Communist Party.

Today the reality is much more complex. Turin cannot surmount the crisis without the launching of new activities by the "third" sector, that is, by scientific research and by the University. In the process all cultural streams are needed including that represented by the Catholic Democrats.

A new dimension of the city cannot be expressed solely in terms of productivity and economy, it demands from all an awareness of human problems, of ethical problems first of all. Only in this way can a new sense of solidarity come to life capable of offering possibilities to future generations and of preventing the consumer society from creating a new ghetto - that of the old.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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3. Responsible attention by the Christian educator

The Christian educator should, above all, be conscious of the imperative need to oppose the tendency to seek solutions to the city's problems which are purely materialistic, characterized by the profit motive or by selfish interests which set one sector of society against another.

There is an equally imperative need, in view of existing tensions in society, to give responsible attention to the all round education of the person which goes beyond purely personal interests. For example, it is difficult to oppose the spread of drug abuse even in school if you do not endeavour to form individual consciences to a scale of values which give meaning to the life of a young person and demand commitment and a sense of responsability to himself and to others.

To be more specific, it seems essential to stress the kind of commitment required at each level of education. In universities and other institutions of higher education which form the future leaders of industry it seems appropriate to insist on their role as enlightened and constructive leaders not only of industry but of society.

It is not, therefore, a question of a school whose aim is preparation for a personal career. The school must also educate the student to make choices which are in accord with the general good. It is development of the human personality which must be given priority in industrial policy, in the conduct of public affairs and in professional activities. This demands a careful study of the life of our society so that an effort and if necessary criticism, can be made to discover new sectors for development and new industrial activity, in other words, to make a contribution to the renewal of the whole life of the city.

In middle and professional schools attention must be paid to the preparation of students for a trade or profession which offers some hope of employment. To this end school programmes must be adapted to the needs of the area, given that a good professional training has important value for the future, for it guarantees employment and protects the person from marginalization and idleness.

The Christian educator must do his best so that the school may not be just an aside in the life of the young person but an essential factor in his personal development and in his finding his place in society.

4. The Lasallian response

Lasallian experience suggests two considerations:

a. You cannot fully respond to the needs of the persons and of society without an education unlimited by the horizontal dimension but envisaging also the vertical dimension. In a society becoming more and more secularized, reference to Gospel values and to a higher Reality seems an essential element for the young person if he is not to be carried away by the myths of the consumer society and the "good life" as an end in itself.

b. From the ideological aims of the 19th century came an ardent aspiration for a new dimension of man with new possibilities towards the absolute. In this context the Lasallian message remains an essential point of reference and should never be watered down for fear of embarrassing certain social and cultural groups.

Three centuries ago, in a France where the middle class was beginning to emerge, St. John Baptist de La Salle gave preference to the poor. Today we must devote our attention to the "new poor" of the post-industrial society. In present day Turin, the "new poor" are the young people threatened by unemployment and emargination and a prey to drug pushers. Whence the special importance today of technical and professional schools which are orientated towards market outlets and are more responsive to known needs.

To provide such a school is to answer in full to the needs of those who otherwise would become the "poor" of twenty-first century society. It is equally important to bring attention to bear on new scientific research and modern technical innovations for it is in these fields that the future of the next and following generations is determined.

5. An agonizing question

There remains the agonizing problem of drug abuse. Here I pose a question: Why do the Lasallian Community and the Lasallian family not enter this field in an educative capacity by the formation of groups of leaders capable of taking the initiative in the fight against drug abuse? In this field there is a void: Few people devote themselves to this work and they often lack the scientific training and the means necessary.

A "school" for volunteers, training the best of the young people, would be a really worthwhile initiative. The same holds good for Turin as for Milan and Rome for the drug problem is the same in all great centres of population.

Like the abandoned children, the vagabonds, the "libertins" of the seventeenth century, the young drug addicts of today are waiting to find on their path a new de La Salle.

Mario BERARDI
Turin City Councillor and
Television journalist.

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05-E-09

BROTHER ARMAND HUBERT: TWENTY YEARS IN A SPECIAL SCHOOL

Introduction:

This Brother, who has spent the past twenty years in the apostolate of caring for retarded children, prefers not to talk of the work which he has done so well. I asked him if I could write these few lines though I have not had the happiness of living with him during those years of dedicated service.

My principal and practically my only source of information is an article, dated 15th June, 1982, which appeared in the review "Equipe" of the District of South Belgium. The article was the outcome of an exchange of views during which Brother Armand Hubert answered questions from about a hundred of his confreres at a meeting held at Mont de La Salle, Ciney (Belgium).

Brother Maurice Hermans

Beginnings:

Like many others Brother Armand Hubert became aware that more and more pupils were not benefiting from the teaching given in ordinary classes. For almost twenty years he had been teaching in primary schools and then from 1962 to 1965 was in charge of the fifth year class in a school of the Brothers in the town of Binche (Diocese of Tournai, Belgium).

During a school inspection, Brother Armand and the Academy's Inspector discussed the serious problem of retarded children. After three, four or five years schooling these pupils have still not learned to read. "With your experience", suggested the Inspector, "you could start a special class for these boys".

In September 1965 two special classes were formed. Five years later there were six. Faced with the same problem, the Sisters in a neighbouring Community formed three special classes for their pupils. In 1972 the special classes for boys and girls were combined in a special school. Pupils and teachers went to live at the château de Clerfayt which had been put at their disposal by the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Administration was put in the hands of a lay man but Brother Armand remained in charge of education, a post which he had held from the beginning.

The number of pupils, boys and girls, remains around a hundred. For the most part, they are children who are slightly handicapped or lacking in muscular coordination and unable, therefore, to follow the rhythm and programme of basic primary education. Their defects were diagnosed by the psychologists at a special centre for the purpose. There is a small number of more seriously retarded children, some mongoloid children and some very seriously handicapped children who will never be able to read, and finally there are some with "character" problems — disturbed children.

At thirteen years of age some of these pupils go to a special training school while the less handicapped are able to attend normal technical schools.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Via Aurelia, 476 – 00165 ROMA, Italia

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The Brother among the children

The Brother is, for these children, not just a Director or even a teacher or animator. He is all that and more besides. The child is at the centre of his preoccupations. It is for him that he established the school so that he might no longer be rejected or neglected. It is with the child in mind that all moves are made and all decisions taken. It is the child who must be made happy in a climate of affection, at once relaxed and calm; it is he who must be helped to develop. In a word, the Brother seeks to put into practice the advice of St. John Baptist de La Salle to his first disciples "to love all their pupils tenderly".

Loving them means, above all, listening to them patiently without ever showing surprise or annoyance at their untimely demands. For instance a boy wants a football pitch for himself and his companions. The Brother goes to a neighbouring farmer with the request and the farmer puts a field at their disposal. A boy wants to make a visit home so he mentions it to the Brother who intercedes with the authorities so that he can realise his wish. For Mothers' Day, a child, instead of buying a gift, makes an object for his mother and it is the Brother who finds the materials and tools to make it. A boy cannot make his profession of faith in his own parish so the Brother arranges for him to make it in the school chapel. Organizing an excursion, remembering a birthday, tending a wound, providing clothes and, perhaps, a gift when the parents have too easily forgotten, all these are the concern of the Brother.

When teachers, off duty, use the time for a little relaxation among themselves, the Brother is with the children. It is at such times, especially, that the children come to him with their troubles.

The Brother and the teaching staff

The Brother is especially careful to see that the members of staff remain united, dynamic and enthusiastic. He seeks to create friendly relations among the personnel. He is close to everyone, always available, and aware of each one's difficulties in the exercise of his educative task.

When a teacher arrives late or is kept at home by illness, the Brother is there to replace him. You can always count on the Brother to do repairs when the school is too poor to pay a maintenance man. It is the Brother who looks after maintenance and most importantly, keeps the central heating going.

The Brother is, above all, the person who understands. You would have to have "gone through the mill" to understand how a class of retarded or disturbed children can test the nerves of adults.

How can anyone from outside or from a distance understand the problems of supervising recreation or the school dining room during the mid-day meal? The Brother has gone through it all. He understands, helps, puts in a soothing word, suggests appropriate action. He can often help adults to understand the sometimes inexplicable reactions of certain children.

The Brother is the moderating and conciliating element in the school. On him depends the maintenance of mutual trust and good relations between pupils and teachers, between the teachers themselves and between teachers and management. The Brother is also the conciliator when it is a matter of relations between those responsible for the school: the Governors, the parents' committee and the teachers' representative.

It frequently happens that the Brother is taken into their confidence by members of staff. He becomes the intermediary between God and the people with whom he works. Some will discuss with him family problems and other delicate matters which they keep hidden from the rest of the world.

At the end of a two-page article in the District review the editor quotes from Brother Armand the following:

"I must mention my contacts with the families of my pupils which take up a lot of time and also the work of catechesis. I spend twenty four hours a week teaching catechism".

"Twice I received special encouragement. Once Brother Superior General paid a surprise visit to the school anf afterwards wrote to me saying, "You are doing wonderful work which is perfectly in line with the purpose of the Institute".

"Our bishop (of Tournai) said to me a few months ago (March, 1982) "I see two fields of action for the Brothers: running special schools like yours, and working among immigrants. Continue to give your witness to the world".

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05-E-10

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE OF THE VERY POOR

"Let us not be content to stay where we are, but rather let us go on our way directed by the Holy Spirit, with the aid of our Brothers and the guarantee of the Church" (Circular 412, p. 119).

"Every man carries in himself a fundamental, inalienable value, his dignity as a man". (Movement ATD Fourth World)

For five years I have been working with young people and adults in a "Fourth World" setting in Rheims. I am part of an educational organization known as The Movement to Aid the Very Distressed in the Fourth World (Le Mouvement Aide Toute Détresse Quart Monde). I began this work and continue to do it with the encouragement of the District Council. For two years three Brothers worked with me, one full time and two part time.

In this article I wish to say something about the people for whom the ATD exists and about my own work with these people of the "Fourth World".

FOR WHOM ARE WE CONCERNED?

In every society there are millions of poor workers living at the lowest rung of the social ladder. From one generation to the next they pass on a heritage of ignorance, indigence and violence. Excluded from decent housing, basic education, instruction in the professions, and lacking a national union, they are at the arbitrary mercy of the administration and dependent on the welfare agencies. They form a sub-population which in 1960 was given the name the "fourth World". Although the extent of this sub-population is unknown, it is estimated that approximately ten million people in Western Europe alone are part of this culture, with about two million of them in France. The fourth world population of France is family population estimated at three hundred fifty thousand. The majority of these families are French in origin and have a history of nomadic existence; there are also refugee families who over several generations in France have joined the sub-population.

Sent to the galleys by Louis XIV and relegated by Karl Marx to a rank of "population in rags" this sub-population continues today to experience the sub-human conditions of a life marked by exclusion. The families of the fourth world suffer in every area of life:

Economics: Their income is very low or non-existent; since they have no guarantee of even a minimum wage, they must live by their wits.

Housing: Their housing is always over-crowded and of the poorest quality. Despite the disappearance of large shantytowns their habitations continue to be dirty and dangerous. They are usually located on the periphery of large cities and in the worst environmental conditions — temporary homes built to meet an emergency. The people are to be found more or less hidden and scattered in hovels, huts, tents, cellars, abandoned cars, immobile canal boats and empty factory buildings. The minority of these families who may succeed in getting public housing are rarely able to remain there.

Health: Their health is the worst in the nation. They suffer from tuberculosis, alcoholism, pediculosis, stunted growth and other diseases related to the environment. Their life expectancy is the lowest and their infant mortality is the highest; they are a reminder of France in 1850.

Family: They know the humiliation and the mutilation of being deprived of the responsibility of raising their children. Their family and social lives depend in large measure on the public social and educational agencies.

Education: Unable to read or write, the men and women of the fourth world are stuck in a destructive ignorance which undermines all of life, poisons their relationships and often crushes them. In spite of their efforts they have few chances of advancement and are condemned to pass this heritage on to their children. Unable to use existing political power or union and family organizations, they remain ignorant. They are viewed as "Social cases" marginal people condemned to a life of uselessness and mere survival.

THE MOVEMENT TO AID THE VERY POOR OF THE FOURTH WORLD

The Movement ATD was born in 1957 with the aid of a few families and Father Joseph Wresinski. Since its inception it has fought for the respect and the advancement of the people of the fourth world. Its object is to help these families

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reintegrate into our collective consciousness and acquire the means of expression which are at the disposal of the majority of citizens. The Movement has three principal goals:

— to see that the recognition of the needs of the most neglected is guaranteed.

— to promote a society which gives absolute priority to the most underpriveleged among its members. Misery is not inevitable but is the result of choices made in the areas of economics, politics, science, culture and religion.

— to sensitize our society to the fact that all our efforts to build a world of justice, peace and brotherhood are futile until we attend to the needs of the poorest among us.

The work of the Movement is focused on three areas:

— the family: acquisition of the means necessary to live a decent family life.

— education: to permit access to the gift of knowledge by mobile libraries, learning to read and write and providing job training for the professions.

— participation: assemblies of young people and adults to learn public speaking and the ways of union representation.

A COMMITMENT TO ACTION

The discovery of the fourth world, existing outside our gates, is a progressive discovery. Twenty years of teaching in the Middle East did little to prepare me for this world. Meeting with close friends in a house for young people, showing the same care, the same ideal for justice and facilitating a group of illiterate immigrants for many years helped me to discover among us those most neglected and living in misery. It was also a time for me to answer some questions in my own life. Through reading and sharing the Gospel, various texts of the Founder, the Declaration and the letter of the Superior of May 15, 1978 I came to the conclusion that I had had enough of discussions about poverty and the poor... it was absolutely necessary to do something! But what? When? Where? And With Whom?

The different organizations and projects with which I was familiar did not satisfy me. They appeared to maintain the poor in a form of assistance, or a state of dependence. They did nothing to respect their dignity or to empower them to take matters into their own hands, to live decent and upright lives. A meeting with volunteers of the Movement ATD was followed by my participation in some formative sessions designed to help me understand the plight of the people of the fourth world. My search was ended! I was able to properly celebrate with my Brothers the Tercentenary and to put into practice my vow of educational service to the poor. It was an occasion for me to return concretely to the sources of the Institute.

My efforts with neglected youth were not successful in a day or two. I was able to meet them straight away because of the history and the work already in existence through the Movement ATD in Rheims. In the first place I was content being present to the youth, meeting them where they were, listening to them, sharing with them a part of their experience, permitting them to be and be known such as they were. I had to win them over in some way. All this work demanded much time and patience, a certain "wasting of time". Secondly, the work consisted in bringing them together, helping them to live together, to listen to themselves, to express themselves, to discover and express their needs, to learn ways of changing that would allow them to take charge of their lives. And finally I was able to convince some of the "official" organizations, who were not as yet open to the most neglected, to pay more attention to this area of our society. I worked as a kind of educational facilitator for a group of young people between sixteen and twenty years of age, the majority of them illiterate and from the fourth world. The situations of these fifteen boys and girls were practically identical:

Material poverty: living conditions beyond the worst one can imagine.

Exclusion: they are practically excluded from all walks of life and especially from the world of employment. They turn in upon themselves and are fearful of leaving their neighborhoods. They are afraid of the unknown in any form and consequently are unable to follow through on a project.

Intellectual poverty: this is easily recognized in the paucity of their vocabulary, the difficulty in handling the language and their inability to progress beyond the simplest thinking. Their intelligence lacks dynamism, their imagination lacks creativity. Their inhibitions, however, are less important than their lack of means.

These divers details help in understanding the thousand and one difficulties which confront the students of the ATD Center. These difficulties are enhanced when faced with the practical: venturing into an unknown environment, a simple trip to another area of the city, remembering the time for a meeting, keeping to a schedule, incomprehension or poor interpretation of information, in general a paralysis of the young person by a milieu which does not believe in his new-born project.

I have attempted to outline the essential areas in my commitment to and my work with the fourth world. What are the Results? For youth marked by the daily weight of misery interiorized over many years the results are not immediate. Neither is it possible to measure them by the usual criteria. By way of answering the question of results and as a conclusion allow me to cite two remarks by parents of these youth. The first from a mother of an eighteen year old girl who had just completed ten months of instruction at the Center, "She was a girl of the streets now she is a woman". The second from a father, living in an abandoned car on a vacant lot, about his son, "Since he has been going for instruction, he no longer plays the fool and the police do not arrest him anymore".

Brother Claude DARREYE
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05-E-11

SCHOOLS WITHOUT WALLS

"We are all aware of the problem of illiteracy in developing countries but are we equally aware that the same plague is spreading, little by little, in the areas surrounding our great centres of population?

That was the question asked, in the presence of the Academy Inspector of Pontoise and in that of leading personalities of the Departement, at the inauguration of our second Mobile School Unit for the education of the children of itinerants in the Paris area. That question, asked on 22nd March, 1983 on the wretched camping site of the itinerants of Eragny, found an echo in a recent report published by the Commission of the Mayors of France and which proposed the setting up of a "school without walls", organized by travelling teachers who volunteer for educational work among the "nomads".

In fact, the establishment of the first "school without walls" took place on opening day, in September 1982 when a mobile school unit led by Brother Camille and named "Antenne Mobile Scolaire" first left the St. Joseph de Pantin school yard for a camp site where about twenty motor caravans were parked on the east side of Paris.

It would, obviously, take too long to go into detail about the beginning of this venture, "revolutionary" in the context of the French education system, but which the Minister of Education had foreshadowed in the official regulations of 1970. These proposals, however, remained a dead letter. Briefly we could say that without the prophetic vision and drive of Brother Pierre (see Lasalliana, No. 3, leaflet 03-C-10) and of his small team of Brothers working under the title SIGEVO (Educational Service of Itinerants), hundreds of "gypsy" children would remain irredeemably condemned to illiteracy without hope of escape.

This is precisely the problem underlined by the Academy Inspector of Pontoise at the inauguration of the second Mobile School Unit when he uttered the significant words that warmed the hearts of the handful of Brothers present:

"M. Cote (Brother Léon Cote), by devoting himself to the disinherited, fulfills a mission of the utmost importance and brings to light a very painful problem of which we are not always fully aware within the confines of the established educational system. You and your fellow teachers are truly pioneers! I hope that we may follow your example and, particularly, that we may learn from your experience of the mobile school which I consider the best means of dealing with the problem of illiteracy". Who, precisely, are these people whom we call gypsies, tinkers, itinerants or nomads? In fact, there is general confusion on the part of the majority of people, which does not make it any easier to understand these marginal groups who tend to disturb and annoy right thinking folks.

If we study their origins we find the Gypsies who are of Indian origin and who came to Europe five or six centuries ago. They comprise several ethnic groups, notably Manouches, Sintis, Rom, and Gitans... The Rom are fairly numerous on the east side of Paris and are sedentary while the Manouches continue to live in caravans along the roadsides when there are no parking sites provided for them by the public authorities. In the Paris region alone there are an estimated 20,000 Gypsies. Their total number in France is about 200,000. Practically all of them are French citizens.

The Yéniches appear to have originated in the Germanic regions of Northern Europe.

There are others who do not belong to these two groups but who have lived and travelled like them for generations.

When we consider their way of life we find a people faithful to certain specific ways of acting: an

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organization based on the nomadic tradition, respect for these traditions, a separate language, a highly developed sense of family solidarity and a strong religious sense.

From a demographic point of view, the population could be divided as follows:

* Young people under 16 years of age: 47% (Total French population: 27%);
* Adults between 16 and 65 years of age: 51% (Total French population: 59%);
* Adults over 65 years of age: 2% (Total French population: 14%).

You will note that the population pyramid follows the pattern observed in the Third World. That is the result of the sub-normal economic, sanitary and social conditions of the itinerants as compared with those of the majority of the population and which demand from society serious efforts to improve them.

On the other hand, polls and inquiries show that the average itinerant family consists of from 4.5 to 6.6 persons. Families with seven, eight or even more children are common.

In the two Departments of the Paris region, Seine-Saint Denis and Val d'Oise, where the Brothers work with the help of the Mobile School Units, the gypsy population is estimated at between 8,000 and 10,000 people. If you accept that the majority of these are itinerants, the number of children without schooling reaches several hundred in each Department. It is to these that our four Mobile School Units go. The creation of these mobile units has been shown as the only workable solution to the problem of educating this itinerant population which no traditional system of education could ever reach.

Besides, the continual changes of location imposed by the public authorities on these unfortunate people, who have been rejected for centuries by almost the whole of French society, make attendance at normal schools impossible.

In addition, most schools find it impossible to teach the children of itinerants in normal conditions since families come and go without warning. Even if they could, the rate of illiteracy of these children, estimated at about 95% in the Paris region, causes them to feel themselves strangers and failures in face of an educational system conceived by and designed for a culture utterly different from their own.

The mobile school unit, on the other hand, allows for adaptation to the specific needs of itinerant children, and takes account of their anxieties and their feeling of insecurity which arises from the contrast between the security experienced in the intimacy of the clan and the threat of the outside world.

Our daily approach to this rejected world is proof of our willingness to accept and listen to each individual itinerant child who wants to learn to read and write.

Our teaching method is, above all, a personal dialogue with each of the children confided to us by the parents. This requires that we work with small groups (on average, eight) who are taken in turn for a maximum of two hours a day. We try to make each group homogeneous as regards rate of progress but we take a very special interest in the older ones. This is because the older children can become, later on, teachers of their own family group. One young girl, after learning our method, devoted herself to teaching a dozen children of her own clan to read and write. As a result, the Gabriel Drolin Centre awarded her a substantial sum of money to help her to continue her work in more favourable conditions.

The method used is that invented by Brothers Pierre and described in Lasalliana, No. 3: "The School goes to them". In the space of three or four months an itinerant child can learn to read intelligibly. What a success for a child who was convinced that "he would never be able to read!" That is why we created quite recently, with the help of the Gabriel Drolin Centre, a "Licence to read" which rewards the child's efforts to reach that stage with the gift of a book token worth 100 francs. What motivation for the 300 or so young itinerants of the Paris region whom our units reach.

What wonderful things have been accomplished in France in the last hundred years of free compulsory education! But how much more remains to be done? That is the problem the school is faced with. More than ever it has need of people who are passionately interested in teaching and education. More than ever is there a need for innovation to "re-invent" the school...

Above all, learning for the sub-proletariat must come through knowledge and love of their milieu, for there, more than anywhere else, you give not only what you know but what you are.

Brother Camille VEGER
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05-O-03

1985: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

NUMEROUS AND VARIED

Convention dictates that persons between the ages of 15 and 24 be called "YOUTH". We all know, of course, that the young of mind and heart do not allow themselves to be confined between such narrow limits.

In 1981 the United Nations Organization declared 1985 "International Youth Year".

Demographers tell us that there are about 900 million young people in the world. In the past twenty years the increase in the number of young people was in the region of from 17 to 19%. This is quite considerable, but according to the forecasts of statisticians the actual numbers will vary little from now to the year 2000 A.D. They base their forecasts on the present birth rate but, up to now, short term demographic forecasts have proven rather unreliable.

The division of these 900 millions among countries and continents is far from equal. As everybody knows, the growth rate of the population varies considerably between industrialized countries and developing countries. In the latter the growth rate is double that of the former. It is, therefore, in Latin America, Africa and South East Asia that we can expect the most spectacular increase up to the year 2000 A.D.: In Africa the total number of young people is expected to double in the next twenty years. In China, on the other hand, the number is expected to fall by 10% due to the policy of birth control. There will still be 183 million young people there which is quite a lot for a single country.

FACED WITH MANY PROBLEMS

To these quantitative differences are added the differences in living conditions whether economic, social, cultural or spiritual.

* For many there are the concrete problems of nutrition, hygiene, health and even survival. There are tens of millions who suffer from harsh climatic conditions, static economies and inadequate medical facilities.
* For others there are cultural problems: some receive a normal education and can acquire a solid culture which enables them to meet life's problems while others are condemned to remain illiterate.
* Some are born and grow up in united and caring families while others are abandoned or left to themselves without affection or support.
* Some, forming part of a strong, closely-knit community feel secure and well integrated into a way of life but many others find themselves rejected, forgotten, marginalized, perhaps uprooted by war or by forced migration.
* Happy are those who are healthy but far too numerous are those who suffer from illness or from physical or mental handicaps.
* Some, at the end of their schooling, find employment or enter a stable and respectable profession while others experience the insecurity and frustration of unemployment and see their lives as without hope. Studies of the problem show that, in general, the rate of unemployment among the young is three times higher than that of the population as a whole.
* Some grow up and live in a milieu which has clear and definitive values. Many, especially in industrialized countries, enjoy a high degree of material comfort but are faced with spiritual poverty.

  The International Catholic Office for Youth at present concentrates its efforts on the theme: "The child faced with a spiritual void". Is this emptiness not often the cause of dangerous and sometimes fatal attempts to escape from the situation.

These few considerations are meant to underline the contrasts which characterise the situations of young people and are not just a catalogue of dificulties. They partly justify the description, by a contemporary sociologist, of modern youth as "a troubled generation».

YOUTH YEAR: AN APPEAL TO EDUCATORS

When proclaiming the International Youth Year, the United Nations Organization also indicated the principal lines of action to be taken. The theme centres on three words: "Participation, Development, Peace". This recalls the theme of the Lasallian World Congress in Mexico: "Faith, Solidarity, Service". I would suggest that the word "Faith" be added to the theme proposed by the United Nations Organization. We could then ask ourselves what we propose to do or what we could undertake under these four headings.

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Participation:

of the young people with whom we are in contact in the school or in youth groups or movements outside the school:

* How do we plan to increase the participation of the young in the activities, decision and conduct of daily life?
* What place are we prepared to give to the initiatives of individuals and of groups?
* How is it possible to arouse and develop the creative spirit so as to help them to live a fuller life in a world of rapid and continual change?
* What attitudes and habits should be encouraged so that they may eventually be able to take control of their own lives?
* What can we do to prepare young people for changes of profession, of place of residence, of culture so that they can accept such changes in a positive and enriching manner and not as something to be unwillingly endured?

Development:

* How to render, in daily life, the mutual service which is the preparation for a life of solidary with others.
* How to promote an open, generous and disinterested solidarity in the face of glaring inequality whether at home or far away?
* What personal or group commitments do we propose for rendering mutual assistance and for providing help to young people less fortunate than ourselves?
* What role are we prepared to play in welcoming, helping, integrating and sharing with new arrivals in our milieu: immigrants, refugees, itinerants, etc?
* What have we done about Circular 412 on "The Educational Service of the poor and the Promotion of Justice"?

Peace:

* Getting to know one another is a step towards understanding and agreement. What opportunities does our profession afford for improving our knowledge of others and practising mutual tolerance?
* To build peace we must get together, we must meet. What animosities and misunderstandings can we dispel by organizing meetings?
* This year invites us particularly to increase the number of exchanges among young people, to widen their scope and to diversify their nature, in regions countries and continents. What are we prepared to do in this matter?
* Peace is experienced also in affective sharing, in treating people as equals and with respect. What goods, cultural heritage, values and beliefs do we wish to share?

Faith:

* At its General Congress in 1982 the International Office for Catholic Education underlined four essential values that we could consider during this Youth Year: respect for the other person, responsible solidarity, creativity and interior life, understood and lived according to the inspiration of the Gospel.
* To put before oneself and to live these essential values is to contribute to the meaning of life. Is it not a lived and committed faith which gives to life its fullest meaning?
* In this year of 1985, have we planned to celebrate with young people the values and qualities which they possess: their friendship, their solidarity, their hope and their love of God?

In Conclusion:

To educate young people is to form the future, for youth is the future, theirs and ours. They must begin to build it, not just dream about it. It is our task to encourage and help them. The following quotation from the letter of Pope John Paul II to the Congress of the O.I.E.C. in February, 1982, could sum up and conclude this article:

> "The youth of today, fascinated by the progress of modern science, is tempted to accord to science unlimited confidence and to regard it as the supreme value. It is essential, therefore, that the Catholic School show its pupils that the progress of humanity is not measured solely by scientific and technological progress. True progress lies in the priority given to spiritual values and to moral progress. The basically unjust conditions encountered in a materialistic society result in a situation where some live in abundance while others die of hunger. To remedy this evil a new world order is needed and, consequently, an education in the values of justice and love which are its foundation. In a secularized society which has lost the sense of the sacred and with it the sense of morality, there is an urgent need for an education in religious values, an education which enables its beneficiaries to discover the call of faith. It is the duty of the Catholic School to awaken the young to the interior life in such a way that they may be able to answer the call of faith with enthusiasm and generosity". *(Pope John Paul II - Letter to the O.I.E.C. - February, 1982).*

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No. 6
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FOREWORD

In the present number of Lasalliana which comes at the end of the school year 1984-85, you will find, in addition to the usual twenty leaflets, a list of 120 articles published in the last two years.

This list of titles will give you a more precise idea of the diversity and interest of the articles as a whole. The cumulative aspect of a publication such as Lasalliana is important. It invites the fidelity of contributors and readers and the ordering of additional copies of the numbers already published.

During the past two years the number of contributors has increased. As you may have noticed, the names of some contributors appear regularly. This is because the subject they have chosen to treat is the outcome of years of research, particularly on the writings of the Founder. We are grateful to them for sharing with us the results of their labours. Perhaps others will follow their example.

Personally, I think that Lasalliana is one of the publications in which the unity and diversity of the living Institute are most clearly evident. It is a useful means of mutual enrichment, modest, no doubt, but real. The more Brothers contribute to it by writing articles or by helping to publicize it, the better it will become.

With this final number of the school year your subscription comes to an end. You will receive, under separate cover, a subscription form for the year 1985-86 and we count on your renewing your orders. Don't hesitate to bring Lasalliana to the notice of your teacher friends, both religious and lay.

The Brothers in the Generalate who are responsible for finding contributors and for editing Lasalliana thank you for your help and fidelity. They would be grateful for the names and addresses of potential writers, Brothers and lay people, for the coming year.

With kindest regards and best wishes for success in your apostolate of education and evangelization.

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

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06-A-32

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (6)
"Knowing the pupils as individuals"

Previous leaflets (see Lasalliana Nos. 3 and 4) show how "The Management of Schools" aimed at "education to measure" through the practical organization of classes and programmes. Another essential element of the personalized care of children is a thorough knowledge of each individual. This leaflet gives gives some indications as to how this aspect of education was dealt with.

AN ESSENTIAL EDUCATION PRINCIPLE

To get to know each pupil personally is an educational obligation for de La Salle and the first Brothers but it is outside "The Management of Schools" that the affirmation and explanation of this obligation is most strongly expressed.

Without referring to all the relevant texts I shall simply choose Meditation 33 for the second Sunday after Easter. De La Salle uses a passage from the Gospel of the day to develop his ideas on personal knowledge of each pupil. The passage is from St. John, 10,11 to 16, commonly known as the parable of the Good Shepherd.

Let us meditate, for example, on the following passage:

> "In today's Gospel, Jesus compares those who have care of souls to a good shepherd who is very careful of his sheep. One of the qualities which Our Lord says distinguishes him is that he knows them all individually. This is also one of the essential qualities required of those who instruct others, for they must get to know their pupils and discern the manner in which to act towards them." (*Med. 33,* first point)

PRACTICAL MEANS OF FULFILLING THIS OBLIGATION

It is in "The Management of Schools" that we find the practical means of acquiring this personal knowledge. I refer, particularly, to Chapter 3 of the second part: "Registers" (cf. pp. 133-137 and 233-239 of Cahier Lasallien 24). The third part of the "Management" of 1706 which is absent from the 1720 edition and which is devoted to "The Duties of the Inspector of Schools", gives us more details as to how personal knowledge of the pupils is to be gained (see especially pp. 256-262 of Cahier Lasallien 24).

To indicate the content of this text I quote the introductory paragraph of Chapter Three:

> "One thing that can contribute much to maintenance of order in schools is that there be well-kept registers. There should be six kinds of registers:
>
> 1. Register of admissions; 2. Register of promotions to grades; 3. Register of sections of grades; 4. Register of the good and bad qualities of the pupil; 5. Register of class officers; 6. Register of those who visited absentees.
>
> The first two of these registers are for the use of the Inspector of schools. The teachers will use the next two and the last two will be kept by the pupils." (*Cahier Lasallian 24,* p. 133)

A careful study of what is said about the different registers makes us realise how much their regular use helped the teachers to acquire a detailed knowledge of their pupils. We must add to these specific means the importance placed on vigilance throughout "The Management of Schools".

One gets the impression that the information provided by the registers formed a precise X-ray picture of the personality and behaviour of each child: his family background, his previous education, the different stages of his development since admission, his progress through sections and grades, the essential elements of his character, his absences and their causes, and even his conduct outside of school — between the school and his home.

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SOME PRECISIONS

• THE ADMISSIONS REGISTER: When a child is admitted into a school, at the beginning of or during the school year, various items of information are entered in the register. You find, for example:

— a page giving his identity, that of his parents or guardian, his home address, whether he has made his first Communion and been confirmed;

— a note on his school situation: the grade and section in which he has been placed, his individual time-table, if this is necessary, his regular, authorised absences, his previous school or schools and the reasons for changing;

— remarks on his personality as he becomes better known. Observations concerning his character traits, his reception of Holy Communion, his regular attendance at school or his absences, his attitude to work and lessons, his promotion to sections and grades.

"Concerning all these matters, the Director will enter in the register what he judges appropriate" (p. 234). Discretion is assured since only the Director has access to this register.

• THE REGISTER OF PROMOTIONS: As promotions took place every month in the organization of the Lasallian school the filling in of the register entailed a considerable amount of writing. The registers provided a mine of information on the running of the school for in them one could see the results and from the results judge the quality of the teaching and follow the progress of the pupil. The register contained, also, brief notes on the pupil's conduct. Mention was made of his late arrivals during the month, his absences with or without permission, and the results of his regular recitation of the diocesan catechism.

• REGISTER OF THE GOOD AND BAD QUALITIES OF THE PUPIL: This was a kind of synthesis of the observations made by the teacher during the course of the school year. Each teacher had to prepare this report during the month of August, the last month of the school year. In it he gave his estimate of the pupil's personality as he saw it at that moment: his character, his conduct in class, his piety, his obvious faults, his good qualities, his punctuality, his relations with his parents, offices held during the year. The report was prepared under fifteen different headings as presented in "The Management of Schools". The object of all this work is clearly stated in the Management: "To get to know his pupils and the manner in which he should act towards them".

It is interesting to note also the following passage: "The Director will keep them all (registers) and will be careful to compare those of previous years with those of following years, and those of one teacher with those of another of the same class and same pupils to see if they agree or differ on some points or on all." (page 236) Here you should re-read the example given in the "Management" (*Cahier Lasallien 24,* p. 237).

• THE REGISTER OF CLASS OFFICERS AND VISITORS TO ABSENTEES: Both these registers were meant for pupils whose attendance was irregular: late comers and absentees. They helped also to keep a check on the conduct of the pupils.

We know that absenteeism was a serious problem at the end of 17th and beginning of 18th century. The reasons for this were many and to study them we would have to refer to the biographers of de La Salle and to the historians of the Institute.

We also know that one of the main preoccupations of the Founder was to make the Brothers' schools attractive and well organized in order to stabilise the school population. In this he was eminently successful.

These two registers provided a daily check on presences and absences in the large classes of the time and recorded information about those who were absent and the real reasons for their absence.

IN CONCLUSION

The evocation of this complex system of checking the pupil's progress and recording his personality traits could give the impression of an administrative system which was both annoying in its detail and in no way conducive to personal relations. We must, however, remember the size of the classes at that time. The large number of pupils in each class required constant vigilance and precise means of control.

We must, above all, go back to the thirty-third Meditation, and particularly to the second point, to understand the spirit in which the Brothers were invited to get to know their pupils. It was not a question of cold and distant relations but of relations of mutual love and affection:

> "It is also necessary, says Our Lord, that the sheep should know their shepherd in order to follow him. Two things are required, therefore, of those who have charge of souls and should characterize them. Firstly, they should be very virtuous in order to serve as an example, for unless they walk in the right path, those who follow them would be led astray. Secondly, they should manifest great tenderness for the souls confided to them, so that anything that might be capable of injuring or wounding these souls will call for their attention. In this manner the sheep will love their shepherd and be pleased in his company, since they will find therein their repose and their relief". (*Med. 33,* 2nd point)

It is, therefore, a question of mutual knowledge through relations marked by affection, for you only know a person well if you love him.

> "One sees well only with the heart. The essential is invisible to the eye" (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince,* p. 72).

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06-A-33

WHY AND HOW WE SHOULD READ THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

1. WHY?

On the day we consciously and freely decided to follow in the footsteps of St. John Baptist de La Salle we undertook certain duties and acquired certain rights. The effort to get to know him as a person became for us a categoric imperative from the moment we decided to follow him.

Coherence with our option and the Lasallian character of our way of life require that we make a serious study of the writings of our Founder. In them as in the calm waters of a deep lake we see reflected his image and his soul.

Whatever profession a person follows we expect him to know something of its origins, its evolution and the principal dates of its history. In the history of education the Management of Schools constitutes a document which the student of pedagogy should know both because of its intrinsic value and because of the influence it has had on millions of students and thousands of teachers. That influence continues since the spirit of the Founder continues to inspire Lasallian pedagogy.

The return to their sources so strongly recommended by the Second Vatican Council to religious in general and by our own 39th General Chapter (*The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today*) imposes on us the duty to study the teachings of our Founder and to get to know him thoroughly. We should undertake our studies, not as an exercise in archeology, but with a view to adapting the teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle to the reality of modern conditions.

Much has been written, and with competence, on the pedagogic innovations introduced into primary education by the Founder and his early disciples, but we must continue to study and make known the educational philosophy of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the philosophy which inspires all his writings but particularly the Management of Schools.

2. HOW?

Like every pedagogical work, the Management of Schools is the work of an author who lived and acted within a given society. We must take these two factors into account when we read his book. Besides, the society pre-dated the author.

Between the school and society there is an interaction — a symbiosis. The school reflects society and at the same time works to change it. It forms a link between past and future. Pedagogic action implies that one applies one's memory to what happened in the past, that one applies one's will-power to control the events of the present and that one uses one's intelligence to foresee what will happen in the future.

An exhaustive study of the Management of Schools presupposes a knowledge of the philosophic trends current in France during the second half of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth. The influence of Descartes did not cease with his death in 1650 but

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continued with his disciples. The "Sun-King", ruling on the principle that "L'Etat, c'est moi" dominated the entire period by his presence.

It is equally important to be acquainted with the pedagogy of the time as formulated in the numerous regulations for the "Little Schools". Among the most important are those of the Precentor of Paris, Claude Joly (not to be confused with his namesake, the bishop of Agen). The "Parochial School" is even more important because it was beyond doubt one of the sources of the Management of Schools.

Lastly, the reader should be aware of the semantic value of many words in the text which have changed their meaning in the course of the years.

Environment and events, as the philosophers point out, shape the "I". St. John Baptist de La Salle did not discard the pedagogy of his time. On the contrary, like the bee, he took the best of what he could find in the manuals and what he had learned from his own experience. Passing through the prism of his noble and virtuous personality, existing educational theories and practices combined to form a multicoloured spectrum of educational ideals, balanced, creative, personalized and progressive. That is why, if one wants to read the Management of Schools with profit, one must keep in mind this background, study attentively the educational system proposed, and try to penetrate the psychology of the author which influences every page of the work.

A Lasallian will read the Management of Schools as a testament left to him by his predecessors. They devoted their best efforts to its compilation, to putting it into practice and to successive revisions of it. Its use throughout the centuries has formed generations of citizens and Christians to the benefit of the state and of the Church. That was the aim envisaged by the saint of Rheims.

I consider a reading of the capitular document "The Brothers of the Christian Schools in the World Today" as the best preparation for reading the Management of Schools. Many pages of this document contain the quintessence of the Management. The Capitulants, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have brought together and made available in modern language the educational thinking of the Founder.

We must not regard the Management of Schools as a handbook for daily use in modern schools or as something of an anecdotal nature, but as the pedagogy "perennis". The adaptation of our Rules in 1966 did not mean for us a change of identity. We remain consecrated persons, animated by faith and zeal and living in community. Following the advice of a poet of antiquity, let us remove the outer bark and penetrate to the sap, let us leave the dead leaves to be carried off by the wind and let us hold fast to the trunk which has its roots firmly planted in the good earth.

CONCLUSION

If the reader now feels the urge to read the work of the Founder I would recommend two sources: first the princeps edition (anastatic reproduction) in the Cahiers Lasalliens, No. 24, and even more strongly, the text with a study, published by Brother Anselme. The introduction to this study is brilliant and the accompanying notes illuminating.

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THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN (5): Theocentric or Anthropocentric?

In the history of spirituality and catechesis the terms "theocentric" and "anthropocentric" are often presented as opposites. In this respect what was the formula adopted by St. John Baptist de La Salle?

From a careful examination of the pages of De La Salle's treatise we can state categorically: neither theocentric nor anthropocentric but christocentric because God and man meet in the Person of Jesus Christ. With St. Paul we can express it thus: "God in Christ, the salvation of the world" and again, "Christ the Saviour who makes sharers in his life all those who believe in him".

Considering the important place given in the "Duties" to the Person and Spirit of Jesus Christ I shall limit myself in this article to the instances where Christ is presented as Head and Soul of the Mystical Body. I would like, at the beginning, to point out some illuminating facts in relation to this matter.

THE NAMES GIVEN TO THE SON OF GOD IN THE "DUTIES"

The name Jesus Christ is the one that flows most readily from the pen of the saint — no less than 352 times. Then, but less frequently, comes the name Jesus — in 82 passages. We find the expression "Our Lord, Jesus Christ" 39 times and "Our Lord" 36 times. The expression "Son of God" is used 26 times. The fact that the word "Christ" is used in 4 passages only deserves our attention. Was it because the preceding appellations had a greater anthropocentric signification?

Though these 546 repetitions do not, of themselves, prove the christocentricity of the "Duties", they, nevertheless, give a revealing indication of the author's thinking. Other expressions such as "Spouse", "Redeemer", "Mediator", "Saviour" etc., frequently found in the "Duties", point in the same direction.

JESUS CHRIST IN THE MYSTICAL BODY

1. The mystic reality

According to De La Salle we must seek the ultimate and existential meaning of the Mystical Body in the saving will of Jesus Christ who, having come to save all men... unites them in one single body "because he has established a new religion and has given to men a new Law". (1).

This body, mystical and real at the same time, is the prolongation of his "divine-human" Person. Consequently, "to disobey the Church is to disobey God and Jesus Christ" (2) because the Church has received from Christ what properly and exclusively belongs to the Son (3): his power and authority as well as his doctrine.

2. Jesus Christ: Head and Heart of the Mystical Body

Just as in a living body it is the head that directs the whole body, so "Jesus Christ... is the Head... who leads and governs invisibly" the Mystical Body of the Church (5). Since the Church militant requires visible leaders, the Church's pastors, who represent Christ, govern it in his name and with his authority (6).

(1) "Les Devoirs d'un Chrétien envers Dieu", I, p. 62.
(2) *Ibid.*, p. 151.
(3) Mt. 28,18; Col. 2,10; Eph. 1,21.
(4) Devoirs, pp. 69, 241, 339, 366, etc.
(5) *Ibid.*, p. 73.
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 129.

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In the Mystical Body the grace of Jesus Christ is not only a directive force, it is also an animating and life-giving force through the action of the Holy Spirit whom he communicates to its members who are united with him in charity. A leitmotiv of the "Duties" is that the faithful are *Members of Jesus Christ* and that to be considered as such they must be *united with Christ* in charity. These two aspects respond to each other as do the chords which form a melody.

3. From Baptism to Extreme Unction through the Eucharist

In Baptism Jesus Christ takes possession of the Christian, incorporating him into his human nature and through the intermediary of his sacred humanity putting him in relation with the divine Person of the Word Incarnate. He communicates to him "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" by which he unites him to himself so intimately that God considers him from that moment as a "Member of His Son made Man" (7).

The personal union of the baptized person with the Head attains "community" dimensions which extend to all members of the Mystical Body of the Church. It is on this union that the "Duties" base the love we owe to Christians more than to other men (8). Furthermore, this loving intercommunication extends beyond time and space and makes the Church, militant, suffering and triumphant, a single Body in Christ Jesus (9).

The union within the Body of the Church has its own sacrament: the Eucharist. It makes the unity of the Body real because it contains really and substantially Him in whom the Church is One: Unus panis, unum Corpus. De La Salle writes that this sacrament is called Communion because it unites closely to Jesus Christ those who receive it, and that those who communicate are united by a sincere and visible love (10). It is the union of the members with the Head, and of the members among themselves in the love of Christ; in a word, the communion of the whole Mystical Body.

When he speaks of the effects of Holy Communion, De La Salle stresses that it unites us so closely with Our Lord that we form but one and the same Spirit with Him (11). These mystic effects extend even to the bodies of the communicants which become, in effect, Members of Jesus Christ... living Tabernacles of the Most Blessed Sacrament (12).

4. The Christian becomes one with his brothers through Jesus Christ

Sanctifying grace flows in a constant stream from the Head to the "Members" as long as these remain "united" to the Head by charity as the branch is united to the vine (13), that is to say, as long as they remain living members, because Jesus Christ does not communicate the effects of his merits to dead members" (14). Consequently, the sufferings of a Christian have a redemptive value and and are a complement of his Passion if the member is animated by charity (15).

In conclusion, the whole life of a Christian should be that of a branch united to the vine because if one is content to be a Catholic without being "united interiorly with Jesus Christ it is of no avail to salvation" (16). This union must, however, be habitual to the Christian so that, at the end of his life, he may be able to say, "that he wishes to remain to death in union with Jesus Christ", symbolized by the lighted candle placed in his hand by the priest who administers the sacrament of the sick (17).

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(7) *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212, 213.
(8) *Ibid.*, pp. 98 & 99.
(9) *Ibid.*, pp. 342 et 350.
(10) *Ibid.*, p. 243.
(11) *Ibid.*, p. 260.
(12) *Ibid.*, pp. 260 et 418.
(13) John 15,2.
(14) Devoirs, p. 336.
(15) *Ibid.*, p. 332.
(16) *Ibid.*, p. 74.
(17) *Ibid.*, p. 364.

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THE MEDITATIONS FOR THE TIME OF RETREAT AND THE DIRECTED RETREAT (2)

The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* in the context of a directed retreat:

As stated in part one of this article, the role of the spiritual director is to assist us in paying attention to God, as God is revealing himself in our lives, and to help us in recognizing our reactions to God's revealing and in deciding on our responses. Lasallian spirituality is admirably suited to foster this movement. By the Spirit of Faith and Zeal we are formed to a posture of looking for God present in every aspect of life and responding to God concretely in our daily activity. The purpose of a directed retreat and the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* is co-extensive, as indeed it must be, since both are expressions of the one spirituality of Jesus found in the Gospel.

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* De La Salle shows himself to be a remarkable spiritual director; he exhibits a profound understanding of the fundamental movements of the spiritual life. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* enunciate clearly the normal flow of these movements in a Christian spirituality: the awareness of a loving and forgiving God inviting us into relationship the way we are at the moment; the contemplation of the life and ministry of Jesus with a view to becoming His disciple; our lives as sacraments of Jesus present in the world helping others to discover the kingdom of God. Because the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* are both biblical and historical, they root the Gospel in our experience of relating to God and others, especially our students.

The fundamental movement in a Christian spirituality is the experience of a God who loves us unconditionally as we are; a God who continues to be faithful to us in the midst of our own infidelity. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* begin by presenting us with an image of a loving and forgiving God who desires a relationship with us:

> God is so good that he not only brings us into existence by his act of creation but also desires that all of us come to a knowledge of the truth. This truth is God himself and all that he has willed to reveal to us through Jesus Christ, through his apostles, and through his Church. God desires all of us to be taught this knowledge that our minds may be enlightened by the light of faith (MTR 193:1).

Notice the personal and relational language of De La Salle: God is good, God desires. The truth spoken of is personal Truth, relational truth, God Himself! The knowledge spoken of is a felt knowledge, an experiential knowledge, a living knowledge, a faith experience of this personal God. The language is reminiscent of the creative language of *Genesis* where God creates in His image, blesses and fills with life:

> God created man in his image;
> in the divine image he created him;
> male and female he created them...
> God looked at everything he had made
> and he found it very good. (*Genesis* 1:27,31)

The movement of the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* is a biblical movement beginning with images of *Genesis* and ending with images from the *Book of Revelation*. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat,* like the Scripture which inspires them, tell the story of salvation in sixteen simple but pointed reflections. But they are a special story of salvation: the story of God interacting with De La Salle and with us, inviting us to discover how God is present in our lives. As John the Baptist invited his disciples to recognize Jesus present in their midst and to follow Him, so De La Salle does the same for his disciples. As a good spiritual director, De La Salle points to Jesus and then gets out of His way! Again as a good spiritual director, he points to the events of our lives as the place to meet Jesus:

> Examine before God how you are acting in your ministry and whether you are failing in any of your responsibilities. Come to know yourself as you are. (MTR 205:1)

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Lasallian prayer is an apostolic prayer; the fundamental act of this prayer is the ongoing dialogue with God about the reality of our lives. We are invited to share with God and with one another what is the truth of our experience: "Come to know yourself as you are," says De La Salle! We will come to know ourselves as we are when we come to know ourselves as God knows us, this is the truth of our lives and this is what both a directed retreat and the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* are all about. Joys and sorrows, hopes and anxieties, gifts and sins, loves and hates, successes and failures, the daily life of interpersonal relationships, these constitute the "stuff" of our lives. The agenda, the content for a directed retreat, is the reality of my lived experience shared honestly with God. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* are an invitation to lay before the Lord what is happening in my life and ministry today:

> You must then devote yourself very thoroughly to prayer in order to succeed in your ministry. You must constantly represent the needs of your students to Jesus Christ, explaining to Him the difficulties you experience in guiding them. Jesus Christ seeing that you regard Him as the one who can do everything and yourself as an instrument to be moved only by Him, will not fail to grant you what you ask. (MTR 196:1)

The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* help us to focus our lives of Faith and Zeal by asking in different ways two fundamental questions: How is God present in my life today? What is God asking of me in this situation?

Ways of Using the Meditations for the Time of Retreat in a directed retreat:

In the context of a directed retreat the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* can be used in various ways, the director always being careful to respond to what is happening in the prayer of the retreatant so as not to impose the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* in an artificial manner. Perhaps what is needed is to focus the image of God better; *Meditations* 193, 195 and 196 are excellent for this purpose. Maybe the retreatant needs to deepen his/her understanding of ministry; *Meditations* 195, 196, 199, 200, 201 and 202 will be most helpful here. If the quality of my personal prayer is the issue, *Meditations* 195, 196, 197 and 198 will have much to say about this exercise.

The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* may also be prayed with a view to salvation history and the great mysteries of God in my life: the act of *Creation* in 193; the mystery of the *Incarnation* in 195 and 196; the *Redemption* 199 through 204; my response to God's goodness in these mysteries in 205 and 206; the desired union with God spoken of in 193 comes to fulfillment in 207 and 208.

Using the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* in conjunction with the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* can be a rich experience of Lasallian prayer. For example: consider God present in the place in which we are using *Meditations* 193 through 196; God present in us using *Meditations* 197 & 198; God present in the Church using *Meditations* 199, 200, 203 and 204.

Simply to use the Scripture of the *Meditations* is another way of making the *Meditations* useful as prayer material. Or to use the first six *Meditations* as a unit of prayer is helpful. In aretreat of eight, fifteen or thirty days the *Meditations* may be used as they are, one at a time or in different groupings.

The most effective way to use them seems to be as they are needed to move the prayer of the retreatant. In other words, be selective as to how they are to be used. Do not follow any particular sequence, but when something in the prayer of the retreatant seems to suggest that a particular *Meditation* or a particular point of a *Meditation* would be helpful, then use it. The director must be very attentive to what is happening in the prayer of the retreatant and know when and how to introduce material to deepen the prayer experience of the moment.

Neither the directed retreat nor the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* is a program to be completed in some prearranged fashion. Like the Scripture the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* are a means to an end. They are an aid, a method to help us enter into dialogue with the Lord. They are an invitation to us to write the Scripture of our own lives from our relationship with the Lord. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* are to stimulate our prayer; they are not the prayer proper. When we finally enter into dialogue with the Lord then the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* have served their purpose and should be put aside. In the hands of an experienced spiritual director the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* can be the catalyst for a powerful prayer experience. Coming as they do from the intimate personal relationship of God with Saint John Baptist de La Salle they are their own best advertisement of success. They are a magnificent expression of De La Salle's wish written in his letter to Brother Barthélémy:

> It seems to me that what I desire in prayer is that God make known to me what he wants of me and that he put me in the dispositions he would like me to have.

Brother Malachy BRODERICK
ROME

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NEEDS OF YOUTH IN FRENCH CANADA

The four French-speaking Districts of Canada are in the process of rethinking the role of the Brothers of the Christian Schools today. They are asking themselves what kind of image do they project and what the reality behind the image is. They are also asking what are the most pressing needs of present day youth which call for their concerted apostolic efforts. An inter-district meeting was held at Cap Rouge to consider the type of Brother required to meet the needs of Canadian society at the present time. Another meeting was held later. More than one hundred Brothers attended, including five young Brothers. These young Brothers and the four lay resource persons told the assembly what they expected from the Brother of today.

The following are brief sketches, by the members of the inter-district committee, of their vision of the ideal Brother who would meet the expectations of Canadian youth:

The Brother should be "a man of the people", prepared to share the life of the working classes, living in more modest surroundings and capable of giving real, not token assistance.

A man in work clothes i.e. a person who is not satisfied with a comfortable boring existence, a man who spends more time in work boots than in patent leather shoes, a man who thinks of something other than his personal comfort and wellbeing and who rejects the consumer mentality.

A "radiant" person, idealistic, dynamic, in love with life, having a positive outlook, happy to be himself. This does not mean to say naif, simple minded, childish, short-sighted or light-headed. He should be convinced that he is the depository of the salvation brought by Jesus Christ, in other words, a man who radiates the joy of life.

A man independent of structures, capable of improvisation, able to live with a variable time-table, with insecurity. He is, nevertheless, not absolved from attention to the Word of God nor from community life, for otherwise his life would have no meaning.

A man of God who radiates Jesus Christ, a man of faith nourished on the Word of God and by the sacraments, who sees everything with the eyes of God and who expresses his faith in terms adapted to the circumstances of modern life.

A man "free and inspired", not a slave to hypersensitivity which results in paralysis, a man capable of changing his view of things and his way of acting. Nothing in this life is cast in concrete. A broadminded person, ready to accept new challenges and attentive to new needs. In effect, a man freed from himself.

A man who is not afraid to show affection, tenderness, warmth, tolerance and mercy. A man full of the joy of life, not a "wet blanket".

A man who can "work in harness" i.e. as a member of a team, who carries out his commitments, who accepts responsibility and who inspires trust. A man who can involve young people and work with them.

A prophetic person who can take a wise view of things and who looks to the future. An interior person who sees things in the light of faith, not superficially, and who gives a meaning to life.

Let us now compare this ideal image of the Brother as envisaged by the Brothers themselves with that of the five young panelists aged from 18 to 22 who were invited to the Collège Marie-Victorin on 29th September 1984 to tell us what they expected and what they considered the most important needs of modern youth. We quote the following extracts from their most significant observations:

"The young person needs love and affection. You are a free person and I am so happy that you freely chose me as your friend."

Johanne Gravelle

"Young people want to feel themselves active members of a society which includes adults and young people. They need to be valued, to have concrete projects, to have aims in order to develop. They need to feel useful, to have a job, to be listened to with respect and to be allowed to run their own lives."

On the human and Christian side, young people must have the means of discovering and sharing real values: love, friendship and mutual aid. This presupposes certain changes in the world of education and recreation. They need forms of prayer and celebration more adapted to their needs as well as facilities for meeting other young people.

The young expect from adults open-mindedness, help in satisfying their needs, freedom to choose for themselves and no harking back to "the good old days".

Marie Bourgault

"In the matter of faith they want to be made acquainted with the Word of God. They would like to know Jesus Christ but without undue pressure. They expect adults to commit themselves to the welfare of the young and ask them to teach by example as well as by word. They will not accept the 'Don't do as I do but do as I say' mentality.

I would ask you, above all, to act towards the young with sympathy and love. They will remember what you are more than what you say."

A. Marois

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"A major problem is the lack of communication between young people and adults (parents and educators). Young people are afraid to say what troubles them. In Québec the suicide rate is very high. We must listen to young people but in order to do so we must reach them. The way to reach them is to provide a meeting place where you can engage them in conversation, make friends, listen to their cries of distress and discuss their problems with them. Jesus gave his message to the people through the things that interested them! He was able to make friends and disciples among them. He was one of them.

Young people need to believe in something. They seek the light but find only drugs, alcohol and the new sects. Brothers, where were you when they made their choice? You who should be the teachers ready to light the path of your neighbours.

The young do not feel at home in the Church. Pope John Paul II reminded you that you should help us to find our place in it because the Church can exist only if we form part of it. Help us to bring our dynamism to the service of the Church.

You have asked me what kind of people we need, people who will help us to make society our own. We need inspiring leaders, men who can take us out of ourselves and make us interested in others. We need counsellors to help us in the choice of a career. We need youth centres where we can meet, find amusement and get to know one another. We need people who will help us to a better knowledge of our faith and of our Christian vocation. And lastly, we need men and women of good will to create a world of peace and love."

Réjean Dicaire

"A young person needs to be somebody in the eyes of someone. He or she needs to feel loved, cared for, noticed. 'Look at me' said a little girl to me one day. We must take time with them over simple things. We must trust them and believe in their good qualities. I myself decided to meet young people on their own ground, where they, not I, had the upper hand, that is to say, in the street, in the school playground, in the home, in places where adults were not in control. We must undertake projects with them and in doing so we must live in an evangelical manner. We must radiate Jesus Christ because the young need a 'spiritual master'.

Young people make gestures and ask to be allowed to commit themselves. They need models to identify with; adults who will treat them with respect and take them seriously. They need people of real love, of truth, of depth, of simplicity, of daring, of patience and of openness. They need people who are father, mother, brother and sister to them, different from but at ease with them.

Helping young people to really live the Gospel values, to organize their lives, to find solutions to their problems, to love as Jesus loved, and to enjoy themselves together is quite an education for an adult. It is impossible without God and without the presence of people who lead an interior life and who are capable of helping young people to grow. What is clear is that young people want something solid. It is not the easy and the superficial that they are seeking."

Sister Jacinthe Quévillon, P.S.S., Social worker

The following are the results of a poll of 282 students taken by Brother Gautier, FSC, on the needs of the young, together with the questions asked.

A group of educators wishes to hear your opinions on the present situation of young people so as to be able to respond to their needs. You can help them by answering the following questions:

1) What is, in your environment (school, family, society) the biggest problem and the greatest need of young people today?

2) What is, in your environment (school, family, society) the factor which prevents you from being as happy as you would like to be?

3) If, in your milieu (family school, society, friends) an adult were prepared to do something for you or for other young people, what would you ask him to do?

To questions 1 and 2, 136 answers mentioned the lack of love and affection, of attention, of understanding and of a willingness to listen on the part of adults. 70 mentioned problems related to drugs and drink. About 70 spoke of problems of adolescence: lack of self confidence, lack of freedom, too many pressures, the fact of not being treated as adults. 41 spoke of unemployment, lack of money and fear of the future (nuclear war).

In answer to question 3 which concerns our role as helpers, the young want us to be more attentive, more available and more affectionate. If adults would put themselves in young peoples' shoes fewer young people would be rebellious.

Brother André Gautier ends his report by stating, "Having read these answers I feel more and more the desire to do something for these young people."

The last adult to give his opinion is a lawyer, with three children of his own, who looks after a centre for young people in trouble.

"A young person needs understanding and complete acceptance. He needs hope and he needs Jesus Christ. The Brother is well placed to respond to the needs of today's youth. In the matter of education, make use of your experience and skill. Concentrate on the young people whom society has given up as hopeless:

1) Provide a training centre where 'drop-outs' and illiterates can learn a trade. 2) Take prompt and effective action with trade schools, unions, and other organizations to ease the transition from school to work. 3) Contact social workers and guidance counsellors with a view to helping young people in trouble. Provide temporary lodging, spiritual guidance etc. 4) Give direct and sustained help to young delinquents...

I invite the Brothers to profit by the International Youth Year to reflect on their role as educators in our society and to examine seriously the possibility of adopting a general (inter-district) policy of action and participation in the social, religious, and community life of the area in which they are called to work. They must do this if they are to respond to the pressing needs of the young in the spirit of the evangelical counsels and in such a way that they may be seen as representing Jesus Christ, the Saviour."

Brother Jacques MONGEAU
MONTREAL

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OPERATION MIGRATION
A Community Project in Africa

"The service of the poor through education is a work of preference for us as Brothers of the Christian Schools. This is made clear by the sense of unity among men in the world today, by the appeals of the Second Vatican Council and of recent Popes, by the fact of our religious vocation which dedicates us in a special manner to the imitation of Christ and by fidelity to the specific intentions of our Founder". (*Declaration* 28,1)

The migration project had its origins in the realization by those in charge of the mission at Nkolmébanga, 40 km. north of Yaoundé, that something would have to be done about the serious socio-economic problems of the area. They were moved to action by the desperate situation of the village people and particularly of the youth of the region.

It was not simply a question of bringing aid to the people but of radical change and improvement through the acquisition of more land, training in agricultural techniques, development of health services, and Christian education.

The Brothers were asked to take charge of the project because of its educational character. This meant bringing the school to the village. After all, the Institute gives preference to the poor and commits the Brothers to the service of those whose poverty constitutes an obstacle to their human development and to their reception of Jesus Christ. (C.R. 1g)

I. A REGION IN DECLINE

The Department of Léiké is situated in a forest region to the north of Yaoundé. The population is engaged almost exclusively in agriculture and the towns are comparatively small. Living conditions in the area are becoming more and more difficult as the population continues to increase and the land becomes exhausted due to misuse.

Traditional methods of farming combined with the lack of fertilizers, either natural or chemical, and the impossibility of resting certain areas because of pressure of population, have caused serious deterioration of the soil. Léiké was the first Department to introduce cacao production. Plantations cover one third of available land but the average age of the trees is 35 years. Production is around 250 kg. per hectare whereas it could be 1000 kg. per hectare. Most of the plantations will have ceased production within a short time because of ageing of the trees.

While the region experiences a decline in agriculture the population is increasing at an alarming rate to a density much too high for the type of agriculture practised. The Nkolmébanga mission area has a population density of more than 150 to the square kilometre. The result is that there is not enough land available for the younger generation and there will be less in the years to come.

However, on the other side of the river Samaga, the Department of Mboan has a population density of only 5 persons per square kilometre and has ample land available. A recently built bridge makes communication between the two Departments easier with the result that many villagers from Léiké have moved of their own accord to the other side of the river. But such migration is becoming more difficult because of the rise in the price of land caused by the influx of settlers. People have to move farther on and it is then that the real problems begin.

One senses a feeling of despair among the people in the face of a hopeless situation. "The earth is dead", they say. The fall in production has brought a reduction in money income resulting in a mass exodus from the countryside which could have dramatic consequences for the country in a very short time: ageing of the rural population and overcrowding in the towns with all the social and economic problems that that entails.

But the people have neither the material means nor necessary techniques to prevent exhaustion of the soil or to undertake a migratory movement in reasonable conditions: cost of transport and installation, food supply for the first year while awaiting new crops, infrastructures such as roads, water supply etc. In the face of such a hopeless situation the people remain passive because they do not know what to do to escape from it and have not got the will to try.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MIGRATION PROJECT

The aims of the project are simple: to restore life to the village and to make the people masters of their destiny. Restoring life to the village does not mean creating new structures to "serve" the villagers — structures that collapse as soon as the organiser departs. It consists in meeting the people and finding out their needs, in helping them to organize their own lives, in restoring hope to the adults and giving the young an interest in village life. This is what is happening in the pioneer village of Issandja-Mifoumbé where we are creating an attractive, dynamic village community.

The first thing we had to do was to set up a village. It was not easy in a forest region where there was no road, no water supply, not even a hut. But necessity is the mother of invention!

Re-settlement on new land solves only the immediate problem. The essential is to ensure that the same problems will not re-appear after a generation or two. It is necessary, therefore, to open up new horizons for the people by educating them. With this in mind we help them to try out new methods of farming to increase production while maintaining the fertility of the soil. We concentrate on two kinds of cultivation: growing of food crops by the women for home consumption and production of cash crops, mainly plantain and cacao, by the men. In this way the families are better fed and there is more money for the purchase of tools, equipment etc.

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To enable the people to lead healthier and fuller lives we encourage them to form village health committees to look after water supplies, sanitation and the setting up of local pharmacies.

A community which takes in hand its material welfare should also take charge of its spiritual animation. Beginnings were slow but at present five pioneers are undergoing a course in doctrinal formation. You may ask, why five? It is because animation of the community must be a communal effort. The community must not avoid its responsibility by passing it over to a semi-permanent catechist. Many villages without a priest, in some of the older Catholic countries, could well copy the Sunday liturgy of Mifoumbé!

III. MIFOUMBE - AN AUTHENTIC VILLAGE COMMUNITY

The site given by the chief of Issandja at 12 kilometres from the village has now become the new village of Mifoumbé.

1. On the material side

— 62 holdings, each of 8 hectares, have been staked out and fenced. 59 pioneers have begun planting banana and cacao trees. Some of these are already producing.

— 59 plots of savannah land, each of 50 ares, have been allocated for the building of huts and the production of food. 40 huts have been built and 12 more are under construction.

— Two buildings (part brick) have been erected — one for the Brothers and the other, the "Pioneer House", with a tool store, an office for the group leader, a clinic and a meeting hall.

— The school is almost finished and awaits authorization to open.

— A well has been sunk and some dozens of toilets provided.

— A village palm grove has been planted with specially selected saplings.

— Roads, bridges, etc. are in course of construction.

2. On the human side

— 59 pioneers, between 40 and 50 of them permanent. Others come and go, discouraged, no doubt, by the initial difficulties and by family problems. Some came simply to claim land but with no intention of remaining. The average age of the pioneers is 40 years but 16 of them are under 30.

— A community of three Brothers who initially confined themselves to teaching the village children but who now admit children from other villages.

3. Community organization

This village is not just a collection of individuals. It is an authentic village community welded together in hardships and effort.

The first pioneers drew up pretty strict regulations for the life of the group: rules for admission and exclusion and for the ordering of village life. A council, elected for three years, is responsible for applying the regulations and for the organization of the weekly community work. This is essential in a place where there were no roads, bridges or buildings and which received no help from the state. The council also settles disputes among the pioneers who meet regularly on Tuesday evenings. A kind of direct democracy!

It is this cohesion, in spite of the inevitable tensions, this community organization, not necessarily evident in view of natural individualism, which has brought the village into being, and helped it survive through difficult times and put down roots. The role of the Brothers in the village is more that of catalysts than of leaders. Our financial limitations do not permit us to play such a role.

4. The part played by the Brothers

"The service of the poor... requires a genuine participation in the life of the poor... a courageous, personal and community practice of poverty". (*Declaration* 34,2)

The presence of the Brothers at the founding of this village community is not without importance. We also have experienced an exodus. We also have lived in precarious shelters and gone without food. It is not enough to accompany the migrants. One must live with them, share their joys and their sorrows and take part in the construction of their village. It is this "living-with" people which has created between the Brothers and the pioneers a bond of fellowship.

5. The village and the local Church

The migration project was launched by the Catholic mission. It is encouraged by Msgr. Zoa, Archbishop of Yaoundé, who sees in this kind of work a form of the Church's presence and her interest in the whole man, both body and soul. We are trying, in this project, to follow the lines of "Populorum Progressio" and Paul VI's letter to Cardinal Roy. But a lot still remains to be done to make this a work of true evangelization. Does the same not hold good for every Brother irrespective of the form of his apostolate?

CONCLUSION

The work we are trying to do is very different from that of Brothers in the classroom but it has the same purpose: to help those with whom we come in contact to become masters of their destiny. We feel that we are truly Brothers in this work for the village and the future of its people. What can be more exhilarating than to give hope to people and to provide land for the young who did not dare hope? It is an exciting experiment in which our community is privileged to share, but much remains to be done before we can really "announce to the poor a Gospel of liberation", to quote the Cameroonian theologian, J.M. Ela, and before we discover the full prophetic meaning of the words of John Paul II, "Man is the way to the Church".

Brother Bérnard COLLIGNON, FSC
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THE BROTHERS AND THE ASIAN REFUGEES IN FRANCE

As an introduction to this article I wish to call attention to two realities. The first concerns figures. Between May, 1975 and October, 1984, 107,000 refugees from South-East Asia came to France, 700.000 went to the United States and approximately 900,000 went to various other parts of the world including Israel.

Besides the total of these figures we must not forget that a great number rest on the ocean floor because only about 50% of those who tried to flee in boats ever reached land.

The second reality is the suffering endured by those who were picked up from the boats and accepted by other countries. After having paid their passage by a lifetime's savings they were taken on board frail and often overcrowded craft. They then ran the risk of being intercepted by coastguard patrols, of storms, of hunger and thirst, of the break-down of engines and of being attacked by pirates from Thailand. These latter, attracted by the hope of finding gold and by the women and girls on board, were guilty of the most heinous crimes: murder, rape, robbery and kidnappings.

So, when at Easter, 1978 I was asked by Vietnamese friends, priests and lay people, to do something for the children of my compatriots, I could not refuse. I agreed, but what could I do? How could I find the money? Where could I begin? I was only a refugee, myself.

However, together with the Vietnamese Brothers already in Paris, I decided to do what was most urgent. In conjunction with other organizations, both official and private, we helped with administrative forms, translated identity documents, wrote letters, tried to find lodging and work, got the children into schools and taught children and adults to read.

Without money, without support... for two years I was practically alone except for a young Vietnamese woman refugee who helped me with the work. Occasionally two Brothers helped me during their free time.

Little by little our work became known. The Ministry of the Interior recognized our literacy classes and from 1980 on we were accepted as a legitimate organization with a variety of activities. We run literacy classes at four different levels for ten hours a week each. We run supplementary courses for secondary school students in all subjects. We organize social, cultural and religious activities throughout the year with special functions at Christmas, Easter and the lunar New Year. We have monthly student meetings, guided tours in spring and summer and annual family vacations for the cost of the food. We have a lending library, an information office, a choir and a music club. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoons as well as on Sundays more than 100 students come to ALDER (Lasallian Association for Aid to Refugees) for help with their studies. Many families put their homes at our disposal for meetings. We five Brothers, three of whom have reached retiring age are, carry on this work from our house which has become a reception centre, open all day.

We have no fixed income and must rely on donations from well-wishers and annual membership fees. As Vietnamese refugees we are looked upon with distrust by an administration which, in spite of appearances, is prejudiced, while others have the benefit of government subsidies during their period of studies in France.

Though we have managed to maintain our activities for the past five years, it is only since October, 1983, and thanks to the opening of the house at Ivry, that we have known anything like comfort. This house, bought by the Region of France and put at our disposal, is the most appreciated, but not the only

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help we have received from the Brothers. We have also formed many personal friendships with individual Brothers and have found them most useful, but it is the house at Ivry that has been of most benefit to us.

Unfortunately, the initial objective of the Association has still not been attained: that of helping to educate the young people whose families were suddenly transplanted from a partly closed society to one which is wide open and often permissive. We are the first to regret this, as are many of our friends because, in their eyes, we are the best fitted for the task by reason of our vocation and the success of our work in Vietnam during the hundred or so years from 6th January, 1866 to 30th April 1975.

We share their point of view but for different reasons. Vietnam is a country in a permanent state of war since the Japanese occupation in 1941. When the Japanese left in 1945 we had the war of independence from 1946 to 1954, followed by the war against North Vietnam, 1954-75. At present we are at war with Cambodia and there is always the nationalist guerrilla. People under 40 years of age have never known peace. The ruins which continue to pile up after nearly 50 years of war will not be easy to rebuild. Those who, at the moment, in Vietnam, have to struggle for their daily bowl of rice, for the shirt on their back, or for the elementary freedom to think, to work, to move from place to place, to meet or even to sleep peacefully in their beds, are not the people to carry out this task.

This challenge awaits the generation which will have benefited, abroad, by the opportunity of gaining a better human and professional formation. But will they be able for the task of reconstruction if they are beginning to dissipate the only heritage that they brought intact from their native land: their culture, their language, their history and their traditions, and if they follow the same path of decadence which we deplore in other populations of immigrants from the Third World?

Sociologists interested in the case of immigrants, particularly Chinese and Japanese into the United States in recent decades, say that you cannot count on the first generation because they are taken up with the struggle to adapt and to earn a living, and that you can rely on only part of the second generation who are often disappointed with their milieu and reject it. Only the third generation is well adapted to the host country and at the same time faithful to its ethnic origins. Consequently those who care for the future of their people must work on the second generation in order to form the third.

The lesson is clear for us. To me it seems that this is a providential mission for us Brothers who are messengers of the Gospel and people in whom the sense of country and of ethnic culture finds a certain resonance...

An inquiry conducted by those in charge of Polish and Catholic Armenian pastoral centres shows similar preoccupation with loss of identity. The Poles, who came to France in large numbers after the second world war, and the Armenians who came after the first, have educational centres in schools or other establishments under the direction of religious of their own nationalities. The pupils of these schools are mainly Poles or Armenians though they live in a predominantly French milieu. Though only a small proportion of the children of both nationalities attend these schools, those in charge feel that they are serving their respective countries while leaving pastoral care of the people to their own clergy.

This dream which we have cherished from the beginning and which we have not yet been able to realize could have given rise to a community effort capable of creating a spirit of real unity and fraternal sharing, as well as a rallying point for our fellow countrymen scattered around the world. It could also have provided a formation centre for those in search of God while awaiting the moment to reestablish the District of Saïgon in a country united and at peace.

It is with this in view that we propose to create a system of mutual aid to meet effectively the needs of the refugees. Everything else is but a temporary expedient.

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Note: A debt of gratitude is due to the "Orphelins Apprentis d'Auteuil" who sheltered our Association from 1980 to 1983 and who, on two occasions, gave us the use of their provincial schools for our family holidays.

We wish to thank also the Community of the Rue de Sèvres where our students were able to prepare for their examinations at week-ends, and the Brothers of the Pensionnat de l'Immaculée Conception in Béziers where "our families" spent the best holidays of their lives.

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A SCHOOL CO-OPERATIVE FISHING PROJECT

"It was apparently for this reason that God, who does everything with wisdom and gentleness and who does not force the acquiescence of man, wanted me to commit myself completely to the care of the schools. He acted towards me in such an imperceptible manner and over such a period of time that one commitment led to another without my having foreseen it from the beginning." (St. John Baptist de La Salle: "*Mémoire des Commencements*")

UNFORESEEN BEGINNINGS

I find myself caught up in a complex which started off as a simple initiative but which now threatens to take me over completely. It all began with my arrival in St. John's College, Antalaha, in the month of October 1981.

I arrived in a college about which I knew little and in a strange environment on the north-east coast of Madagascar. There were then about 600 students in the secondary department of the college. There are now 1150.

What surprised me at the start was the high degree of absenteeism. The principal cause of this, in a wooded area with a damp climate, was malaria. Poor sanitation and drainage prevent the people from effectively combatting this disease.

I spoke of this to a Jewish friend who, in turn, mentioned it to one of his friends in the "Secours Populaire Français" and to other friends who are involved with "Enfance et Partage".

Thanks to these connections we were soon able to organize the distribution of nivaquine in the college: three tablets per student per week. This is the remedy currently in use in the country.

The distribution of medicine enabled me to form personal friendships with the students and to learn about their living conditions. I soon realized that besides malaria many of them suffered from malnutrition which made them more vulnerable to the disease. The majority of our students, in fact, come from villages scattered throughout the forest areas and live away from their parents during the school year. It would be more accurate to say "survive" since their material conditions are so precarious. Few among them, for example, can afford to eat meat or fish at home. Milk products are scarce and far beyond their means.

I described these conditions to one of the men in charge of "Secours Populaire Français" when I was thanking him for a consignment of medicine. Like myself, he found it paradoxical that people living beside the ocean should find it difficult to buy fish. In the end he offered to finance the purchase of fishing equipment and the setting up of a small co-operative fishery.

REALIZATION OF THE PROJECT

Surprised by this proposition I spoke to the local fishermen and then consulted the Administration Committee of the college. Thanks to their advice and help the project gradually took shape. The delegates of the European Development Fund soon became interested and encouraged me to go ahead. That was in December 1982.

Assured of financial support I commissioned the building of a three ton fishing boat but it was still risky. The Small Projects Office of the Republic of Madagascar showed some interest at first but the project was eventually financed jointly by E.E.C. and "Secours Populaire Français", each providing half the cost.

Essential equipment for the boat came only in July 1983 and she put to sea on 10th March, 1984. She is

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a fine boat of 20 tons gross and 7 tons nett, with a 15 horsepower diesel engine. We named her "TSIMANAKAVA", a Malagache word which could be translated as "Without discrimination" or "All together for a better world".

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

During the past ten months the boat has been in service when the weather permitted. Each evening the boat's crew of four, together with four boys from the college, put to sea. The catch is sold at the college at half the price charged for fish in the neighbouring town.

Results so far have been very satisfactory:

— cheap fish can be bought by the students themselves,
— despite sea-sickness, about twenty students are really keen on fishing,
— local fishermen are also interested. There is such keen competition to put to sea that we have had to establish a rota for the crews.

Success has brought further needs:

— to improve safety measures at sea,
— to increase the size of the catch,
— to satisfy a greater number of crews.

The order for another boat has been placed but we need about 40,000 francs (4,000 dollars) to pay for the engine. For the new boat we need a 22 horsepower YANMAR 3GM diesel engine capable of powering the boat and towing one or two local dug-out canoes. The organizations which financed the first boat are not in a position to finance the second one so aid from the readers of Lasalliana would be more than welcome.

THE FUTURE

In the course of the present month we are going to introduce new techniques by installing sonar on the boat and using modern nets. I have lots of ideas in my head... This region is potentially rich but the living conditions of the people preclude new initiatives.

Unfortunately, the young people who come to the college from forest areas dream only of obtaining the baccalauréat in order to move later to the capital. They are drawn to the bright lights of the city and want to escape the harsh conditions of life in the villages. Efforts must be made to bring minimum conveniences to the villages, to provide attractive employment and to create living conditions which will encourage young people to stay in the country areas. We have already tried to introduce stock-raising and the cultivation of soya beans, but only on a very small scale.

These attempts obviously run counter to the habits and ways of thinking of the people. We do not pretend to have found the secret of getting people to take their lives in hand and to widen their horizons. Too often they seem to adopt a fatalistic attitude.

The young people entertain the illusion that manual work is too hard and that diplomas will bring easy money. I could cite other examples from daily life which could give rise to pessimism and discouragement in the face of the immense task that lies ahead but this is our contribution to the work of God and our reason for continuing.

CONCLUSION

Two expressions of the Abbé Pierre could summarize the purpose and inspiration of these activities:

— to live and to help others to live,
— to make God's love credible.

Perhaps I may be permitted to add that the activities outlined above are, for me, additional to my full-time work of teaching second cycle classes in St. John's College.

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LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (3) By whom?: The Lasallian Family; new role of the Brothers

For some three hundred years the Brothers have received, lived, and passed on the Lasallian ideal, aided for a number of those years by men and women collaborators in an important but secondary role.

A CHANGING MODEL

This traditional model of FSC-lay collaboration has virtually collapsed everywhere. It neither can nor should continue to exist. It is not merely a question of a diminished number of Brothers. It is more the call to full apostolic participation of all Christians, and the willingness of so many well-formed, highly motivated men and women to respond positively to the challenge.

As the percentage of lay teachers in US Catholic schools has increased (from 8% in 1944 to 75% in 1982) we have progressively shared positions of responsibilites. Yet at the same time many of us felt frustrated, perhaps demoralized, that Brothers' schools, as we once knew them, were things of the past.

But lay teachers as well as Brothers have wrestled with the implications of this dramatic change. Many dedicated lay teachers in the FSC world are expressing the desire to participate not only in positions of authority in the school, but also in the Lasallian spirit and FSC tradition. The 40th General Chapter studied this development, calling it the Lasallian Family Movement, and strongly encouraged it. What has happened in recent years is nothing short of remarkable. Numerous districts of the Institute have organized frequent and effective workshops and retreats for lay collaborators in Lasallian spirituality and ministry. The response has surpassed all expectations.

There is a high degree of desire and readiness for identification with the Lasallian tradition. US Toronto participants in the Mexico World Congress were amazed to hear teachers, parents, young people speak of "our" Founder and of the spirit of faith and zeal in association.

The older model of FSC-lay collaboration — a triangular model, if you will, is yielding to a circular model. On points of this circle are the Brothers, the administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, former students, board members, friends, benefactors, students themselves.

A NEW FSC ROLE

In this circular model of Lasallian Educational Ministry, the FSC have a crucial role to play, but a different role from the past. This role is to animate, that is, to give spirit, support, vigor, and zest, to move to action, to encourage. We exercise this role of animation not only as individuals, but as communities. Determining precisely how is an essential moment in the process of formulating the Community Annual Program. Our communities ought to be "impact centers", giving spirit to the Lasallian Family, sharing, as the trained Lasallian disciples we should be, the richness of our heritage. We claim no special holiness or academic or professional superiority in virtue of our life-style; but we do claim this particular role of animation in Lasallian spirituality and Lasallian Educational Ministry.

Brothers, I know that what I'm describing is feasible only in FSC schools. But when we work in collaboration with other religious institutes or in other non-FSC schools or non-school apostolates, we can still represent personally and communally the values that constitute Lasallian education.

BY WHOM? THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

I want to insist that nothing I have said indicates in any way a "watering down" of the FSC vocation. We must avoid all ambiguity and lack of clarity with regard to FSC identity. The Brothers, on a point of the Lasallian Family

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circle, have a distinct identity as consecrated men. Nevertheless, the answer to the question BY WHOM? is not: Brothers of the Christian Schools with lay collaborators. The answer is rather: the Lasallian Family animated by the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

WHAT?

"The end of the Institute is to give a Christian education to children". (Rule of 1705) General Chapters throughout history, including the last two General Chapters, have strongly reaffirmed this orientation.

ELEMENTS OF LASALLIAN EDUCATION

The topic assigned me — Lasallian Educational Ministry — prompts us to ask whether there is in fact a specificity to Christian education that can legitimately be called Lasallian. I think there are clearly discernible elements in our tradition that make it possible for us to speak of a Lasallian expression of Christian education: attention to persons; special concern for the economically poor and for all "down and outers"; commitment to excellence; creative and adapted education; dynamic religious instruction and pastoral service; promotion of justice and peace; faith-filled and zealous teachers in association.

The composite of these elements gives us a picture of WHAT of Lasallian Educational Ministry. I'm not concerned whether other religious institutes have an understanding of their mission that is similar. We do not define ourselves in terms of who we are not, but in terms of who we are and what we are all about.

It is this understanding we want to share with other members of the Lasallian Family. For the next few minutes, however, I am going to focus specifically on our own relationship to Lasallian Educational Ministry.

THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

"It is true to say that the Brother exercises an apostolate whenever he truly educates" (Declaration, 41). The Institute has always given the central place in this Christian education. But it has never dissociated the teaching of religion from the rest of education, or devoted itself to religion alone. There has always been the concern to link the work of evangelization with growth in education and culture (Declaration, 40).

We are ministers who are educators; we are educators who are ministers. Our vocation requires that we be well-trained, professionally and academically, that we be life-time students. It demands also that we be prepared sufficiently in theology or religious education to be instructors of religion, as well as pastoral animators. While the teaching of religion will not always be feasible, it should be considered normal activity for the Brother. We cannot accept lack of adequate preparation as an excuse for not teaching religion. We have to remedy the lack. And there is no country in the world where continuing education in religious education or theology is so readily available.

MINISTERS TO YOUTH

But more than teaching of religion is required in our mission. We are called to be youth ministers, experts on youth, specialists in helping the young grow in the life of faith. Whether we are teaching religion or not, we can be actively involved, part-time or out-of-school time, in campus ministry, in the prayer and liturgical life of the school, in leading youth groups of prayer and Christian service, in helping with youth retreats, in counselling and spiritual direction of young people.

In some countries today there are full-time district-level administrators charged with the promotion, animation, and coordination of pastoral ministry in the schools of the district. The overwhelmingly positive response of young people to these movements is a clear indication that they are looking to us, Brothers of the Christian Schools, for help in growing as Christians.

But I repeat, Brothers, that Christian education is our ministry; the pastoral animation of the young is one dimension of that ministry. To reduce the mission of the Brothers, as some are inclined to do, to pastoral service is to opt for an apostolic scope far too narrow to be in any sense healthy.

Brother John JOHNSTON
Vicar General - ROME

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LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (4): FOR WHOM?

"Our consecration constitutes us messengers to the young to declare the truth that sets them free". (Rule, Chapter 9)

"Messengers to the young". While our service is not limited to the young, they are our principal focus. God has confided them to our care.

By vocation we are leaders of youth; guides for parents and others working with youth. We have to know young people, how they think, what their hopes, aspirations, problems are. We have to know how to reach them.

The youth we are called to serve by preference are youth who are poor. Our Rule is unambiguous that we are directed by preference to the poor. (Rule, Chapter 1) The 40th General Chapter insisted that orientation towards the direct service of the poor become the rule rather than the exception in district priorities, and that when we are not teaching the poor directly, we must be effectively educating our students to a commitment to justice and peace.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR

Whatever their particular commitment, says the Declaration, the Brothers want to be in solidarity with the poor. (Declaration 32, literal translation) Solidarity with the poor is a good umbrella expression: the Brother is a Christian educator in solidarity with the poor. This solidarity commits us:

1) To "see" the poverty that exists, at home and abroad; to seek to understand the underlying issues.

2) To "feel" poverty and the effects of poverty — which implies exposure to and familiarity with the world of the poor.

3) To know the social teachings of the Church.

4) To be sensitive to our own attitudes, feelings, prejudices: and be disposed to confront them, and, when necessary, to change.

5) To live as persons of ordinary means or modest condition (Rule, Chapter 6) — otherwise we become too "at home" in the upper middle class environment; as De La Salle says, we'll "acquire rich tastes and will no longer be able to refrain from applauding the language of the rich, however pernicious it may be." (Last Will and Testament)

6) To take stands, to be willing to get involved, to put ourselves on the line, giving evidence that we are men in solidarity with the poor, people who really care.

7) To educate for commitment to justice and peace. I have the impression that we have made significant progress in this area in the United States. Since we must help our young people "see" the poor and learn the social orientation of the Church as well as give them the opportunity to serve, it is encouraging to know that such programs are enjoying high priority in our schools.

8) To serve the poor directly through education, at home and abroad. The 40th General Chapter challenged each of us "to volunteer for this educational service of the poor wherever the most urgent needs present themselves". (Proposition 13) A significant number of Brothers have said YES to this challenge. The list includes Brothers of all ages, including Brothers legally retired from teaching. If we do not see such service as feasible for us we should, nevertheless, support the district in placing "no obstacle, even under the plea of maintaining existing works, to Brothers who volunteer for this educational service." (Proposition 13)

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THE QUESTION OF NEEDS

This orientation by preference for the education of the poor does not represent an option for one specific social class and the rejection of another. Nor does it imply that those who are not poor have no legitimate needs. It does mean, however, that we resist the temptation of labeling anyone with needs — namely everyone — as poor, thus stripping the word of all meaning. Thank God our First US Regional Chapter declared unambiguously: "By the word poor, we mean the economically poor" (Acts, p. 42) This no-nonsense stance does not, however, conflict with our grand tradition of reaching out to all "down and outers" — youngsters with behavior problems, the handicapped, the retarded, the emotionally disturbed, the intellectually slow, etc...

It is in this context that we must understood the expression: "serving those most in need." These are in the first place the economically poor people whose needs are not being met, either at all or satisfactorily, by government, Church, or anybody else. The Second US Regional Chapter had these same people in mind: "In this region, the economically dependent, the unproductive, and the victims of any kind offer the Brothers the greatest opportunity for service. These poor are excluded from a fair share of society's benefits, in spite of their desires and efforts; they lack many opportunities necessary to make their lives more fully human." (Acts, II Regional Chapter, pp. 47-48).

THE HISPANIC PRESENCE

Such economically dependent are many and I hesitate to specify any one group. Nevertheless, I want to call attention to the Hispanic population. The publication last December of the US Bishops' Pastoral The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment, together with the debate generated by the proposed immigration legislation, has made all of us more aware than ever of the needs of immigrants in the United States. In the last century Catholic schools responded creatively and admirably to the needs of Catholic immigrants. Today, according to the Bishop, Catholic educators must turn their skills to meeting the educational needs of Hispanics.

I know that we have many Hispanics in our schools and that we are making every effort to reply to their plea for help, even by the creation of new works. I want to affirm what is being done and at the same time urge the districts to commit even more men to this service. The need of elementary education of young Hispanics is keen. Many high school age students need remedial help. Adult Hispanics need to learn English. Can our high schools and colleges do even more through special evening and weekend programs?

There are unlimited possibilities for the service of immigrants as well as refugees not only from Latin America but from other countries as well. It is encouraging to know that some Brothers are actively involved and fully supported by their districts in diocesan programs for refugees, immigrants, and other minorities generally, exercising positions of leadership.

My specifying the Hispanics and other immigrants and refugees is certainly not intended in any way to minimize our very necessary service of poor US citizens. But it is to recall that we must always be sensitive to new needs, as well as to the perennial needs that never cease to challenge us.

SERVING THE POOR WHERE THEY ARE

Several times, Brothers, I have used the phrase "Service of the poor, at home and abroad". And the poor of the world are, proportionately, abroad. Today there are approximately sixty-six US Brothers serving very significantly in a number of foreign countries. That is approximately 4,4% of our personnel. I think the percentage should be higher. Brothers from the US are urgently needed to live, serve with, and support local Brothers not yet sufficiently numerous or not yet adequately trained to take responsibility for their apostolic projects; to maintain existing commitments where there are few or no local Brothers; to promote local vocations and to assist in programs of initial and continuing formation; to respond to special needs and to make new foundations in reply to the urgent requests the Superior General receives regularly.

Most of the poor areas of the world can provide educational opportunities for only a fraction of the school-age population. The needs, therefore, are urgent and demand our serious consideration. That the US/Toronto Region is presently reviewing its missionary commitments is good news. It is, of course, essential that this review take place in close communication with the Superior and the General Council, who are charged with the responsibility of coordinating our Institute missionary endeavors.

Brother John JOHNSTON
Vicar General - ROME

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THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL (4): A place of interpersonal relations and pupil participation

1. THE SCHOOL: A CHRISTIAN AND HUMAN COMMUNITY

De La Salle was a man of his time. For that reason his pedagogical writings contain some principles which are now outdated. We cannot deny, however, that there are others which are modern and still relevant today. We find there, in embryo it is true, but still valid: the psychological study of character, an essentially practical education for life, attention to the child's background, the participation of the child in the running of the class, care and attention given to the individual, etc.

In the study of the Lasallian system there is something with identity of its own which must be preserved and developed. I mean the educative relationship between teacher and pupil as well as the pupil's active participation in the educational process. We would say today that every school should try to become a human community. The Declaration underlined for us the constitutive elements which such a school community should possess:

— human relationships which encourage dialogue and acceptance of persons as they are;
— a margin of liberty which allows the pupil a degree of responsibility for the conduct and discipline of the school.

From the beginning, Lasallian pedagogy has tended to make of the school a community where the child is at the centre. It sees him as a person whose potential must be developed by affording him all the help he needs. The child is, first and foremost, a person. In the school the relationship of love is the only one that can make all other relationships valid. The child is more affectivity than intelligence. Everything he thinks about reaches him through his emotions.

The Lasallian school is Christian which implies that it is open to all without distinction of class or colour. It is gratuitous: it freely gives what it has freely received. The Brother makes a gift of himself to others. His time is his pupils', he belongs to them. He lives for them.

The teachers are called Brothers, not masters. They are not functionaries working solely for a salary. They are not content merely to give instruction because they do not separate instruction from education (2).

Brother, not priest. This has clearly marked us and, in my opinion, happily so. Our schools have always been distinguished by simple relations with our pupils and with other people with whom we come in contact. We were always able to come down to the level of our pupils and mix with them as one of themselves. I don't think the Brothers found it difficult to accept the democratic demands of modern society. We were always accustomed to them. We had only to improve and perfect them.

We are conscious that distances between classes have lessened, that interpersonal relations have become simpler, that more importance is placed on the personality of the individual. The personality of the teacher is marked by humanity. That is the quality we like to see develop in a teacher (3). Teachers and pupils go through a process of mutual education in the practice of the precepts of the Gospel and in the fulfilment of the duties required of them by their respective situations (Med. 202). Pupils and teachers help one another to live in a manner worthy of God. This is apparently the meaning of de La Salle's Meditation 198,3.

The presence of the Brother among the pupils has as its purpose to help them to live in a manner worthy of God. It is what the Brother does when he predisposes the pupils to have the same sentiments and the same dispositions as Jesus Christ (Med. 198,3). In this way the Brother becomes for his pupil a guardian angel and a guide to his path (Med. 197,1) Teacher and pupils should both keep their regard fixed on him who is, par excellence, the Unique Master, Jesus Christ, and learn from him how to live.

(1) Conduite par le Frère Anselme, pp. 31-42.
(2) Sauvage, *Catechèse et Laïcat,* p. 593.
(3) Rodriguez G., *Adolescentes: experiencia humana y mensaje cristiano,* (Ed. Sigueme, 1971), p. 204.

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2. THE SCHOOL: A PLACE OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

St. John Baptist de La Salle insists that the Brother must have the cooperation of the pupils in his educative task. The teacher can do nothing if the door he knocks at does not open of itself. In this matter force and cunning are of no avail. You need the key of love and devotion. The child must be convinced by experience that the teacher appreciates and esteems him. The teacher must gain his confidence. There must be between teacher and pupil what de La Salle calls a manifest bond of goodness, tenderness and affection (Med. 134,2). "They shall love all their pupils tenderly", the Rule tells the Brothers. It admits no exceptions: "all their pupils" (Med. 157,3).

De La Salle requires from the Brothers that they present themselves before their pupils, not with a sombre and severe expression, but with one that denotes joy and affability (cf. *Cahiers Lasalliens, 24,* pp. 185-186) which in no way means weakness or excessive familiarity. They should combine the firmness of a father with the tenderness of a mother (Med. 101,3).

The fruits of this system of education were apparent to all. Lacordaire, referring to the Brothers, could write, "Obscure apostles of the people of France, they create without noise... law and order, peace and fraternity" (Rigault, tome V, p. 241). Felicité de Lammenais added, "These men are respected for the austere gravity of their lives and loved for their goodness" (*id.,* tome IV, p. 393). And Lamartine writes in the same vein (*id.,* tome V, p. 114).

We quote only these three significant tributes from a period when the defence of the Catholic school had become an urgent necessity.

All this was made possible thanks to the methods employed, to the goodness of the persons involved and to their dedication to a specific task which brought about a notable change in the children of the common people (4).

Participation of the pupils

Modern pedagogy insists on the participation of the pupils in the educational process. Lasallian schools never neglected this aspect of their work. They stressed the importance of the relationship between the persons involved, teachers, pupils and parents.

1. *Relations of the pupils among themselves.* De La Salle wanted the children to live as well-behaved persons. His books were read in class: The Duties of a Christian, The Rules of Good Manners and Christian Politeness.

At a time when education was not yet obligatory the saint encouraged his pupils to show the human aspect of their school to their companions, less accustomed to the demands of school discipline, and to win them by their advice and good example. (*Management of Schools* by Brother Anselme, p. 222)

The list of offices that de La Salle confided to his pupils is well known. There are fourteen of them. We all know how seriously a boy takes an office entrusted to him. The distinction greatly honours him. It is, doubtless, one of the ways in which he can impress his companions with his personal worth. Such an office helps him to avoid the egotism common at his age. He realises that he must reckon with other people in his life. He must visit a fellow pupil when he is ill and find out why he is absent from class. Other pupils collect the food left over from the mid-day meal or the afternoon snack and distribute it among those who are in the greatest need.

2. *Teachers and pupils.* De La Salle, at all times, considered the school a place where efficiency reigns and where work should be exemplary. To attain this objective the teacher must have order and discipline. Correction was a thorny problem in de La Salle's time. Though he reduced them and would have liked to see them abolished, he minutely listed and adapted punishments to the faults committed. He maintained that a lot of absences were due to lack of restraint on the part of the teacher when correcting his pupils (*Cahiers Lasalliens, 24,* p. 184).

The manner of correcting, as de La Salle prescribed it, is such as to elicit the affection and tenderness of the pupil rather than the contrary (cf. Blain, *Relations de plusieurs choses,* p. 110). We leave aside the passage where de La Salle speaks of "vigilance". He uses the word "assistance" but the meaning is the same. The child must be assisted because he is weak. He must be made aware of his faults in order that he may correct them. (Med. 197,3) (5).

3. *Teachers and parents.* Relations with the parents are important when it is question of admitting a pupil to the school. Brother Director ought to ask the parents for certain information: the pupil's state of health, his outstanding qualities and defects, his character, etc. This information must be brought to the notice of the teacher to whose class the pupil is assigned.

Today great stress is placed on the role of the school counsellor. This is a key post in relations with the pupils and their families. It demands a high degree of tact and delicacy in dealing with people. It is a very effective role. If there is a post for a Brother who is a real educator, this is it. In such a position he can guide, direct, enlighten and unite.

Some of the above points will be developed in a subsequent article.

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(4) Voir l'affection réciproque entre La Salle et les enfants (Blain II, pp. 164-165). Aussi Blain II, *Relation de plusieurs choses,* p. 102 (*Cahiers Lasalliens* 8).

(5) Pour plus de détails, voir: Alcalde, *El Maestro en la pedagogía lasaliana,* p. 417.

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06-C-22

THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL (5): A preparation for life

I. DE LA SALLE AND HIS PREDECESSORS

For the predecessors of De La Salle the school was, first of all, a place for teaching Christian doctrine. The rest was incidental. The school was used as a "bait" to attract the children. De La Salle would not accept such reasoning because he considered that to work honestly was to live as a Christian and that the avoidance of idleness was, in itself, a virtue. Attracting children to catechism lessons was not his aim because there were other means of doing so which were less troublesome and less costly than the school.

He begins his chapter on "The manner in which the Brothers should behave in school" by imposing the obligation of keeping school, and goes on to make the obligation more explicit: Teach reading. Teach writing. Teach arithmetic and spelling. He then insists that the most important duty of the teacher is to teach prayers, catechism and the Gospel. De La Salle does not undervalue religious formation but he gives importance to secular instruction by recognising its intrinsic value, something which was quite new at that time (1).

"The Founder of the Brothers is an essentially practical genius, he creates schools which are a preparation for life" (2). He introduces an eminently democratic programme of studies. Thanks to him the common man will henceforth be able to learn of the glories of his country, read the Gospel and communicate by letter with those who are absent.

De La Salle refuses to impose on his schools an inconsistent programme of studies. "He made some decisive contributions to primary education" (3) as is evidenced by the position he took on the following questions:

a. **Learning French before Latin.** Latin takes second place in his schools. It is used only in reading while priority is given to French. In the memoir addressed by De La Salle to his friend, Godet des Marais, bishop of Chartres, he gives among other reasons for this preference the uselessness of teaching Latin to children of poor artisans, knowing that they would spend but a short time in school and that on leaving school, they would have no chance of continuing to study it (4).

b. **The simplification of writing.** De La Salle simplifies the rules of writing at a time when the writing masters had, by their numerous prescriptions, made it an impenetrable thicket, an area reserved to specialists and from which the poor were excluded. In spite of the complaints of the writing masters De La Salle does not cease in his efforts to popularize the art of writing. By putting a pen in the hands of the poor he is not giving them a dangerous weapon, as Voltaire and La Chalotais claim, but a tool with which to earn their daily bread and defend themselves.

c. **The good of the Church and of the State.** (cf. Declaration 47,3) The action of the Christian tends to promote the good of the Church and of the state. "The school aims at and attains the earthly objective (cf. Meditation 160,3) of preparing children for life here below by giving them the indispensable basic techniques, the essential tools: reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic." (5)

In De La Salle's schools the whole atmosphere speaks of diligent scholastic activity.

d. **The schools are designed to meet specific needs.** De La Salle adapts his schools to the concrete needs of everyday life. At Saint Yon he creates a form of higher education to meet the needs of the better off. This was the forerunner of what is called today modern secondary education. The "Sunday School" for workers and other adults

(1) Poutet, Y., *Le XVIIe siècle et les origines lasalliennes,* t. I, p. 402.
(2) *Conduite des Ecoles Chrétiennes,* Introduction par F. Anselme, p. 37.
(3) Sauvage, M., *Catéchèse et Laïcat,* p. 672.
(4) Blain, *La vie de M. J.-B. de La Salle,* t. I, pp. 375-376.
(5) Sauvage, *id.,* p. 678.

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is a new type of school to meet the needs of the parishoners of Saint Sulpice. The seminary for country schoolmasters is another stroke of genius on the part of the Founder aimed at supplying teachers from his "Training College" to the villages. The income from these boarding establishments will be used for the benefit of the schools for the poor.

II. THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL SEEKS TO FORM HABITS OF WORK

One of the fruits to be expected from the schools is the preparation of children for a profession. The school should prepare them to face life and to make themselves useful in the world when their parents decide to withdraw them from school (cf. Meditation 194,1).

"The school, as conceived by the Founder of the Brothers, should give the children a taste for work and gradually train them in habits of concentration. The pupils' efforts are stimulated and their progress carefully monitored throughout their period of schooling." (6) At the end of each school year the teacher puts on a sheet of paper all the information necessary for the parents and for the teacher who will have the pupil in his class the following year.

The "Management of Schools" which the Founder puts in the hands of his disciples is not, in itself, something sacred and immutable. De La Salle himself revised it several times. The more experienced Brothers helped him to assemble the treasures of pedagogical wisdom which it contains. Everything in it is important. It was the subject of much discussion and reflection. Good sense is evident in every line since its purpose is to contribute to the improvement of the instruction and education of poor children. We shall now consider a few of the methods which contributed to the success of the schools and to the welfare of the poor.

a. **Pupils are allowed to progress at their own rate.** The teacher cares for all his pupils but more particularly for the less gifted to whom he gives his time and attention while allowing the more able to work on their own.

b. **The uniformity of method** introduced by De La Salle creates an atmosphere of discipline and good order in all his schools. The time-table is adhered to and the silence observed by the teacher has no other purpose but to encourage the pupil to speak and explain himself. What the pupil finds out for himself will have more value than what the teacher too readily provides for him.

c. **Pupils are encouraged to work on their own and to help their less able companions** (7). Modern pedagogy insists on the necessity of allowing children to work on their own, on the value of individual initiative and personal research. The teacher should not do what the pupil can do for himself or teach another to do. De La Salle also uses the small group method for the weaker pupils and asks the more able pupils to help them even at the price of their own promotion. "Let the teacher be careful not to help them too readily to overcome the difficulties they meet in the solution of a problem. On the contrary, he encourages them not to give up and to look for the solutions which he knows they can find out for themselves. They should be persuaded that the knowledge they gain through sustained personal effort will be better retained. The teacher will not be satisfied with posing problems himself but will encourage his pupils to pose problems of their own according to their ability." (8)

d. **Subjects for study are taken from everyday life.** In arithmetic the pupils learn the elements of book-keeping, the use of money, how to make out invoices and how to make simple measurements etc. In reading they use manuscripts, records and legal contracts when they have mastered the elements.

As for social relations (9), De La Salle insists that the rules be learned from daily contacts among the pupils themselves rather than from formulas learned by heart. This, in spite of the fact that he wrote for them "Rules of good manners and Christian politeness", a work which Guibert says is better than anything that went before.

De La Salle requires that teachers and pupils reflect at the end of each school day on the way they behaved to one another and on the faults they committed. The child is thus led to think of others and to treat them with consideration. Our own Declaration says, "The school is one of the principal places for acquiring social graces both for children and adolescents". (44,2)

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(6) Sauvage, *id.*, p. 678.
(7) *Conduite,* p. 38.
(8) *Conduite,* p. 37.
(9) Poutet, p. 144. "La civilité lasallienne refusera de s'en tenir aux belles façades. Elle visera le coeur, l'esprit".

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06-D-11

SEMINARS ON LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY

DEVELOPMENTS TAKING PLACE

In Argentina, as elsewhere in the Institute, we have witnessed, during the past twenty years a gradual reduction in numbers combined with a rising average age among the Brothers (the increase in the number of vocations is limited and of recent date). In the meantime our commitments have increased and become more diverse. As a result, our institutions are employing more and more lay teachers. Today they are more than twenty times the number of Brothers in active service. Lay men now hold positions at every level of educational organization and in all branches of teaching.

A study of the subject shows among other things that:

— the employment of large numbers of lay teachers is inevitable,
— Lay teachers take their place in our schools by right and not as spare wheels,
— if our schools are to remain Lasallian in spirit it will be thanks to the lay personnel,
— the latter feel that the schools are also theirs and wish to retain their Lasallian character,
— not having made the novitiate or scholasticate their attachment to things Lasallian springs more from sentiment than from a serious study of Lasallian pedagogy and spirituality.

Faced with this challenge, the Brothers could decide to close ranks and await the future (what future?) or they could resolutely decide to create the future by forming their lay colleagues in the spirit of De La Salle. The District opted for the second alternative. The seminars have become the basic means of initiating lay teachers into Lasallian spirituality. They are a kind of kerygmatic phase in the process.

This effort to spread the Lasallian mystique among lay people, though not the first of its kind, has been undertaken with renewed vigour since 1978, thanks largely to the rediscovery of the Founder by the District.

The research work carried out by Brothers Maurice Auguste, Miguel Campos, Michel Sauvage and Patrice, together with the participation by a greater number of Brothers in the sessions of CIL and in the Latin American seminars on Lasallian spirituality have given vitality to our adhesion to a Founder who is now better known in his evangelical apostolate and in his spiritual doctrine. Our ministry has gained in fervour and has widened its horizons.

GUIDE LINES FOR ACTION

From the inception of this form of our apostolate, and to a certain extent, in the seminars on spirituality, two criteria were adopted:

1. to involve as many as possible of our lay collaborators in the work of education,
2. not to confine the work to a ready-made programme but to develop it in response to the needs of the teachers.

Two other criteria were adopted later:

1. to keep in mind the degree of commitment of the people concerned,
2. to respect the ecclesial dimension of the work. Lasallian action is an integral part of the Church's mission. It is *not* the Church.

SPIRITUAL WEEKS

Every year since 1979, one or two weeks of the summer vacation have been devoted to a project organized along the following lines:

Participants: Brothers and lay teachers. Several from each school to ensure subsequent mutual support and effective animation of the teaching body.

Animation: A team of Brothers and lay people together with a priest.

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Duration: Five or six days. Daily Mass. Morning and afternoon sessions. Recreation and discussion after the evening meal.

Expenses: Each person participating was responsible for his own expenses. Some were helped by their school or college.

Objectives: With minor variations from week to week, the main purpose was:

1. to give the participants an opportunity to experience life as Lasallians and to deepen their knowledge of the spirituality of De La Salle;
2. to find God in their own lives and in the life of the group;
3. to discern God's call here and now and to commit themselves individually and collectively to respond to it.

Programme: The central themes of the seminars were:

1. The plan of salvation. (God's presence and design in history).
2. General view of the life-work of De La Salle and the main aspects of his spiritual doctrine.
3. The life of faith.
4. Mission: Teachers as God's ministers.
5. Mission: Christian community and fraternity.

Activities: The seminar is something more than a retreat. It is a time for studying and living the spirituality of De La Salle. The days are so organized as to allow for:

— initiation into personal and community prayer with the Eucharist as the culminating point of each day,
— presentation of the life, work and teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle as the main work of each day,
— reading and reflection on Lasallian teaching, alone or in groups, followed by discussion,
— periods of relaxation where the participants could meet informally and get to know one another better.

Towards the end of the seminar the District plan for the following year was presented to the participants who were invited to make a commitment to work together for its achievement.

OTHER PROJECTS

Besides the "weeks" described above, we have, since January, 1981, organized other meetings for those who are not satisfied with the initial experience but who wish to come to a deeper knowledge of Lasallian spirituality. These meetings follow a similar pattern but have a more specific objective (e.g. the study of Lasallian faith communities) or take the form of a retreat.

In February, 1985 a seminar was arranged for those who are responsible for internal organization in our colleges. Eighty-one lay teachers and eleven Brothers took part. The week's activities were centred on: Lasallian lay teachers as faith witnesses, Educational organization in the light of the Gospel, Collaboration with the District, in the District, and as a District.

Encouraged and inspired by the experience of these seminars on Lasallian spirituality the District has opened them to teachers in state schools in the extreme north-west of the country where the Brothers have recently opened a school for the marginalized. A Brother from the new Community has volunteered to keep in contact with and support the teachers who have participated in one or more of the seminars.

RESULTS

It is unwise to speak of "results" in matters of spirituality so the following facts should be treated with some caution:

— more than 400 persons have taken part in one or more seminars. This means that, at least a third of the administration and teaching staffs of Lasallian schools has made real contact with the Founder.
— The lay teachers understand better the spirituality of De La Salle and identify with the work of Lasallian schools.
— Relations between Brothers and lay teachers and among the lay teachers themselves have shown marked improvement.
— A more intense Christian life and a deeper commitment to the apostolate of teaching is evident among the lay teachers.

WHAT NEXT?

When you open up new paths you take on a certain responsibility. You must continue on to the end otherwise you let people down.

The response of the lay teachers gives the District the possibility of meeting other demands in the field of education, especially among the marginalized. But the lay teachers themselves, rightly demand that the Brothers take account of them and that they help them in their efforts to become Christian educators benefiting by what the Institute has to offer them. That is why the Argentine District must create a ministry of lay people among whom the lay teachers will hold a place of honour.

(Condensed from "Formation of our lay collaborators: an experiment". Argentina and Paraguay, 1982, with the addition of some recent information).

Brother Bruno ALPAGO, FSC
ROME

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TWO DAYS AT PARMENIE
With the SIGNUM FIDEI of France

At Whitsun 1984, an event, modest but significant for the Lasallian movement, especially in France, took place at Parmenie.

AS BROTHERS

Over the week-end we formed a veritable Lasallian community in the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle. We strove to deepen that spirit in ourselves and to find the meaning of our own vocation. The group was composed of people of all ages: men and women, Brothers and lay people, parents of families, teachers and headmasters, students and former students, all members of Signum Fidei.

In all about twenty people came together to form a community, to pray together, to exchange views, to grow in the knowledge and love of God and of his servant St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Everybody wanted to make the occasion a worthwhile experience and so took the necessary steps to make it such. It required a real effort, in the beautiful spring sunshine, to drag oneself away from one's accustomed activities and to travel, as many did, across the length and breadth of France to this hallowed hillside.

AS LASALLIANS

We look back on the long hours spent in discussion in groups or teams and to the first meeting in the dining room where we had the opportunity to introduce ourselves and to say in what way we felt ourselves Lasallian. We preferred to start from our own experience before trying to define terms which we find too imprecise. Though the words "Lasallian" and "Signum Fidei" are much used (perhaps too much used) in our country few know exactly what they stand for. We experienced a moment of intense faith and hope as we listened to these personal revelations of attitudes which were genuinely Lasallian.

> "Claude (Brother), it did us good to hear you say, "Since 1942 I have never looked back". "And you, Alain (former student), when you quite naturally quoted the Founder in telling us that you were imperceptibly led" to feel yourself Lasallian". I imagine that the Brothers, especially, felt themselves one with you. As for you, Jean-Marc (lay teacher), you made a profession of faith when you said, "For me everything revolves around the school" and your wife added, "For the past twenty years I have been growing into the great Lasallian family."

PRESENT AND FUTURE

There are times like these when the witness given by members creates real unity and strengthens human and spiritual ties in a durable manner. Another period of discussion and exchange of views provided an occasion for considering the present situation of Signum Fidei and the future we foresee for it in our country. Signs of hope and causes for disquiet were analysed and modest but concrete and realistic

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proposals were put forward. First of all Brothers and lay people must together define the terms and explain the words which are now part of our vocabulary. How can one speak clearly about something that is ill defined.

These vocabulary problems, and they are not the only ones, do not always make for clarity nor do they help us to see things in the light of the Gospel. Brothers and lay people do not really know one another and each side often regards the other with a certain degree of suspicion. Some lay people find it hard to accept the renewal of our Associations and are unwilling to commit themselves while some Brothers are unaware of developments among Lasallian lay people. "The Brothers must be shaken up", was someone's rather blunt summing up of the situation. Hence the need to take seriously the preparation for the General Chapter to which, according to Circular 419, lay people are invited to contribute.

OUR CONVICTIONS

The last session, when the participants worked in groups, was devoted to drawing up a summary of the convictions expressed by each one. The following gives the opinions of the teacher-headmasters group:

> "In our profession we have chosen to pay attention to the young and especially to the most deprived amongst them: those who have problems at home or in school or who suffer material want — those "who are furthest from salvation"...
> ..."the least of these my brethren."
>
> To be closer to these young people we believe in the creation of a community of educators who have the same mission and employ the same means.
> "That they may be one..."
>
> We believe that our mission is a "ministry". Our profession becomes then, the means employed by God for the evangelization of the young.
> "Go ye therefore, teach..."
>
> Today it is St. John Baptist de La Salle who inspires our activities in favour of the young. We hope that other educators like ourselves will come to know the Lasallian spirit and that our community will grow stronger and become more and more available for the service of young people."

TWO LEADERS

Besides the periods of community prayer and of formal and informal discussion two people helped us to gain a better knowledge and a deeper appreciation of the evangelical inspiration that guided him. They were: Brother Charles Lapierre who underlined the significance of Parmenie in the life of de La Salle and Brother Jean-Marie Thouard, Regional President of France, who showed us how the Founder was led from "one commitment to another" until he surrendered himself totally to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

NIMES 1985

The week-end was for all of us a time of grace. One concrete decision was taken as a logical "follow-up" to our discussions and is now in the course of realization. All Lasallians interested in the Founder will meet in Nimes, in the south of France, at the end of June 1985. We are convinced that like Mexico this meeting will be for our Associations and for the Institute a time of grace.

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06-D-13

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE LASALLIAN WORLD CONFEDERATION

Dear Lasallian friends, I thank you for your confidence and I put myself at the services of the Lasallian Mission in taking over the presidency of the world Confederation. I did not want the responsibility, and those who suggested me for the position have been aware of this for some time past. But they knew also that when the day came that I had to choose between the right to refuse and the duty to accept, my choice would be to conform to what I believed to be the will of God.

I shall fulfil my duties with my good qualities as well as with my faults; I shall do my best, with the help of you all but especially with the help of the Holy Spirit, of St. J.B. de La Salle, and of Our Blessed Lady, and, since my appointment took place in Mexico, I would like to place my tenure of the presidency under the special protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe whom we visited this morning.

Presidents come and go but the Confederation remains, and it is in the light of this continuity that we should envisage the future and that each one, in his own way, should commit himself to the action which will make effective the conclusions of the Congress in his own milieu.

Before addressing a message to you on this subject, I would like to pay special homage to the man who, for the past four years, was head of the Confederation. He wished to travel in order to get to know the Lasallians of all countries and, thanks to him, the new President has today a clear vision of what the Lasallian movement is throughout the world. I would like to add a personal word of thanks to Dr. Claudio Andreoli who has always shown me a degree of kindness which will contribute, as we both wish, to perfect continuity in the conduct of the Confederation.

It would not be right if I did not say a word of thanks to the man who has for years past been the soul of the Confederation and without whom many things would have remained undone, Brother Manuel Olivé!

I shall try to be brief because you have already listened to several speakers and I do not want to abuse your patience. I shall confine myself to outlining a programme of work for the years ahead and to making five appeals to those who are to be the principal agents in the Lasallian renewal.

We should be conscious of the fact that we are at the end of an era and that it is up to us to establish a new balance which takes into account the responsibilities of lay people according to the directives of the Second Vatican Council. We have witnessed for several years past the growth of different groups drawing their inspiration from Saint John Baptist de La Salle: attentive to the signs of the times we have let these groups grow up and develop considering that we must not usurp the place of the Holy Spirit. We have taken care to create a climate and soil favourable to the development of these groups and we knew that that would take time. First of all because in the things that concern God one cannot be sparing of time and also because the world knows that time does not respect what is done in a hurry.

These groups are today many and varied: lay teachers, young people, parents, Signum Fidei, former students and other groups claim a link with St. John Baptist de La Salle. The time has come to co-ordinate these groups whose objective is the same: to educate and serve the young, especially "the most deprived and those farthest from salvation".

We are going to turn resolutely towards all these Lasallians to give a new force to the development of this movement in our respective countries and taking particular care to:

— create, develop and support groups of young people,
— create, develop and ensure the evolution of former student associations,
— Urge and help the lay teachers to join national Lasallian organizations.

These organizations and regroupings will be impregnated with the Lasallian spirit which unites us and will, quite naturally, result from our Congress to which they will explicitly refer. This will be our way of putting into practice our reflections on Faith, Fraternity and Service.

The other part of our programme will be to turn towards the Brothers and to do our share in the preparation of

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the General Chapter of 1986 and afterwards to share in putting into practice its directives within the Lasallian movement.

To carry out this programme, which I realise is ambitious, we need the collaboration of all, and for that reason I wish to close the Congress with five appeals:

My first appeal will be made to all of you who have participated in this Eighth Lasallian World Congress: young and old, lay people and religious, Signum Fidei and postulants, we have lived through extraordinary days in the study of the theme: Faith, Fraternity, Service, and we have arrived at some decisions.

Beneficiaries of these wonderful days, we must, when we get home, become missionaries and the leaven of the mass, but we must not forget that to be effective "the leaven must remain leaven" as Pope John Paul recently said, hence the need for each one of us to nourish himself regularly from Lasallian sources.

It is you who will be the effective instruments for putting into practice the directives of the Congress in your respective countries. The Confederation counts on you.

My second appeal is to the young. You have the enthusiasm, the dynamism and the generosity of youth. Put these qualities at the service of the Lasallian movement by committing yourselves to the movement in the fullest sense of the term. It is you who will ensure the renewal of the Lasallian movement, and your commitment will allow the Brothers of St. J.B. de La Salle to continue their work in the service of the young and of the deprived.

You represent for us the changing of the guard. You will, in a few years be, in your turn, guarantors of the continuity and of the spirit of the Lasallian movement; you should prepare yourselves to take responsibility in the future. Those in charge today count on you. St. J.B. de La Salle counts on you.

My third appeal is to the Lasallians in the school: teachers, collaborators with the Brothers and lay headmasters you are, more than all the others, guarantors of the Lasallian spirit in the schools where you have chosen to serve youth. It is you, in effect, who ensure, not only the concept, but above all, the putting into practice of the educative project. You are the actors and you have the role of perpetuating Lasallian values.

Your privileged position among the young makes particularly effective the integration of the conclusions of the Congress in your daily actions. We appeal to you to widen the scope of your activities and to share actively in the development of the Lasallian movement. You have your place there, we expect you there, and we know that we can count on you.

My fourth appeal is addressed to Lasallians outside the school, i.e. essentially to former students. A profound evolution has taken place among you in recent years. Whatever some people may say, we are no longer in the days when the words of a contemporary French philosopher could be applied to you.

"For them, heaven is too high, the earth too low, only the table is at their level". Witnesses to what you have received, guarantors of a spirit whose perpetuity you ensure by your steadfastness, you must never forget that to try to do as well today as was done formerly one must often do differently.

You ensure for the schools from which you came both outside help and openness to the world the students will find on leaving school. You are at the meeting point of school and life.

Leaders of the Lasallian movement and its main support you must not deceive the young. You must re-define the mission of your associations so that they may become authentic Lasallian Associations. We know that you can open wide the doors of your associations.

My fifth and last appeal is addressed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Sons of St. J.B. de La Salle and heirs to his patrimony and to his spirit your influence spreads, whether you wish it or not, to the Lasallians of all ages and you are the spiritual driving force, the soul of the Lasallian movement. You are not only heirs to a moral authority but also to a power which is decisive to the extent that nothing can come to life and develop without the active support of a Brother. I must stress here the irreplaceable role of the Brothers Visitors and the Brothers Assessors.

The Lasallians that you have formed or those who work with you are not demanding; they simply consider that, as they are near to you, they should put themselves at your disposal to serve the young in a spirit of faith and fraternity by giving the best of themselves.

Just as once the Brothers asked their Founder to resume the government of the Institute so we ask you today to take in hand the Lasallian movement, born of our dedication and of your fidelity to St. J.B. de La Salle.

Dear friends, we are all heirs and, like all heirs, we are depositories of a patrimony, the Lasallian patrimony, established by St. J.B. de La Salle and enriched by 300 years of work in the service of youth and especially in the service of the disinherited.

We, lay people, must transmit what we have received but we can do so only within the framework of the mission of the Institute. It is for you, my dear Brothers, to show us the way.

We are ready to go along with you. Help us to help you.

M. Alain DE MONTECLER
PARIS

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06-E-14

THEY GAVE MEANING TO MY LIFE

A few days ago, I celebrated in the privacy of my prayers, the 30th anniversary of my first commitment as a religious in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. I was then nineteen. I was happy then and I am happy still, but in a deeper sense!

You may wish to know what I have done since that first commitment twenty-seven years ago, especially as all my active life has been spent in Africa: Morocco, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast and Niger.

"THE SEED HAS BEEN SOWN"

September 1957 saw the realization of a youthful dream: I began teaching on African soil. The early years of my apostolate were marked by several meetings with the "Patriarch of the Atlas", Fr. Peyriguère, who died in 1959 after spending thirty years of his life among the Berbers. A life of prayer and silent presence at the heart of Islam without making a single convert! The strongest impression he made on me was one of faith in the living Good of the Eucharist, Saviour of the milieu in which he lived. His deepest conviction at the end of his life was; "The Seed has been sown"! I have retained the certitude that beyond the visible, God is acting and that the important thing is to render Him present wherever I am, to plant and to water, knowing that the rest is up to Him. That is what gave meaning to my apostolate in the Islamic world.

"THE TREE-TRUNK MAY BE A LONG TIME IN THE WATER BUT IT NEVER BECOMES A CROCODILE"

In 1965 I arrived in black Africa. My activities there were varied: teaching, formation of young Brothers, study of African sociology.

On my first arrival in Africa in 1957, I told myself; "I have come for good. I want to remain a Brother to the end of my life". That seemed to me as natural as it was exhilarating!

But the year 1970 brought a turning point in my missionary thinking. My sociological studies brought me to numerous villages of the Ivory Coast. It was there I heard more than one old man say with some malice "The stranger has big eyes but he sees nothing"! which meant: you're curious, but all you see, all you think you understand, you always see with the eyes of an outsider, with the reasoning of an outsider. You only grasp appearances. To really understand you must belong here!

Others quoted, in the same tone, the Bambara proverb, "The tree-trunk may be a long time in the water but it never becomes a crocodile", which means that even if you've been here a long time you always remain an out-sider! This made me understand that in spite of everything, a deep friendship could exist between people but that it sprang from mutual respect and sharing of what one is and what one has. And I realised that I was only an invited guest on African soil, happy to be so, and to act as such but prepared to accept the possibility of leaving if circumstances compelled me, as we have seen happen in other places.

But at the same time I realised that African wisdom and proverbs have their human limits. Happily, faith and love can overcome them. I felt that, despite appearances, and by sheer force of loving and listening, it was possible to reach a certain identification with the other person. True brotherhood, which knows no barriers, becomes real in Jesus Christ to the point where one feels at home where people really love one another.

It was a great moment for me, when that thought came to me in serenity. It was a little like a second breath to my life in Africa which I am trying to live in a spirit of availability for today as for tomorrow, in receiving as in giving.

"YOU DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE ME"

At the moment I am teaching in Niamey. Practically all the students in our technical college are Moslems. How does one live as a Brother amongst them?

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Once in class I had just finished explaining the work to be done. Hands were raised asking for further explanations. I answered the questions and then said, "Get to work, now". But one hand was still raised. It was that of the most backward pupil in the class. I thought to myself: "The Lord invites me to love him. Go down to him and answer his question". Wanting to surprise him I went towards him but without looking at him and passing along the next row of desks. When I reached him and stopped to speak to him he turned towards me and I saw a face filled with utter hopelessness and heard a sorrowful voice say "You didn't even notice me".

The depth of his disappointment surprised me... What he wanted of me was that I should take notice of him at that moment, not afterwards. Of course, I explained matters to him and he was quite happy but I shall always remember the lesson he taught me.

I found the same expectations in letters from senior students of former years who occasionally write to me. One begins his letters with "My Dear Educator"... and after his signature underlines the sentence *"I look forward to hearing from you"*.

Another expresses more the goodness of his heart and his eagerness to receive an answer than the truth as regards my behaviour towards him. (This gives me the right to quote him). Unconsciously, he describes the teacher he would wish to have to help him, and that gives food for though. "I searched my memories of school but I found no face but yours which I could clearly recall: I remember you because you always fulfilled well your duties as educator. You always had time for us young people, you were always available whether in class, in the playground or in your office. You easily joined in the conversation of a group of boys. You could always guide, advise and teach us. You were always patient, smiling, accessible. You knew how to encourage us. You always found something positive and praiseworthy in our work even in a mediocre poem without form or substance. That is why I write to you and ask you to help me." I could answer these young people and tell them that their letters, their attitudes and their reflections help us more than they think, that they sometimes shake us up and often challenge us.

BEING A CHRISTIAN CHANGES ONE'S LIFE

At the centre of this attention to man, which for us means attention to the young people who pass through our schools, lies the wonderful riches of the presence of Jesus, recognized and made actual in our lives. I am more conscious, perhaps, in this Moslem world where He is not really known, that I am His sign, His ambassador. Every time a group of pupils enters my class my prayer goes something like this, "Lord, If my visible role is to teach them the profane subjects they expect from me, my invisible role is to offer their existence, their daily work, their efforts, their fears and sorrows and their more or less conscious expectations as a prayer and a consecration of their lives to you".

It seems to me that my presence amongst them in the faith helps to start something, of which they are not yet conscious, but which for many of them will be lost on the way. To this priesthood of offering, which is the duty of every baptised person, is added the duty of witness through a manner of living and acting which surprises and challenges; "Be ready at all times to explain the hope you have in you" (1 Peter, 3,15). In a country where Christians form only 1% of the population a person must live Christianity 99%, — a Christianity which is a sign of the love of God for men and which calls forth the action of the Holy Spirit everywhere.

How encouraging to hear this statement from a Moslem student at the end of the year: "Being a Christian changes one's life".

To spend one's life transmitting something of the love of God incarnate in Jesus Christ, is this not to live one's life genuinely and to the fullest?

It is to live through the season of sowing, and therefore of hope!

MY HEART IS READY LORD (Ps. 57,8)

I said at the beginning of this article that I was happy... I have, in fact, been happy throughout my stay in Africa, a stay marked by frequent changes of place because of the work I was asked to do.

These successive uprootings, in the service of a common cause, however trying they may have been, convinced me, in their own way, that the only "incarnation" demanded of us, and which removes all illusion, is that which coincides with the will of God expressed in our readiness to accept events.

Then nothing surprises, nothing disappoints: the heart is ready to listen to the invitation of Peter (1 Peter 4,10-11).

EACH ONE AS A GOOD MANAGER OF GOD'S DIFFERENT GIFTS,
MUST USE FOR THE GOOD
OF OTHERS THE SPECIAL GIFT HE HAS RECEIVED FROM GOD.
WHOEVER PREACHES MUST PREACH GOD'S MESSAGE;
WHOEVER SERVES MUST SERVE WITH THE STRENGTH
THAT GOD GIVES HIM, SO THAT IN ALL THINGS
PRAISE MAY BE GIVEN TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Brother Jean-Pierre LAUBY
ROME

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06-E-15

A NEW APOSTOLATE FOR RETIRED BROTHERS

WORKING WITH PRISONERS...

Pierre who retired from teaching six years ago is a member of a team of prison visitors to the prison of S... Like each of the other visitors he talks in private every week with five or six prisoners who wish to see him. He makes these weekly visits throughout the period they are in prison (from a few weeks to several years). This apostolate of listening to the inmates also involves a great variety of activities: contact with the families, interviews with prospective employers, repeated visits to the social services, etc. Pierre is also lay assistant to the Catholic chaplain and as such takes thirty or forty prisoners for prayer and reflection on a Gospel text as the occasion offers.

AND WITH EX-PRISONERS...

André, who is a joiner, works full time with three companions in a workshop belonging to an Association which employs them as specialist instructors. In the workshop, which is situated in the country, or on building sites they are helped by six young men aged from 18 to 24 whom the Association places in their care for a period of six months and pays for their work. For fifty hours a week the "apprentices" work side by side with the instructors and take their mid-day meal with them.

Accepted as they are, often in a state of physical and moral exhaustion, these young men, from whom no life history or court record is demanded, gradually awaken to the reality of life and to relationships they have never before experienced. Rejection and repeated failure had led them to delinquency and prisom.

As time passes each finds his place, takes an interest in his work, learns to handle his budget, pays his debts (court costs, compensation to victims etc.) and begins to stand on his own feet. However, nothing can be guaranteed and you don't always win, but for many of these young men the work periods have been the road to social and professional integration into society.

...FOR THE SALVATION OF ALL THE PEOPLE

Pierre and André live in the same Community. They are Brothers of the Christian Schools. The people they deal with have a strange resemblance to the "children of artisans and the poor" of whom St. J-B de La Salle used to say that their parents were "compelled to abandon them".

It is to these "overgrown children", in a milieu little conducive to friendliness, that educators, visitors and chaplains must act as "brothers". Is this possible without convictions which must be continually renewed and affirmed? Some of these convictions are not entirely foreign to Lasallian tradition.

— God wishes the salvation of ALL men without exception. How many, before going to prison, had a chance to hear the Word of God?

— A man is still a man whatever the obstacles he met on his path: heredity, lack of affection, bad habits, etc... No man can wipe out the past, but to feel that he is respected for what he is can help a man to accept himself with his past and to take his future in hand.

— The message brought by the person who visits and supports the prisoner must be conditioned by the prisoner's actual daily experience. How can he become a self-respecting man if he finds in the depressing reality of his daily life no motive for hope?

Separated from his family... suffering from drug withdrawal... from the constant tension between the desire to "kick" the habit and the fear of relapsing... from solitude or the promiscuity of the cell, from loss of personality in the face of abuse from tyrannical warders... addresses exchanged in the exercise yard in preparation for a "job" after release... release with a miserable pittance for a man without family, without lodging, without work...

HAS THE GOSPEL NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT SUCH SITUATIONS?

— The building up of the Church — or of a more human world — is also the task of lay people including those temporarily detained. In the closed and regimented world of the prison, which is hardly conducive to a sense of responsibility, the practice of religion is the only way by which a prisoner can develop as a full human being. The awareness that he has something to share is, for the ex-convict, an antidote to withdrawal into himself with all its fatal consequences.

THE ROOTS OF THIS EVIL

It is not easy to unravel their tangled mass. It is easier to recognize the soil and climate which favour their proliferation.

— **Unhappy or one-parent families.** Gérard, abandoned by his unmarried mother and passed from one foster mother to another... Claude, beaten, up to the age of fourteen, by a drunken father who was finally deprived of his paternal rights... Maurice

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who can no longer live with his drunken father. He ran away at the age of twelve to join a gang of car thieves... Daniel, torn between divorced parents...

— **Schools where one is unfairly treated.** Handicapped by poor eyesight and speech difficulties and classed as good-for-nothing, Louis finished school at the age of sixteen in a "deadend" class. Unemployed... two attempts at suicide... involved in a drugs network. Other boys from poor but decent families were not able to keep up and became disgusted with everything and with themselves. "Nobody bothered about me in school and it was there I first started to go wrong" is a refrain often heard in the prison. Three drug addicts began to sniff glue in 5th year under the very nose of the teacher...

— **High density housing areas with mixed cosmopolitan populations.** It is there more than in purely working class districts that young people feel excluded and, in protest, join rival gangs. Mahomet, revolted by being always suspected and blamed in the wrong, joined such a gang. Edward aged nine was rejected by the other children in the block where he lived. He ran away and joined a similar gang.

— **Lonely adolescence.** After a childhood without trouble and in surroundings neither better nor worse than those of others, they committed their first crime at the age of fifteen or sixteen. Why? Who knows? If you listen patiently for a long time you can guess the reason: depressing loneliness. "It was impossible to discuss anything with my father". "Everybody was against me". "I never had a companion". Then followed the flight from home, the desire to become somebody by acting the "hard man", an unfortunate introduction to drugs, the appearance of suicidal tendencies. Alain swallowed a tube of barbiturates, drove a car through the window of a pharmacy and got himself arrested saying, "Now I'll bother nobody".

SECURITY - PREVENTION

Under these titles local associations are being formed in the areas of greatest risk. Conscious of the fact that the disruption of family ties is at the root of delinquency and violence they want to develop a dynamic of neighbourhood friendliness between the generations, social classes and ethnic groups. They are trying to create a movement of active solidarity among the local population to include:

— old people who live alone and who have been the victims of robbery with violence or who are likely to become so,
— young people out of control including those with police records,
— families unable to do anything for the education of their children.

With the help of well-wishers they are slowly forming groups of social workers, providing meeting places, youth centres, family counselling and conciliation with a view to obtaining compensation without having to call in the police.

The participation of teachers and educators in such projects would make for a better understanding of the needs and aspirations of the young.

— Joy and affection in a secure environment would ease the child's anxiety which is the cause of agressivity and lack of self confidence.

— The child, especially if he is withdrawn, needs to be able to discover, build and play with other children, to express himself, and to be listened to by adults, if he is to fit into society.

— The adolescent who feels rejected needs to meet older people, adults who take an interest in him, take him seriously and trust him, if he is to find a motive for living and making an effort to better himself.

— Respect for the wish of young people to be and to act together, for their desire to be themselves and to be responsible for their future, acceptance of their tastes and their refusal of regimentation make it possible for them to develop into mature adults.

To consider them capable of joining together in collective action for humanitarian or social ends, to encourage them to do so or to ask them to do a favour is to give them a chance to show the better side of themselves. It could help a gang of adolescent delinquents to sublimate their aggressive tendencies into action for the common good.

WHAT CAN THE SCHOOL DO?

— To combat all forms of racism and the mechanisms of exclusion which are factors leading to anti-social behaviour,

— to discover, in the early stages, handicaps and behaviour problems capable of seriously disturbing the personality of the young person,

— to help a disturbed adolescent to understand and solve his interior conflicts, to make him conscious of his potential and of his limitations, of everything in him which could lead to delinquency,

— to help each student to realize his full potential, to become a useful member of society and to give a meaning to his life.

The following lines do not pretend to give the answers. They are meant to provoke the critical reaction of the reader:

— A school adapted and open to its environment, taking the means to combat scholastic failure, to minimize cultural inequalities, to encourage, while respecting differences, dialogue and mutual enrichment, to develop manual skills as well as mental ability and to care for the affective needs of the students.

— Constant vigilance, close collaboration with the family which must be made aware of its responsibility, recourse to competent authorities, such as the social services etc. Can a single teacher in a primary school cope with all these demands? Does the boarding school not encourage families to avoid their responsibilities?

— A system of education which emphasises the quality of relationships within the educative community and particularly between students and teachers. Support and care for the young person in difficulty... Responsibility given to the students, encouragement of initiative, a sense of solidarity and self evaluation, not only of school work but of the effort put into it and of behaviour within the peer group...

— In order to provide the students with better direction in their studies and careers and to make them aware of social realities, take every opportunity to arrange contacts between them and people engaged in work, in the struggle for justice and in the fight against all forms of poverty and oppression...

Learning from a friend how other people have given direction to their lives and how much the world has need of hearts and hands is an invitation to a young person not to allow himself to become a prisoner of his own immediate interests, of his dream of economic success or even of suffocatingly close family ties.

A.A. and P.B.
of R... Community

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06-E-16

A BROTHER WORKS WITH YOUNG IMMIGRANTS IN BRUSSELS

When I arrived in Brussels in 1970 my intention was to work in the schools with immigrant children and to live a new form of community life in an ordinary house in a working class district.

Several years ago I redefined my objective as "to be with and to live among them". They are the Turkish, Maroccan and Albanian families who form 70 to 80% of the population of the district where I live. For the past ten years I have lived in a little apartment with two rooms.

My manner of life, the relations that it involves, my activities in the area and the time I have spent there constitute for me a human, social and cultural experience which has enriched my life and which justifies amply the exceptional character of my situation as a Brother detached from my Community to lead a privileged existence.

My work involves five different forms of activity.

IN THE SCHOOLS

In 1968 the Belgian government created "crash courses in the language used in teaching" for immigrant children. That was all it did up to 1982. The conditions for establishing such courses were so restrictive and held so little interest for the teaching profession that they met with little enthusiasm on the part of administrators or teachers. One day, a priest who was seriously concerned with the problem, said to me, "That is a task for religious".

That is why I am now teaching in three schools in this area. I give lessons for six hours a week in each school to groups of from 2 to 8 children. That is the maximum allowed under government regulations.

Two of these little primary schools with 150 and 210 pupils respectively, have no Belgian children. Three quarters of the pupils are Turks. Educationally they are very retarded because they do not know French sufficiently. Not only do they get no help at home but they speak Turkish all the time in the family, in the street, at school and even in class where they are in the majority. That does not help their French!

For the past three years the Belgian authorities have allowed additional teaching staff in schools with a high proportion of immigrant children but these teachers are sent there by government order or are students in training or part of a pool of peripatetic teachers. This makes for a dissatisfied, discontented and unstable staff and the unfortunate children are not only retarded but neglected in the weakest sector of the educational system.

Are these not the type of children that John-Baptist de La Salle would care for today?

ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

This Association, founded with the help of two friends, has as its object the establishment of classes and workshops for the numerous young immigrants who cannot gain admission to ordinary schools because they do not know French, are too old, too backward or arrive from their country of origin in the middle of the school year.

After four years as a private organization, the Association is now recognized by the Ministry of Education as a branch of the Institut Technique de La Salle de Molenbeck. It is a trade school with a five year course in technology... geared to the needs of immigrants. In fact, more and more of these young people are looking for the kind of school which will welcome them and adapt its programme to their needs and help them solve the problems they face in a foreign environment.

With our 80 Turkish and Moroccan students we are well acquainted with such problems as backwardness, failure, drop-out, expulsion, indiscipline, delinquancy, family troubles, etc. Much is said and written today about this second generation of immigrants, without roots, without social structures, without education and without work.

Nine years ago we thought we had only to teach them French. Today we are faced with a multiplicity of problems and here again the State offers little help and shows less understanding of the abnormal situations with which we have to deal and which do not fit neatly into administrative norms.

At present, a team of 15 people (some part-time) look after these 80 youths. The majority of these teachers are particularly interested in this kind of school and try to make the programme interesting to these boys whose past has been nothing but repeated failure. Teaching has to be on a personal level because their levels of education are very different. Account is taken of their ethnic problems by providing teachers of their own nationality, Turk or Maroccan. Some of these teachers also act as social workers among the students from their own ethnic group.

Personally I no longer teach class, but look after administration and finances as a member of the Administration Council which is responsible for the running of the establishment.

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LE RASQUINET

This is a centre to which the children of the area come for tuition and help with their homework after school. It also provides workshops where the children can develop their skills in the evenings and on school holidays, as well as a sports field for games.

It has been in operation since 1972 and during that time hundreds of young Belgians have come here to help organize different activities. During the summer vacation 150 children used the playing field or took part in the summer camps which we organized.

At present we are finding difficulty in getting young Belgians to help supervise these activities so we have had to limit the number of children admitted to the evening classes and to the workshops.

The evening classes meet an evident need. I have mentioned above the failures and backwardness experienced by the children of immigrants. This is due to unfavourable conditions at home where the parents cannot help the children with their homework, the living quarters are overcrowded, and the families large. The children's future progress is determined by the education received in the primary schools. At 15 or 16 (at least before the law which extended the duration of school attendance) they leave school and can only gain admission to trade schools where many of them never finish the course. The serious problems encountered by immigrant youth stem from their failure in the primary schools. Consequently, the best means of preventing these problems in the future is to help the children who are finding difficulty at primary school level.

CENTRE FOR TURKISH YOUTH AT SCHAEBEEK

This centre, opened a year ago, meets the needs and the demand of young people for a place where they can meet in comfort. Many of them pass their leisure hours in the parks, the public squares and in City II (a covered commercial centre). There they gather in bands; some in conflict with their parents, others victims of rejection, exclusion and racial prejudice. They easily turn to crime and commit acts of theft, burglary and agression which give them a bad reputation and attract the particular attention of the forces of law and order.

The youth centre tries to cater for these turbulent and sometimes violent youngsters and to prevent, as far as possible, their involvement in crime. To this end we organize cultural and sporting activities, help to solve their personal and social problems and to create among them a positive and responsible attitude to life.

The various activities of the centre are organized and supervised by some of the older Turkish members while I act as advisor and councillor and public relations officer with other youth organizations and associations and with the public authorities. This requires my constant presence among them. The mentality of Turks and Maroccans, their way of looking at things, their way of doing things and their social structure are so different from ours that it is very difficult to get them to work together for a common end. It demands infinite patience. Besides a meeting place and a gaming table they are not interested in any other form of social activity.

IN THE CAFES

The majority of Turkish and Maroccan men spend a considerable amount of time in the cafés. As two men out of every three are unemployed,the cafés are crowded all day to the disgust of Belgians who do not understand that café life is an integral part of the culture of these immigrants. In my district alone there are no less than 22 Turkish cafés to serve this important clientèle. Some of them are frequented by the older men while others are favoured by the young people, those between 18 and 30 years of age. It's in the cafés I find most of my acquaintances: fathers of pupils, former students or youths who have been members of the Rasquinet club. There, where they really feel at home, I am welcomed with open arms. They appreciate my keeping in contact with them and we can discuss our common problems in spite of the interminable card games which I have to watch for long periods before I can get down to discussion with the players. I spend most evenings and week-ends in the cafés because my presence there is one of the most important elements in my apostolate of being "with them".

I get to know and understand many things there, though I do not know their language. These moments of friendship and confidence help me to overlook what, to me, is negative and unacceptable in their customs. At least, it enables me to see things in their proper context and to form a fair judgement.

CONCLUSION

I get a lot of satisfaction from this work which makes up for the disappointments, hardships and worry inherent in the situation. But what I find hardest to bear is the inability of these Moslem men to understand my voluntary celibacy. That forms an insurmountable barrier between us — an inexplicable mystery. I feel deeply the fact that I cannot get through to them on this matter which they frequently bring up in conversation, but they can accept no other way of life but their own.

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WHO WAS BROTHER SCUBILION?

To the public at large and even to his brothers in religion Brother Scubilion is practically unknown. Now, after a long period "in the desert" he is beginning to make the headlines. The Church, which in 1984 declared that he had practised all the virtues to a heroic degree, will probably declare him "blessed" in the near future. He will then take his place, as one of the glories of our Institute, alongside Saints Benildus and Miguel, Blessed Salomon and Blessed Mutien-Marie. A striking miracle, attributed to his intercession, is now undergoing rigorous examination by a medical commission. Miracle or no miracle, his reputation for holiness in the island of Réunion is such that the "vox populi" may soon be recognized as the "vox Dei".

But who is Brother Scubilion? When did he live? What relevance has he for today? In answer to these questions we are going to publish a series of four leaflets in "Lasalliana" on the life of Brother Scubilion. They are condensed from a book by the present writer which is about to be published (1). The reader will find therein ample documentation if these notes have succeeded in awakening his interest in Brother Scubilion.

Let us then, make the acquaintance of Brother Scubilion, beginning with some names and dates from his life story. His family name was Jean-Bernard Rousseau, a name made famous in history and litterature by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Scubilion was the name of a saintly Norman monk of the sixth century. It was given to Jean-Bernard Rousseau the day he put on the habit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He was born in the French province of Burgundy in 1797. His adopted country was the distant French colony of Réunion, an island off the coast of Madagascar, where he died in 1867.

His life was divided into two almost equal parts: thirty-six years in France from 1797 to 1833 and thirty-four in Bourbon (2) (Réunion) from 1833 to 1867. In number of years the two periods were almost equal, but in impact they were vastly different. His years in France would have been consigned to oblivion were it not for his years of missionary activity in Réunion. Passionately interested in evangelization, Brother Scubilion left France with no wish or intention of returning. Today in his native diocese and even in his native village he is completely forgotten. An evangelical paradox. He is forgotten precisely because he gave himself totally to his adopted country as a missionary.

In Réunion, now a French department, Brother Scubilion is SOMEBODY. He is part of the common patrimony and collective memory of the island's population. They have not forgotten the humble Brother of the Christian Schools who landed on their island in 1833 and who, at a key moment in their history, became the friend, the teacher and, especially, the catechist of the slaves before their emancipation in 1848. He announced to them a Gospel of freedom! He died at his task among them and is buried among them at Sainte-Marie.

One hundred and eighteen years after his death a strong current of popular devotion draws crowds to his tomb. They come to honour a man who radiated Christ, who became the slave of the slaves, and who, long before the expression was heard of, made "a preferential choice in favour of the poorest".

THE STAGES OF HIS LIFE

Let us now go into more detail. Jean-Bernard Rousseau spent his childhood and youth in the little Burgundian village of Tharoiseau (376 inhabitants in 1806) near Vézelay, the important centre of Romanesque art. He was baptized secretly because the Revolution had banned public religious ceremonies. There was no resident priest in Tharoiseau up to 1818. Education remained disrupted for years so that Jean-Bernard's early schooling was rather inadequate. He never completely made up for this during the rest of his life. However, he did acquire enough knowledge to enable him to teach primary classes (3). He did this with success because he was a born teacher. As

(1) André Ferét: "A l'île de La Réunion, un évangile de liberté. Frère Scubilion: Jean-Bernard Rousseau". Preface by Msgr. Aubry, Bishop of Réunion. Desclée et Brouwer, February 1985, 264 pages.

N.B. Hyacinthe Chassagnon wrote a biography of Brother Scubilion in 1902. It was based on sound historic documents. Evidence as to the holiness of Brother Scubilion was remarkably consistent. The present writer has drawn on it.

(2) The island of Réunion was known as Bourbon before 1848.

(3) By an agreement arrived at by the French Government and the Superior of the Brothers, any Brother, on presentation of a letter of obedience from his Superior, was given the right to teach as long as he remained in the congregation.

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a young man he occasionally assisted the village teacher to the satisfaction of the people and of the new parish priest, the Abbé Darcy, who encouraged him to join the Brothers of the Christian Schools who had recently opened a school in Avallon (1819).

He made his novitiate in Paris (1822-23) at a period when the new generations of Brothers were formed in close contact with the courageous veterans who had come through, often at the risk of their lives, the dark days of the Terror. The early years of the nineteenth century were for the Institute "a second spring" and Brother Scubilion left the novitiate filled with the spirit of faith and of zeal characteristic of the early disciples of De La Salle.

For the next ten years he taught the lower classes or looked after the garden or kitchen in Alençon, Poitiers and Chinon.

But already his zeal for spreading the Good News was at work within him and he asked to be allowed to go to a missionary country. Just then (1833) the Minister for the Colonies asked the Superior General for Brothers for the distant and neglected island of Réunion. Three volunteers took ship from Bordeaux and after a voyage lasting 84 days, reached their destination. Among the three were Brother Scubilion and Brother Jean de Matha. The latter deserves mention because, as Superior of the Brothers in the colony, he founded a network of schools for boys between 1835 and 1870. Every little township on the island had a Brothers' school with names like a litany of the saints: Saint-Denis, Saint-Paul, Saint-Benoît, Saint-Leu, Saint-Pierre, Sainte-Marie...

Brother Scubilion easily took his place in this tightly organized body of religious teachers who followed an austere rule of life and who kept schools "together and by association", in the colony as in the home country, according to a set of pedagogical principles, rigorous and well-tried. He taught at Saint-Benoît and Saint-Pierre from 1833 to 1843. The pupils were, of course, the children of white parents. The slaves who, at that time, formed more than half the population, had no right to education, not even to catechism (4).

It was while he was at Saint-Leu (1843-1850) that he was, at last, able to devote himself to teaching catechism to the slaves. Père Monnet, "the Father of the Blacks" had been the courageous pioneer in this work of redemption. Slavery was abolished in 1848 while Brother Scubilion was still at Saint-Leu. But long before that date he had abolished the distance himself and these oppressed people, telling them that they also were the beloved children of God.

The township called La Possession was the centre of his apostolate among the recently freed slaves (1850-55). The obstacles put in the way of evangelization of the slaves by their owners before 1848 were such that, in fact, many of them were neither instructed nor baptized. Brother Scubilion had to gather them around him, teach them the elements of faith and prepare them for the sacraments. He tried also to make them honest, hardworking citizens, wothy of their newly found freedom.

The last ten years of his missionary life were spent at Sainte-Marie, a recent foundation in the north of the island. According to his Superior, Brother Jean de Matha, "The zeal of Brother Scubilion knew no bounds and, at Sainte-Marie, had gone beyond all bounds". He was now in his sixties and still busy teaching catechism to the freed slaves and to the free workers recently imported from India. He collaborated closely with the parish priest whom he called his "vicar", in visiting the sick and the fishermen who feared the "soutane" — the priest's, not his! He also helped the priest to erect a Way of the Cross and two little oratories to Our Lady of La Salette and Saint Joseph (5).

In 1866 he saw the dream of his life come true. A community of Brothers was established in Madagascar, the large neighbouring island. Unfortunately, he was not able to go there himself. Thirty-five years in a tropical climate together with the rigours of a missionary life had undermined even his robust constitution.

After a painful illness he died on 13th April, 1867. On the following day, Palm Sunday, the people of Sainte-Marie, who had lost "their old Brother", their "saint", honoured him with a triumphal procession, combining it with that of the Lord himself.

This was not a passing gesture. For the people of Sainte-Marie, with whom he had formed strong ties of friendship, Brother Scubilion still lives in the glory of the Risen Christ.

A strong feeling of veneration welled up around his tomb at Sainte-Marie and quickly spread to the rest of the island. It was a spontaneous movement which grew rapidly so that on the anniversary of his death scores of thousands of people flock to his tomb. This movement must, however, be directed if it is not to become merely a seeking of favours. Msgr. Aubry, Bishop of Réunion, and his clergy are very much aware of this. He told the pilgrims in 1983, "Don't look for miracles. Brother Scubilion is not a miracle worker. He is a missionary of unity. Return to your homes and become missionaries of peace and harmony".

The next leaflet in "Lasalliana" will deal specifically with Brother Scubilion the missionary: "A Brother to those far away".

Brother André FERMET, FSC
78A Rue de Sèvres,
75341, PARIS CEDEX 07

(4) There were more than 60,000 slaves in a total population of 110,000.

(5) The apparition of Our Lady at La Salette took place in 1846. Devotion to Our Lady, Refuge of sinners, soon spread to Réunion. The principal shrine was at Sainte-Marie.

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THE BROTHERS AND THE NEW CODE OF CANON LAW

Most people are aware by now that a new Code of Canon Law has been promulgated in the church. As of November 1983, this has effectively replaced the 1917 Code in force up until then. The new Code is bound to make some impact on the Brothers, if not in their everyday life, at least in the manner and the meaning of the Institute's relationship to the church of which it is a part.

The part of the Code that most concerns the Brothers is Book II on "The People of God," Part III entitled "Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life" covering canons 573 to 746. Thus there are three basic types of organized religious life in the church: institutes of consecrated life are either *a*) religious institutes; *b*) secular institutes; *c*) societies of apostolic life. The distinctive characteristics of a religious institute are the profession of public vows and life in common. The fundamental characteristic of a secular institute is that the members live in the world, possibly with their families, and not necessarily in community. They are bound by "sacred bonds," sometimes vows, to a life of poverty, celibacy, obedience and prayer. The fact that these institutes are called "secular" has led many to misunderstand their true character. Societies of apostolic life are composed either of Brothers or Sisters living a common life for an apostolic purpose but without religious vows or other sacred bonds. It seems obvious that most institutes of Brothers are, and presumably intend to remain, in the category of religious institutes.

In the new Code, the collective term "religious institute" suppresses the older distinction between a religious order with solemn vows and a religious congregation with simple vows. Suppressed, too, is most of the discriminatory legislation in the 1917 Code concerning religious institutes of women. As in other parts of the code, there are precise directives to guarantee subsidiarity, collegiality and accountability in the exercise of authority in religious institutes. Much greater emphasis has been placed on the autonomy of religious institutes to determine their own internal affairs: there are more than 60 places where these matters are referred to the "particular law" of each institute. On the other hand, the local bishop is given much greater control than ever over all institutes, including institutes of pontifical right, in matters of public worship and the apostolate.

Compared to the Code of 1917, the new Code gives a more theological and inspirational definition of religious life (Canon 607):

> 1. Religious life, as a consecration of the whole person, manifests in the Church a wonderful marriage brought about by God, a sign of the future age. Thus religious bring to perfection their full gift as a sacrifice offered to God by which their whole existence becomes a continuous worship of God in love.
>
> 2. A religious institute is a society in which members, according to proper law, pronounce public vows either perpetual or temporary, which are to be renewed when they have lapsed, and live a life in common as brothers or sisters.
>
> 3. The public witness to be rendered by religious to Christ and the Church entails a separation from the world proper to the character and purpose of each institute.

Notable also is the text of Canon 619 concerning the role of the superior:

> Superiors are to devote themselves to their office assiduously and together with the members entrusted to them, they should be eager to build a community of brothers or sisters in Christ in

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> which God is sought after and loved before all else. Therefore, they are to nourish the members frequently with the food of the word of God and lead them to the celebration of the sacred liturgy. They are to be an example to the members in cultivating virtues and in the observance of the laws and traditions of the particular institute; they are to meet the personal needs of the members in an appropriate fashion, look after sollicitously and visit the sick, admonish the restless, console the faint of heart, and be patient toward all.

Despite this pastoral and theological emphasis, however, it is not surprising that the structural elements traditional in religious institutes remain intact and are explicitly mandated in the new Code. Approval of the basic Constitutions of each religious institute requires that they contain both "spiritual and juridical" elements, including "fundamental norms about the governance of the institute and the discipline of the members, the incorporation and the formation of the members, and the proper object of the sacred bonds" (Canon 587). A group of Brothers is presently at work in Rome preparing a revised text of the Rules, Constitutions and Book of Government of the Institute that will conform to these norms. The Code also reaffirms the traditional legislation concerning the canonical year of the novitiate, obligatory perpetual profession, the role of superiors and councils at every level (with considerable emphasis on wide participation and consultation) and, finally, the wearing of the habit "according to the norm of proper law."

In addition, since the Brothers are lay persons in a lay institute they are by this very fact excluded from the "power of governance" (*potestas regiminis*) in the church, although, like all lay persons, they may "cooperate in the exercise of this power in accord with the norm of the law" (Canon 129). Several sections of the code specifically recommend that lay persons be called upon to contribute their expertise in the decision making process. In the exercise of the ministry of the word, lay persons, including the Brothers, may preach in the church but they are forbidden to give the homily at Mass.

One feature of the new Code that has received a great deal of attention and that has relevance for the Brothers is the totally new section on Catholic Education (Book III, Title III). Here the rights of the parents and the right and duty of the Church to educate are again set forth with great insistence on the importance of Catholic education and Catholic schools. An official description is given of a Catholic school (Canon 803):

> "1. That school is considered to be Catholic which ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastical juridic person supervises or which ecclesiastical authority recognizes as such by a public document.
>
> 2. It is necessary that the information and education given in a Catholic school be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, teachers are to be outstanding for their correct doctrine and integrity of life.
>
> 3. Even if it be really Catholic, no school may bear the title *Catholic School* without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority."

The Code goes on to say that the local ordinary (usually the bishop) has the right to appoint, approve, or remove religion teachers (Canon 805) and to supervise or visit Catholic Schools in his territory, even those established or conducted by religious institutes (Canon 806). It remains to be seen how this will be interpreted and applied in the various dioceses where the Brothers conduct schools.

Finally, it might be remarked that the promulgation of the new Code serves as a reminder to the Brothers that they are in fact members of a religious institute officially approved by church authority; that their personal identity as Brother is tied to the institutional form of the Institute and the church. On the other hand, this in no way contradicts the teaching of Vatican II, the new Code itself, to say nothing of St. John Baptist de La Salle, that for the Brothers the gospel is "their first and principal Rule." It likewise challenges the Brothers and the Institute to keep alive the specific charism of the Founder and the distinctive character and mission of their Institute.

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FOREWORD

With this 7th edition, our third appearance of the Lasalliana begins. In a few months, the General Chapter will constitute an important event upon which we will have the occasion to reflect in future editions. The capitulants themselves or perhaps the next General Council which will be elected, will no doubt review the various publications of the Mother House, evaluate their objectives, their content and their distribution in view of providing the Lasallian Family with an improved and uninterrupted service.

At the beginning of this number, I should simply like to call the attention of our readers and users of the Lasalliana to the purpose of the articles which we publish.

Recently, upon reading the replies to a questionnaire on the situation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the different regions of the Institute, I became convinced that one of the most frequent concerns among the Brothers is that of sharing the Lasallian charism with the lay teachers who are associated with them in the same educational and evangelical mission. These responses, having come from 53 different countries, seem to me to be a truly significant sampling.

This has to do with a sharing on all levels:

— of the spirituality of St. John Baptist De La Salle,

— of a philosophy of education,

— of major pedagogical institutions and orientations,

— of experience accumulated over three centuries,

— of initiatives and responsibilities on every level in the concrete situations of today.

This willingness of sharing and of associating proceeds, no doubt, from various causes:

— the urgency of replacing the Brothers, whose numbers are diminishing,

— the continuity of the educational work which is so often very much appreciated by those who benefit from it.

— the conviction of representing an educational trend of value,

— the concept of a type of scholastic community based on the style of the Brothers.

— the frank recognition of the Ministry of lay people in the Church, etc.

If the awareness of the necessity and urgency of this sharing is quite evident, there is some measure of hestitation regarding the manner and means this sharing should take. It is therefore opportune to recall that the Lasalliana was created for this purpose. It proposes channels of reflection and shared research to individuals, communities, and work groups. It offers the advantage of gathering together all the purposes and aims of Lasallian history:

— a consideration of the origins of the Institute in order to become better acquainted with the Founder,

— a wide range of actual accomplishments, of on-going research, of commitments, and testimonies.

It is because of this that the Brothers who work on the publication of the Lasalliana hope that these articles will be used as instruments of work and not simply as reading material. This therefore calls for distributing the Lasalliana within the community and throughout the institutions.

At the beginning of this third year, we hope that the 120 leaflets which have already appeared and the 60 planned for this year (20 of which are included here) will constitute some of the instruments of reflection on real life situations, and may they enlarge and make more meaningful the "the togetherness and by association" of the Lasallian family.

F. Léon LAURAIRE

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07-A-36

DE LA SALLE AND THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

We shall deal here only with the original reaction of John Baptist de La Salle with regard to the civil authorities.

We begin with the cities, municipalities and parishes.

1) Distrust of the cities:

Legally, because the 17th century considers the school as "educative" and not merely a dispenser of "knowledge", the scholastic institutions are the moral responsibility of the clergy, although civil authority had its rights in their regard.

La Salle is engaged in a school adventure because of the last will and testament of Nicolas Roland which makes him the executor. He is twenty-seven years old. He cannot set aside the wishes of the deceased. He therefore follows his wishes literally. With the approbation of the Archbishop, he vigorously intervenes before the municipal authorities so that an inquiry "de commodo et incommodo" be undertaken and that the local approbation lead to the granting of the Royal Lettres Patentes. He opposes the town authorities in the administration of the office of the poor and of the General Hospital in order to obtain for the Sisters of the Infant Jesus a greater pedagogical and pastoral independence; In 1679, the Sisters thus obtain the Lettres Patentes which recognizes no other valid superior for them except the Archbishop or his designate. Their schools are at the same time "officially" municipal and diocesan "Christian-Catholic" to use a favourite expression of St. John Bauptist de La Salle in his *Duties of a Christian*. So, it is the Archbishop who exercises authority over them and not the municipality. However, the latter may at times underwrite certain expenses for services rendered to the people.

Accordingly, when Adrien Nyel arrives in Rouen from Rheims, he does not go to the town council nor to the General Hospital but to John Baptist de La Salle, as to a parish priest in need of a good school teacher. This is a course quite different from that set by Nicolas Roland. The masters for the boys' school will not be part-time hospital aids as were the Sisters of Roland who ran an orphanage. They will not be subjected to the pressures of the city official nor of those in charge of the hospital. The latter like the former would just impede these homeless children and at little expense at that, without being too concerned that they be properly educated, provided that the "public order" is respected.

2) Liaison with parish authorities

La Salle operates therefore with the parish priest and the parish authorities. This "Framework", that is, this team in charge of the administration of the parish assets is the true democratically organized authority for the management of the assets of the clergy. The parish priest receives from them his financing and it is to them that he renders an account. It is vital to be aware that the French Government today, characterized by its "separation of Church and State" was entirely unknown in the seventeenth century. In that period the term "Parish" was used not in a "religious" context but of a temporal jurisdiction having at its head the parish priest and having an economic administrative assistant responsible for all non-religious affairs. The important citizens were grouped by "parishes". The land claims by the Esates-General in 1789 will be done "by parishes" and will be matter-of-fact when not anti-religious.

So it is through the parishes that appeals are made to La Salle. In other words, the people are bound by

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two types of authority: the parish priest to represent the Church and the layman to determine the families' temporal needs.

At Rheims it is the pastor of Saint-Maurice who requests a teacher and who receives Adrien Nyel accompanied by his 14 year old assistant. They are responsible to the pastor and not to the town nor to the hospital in charge of the poor and their education. In case of a disagreement, Nyel is free to leave, the same as the parish priest can dismiss him without any formal process. There is complete liberty on the side of both parties concerned.

It is the same in the three gratuitous schools in Rheims run by the Brothers of the Christian Schools established at the request of the pastor. The lay authority in particular and at times even those of the municipality cover the expenses but no one is constrained to continue indefinitely in this collaboration. A good school will survive... an inept school will fold up... This is the law of progress, of pedagogical innovation, of devotedness which is always considered for the well-being of children.

The second stage: the Archbishop of Rheims wants to keep La Salle solely in his own diocese. La Salle hesitates. He consults the Minim religious priest, Father Barré, a man of great virtue (Rome has just proclaimed the heroicity of his virtues). The answer is clear: leave your homeland like Abraham, spread out throughout France, and begin by going to Paris and seeking authorization of the Archbishop there. La Salle knows from other sources, the importance that Jean-Jacques Olier, founder of the Sulpiciens, attributed to gratuitous Christian Schools. He therefore establishes a school in the parish of St. Sulpice, where he and his Brothers replace the teachers there, who are dedicated, but whose educational competence is limited. He takes charge of other schools. Finally, every part of this parish of 50,000 inhabitants has its Christian gratuitous and public school. No permission is ever requested from the civil authorities of the city, nor of the ecclesiastical authorities of the school of Paris. It is only the parish priest who, in favour of the needs of his parishioners, that is of the children and their families, gets involved in this new organisation. Subsequently, when a disagreement arises between the pastor and La Salle, the latter leaves Paris for Rouen: their mutual liberty permits this separation without juridical or financial complications. Upon the insistent demands of the parents and when the pastor returns to a more amicable disposition, La Salle does not hesitate to return and to furnish him with Brothers.

3) More complex relations

In Rouen, it is less simple. Archbishop Colbert open his doors. The city authorities are not asked because it is the Office of the Poor, in which Nyel was formerly in charge of the schools, which is responsible for gratuitous school service. But the Office is composed of the President of the Parliament, the Archbishop and various representatives of the city council. La Salle is requested to let the Brothers stay at the hospital and there take care of the orphanage as well as of the dormitory of the young apprentices. Having been chased out of Paris, La Salle accepts. Very soon the Brothers are overwhelmed by the excessive work and begin to fall ill. La Salle negotiates a revision of the contract. The hospital work is given up for the greater good of the schools formerly established in every part of the city by Adrien Nyel. The city will soon contribute to the financing of the school in cooperation with the General Hospital and various benefactors, but this will not give them any right to inferfere with the educational methods of the Brothers or in the recruitment of their pupils. In case of a disagreement, their only recourse will be the threat of removing their financial support. The choice of teachers remains exclusively reserved to De La Salle and to his successors as the head of the Institute.

For the most part events in the other cities developed in an analogous fashion: the municipal administration are in a consultative role but they do not actively participate in the success of the founding of the schools, nor do they have any decisive grip on the Lasallian institution. These schools ever retain full liberty to evolve, develop, and to educate in a Christian manner and in following the teaching of the programme elaborated by the Brothers themselves in answering the real needs of the gratuitous pupils. The civil authorities can only suggest changes, raise or lower their financial support in order to exercise some pressure, but they do not have the power to interfere in the internal running of the school.

Bro. Yves POUTET

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07-A-37

DE LA SALLE AND THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES (2)

4) SOME EXCEPTIONS

La Salle never sends the Brothers into a village where there will not be enough children to fill up, one day or another, a minimum of five classes. He says this quite clearly in a prospectus whose purpose it is to make the Institute known: "The Brothers of this Institute will run schools only in towns where there will be at least five Brothers, four for maintaining the school, and one of these will also be in charge of the house, and a fifth serving Brother to look after the household needs and to replace a school Brother who should fall ill or should require some days of rest".

Let us understand this point clearly. He is not insisting on a minimum of four classes at once. For La Salle to accept a new foundation it suffices that the demografic conditions be satisfied in the future. Consequently, for classes of 50 each (in keeping with the directives of The Conduct of Schools) a town must have at least 200 boys of school age that is boys over six and under fourteen years of age. In actual fact, on this point La Salle always shows himself most anxious about remaining faithful to these principles. When the parish priest of Crosne, a village near Paris, asks him for a teacher, he answers that he has no "married teachers". He adds that "it is not fitting for a school teacher to be in an office if he really wants to be dedicated to his school". In other words, the duties of a clerk or helper of the clergy are incompatible with the scholastic dedication of a Lasallian teacher.

The same refusal was made to Guipavas, near Brest, in 1705. After sending two Brothers to that place, La Salle recalls them again because the allusion to Brest deceived him. It was not exactly a suburb of the city, that they were referring to but only a distant village and very sparsely populated. With regard to Darnétal, which someone informed him is close to Rouen, the Saint begins by being apprehensive: is it not farther away than he is told? Are there not fewer children of school age than he is being led to surmise? In other words how many "first communicants" in the parish, that is to say, not how many church goers but how many residents of school age? Once this matter is cleared up, he agrees to send Brothers to maintain there a popular school for boys.

A systematic study reveals that only nine cities out of twenty-five concretely supported the school projects initiated by the parish priest or Archbishop. Three cities, Le Puy, St. Omer, and Lyons began negotiations but without arriving at a conclusion during the lifetime of the Founder. Of the thirteen cities in which the Brothers established themselves with the solicitude of the municipal authority, four rapidly demonstrated a real hostility. In Mâcon the Brother had to pull up stakes. In Protestant regions, the municipal budget did not make a real contribution. Legislation of Louis XIV, hostile to the Reformists, put at the disposition of the civil authorities the assets of the émigré. Thus the Christian Schools at times became "royal schools", that is to say, supported by the royal budget thus profitting the local communities without costing them anything. Let us be precise in stating that the financial support coming from the civil authorities, and not from an explicitly Protestant source, did not stigmatize the beneficiaries as plunderers. This type of situation facilitated the development of the schools of Alès, Mende, Les Vans and Calais.

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5) CONCLUSION

The Lasallian will to remain master of their programmes, methods, life-style, choice of directors and the teaching force in the school is manifest. Likewise, the unyielding determination of the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is not tolerating any discrimination among the students because of money often hampered the generosity of the civil authorities. They never ceased to believe, during the Founder's lifetime and in the following centuries, that the rich should finance the education of their children as far as they are able. On their part they considered as nothing the humiliation which paralyzes the poor when they have to reveal their financial condition in asking for enrollment in a school. This was also a failure to recognize the cultural value of having children of different social backgrounds present in the same school. This was in effect to despise the human value of scholastic programmes oriented towards trades and commercial employment and to stress rather the types of employment which give access to liberal careers of magistrates, lawyers, doctors, academicians, professors in colleges and those responsible for municipal, provincial and governmental finances, all employments which, at this epoch required a certain down-payment, fee or tax as a prerequisite for acceptance.

La Salle's independence with regard to city authorities corresponds, in a word, to his desire to serve at the same time, both Church and State, God and children, the family and society, without anyone being able to interefere with his ever greater promotion of expansion and enrichment of his secular studies as well as the quality and extent of the religious formation given to the pupils in his schools. These schools were opened by him not merely "to master the catechism", but above all to help the children "live a Christian life from morning until evening". Profane and religious instruction thus join hands, without it ever being forgotten that education is also, and ever more so the apprenticeship of moral living imbued by the spirit of faith, that is to say, by a permanent relationship with God.

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P.S.: Sources and related reading can be found in: Yves Poutet: "Le XVI siècle et les origines lasalliennes", Tome II, p. 68-74.

For a quick grasp of the contemporary realities of St. John Baptist de La Salle,
cf. Yves Poutet and Jean Pungier: "Un éducateur et un saint aux prises avec son temps". p. 100 (dépot: Slepa, 134, Cours Gambetta, 33400 TALENCE - France).

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07-A-38

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (7): Relations in class

The previous leaflet underlined the importance of the teacher's knowing his pupils well. This would lead, one would believe, to deep interpersonal relations. The reading of the Management of Schools lets one view the matter differently.

It would be advisable to set aside the ideas and practices which we have today regarding class-room relations and also certain current pedagogical methods which are so highly regarded today: dialogue, discussion, work groups, study workshop, pedagogical alertness... none of these can be found in the Management of Schools.

The importance of non-verbal relation

This title only appears to be paradoxical. Let us look back to the concrete conditions under which the first Lasallian schools operated: the classes are very crowded, there are numerous divisions within the class according to order and lessons, in a place not very conducive to teaching. How does one establish and maintain in such classes the order necessary for good work? By rigorous silence, among other things.

It seems that three aspects should be singled out: silence, signs, and vigilance.

The importance of silence

The second part of the Management is entirely dedicated to the "means of establishing and maintaining order in schools". The first chapter recommends to the teacher to be particularly vigilant "that an exact silence is maintained in the school!". The third article of this chapter is entitled "Of the care the teacher should take to see that strict silence prevails in school" and it gives in detail the purpose, the reason and the means.

The purpose:

> *"Silence is one of the principal means of establishing and maintaining order in the schools; it is for this reason that each teacher should see to it that exact silence be observed in class, and that no one be allowed to speak without permission".* (p. 122).

The justification of this is primarily in the spiritual order and not only pedagogical:

> *"To achieve this, the teacher will convince his children that they should keep silence, not because he is present, but because God sees them, and this is His holy will"* (p. 122).

The means: the teacher, as well as the pupils will speak in class only on three occasions:

The pupils:

> *"The teacher will let the pupils understand that they are permitted to speak in class only at three times, namely, in reciting the lesson, at Catechism, and at prayer times".* (p. 123).

Regarding the teacher:

> *The teacher himself will also observe a similar rule and will not speak except at three times:*
> *1- to correct the pupil during the lesson, when necessary, when another pupils cannot do it;*
> *2- during catechism time;*
> *3- during the reflection and during the examination of conscience.*
> *Outside of these three times, the teacher will not speak unless he deems it necessary and he should make sure that this happens rarely.* (p. 123).

The use of signs

Chapter two of this same part deals with "signs which are in use in the Christian Schools". (p. 124).

> *"It will be of very little use for the teacher to enforce silence if he does not keep it himself; he will teach the practice better by example than by words, and the silence of the teacher himself will, more than anything else bring about very great order in the school, and it will give him the means of watching over himself and his pupils. It is for this reason that the use of signs has been instituted in the Christian Schools".* (p. 124).

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This is the justification for putting into practice a great number of signs corresponding to diverse school activites, among which are: the prayers, lunch, inattention, school work, catechism and the "corrections" them selves. The paragraphs of the chapter give in detail the nature of the signs for each one of these eventualities.

And to facilitate the excution of these signs, a common instrument for the purpose is chosen, "the signal", which is briefly described in the text and which for a long time has been a part of the tradition of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The vigilance of the teacher

Although put here in the third position in the Management it is the first "of nine principal ways which can contribute to establishing and maintaining order in the schools". (p. 115).

> *"The vigilance of the teacher in schools consists particularly in three things:*
> *1- In repeating correctly every word pronounced wrongly by the reader;*
> *2- In making sure that everyone is following the same lesson;*
> *3- In making sure that strict silence reigns in school.*
> *Careful attention should always be paid to these three things".* (p. 116).

Again it is certain that vigilance is not intended as a disciplinary or coercive end, but rather to facilitate effective work. To facilitate the exercise of vigilance, place the children and station yourself in such a way that everyone is constantly within your view.

This vigilance is exercised not only in the classroom but also in lining up the pupils for going to or returning from church, during the liturgical office, and even in the streets, while leading the children towards their home. When the teacher cannot do this adequately himself, he should pick out certain pupils to assist him. With the good example which the teacher gives on all occasions, vigilance is the aspect to which the Management of Schools most frequently reverts.

Teacher-pupil personal relationships

As underlined in the texts cited below, the "non-verbal" relationships concern the rapport between the teacher and the class as a whole. As concerns the occasional relations with one or another pupil two principal types of rapport can be briefly distinguished:

Concerning authority-dependence relations

These appear for example:

* in the surveillance constantly exercised over each pupil, at every moment of the day;

* in case an infraction of the rules is established: the authority of the teacher is seen in meting out penances and corrections. It is sufficient merely to mention this here, without further details, even though it forms a central aspect of the Management of Schools.

* Contrariwise, the teacher can also reward good scholastic performance or excellent conduct by the distribution of prizes.

In these diverse situations the teacher operates within the authority with which he is invested in order to assure the good conduct of the class. It would be well not to forget that this type of relationship was very much in keeping with the concept of authority in the seventeenth century, "authority by divine right" in a very hierarchical society which was very respectful of established positions and of clearly defined roles or functions.

Concerning personal relationships showing an interest in the child

The respect for this hierarchy impeded neither personal interest nor affection for the pupils. In writings other than the Management of Schools, De La Salle insists on this very much. This interest finds opportunities for implementation on various occasions, for example:

— at the time of accepting new pupils, in trying to gather all allowable information to get well acquainted with them;

— in the keeping of the "Register" in the course of the year, or even the reading of the "Register of Good and Bad Qualities" of the previous year;

— in the continual observation of the deportment and personality of each child;

— and especially on the occasion of absences, in infoming themselves of the reasons and in welcoming the child back on his return.

This collection of means permitted the teacher to do a personality sketch of each pupils in the "Register of Good and Bad Qualities" cited above.

To this constant attention it would be necessary add the very precise occasions when the teacher ought to make decisions concerning certain pupils: the choice of "officers"; awarding of prizes; the decision to punish, the monthly changing of the lesson on rank...

On all these occasions, the Management requires of the teacher a personalized attention to the character and to the reaction of each pupil.

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07-A-39

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (8): Relations among pupils

To talk about relations among pupils as found in the Management of Schools, it seems to me to be necessary to begin with "Officers". In each class, the teacher designated a certain number of pupils, especially those who had distinguished themselves by their seriousness, their application to work, their traits of character... to these he confided the charge or responsibility of coordinating activities for the good order of the group. These were the offices to which officers were assigned.

These were not the only type of relations which existed among the pupils and I would like to distinguish four kinds of relationships which seem to me to sum up the essentials of what is described in the Management of Schools.

Concerning relationships of authority

The manuscript of the text of 1706 lists four kinds of "Officers". They are assigned by the teacher at the beginning of the scholastic year in view of assuring order in the class, especially when he himself is absent or to fulfill certain tasks which he should not or cannot do himself.

Certain of these "Officers" exercise real power over their comrades, delegated though it may be. This is the case with the "Inspectors" and the "Overseers":

> *"The duty of the inspector in each class shall be to observe everything which goes on in the class during the absence of the teacher"* (p. 210).
>
> *"He will faithfully report to the teacher all that has transpired together with all their circumstances; he shall be exact in neither adding anything, nor leaving anything out".* (p. 210).

Regarding the "Overseers", their role appears even more ambiguous because they do not exercise their authority openly:

> *"There shall be in each class two pupils who shall be in charge of checking-up on the conduct of the inspector, while he is exercising his duties, to see if he does not allow himself to be bribed, that he does not exact anything from others in exchange for not reporting their faults to the teacher"* (p. 212).
>
> *"The teacher will take care that the inspector does not know who the overseers are, and for this reason, they will not be openly appointed like the other officers, and will not hold any title"* (p. 212).

Concerning the relations of service

These services are carried out by the other "Officers" designated by the teacher in making use of their qualities and talent. In the exercise of their duties, these shall contribute to the good order of the class:

> *"All the officers shall be named by the teacher in each class, the first school day after the vacation. Each teacher will follow the advice of the Director or of the Inspector of Schools, and if subsequently he needs to change someone, any further nominations will be carried out in the same manner"* (p. 204-205).

It would be useful to note that these officers numbered twelve; some duties were assigned to two pupils at the same time, and others were organized according to a monthly rotation.

These figures seem to me to be interesting, because it underlines the large proportion of pupils who were thus directly associated with the good order of the class. These pupils were on duty:

— during class work

— during prayer or lunch or snack time

— during the Mass in church

— outside of class time by visiting absent pupils, for example.

To give a complete list here would be only of anecdotal interest, the titles pertaining to an older stage of the language and would require too long an explanation.

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On the other hand, it seems to me interesting to retain the principal, of the distribution of responsibilities, which determined the naming of such "Officers". It must also be noted that the invention and implementation of this system did not come from the Management of Schools. It can be found in other schools in an earlier epoch than 1706, for example in the well known work "The Parish School".

Concerning relations of mutual help

The first Lasallian Schools constituted a systematization of simultaneous teaching in France. One could consider that this pedagogical situation easily lent itself to mutual help in school work, and many passages in the Management attest that such was so, thus, for example these two quotations:

> *"During this time, there shall be two people in the first class who will be in charge, on the part of the teacher, to mark on the two papers sometimes a letter or a syllable and sometimes another in a different place, so that the pupils who are learning these things can do their lessons"* (p. 4).
>
> *"The pupils will assemble during the half-hour period preceding Catechism time, and while they are assembling they will interrogate one another, by pairs, about the diocesan catechism, like the drills which they will do during lunch and snack time. The teacher will be careful to take notice of who should be asking and repeating the catechism during this time".* (p. 107-108).

In an even more significant manner, one finds mutual aid:

— during the reading and arithmetic lessons, it is a matter of correcting, that is helping, those who make a mistake.

— to help those who do not understand well, showing them how to read or calculate is a true example of mutual instruction.

— and when the teacher deems it useful for the progress of the group in a section or lesson, he will retain in this group one or more pupils who are more advanced, instead of changing them. They will thus become the motivating elements of the group and they will thus introduce the emulation and dynamism which generate progress. Is this not a nice little example of solidarity?

Concerning the relations of sharing

The clientele of the first schools of the Brothers naturally numbered a good proportion of families which were economically poor. Financial disparities were seen especially during lunch and snack time which the pupils were to take in class. This was, in the spirit of de La Salle, an educational opportunity in propriety and good manners. For these meals, the children were invited to bring their own food, without being constrained. This became an opportunity for those who brought too much food to share their abundance with others, especially true with regard to meat. They were advised not to bring meat because everyone could not afford it, and to share their food.

> *"They will not be permitted to bring any meat, and if anyone shall bring some, it will be given to the most poor, to those of whom it is sure that they have not eaten any at home"* (p. 8).

One of the usual practices was to collect the extra bread so that it could be distributed to those who needed it. This was a way of teaching the Christian concept of compassion and sharing:

> *"He (the teacher) from time to time even during mealtime, will encourage this act of charity either by a few examples or moving reasons which will inspire them to do this, willingly, and lovingly for the love of God"* (p. 15

Conclusion

These few glimpses of the interior relations in the class at the beginning of the eighteenth century may seem very modest in the light of those which we may experience or observe today.

It is, therefore, necessary to put this back into its place at the origin of simultaneous education to better understand the inevitable gropings in the organization and animation of the class-group.

Let us neither forget that the pupils were not accustomed to disciplined and collective schooling and individual instruction hardly prepared them for it. We know how difficult it is and how long it takes to develop any new group behaviour.

On the other hand, at this period, a clear-cut idea existed with regard to the teacher and the one taught, and this led to a pedagogical relationship of dependence of those who should do their studies under a teacher who knows and directs. In spite of this, we know very well how much John Baptist de La Salle insists in writings other than the Management of Schools, on the respect which must be shown for the child.

In fact, the proposals in the Management of Schools on the internal organization of classroom relations were new, and those who implemented them were pioneers.

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07-B-30

JUNIORATE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE ANALABE

The Juniorate and Rural Development Centre are situated near the town of Ambositra on the high plateau od south-central Madagascar.

More than 250,000 people live in an area of 4,000 square kilometres, making it the most densely populated part of the country. As in the rest of Madagascar, the population is mainly rural and must eke out a living from the soil of this mountainous region.

I must say straight away that this juniorate is not the result of a preconceived idea but the answer to a long felt need and to the wishes of the people. As the name indicates, this is a juniorate for young people in a rural setting.

A brief historical note to explain the origin of this establishment

Two Brothers undertook the onerous task of rural development. They started with young people who had left school for various reasons: those who did not make the grade for admission to secondary school and those who could not pay school fees because their parents had to think of younger members of the family.

Back in the bush, these young people forgot what they had learned in school and many of them could not find work. It was a question, therefore, of awakening them to their worth as persons and as potentisl cultivators of the land.

We began with short three-day sessions in the villages themselves. The purpose of these sessions was not only to train young men in modern methods of agriculture but also to give them confidence in themselves and an ideal for which to live and work, in a word, to take a pride in themselves as farmers. This ideal runs counter to the accepted notion that farming is a dead end.

The present situation

We have now got fifteen centres in the vicinity of Ambositra with an average of from 25 to 30 young people, boys and girls, attending each. We visit these centres every three months. A supervisor keep in touch with the students after the sessions and monitors their progress.

To motivate the young people and to encourage them to work, we have formed small basic communities where all the members can share in decision making. They will thus be able to influence the life of the group and create a sense of solidarity among themselves which will help to make them more independent.

Our purpose is to train farmers, especially the younger ones, without taking them away from their rural environment. It is we who go to them in their villages, their fields, their rice paddies and their homes. We want to arouse their interest and direct their energies along paths that will lead to success.

That is why we are training them in the use of modern techniques in agriculture, in stock-raising, in carpentry and joinery and in building. At the same time we are trying to improve cultural and educational standards and involve them in Christian youth movements.

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Why the Juniorate at Analabe?

* The Juniorate accepts young men who think they may have a religious vocation. They are mainly young peasants from our development centres whose ages range from 18 to 25 years. Their educational level is not high but they are intelligent and learn fast. They are recruited from the centres on the advice of the local priests, the Sisters and the supervisors. Conditions for admission are the following:

— Certificate of Primary Education at least,

— two consecutive years' attendance at a rural centre as well as membership of a Christian youth movement,

— two years under the guidance of a priest, a Sister or a supervisor and contact with the Brother Director of the Juniorate,

— three years' formation in the Juniorate before beginning the postulancy.

This Juniorate aims at forming these young men in their own rural environment, giving them a reasonable standard of education, and allowing them time to study their vocation. During their three years here they are expected to take responsibility for their own progress and are given a certain amount of freedom to run their own lives.

Their practical training consists in maintaining the premises, preparation of simple meals, gardening, rice growing, raising of cattle, pigs, rabbits and poultry. A small workshop is available for carpentry, repairs etc.

Their intellectual formation is taken care of by four hours of study per day with classes in Malagache, French, arithmetic, geography, natural science, agriculture, music, drawing and civility.

Religious formation is spread over three years with courses in: the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Divine Office, the Psalms and prayer. Twice a week reflection and discussion take the place of formal classes to accustom these young men to community life, to the sharing of opinions and the expression of one's views. It is important to point out that traditional values are given their due place in the formation of these young Malagaches.

Other activities also form part of their formation such as:

— taking part in the work of the Christian Rural Youth Movement,

— helping the physically and mentally handicapped in a neighbouring centre,

— animation of community prayers and Masses,

— retreats and days of recollection.

Conclusion: Juniorate in the country or Juniorate for country youth

It is decidedly a Juniorate for country youth. Our task is to form young men who will become Brothers, capable of undertaking work in the several sectors of the Institute's activities: rural development, craft teaching, publication of books, farm management etc. In a word, "to do anything at which they shall be emoloyed" in and for the Institute.

In the course of the present year (1985) two of these young men who have been members of the Christian Rural Youth Movement for three years, have attended the development centre for one year and spent three years in the Juniorate, are thinking of entering the District novitiate.

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07-B-31

LENTEN ANIMATION IN A HIGH SCHOOL (1)

Stella Maris College, Tamatave, is a secondary school which caters to students of the first and second cycles, that is, students from sixth class to the final year in which they do the baccalauréat (from 11 to 18 years of age approximately).

In 1984 when the Lenten animation began, the college had 1350 students of whom 900 were in the first cycle. 60% of these first cycle students are Catholic while the others belong to different Protestant groups. We felt it our duty to reanimate the faith of all these students, Catholics and Protestants alike.

Presentation of our programme

Quite simply we wish to share with you our efforts to give meaning to our catechesis and inspiration to the Christian life of the college during the Lent of 1984.

As happens every year, great importance is attached to the liturgical season of Lent and an attempt is made to live a fuller Christian life. It is a special time in the life of Christians and we try to use it to awaken or strengthen the faith of our students which is often superficial and dormant.

We focus on three points:

Strengthening the students' faith by a well-adapted catechesis and by scripture reading each morning.

— Reconciliation with Our Lord by an effort towards penance and conversion: all classes receive the sacrament of reconciliation and a greater effort is demanded in work, in respect for others, in fidelity, etc.

— Renewal of Christian life: love of God and our neighbour.

This year two special efforts were demanded:

— The first was reception of Holy Communion during Sunday Mass. (Attendance at Divine Service for Protestant students).

— The second was a greater willingness to share with those in need (the poor, orphans, lepers, sick children, prisoners, old people).

Each section of the college was organized for a precise effort to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

To attain our objectives:

— we tried to mobilize and sensitize all our teachers without exception. To this end we held a meeting on 25th February, during which the Lenten programme was worked out in detail.

— On the following 5th March the first hour of class was devoted to the launching of the Lenten programme by each form master.

— An inquiry was carried out throughout the college on Sunday observance. Three questions were put to the students:

- Religion (Catholic or Protestant?)
- Did you attend Mass yesterday or Saturday evening?
  (For Protestant students - Were you at the "Fiangonana" meeting yesterday?)
- Were you at Mass (or Divine Service) on Sunday 12th, 19th, 26th February?
  (Answer: not at all, once, twice, three times).

— At the same time an explanatory leaflet was given to each student and a letter sent to the parents so as to involve the families.

— Catechetical instruction in all classes was devoted to the observance of Sunday as the Lord's Day. A booklet of eight pages was prepared and distributed among the teachers.

Programme drawn up with the teachers

The following is a resumé of the decisions taken together for the animation of Lenten observance in 1984.

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Motivation of our action:

We attach great importance to the feast of Easter for several reasons:

— This a Christian school and the education we offer is based on Christian principles. Christian belief enlightens our judgements and our year is scanned by the liturgical feasts of the Church (Christmas, Easter, etc.). With due respect for the liberty of our students we try to instil in them Christian values: the Gospel Faith, Sacraments, the Church...

Generally speaking, our students are happy in this atmosphere of Christian education. Some ask to be baptized and large numbers prepare for the sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation.

— The feast of Easter takes first place in our calendar. It is the foundation of our faith, the celebration of our redemption by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. "Jesus is alive", is the message of hope that, like the Apostles, we wish to share with our students.

— Hence the importance of the Lenten preparation. This year it takes on greater importance than ever because we are going to celebrate the jubilee of our redemption, the 1950th anniversary of the death and resurrection of Our Saviour, while for the Catholic Church it is also a year consecrated to reconciliation. To come closer to Christ and to be reconciled with our brothers, it is for that purpose that we have developed this Lenten programme and it is the entire educative community which is going to put it into practice: form masters, teachers, animators.

The example we give of a Christian life is important for our students.

Lenten animation has three goals:

- an effort to strengthen the faith of our students
- an effort toward penance and conversion
- an effort to live a full Christian life: love of God and our neighbour.

— We shall try to strengthen the faith of our students in two ways:

— by a well-adapted course of religious instruction based on the observance of Sunday, an instruction which will prepare for the effort at Christian living which we insist on. This instruction by bringing us back to the Sunday Eucharist, will lead us to the theme of redemption, to our salvation effected by Jesus Christ. A little booklet will help us to renew our own lives and to assist our students and their families.

— by a reading from the Old and New Testament at the beginning of class each day, followed by a brief commentary from the teacher.

— Effort at conversion:

— There are penitential efforts to be made: more serious application to work, to the duties of one's state in life, respect for the work of others, self-discipline, for the sake of the common good.

— There is also the sacrament of reconciliation. An outline of the celebration of reconciliation will be given to each teacher. Each group may use it with the agreement of the college chaplain. It is important that the groups work closely with him. Each team corresponding with a given age group, will have a coordinator.

The examination of conscience is most important. It is a means of forming the consciences of young people, of teaching them to distinguish between the important and the accessory, insisting on the duties of one's state, on respect for others, on the common good as well as on one's duties to God, to one's parents and to one's neighbour.

— Effort at living a Christian life: Love of God and One's Neighbour:

— Sunday celebration as part of religious education. We wish to restore the meaning of Sunday celebration, not as an obligation, but as an important part of our life as believers. We shall make a lightning "sondage" to find out the rate of participation in the Sunday Eucharist or in the meetings of the Protestant "Fiangonana". A concrete effort in this matter will be demanded from the students and their families will be informed accordingly.

— Care for one's neighbour. Each group of classes will draw up a programme for help to the neighbour, as was done last year, in order to make the students more aware of the needs of the less fortunate: the handicapped, orphans sick children, prisoners, and the old. Don't be afraid to shake up the selfishness and indifference of the students and get them involved in visiting and in material aid. They must be made aware of their duty to their neighbour and of the need to forget themselves. But it is also important not to reduce care for one's neighbour to mere almsgiving. On this point we must take the initiative. Class teachers must work together and stimulate each other.

Co-ordination of efforts:

The day the programme is launched each form master will take his class for the first hour of the day. He will proceed as follows:

— a lightning inquiry

— a distribution of leaflets to each student. The leaflet summarises the points mentioned above. A brief commentary on the contents of the leaflet is called for.

— a letter to the parents is given to each pupil advising them of the programme and inviting them to cooperate in our efforts.

In this way the season of lent will become a good preparation for Easter and will contribute to personal renewal.

Bro. Louis AGNELLET

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LENTEN ANIMATION IN A HIGH SCHOOL (2)

Some comments on the results of the inquiry

The inquiry presented above gave precise results. These results, of great interest to the college itself, would with difficulty be fitted into a Lasallian leaflet. However, some general remarks will indicate general tendencies.

— The inquiry shows clearly that we were right to choose assistance at Sunday Mass as the starting point for our Lenten instructions and of our efforts at Christian animation. In effect, from sixth class, that is, the first year of College, a considerable number of our students cease going to church. Those who did not go to Church, either Catholic or Protestant on the three Sundays mentioned were:

* 22% of Catholics: 36 out of 162
* 28% of Protestants: 26 out of 90

These figures were almost the same for the following three years of the first cycle.

— There is also a group of irregular attenders who practice from time to time and who went to their respective churches on one Sunday out of three. Among Catholics the percentages vary from 19 to 10 according to age group, and among Protestants from 35 to 14. It is to these students that our Lenten instructions and animation should be addressed to encourage them to a better celebration of the Lord's Day.

The actual numbers are: 83 Catholics and 68 Protestants.

— Then there is a group more regular in their practice and who went to their respective churches on Sunday, 4th March and on two or thrée Sundays in February. They, doubtless, need instruction to get beyond the notion of obligatory Sunday observance and to enter into the true spirit of the Lord's Day. In general this is a pretty large group. The percentage figures show from 48% to 66% among Catholics according to age group, and from 42% to 62% among Protestants.

— The results in figures show a decrease from the third class, that is, the last class of the First Cycle. We must study the causes of this decrease. We could think, for example, of worry about examinations at the end of third year, of private courses followed by some on Sundays or simply the need for rest... The aim of religious instruction with regard to this group should be to get their priorities right.

— A quick comparison between Catholic and Protestant groups seems to point to two conclusions:

* the overall participation of Catholics is slightly higher
* the participation of young Protestants increases from the sixth to the third year.[1]

— It should further be noted that 90% of the college students come from Catholic primary schools. It appears, therefore, that formation in the Christian observance of Sunday should begin in the primary schools.

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— Lastly, the importance of careful preparation of the Sunday liturgy in the College should be noted. It is in the careful preparation of the liturgy and the dignified celebration of the Eucharist that the students are gradually initiated into Sunday celebrations. They enter into the spirit of the Eucharistic celebration and go beyond the mere notion of obligation.

A catechetical programme on Sunday assembly

Has our Sunday lost its impact? Because of its ancient origins? They go back twenty centuries, in fact, since they go back to Christ. It is He who began the tradition at His resurrection. It is the meaning of the word "Dimanche", the Lord's Day, the Day of the Risen Lord. Since Easter Day and the following Sunday when Christ appeared to the Apostles, Christians met on Sunday to celebrate Jesus Risen. The day was called the first day of the week. (Acts 20, 7 ss).

Are the Christians of today, who are still faithful to this assembly, consciously aware of this? Are those who are still described as "practising" doing so from habit, from family tradition or from respect for the law of the Church which binds their conscience? But are these motives sufficient to resist the current which for decades past has reduced the number of practising Christians?

This leaflet and those to follow will shed some light on this gesture of faith whose roots we all need to rediscover and which gives meaning and richness to our working week.

Here is a list of the leaflets which will reinforce our catechesis on the observance of Sunday:

Leaflet 1: Christians assemble on Sunday. Why?
Leaflet 2: They recall the memory of Whom?
Leaflet 3: They hear the Word of God.
Leaflet 4: They thank God. For What?
Leaflet 5: They share a meal. What Meal?
Leaflet 6: They give witness. Of What? Of Whom?
Leaflet 7: All Christians do not share in the celebration. Why?
Leaflet 8: In what spirit should we live Sunday?

(1) Following French custom, classes are numbered from six to one, six being the first year of secondary school.

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07-B-33

ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE: TEN YEARS ON. A PERSONAL ACCOUNT(1)

St Cassian's Centre, established in 1975 as a residential retreat centre for young people, is about to celebrate its tenth birthday. Here, and in two articles to follow, Bro. Damian Lundy, who was the centre's Director for the first seven of these ten years, offers a personal account of the centre and its work.

How was the centre brought into existence and why do people go there?

During the 1974 Chapter of the English Province of the De La Salle Brothers, I asked the Province to open a residential retreat-centre for young people. The Chapter had already decided to close our Juniorate (a boarding-school for boys aged thirteen to sixteen who were interested in joining the Brothers) and to set up a new team concerned with recruitment and the fostering of vocations, which meant that the large well-equipped country house in rural Berkshire where this pre-Novitiate formation had taken place was available. After the Chapter, I was invited by the Provincial (Bro. Victor) to join the new team, along with Bro. Joseph Hendron and Bro. Dominic Green. I agreed, on the understanding that the team's approach would include the establishment of a retreat-centre. This was accepted as an experiment for three years, beginning in the autumn of 1975. The experiment was to be assessed by the next District Chapter in 1978, with a view to the Centre becoming more established, if necessary in a different setting, or to its ceasing to exist, if the experiment had not been successful. It was also agreed that a financial subsidy would be assured by the Province. The new Centre was to offer to teenagers and young adults the experience of a residential retreat (though some misgivings were expressed about the use of that particular term), directed by the team of three Brothers with the participation of a chaplain a priest who would either be invited to participate by the team, or who would accompany a group with whom he was already in contact (e.g. a local priest or a school-chaplain).

As Head of Religious Education at the Brothers' school in St Helens, from 1970 to 1975, I had joined with another of our schools in organising Young Christian Student (YCS) activities, which had involved a few residential visits. On certain occasions during the summer, St Cassian's had been used for these retreat-holidays, which had proved successful and popular with those taking part. I had become convinced that many sixthformers who appeared to be so bored during Religious Education lessons would be open to religious questions if these were raised in a less formal and more personal setting, such as at St Cassian's. My experience with groups at Kintbury and elsewhere led me to this convinction. I also felt that Religious Education could succeed only if it started from the doubts and questions with which the young people were filled, but which almost all were reluctant to raise and discuss in a school-setting. Surveys and informal discussions confirmed my impressions. If, as professional Christian educators, the Brothers were to respond to the needs of young people in the 1970s (a rather neglected group in the Church), while not abandoning the traditional school-setting of their apostolate, I felt they should supplement this with a retreat-centre.

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The need for a residential centre with a programme specially devised for the needs of young adults and teenagers was experienced more widely than among the sixthform boys and girls of St Helens and Salford. I saw it as a general need in the British Church, and one which was being met only partially and inadequately. I was sure that, given the chance to make contact with other schools, tertiary colleges and parishes, the centre would flourish.

The experience of creative liturgy, prayer and discussion in the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of a charming old country house would provide the young participants with that for which many of them thirsted but failed to experience in the local parishes or schools: the experience of a Christian community, in which questions could be asked and experiences offered, so that faith could grow. The option, made in freedom, to help to create such a community for a few days, would offer the young people an opportunity which they would normally not have, and for which compulsory Religious Education (however well taught) and compulsory attendance at church or at religious services in school were no substitute. The full participation of teachers interested enough to accompany the group, as well as of the retreat-team, would bring the young people into personal and informal contact with adults, most of them committed to Christianity while sympathetic to the difficulties and questions of the younger generation, and not free from questions themselves. There would also be the opportunity to meet other young people, since, right from the early days, it was envisaged that, if possible, the Centre would be used by people from more than one place, coming together to form a single group, in which both sexes would be welcome.

Finally, the challenge to continue the experience (and develop its implications) beyond the few days spent in the centre would be implicit, setting up more permanent local groups to meet in liturgy and prayer as well as for social reasons - groups which would evangelize their members and the world in which they moved; a concern much discussed in the mid-seventies at various levels of the Church.[1]

How did this tie in with the team's commitment to fostering vocations to the Brothers' way of life? I was convinced that the work of fostering vocations to the religious life and the priesthood could not be separated from the work of building Christian communities more generally, which included praying together and sharing experiences on the level of personal faith, even if this was a searching and uncertain faith. This would often include the need to reject some "hang-ups" and misconceptions, the resúlt of negative experiences which seemed to haunt many of the young people like ghosts, and which, if not addressed, were a major obstacle to growth into a more mature and personal faith.[2] If this was hard to achieve in a classroom setting, limited experience had shown how different the picture looked when seen from the setting of a residential centre, at a safe distance from home, school and parish (frequently associated with these "ghosts"). If the Brothers were to attract young men to join them, if God's call were ever to be heard as á personal call addressed in love to each one, young people must taste what a Christian community could be like and what it could mean to celebrate the Eucharist outside a formal church-setting, using music and texts to which they could respond as a group and as individuals. They must learn to relate to one another in faith and freedom, including a sharing of their questions and uncertainties. As they discovered their needs, personal. ministry would be supplied by the retreat-team and by the young people themselves, since a group which contains needs also contains gifts to cater for those needs. The work was fundamentally a work of evangelization. I am writing this with the benefit of hindsight: it and its implications were to become much clearer as the team worked together during the early years, and as the numbers of young people coming to Kintbury grew considerably - into hundreds and then up to some three thousand each year, a situation which led to various changes in the facilities at St Cassian's, the structure of the programme and the size of the team.

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ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE: TEN YEARS ON (2)

What is the underlying theology behind the retreat-work at St Cassian's?

The basic conviction around which what quickly became known as "the Kintbury experience" was built is that each person has inherent value which is to be sustained and used (once it has been discovered) in the relationships which each one forms. A lot of teenage (and adult) "hang-ups" arise from the fact that, as people grow up, they acquire many negative self-impressions and they become blind to the good in themselves. However well-intentioned, parents and schools play a leading part in this situation. Often religion plays a decisive part in the process (so that it becomes a real enemy of faith), since the image of God with which so many people are encumbered is a basically negative and fearful one, which does nothing to help them grow, since they have no desire to relate with a God who is "like a merciless tyrant".[3] Often a good deal of remedial reflection and action is required since a repudiation of "the God I don't believe in"[4] may well be necessary before a search for an alternative God can really begin. This is not a private task, for we all need help and support, including affirmation to combat the self-depreciation which so many people practise.

My visit to retreat-centres in Australia and the U.S.A. in 1977 helped me to work out more explicitly what we had been trying to do in our centre since the retreats began. In Sydney, a priest friend drew my attention to a slogan which, with some modification, was eventually to become a kind of motto for Kintbury. I express it here using my own name, as it needs to be personalized:

I'm Damian
and I'm O.K.
'cos God doesn't make junk
but he collects it!

The last four words were added by me, since though the first page of the Bible makes it clear that "God doesn't make junk - "God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good",[5] two pages later on, the problem arises, told in the story of the Fall. (One recalls Karl Barth's answer to a fundamentalist student who asked him if he believed that the Serpent really spoke. Barth replied, "I don't believe the Serpent spoke, but I believe in what he said!") We note that God's judgment has traditionally been understood to include the first promise of eventual redemption. Throughout the developing relevation of God, as recorded in the Bible, people come to understand that, even if *we* make junk for ourselves and others, and turn the world in which we live into a junkyard, our dark human situation is relieved by the promise of God's salvation or healing presence for all who will accept him. We Christians believe this was fulfilled in Jesus, the Lamb of God who collects the "junk" of the world (cf John I,29) not to use it against us as evidence of guilty complicity in that destructive process, but to offer us the hope of a more abundant life. (John 10,10).

This is the Good News we all need to hear at every stage in life, but nowhere more urgently and more comfortingly than in adolescence, with all its bewilderment:

"that toil of growing up;
The ignominy of boyhood, the distress
Of boyhood changing into man;

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The unfinished man and his pain
Brought face to face with his own clumsiness".[6]

The challenge of the slogan ("I'm Damian," etc) is to let it question me and to respond to it honestly, to confront the reality in my life, and then, as a next step, to try to account for the reality by sharing my experience with others. I used to suggest that one could respond to the statement in one of five ways: by placing next to it a tick ("Yes, it's true!), or a cross ("No, I don't believe it!"), or a question-mark ("I don't know"), or a tick and a question-mark ("Yes, BUT..."), or a cross and a question-mark ("No, BUT..."). As you will guess, the three responses which were most common were those which included one of the three question-marks, which signified an underlying question or series of questions, to be pondered and identified, alone and in a "sharing-group".

The team's growing experience of what we were now calling "ministry" led us to see that the work of *healing* had a key place in the retreat-experience, and that the implications of this meant that individuals were called to respond to the new life received by sharing it with others. It was in the United States in 1977 that I first heard and came to adopt the expression, "Become Good News!". This was another way of expressing the challenge implicit in another expression we often used at the time: "Kintbury begins when you leave!".

Each person is invited to share his or her discovery in the world to which they return with something to give, namely *themselves.* Bro Simon Ryan, who made a strong contribution to the Centre for a few months during Kintbury's second year (1976-77), used to express the effect for the individual by quoting the final stanza of the W.B. Yeats poem I have quoted:

"I am content to follow to its source
Every event in action or in thought;
Measure the lot; forgive myself the lot!
When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest".[7]

This non-Christian poem shows clearly the connection between self-acceptance, self-forgiveness and the singing or celebration of the resulting "sweetness" with which the individual is "blest". In Christian terms, it is God who forgives and accepts, when he is accepted; he is to be thanked and praised in personal prayer and in the liturgy of the group. It might be added that, from the very beginning, music played a big part in Kintbury. As well as praising God, it helps to build up and express a sense of community, so it was natural that it should punctuate the day and colour the style of liturgy, which was devised to allow individuals and the constituent groups to which they belonged maximum participation. Music and celebration are a natural response to God's generosity, discovered as an experience of the Good News: "It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus, to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it", is the Jerusalem Bible's attractive way of expressing Ephesians 2, 8-10. There are two connected responses: to sing the Good News, and to live it. The response will never be secured once and for all, for it is essentially a personal response to be made in the changing circumstances of life as well as expressed in the liturgy.

In the next issue of *Lasalliana,* I shall continue this account by presenting the outline of a typical session at St Cassian's.

[1] Pre-eminently treated in Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* December 8th 1975.
[2] For a more detailed treatment, see *Growing into Faith,* Gerard Rummery and Damian Lundy, London, 1982.
[3] An expression used by one of my students in 1975, when explaining why he hates God, even while continuing to believe in Him.
[4] This expression is a title of a stimulating book by Juan Arias (Eng. trans. Dublin, 1973).
[5] Genesis 1,31. cf. I Timothy 4,4: "Everything God has created is good".
[6] and [7] W.B. Yeats, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul", *Collected Poems,* London, 1967.

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LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (5) HOW? SCHOOL AND NON-SCHOOL APOSTOLATE

"The end of the Institute", says the Rule of 1705, "is to give a Christian education to children, and it is for this purpose that the Brothers keep schools" The end: Christian education of children; the means: the school. The school, for De La Salle, was the principal and ordinary means, linked intrinsically to the finality of the Institute. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish end from means.

It is equally important to be precise concerning the school that De La Salle chose as the ordinary means. It was not just any school. It was the Christian gratuitous school, the school which embodied the values we spoke of earlier, the school which was free of charge and therefore available to the poor for whom it was primarily intended.

The Christian School, available to all

The General Chapters have reaffirmed the Christian-School-available-to-all as the "foremost apostolic work of the Brothers", (Declaration 44) and as the "privileged instrument" for educating the poor. (Rule, Chapter 1). Obviously, to be such a privileged instrument the school must be creatively adapted to the needs of the poor and realistically available to them. Brothers sometimes erroneously interpret exhortations to give higher priority to service of the poor as exhortations to choose non-school apostolates. That is to mix apples and oranges. Matters concerning the FOR WHOM and matters concerning the HOW, while related, are distinct.

An Extraordinary History

Brothers, the history of Catholic schools in the United States is a clear manifestation of the faith and commitment of our Catholic population. We can and should be legitimately proud of our central role in this development, a development indicating that we were "inculturated" and "inserted" actively in the local Church long before these expressions became fashionable.

The Institute grew in the United States not in response to the needs of the poor class in a Catholic population; but rather in response to the needs of a Catholic minority in a population heavily Protestant, and, in varying degrees, suspicious of and even hostile toward the increasing Catholic population. Catholic schools made possible for the children of minority Catholics, many of them immigrants, many of them poor, a Catholic education which helped them to preserve their faith and to compete competently in United States society. The focus was the Catholic minority, regardless of social or economic status, and not the poor segment of a Catholic population. The financial sacrifice for Catholic education that even low-income Catholic parents, as well as young people themselves, have made and continue to make today is one of the most striking characteristics of the United States Catholic Church. In like manner the effort the Brothers have made and continue to make to keep tuition as low as possible through their contributed services, careful economizing, and creative fund-raising testifies to the desire of the Brothers to make their schools available to as many young people as possible.

Continuing Mission of Catholic Schools

As the Catholic minority has gradually moved up the economic ladder, we have accompanied them, building new schools in new neighborhoods and providing FSC communities. Catholic schools continue to play an important part in the mission of the United States Church, even though the majority of Catholic families, for financial or other reasons, choose not to avail themselves of their services.

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Other Possibilities

While the Christian school, ideally gratuitous, is the "privileged instrument of our apostolate" the Institute, says Chapter I of the Rule, "is open to other possibilities for teaching and education adapted to the circumstances and needs of the time".

Of the 1005 United States Brothers directly engaged in the apostolate: 89% are in FSC schools; 11% are in apostolates apart from FSC schools (1983 statistics).

Guidelines governing the "work of the Brothers in schools not directed by them and in educational activities apart from schools" are provided in the Declaration (50-52) as well as in Propositions 11,12 and 62 of the Second Regional Chapter. The essential is that the educational activity be carefully studied, approved by the Visitor and Council, and become an integral, not marginal, part of the District Mission Plan, as well as the plan of a specific local community: "Those engaged in such apostolates do this work as members of a community and with the consent of their superior. They represent the Institute; it is important that they think of themselves in this way and be accepted and supported in their work by the other Brothers". *(Declaration, 52)*

Sometimes, especially where positions of leadership are concerned, Brothers will, of necessity or at least for understandable reasons, not be associated with other Brothers in their daily work. But our Institute preference is that Brothers work together and by association. This preference is not motivated by a blind obedience to a past tradition, but by a conviction that an FSC community working together and by association is a potent instrument for good.

Our Challenge Today

Brothers, as we reflect on our history in the United States, we cannot help but be impressed. What has been accomplished is a tribute to the vision, the faith, the zeal, and the courage of the Brothers who lived before us. We have to be just as wise, faith-filled, zealous, courageous, and creative today as we try to find our way in a country where Catholic descendants of the first settlers and immigrants "have arrived" (John Tracy Ellis), where a well-educated and zealous laity are assuming more and more responsibility for Catholic education, where new ministries are being created, where the role of men and women in religious institutes is changing, where the number of Brothers has diminished, where the cost of Catholic schools is a formidable and often insurmountable obstacle for low-income families, where many United States citizens live below the poverty line, where immigrants and refugees arrive regularly, with or without documentation, where a Church come-of-age grapples with its responsibility to "let go" of its provincialism and to think and act internationally, sharing its human and material resources.

Men of 1984

In short, this is 1984. As "living men" — men of 1984 — we must discover how fidelity to our Lasallian charism can best be lived today. It is not surprising that there is a tendency to pull the curtains down, to withdraw into the familiar, to try to reinforce what we have, to retreat in order to survive. There is a predictable and understandable reaction to calls for new ventures in response to new needs: "We must be realistic... Where are these Brothers to come from? Our numbers are declining... We have too many commitments already...".

And yet, the Church continues to challenge us to think otherwise. "Institutes dedicated to the active life should sincerely ask themselves in the presence of God, whether they cannot broaden their activity in favor of expanding God's kingdom among the nations; whether they might not leave certain ministries to others so that they themselves can spend their energies on the missions". (Ad Gentes, 40; Declaration 24) And, I can add, on other critical needs.

Distribution of Personnel

After the General Council visit to the United States in 1978, we recommended a deliberate policy of reducing the number of Brothers in some institutions and of withdrawing the Brothers from some others, in order to make more Brothers available for urgent needs, particularly of the poor, at home and abroad. This same orientation is at the heart of Circular 412. These recommendations reveal our confidence that Catholic men and women can assume more responsibility for Catholic schools today.

Both steps, of course, require careful preparation. No school should ever have to close because of our decision. Such moves in no way reflect negatively on what we have done or what we are now doing. The problem is not at all what we are doing; it is rather what we are not doing. There are so many young people deprived of Christian educators. Members of religious institutes are best able to respond, having the freedom, the supports, the structures that make a response feasible.

Turning over an institution to others and withdrawing Brothers for whatever reason, is always painful for the Brothers, and is inevitably accompanied by protest from the local people. But we have to be disposed to suffer the hurt and to subordinate our own feelings to the mission of the Church.

Brother John JOHNSTON
Vicar General
Rome

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LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY (6): HOW? SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The real world

Where does all this leave us? Brothers, we do have to be realistic. We do have to be sensitive to the desires and needs of the Brothers themselves. We do have to be serious about commitments made in the past. I am not advocating any kind of recklessness. But I am advocating corporate evaluation, decisions, and action. Permit me to communicate some strictly personal views on the distribution of personnel:

1. I would favor designating a number of our FSC schools in each district, at home and abroad, as schools the Brothers would administer with a number of Brothers sufficient to be a significant animating influence in the Lasallian Family. Please note that I am not talking about the former FSC-lay triangular model of collaboration, but the circular model of Lasallian Family; I am not talking about "Brothers' schools" but "Lasallian schools". Such schools — first - class Christian schools, embodying the values of Lasallian education — can be examples of what Christian education is all about. Furthermore the availability of such schools is necessary for the many Brothers who want to work in schools that are explicitly Lasallian and administered by the Brothers themselves. Maintaining a number of excellent Lasallian schools, therefore, contributes to the mission of the Church and at the same time responds to the interests, talents, and aspirations of a number of Brothers.

2. I would favor maintaining a strong commitment to the institutions we presently have for the service of the poor, of immigrants, of youngsters with behavior problems, etc. This commitment implies a willingness to provide the specialized training that Brothers in such institutions need.

3. I would favor giving high priority to our colleges in the United States.

I am convinced that Catholic higher education is an important element in the mission of the US Church and that many Brothers have a gift for contributing on this level. At the same time we must participate actively in the continuing search for the meaning of the Catholic college and university and commit ourselves to strengthening the identity and character of our institutions as Catholic. Furthermore, I believe the Brothers in the US can help the Institute articulate the relationship of the FSC to higher education, an articulation that has not yet been done on the Institute level.

4. I would favor district commitments of FSC communities to collaborative efforts of long or short duration, at home or abroad, with dioceses, parishes, lay groups, or other religious institutes, in schools and other educational projects, giving priority to needs of the poor or disadvantaged or to the need for Catholic education in remote areas. We already have a number of such commitments. Others could be created. Some could be joint ventures of two or more districts.

The price to pay

Obviously, Brothers, the fourth and fifth possibilities cannot become realities if we are paralyzed by present commitments. That is why I suggest that while we renew and strengthen a number of our commitments, we reduce the number of Brothers or withdraw them completely from some others in order

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to make possible other ventures at home and abroad. Such moves would have to be preceded by careful planning, but planning that terminates in decision and action within a reasonable period of time.

Lasallian educational ministry: concluding remarks

Brothers, in my opening remarks, I said that our understanding of Lasallian Educational Ministry is determined in large manner by the image of the Brother of the Christian Schools that we embrace and by the model of FSC ministry that emerges in reflection on that image.

I have posed four questions concerning Lasallian Educational Ministry: by whom? what? for whom? how? My answers are conditioned by the image of the Brother and the model of Lasallian Educational Ministry that I embrace. I think that my understanding of the image of the Brother is consistent with the Founder's and with the decisions of the last two General Chapters. One can embrace the same image, however, and certainly disagree with specific remarks I have made. But if your image of the Brother is fundamentally different, then your model of Lasallian Educational Ministry will be different also. I think there are in fact several models of Lasallian Educational Ministry operating among us because we have not as a group made our own the image and model embraced by the chapters.

Vision and Commitment

Brothers, from time to time, people ask me whether as a result of my experience these past eight years I am optimistic or pessimistic about the future. My response is that whether I am optimistic or pessimistic is irrelevant. What my feelings happen to be has nothing whatsoever to do with what the future holds. I respond, however, that I have hope that the Brothers of the Christian Schools will continue to be a power at the service of the young in the years ahead. When I use the word hope I mean a vision of the future and a commitment to make that vision a reality. What I have talked about today is my interpretation of the chapter vision of what the Brothers are all about and can be all about for a long time to come. Without vision we die. But vision means nothing if we are not committed to making it a reality.

That special something

Two years ago the St Paul and Minneapolis District invited a panel of non-Brothers to tell the District Assembly exactly what they thought about the FSC. They did just that. They didn't canonize us, but they certainly affirmed us. One of the panelists, a non - Catholic woman in the St Mary's College psychology department, described a certain special something about the Brothers — something that shows itself in genuine brotherly love for and dedication to the students, a love which young people catch and to which they respond. This particular teacher was responsible for an exchange program with our De La Salle College, in Manchester, Britain. She said that what amazed her was that the St Mary's Students talked about their Lasallian experience in Britain in the same spirit. I don't know what it is, she said, but there is something special about you.

I think she's right. I entered the Brothers in 1951 because of that something special I experienced in the Brothers in Memphis. That something is still there. It is that precious heritage we call the Lasallian charism. It is the gift of Lasallian Educational Ministry which we have received from the Lord — a gift we have received for others. It is a ministry wherein, De La Salle tells us, we have to touch hearts. "Thank God, he says, for the grace He has given you in your work of sharing in the ministry of the apostles... Take pride in your ministry by making yourselves, as St Paul says, qualified ministers of the new covenant" (MTR VII).

Brother John JOHNSTON
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THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL (6) WHY THE TITLE «CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS»

De La Salle called his schools "Christian Schools". Blain added the word "gratuitous". They in no way resemble those that preceded them. Their methods and programmes are completely different. All pupils are admitted irrespective of class or social position. They are kept, not by "masters" which would imply paid teachers but by Brothers, which recalls the gratuity and simplicity of the Gospel.

The Brothers are with their pupils from morning to evening. They make no distinction between secular and religious instruction, in contradistinction to their predecessors. Their only aim throughout the day is to teach their pupils to live as Christians. De La Salle considers that this is done, not only by the explicit teaching of religion, but also by a high standard of general instruction which contributes to the development of secular culture and prepares the children to make their way in the world.

We shall pass in rapid review the characteristics which de La Salle gave to his schools (and which we think he would like to see continued in the Lasallian schools of today).

1. The Brothers strive to develop the faith of their pupils through all the activities of the school day.

De La Salle does not wish to separate the sacred from the profane, secular instruction from religious instruction. The Brother will render an account for the one as for the other, for both are extremely important and strictly necessary in the school programme. The whole atmosphere of the school is an element in the religious education of the children. The Brother is not a catechist who happens to work in a school nor a school teacher doubling as a catechist. The purpose of the school presupposes and ensures the basic unity of the ministry of the teacher-catechist.[1] The profane acquires all its value when seen in the light of Christian faith. "The realities of this world and those of faith find their origin in the same God" (Declaration 48,3).

2. The Lasallian school enables the child to live and to give a Christian meaning to his life.

This help is not confined to the school. It extends to the human community of which the child is a part and in which he gives witness to his Christian commitment. In the second point of Meditation 202 de La Salle is very explicit. He wants children to commit themselves positively to the Alliance. The teacher must help them or rather "get them to do good and perform the good actions of which they are capable". He expects the Brother to attain this objective by adapting his advice and instructions to the age and capacity of his pupils. To this end he provides him with a programme: encourage them to perform good deeds, to speak the truth and to pray to God in private.

3. The Lasallian school helps to free the child from his innate evil tendencies and to open his heart and mind to God.

"The Christian education received in the new schools," says Blain, "went to the root of the evil and corrected the faults due to original sin". De La Salle is zealous for the sanctification of the pupils. He wants them to reach a stage where they will think and breathe only Jesus. He requires that the Brother, as a prophet in his class, point out to the children what could lead them to break the Alliance made with God at baptism. In Meditation 202,1 he reminds the Brother once again of the main purpose in the institution of the Christian Schools and of what should be the principal object of his zeal. He gives a list of the faults and sins to be avoided: impurity, theft, disobedience, disrespect to parents and faults in regard to his companions.

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In his class the Brother is a visible angel who helps them by his example and opportune advice to live in a manner worthy of God. He requires that they give up their bad habits and perform acts of charity. (Meditation 198,3).

4. The school helps the child to get to know Jesus Christ, to love Him and to live by Him.

The unity underlying all the activities of the Brother educator is to be found in reference to Christ. He is the sole object of the Christian message. Formation in the spirit of Christinity should be the soul and life principle of our ministry. Rather than continue writing on this subject I would invite you to read slowly Meditations 195 and 196 (they have a pronounced Christocentric spirit. The first point of Meditation 195 could be summed up thus: By his own life the Brother helps to save children. (It is through us that Christ becomes better known. Salvation is made available here and now in the classroom).

In the second point de La Salle reminds the Brother that authority comes, not from himself, but from Christ. (He is the principal agent in our apostolate). In the third point he gives us to understand that Christ by his words and actions, is for the Brother, the indispensable basis of his work. (The fruit we produce depends on our union with Him. God's work and ours are not two separate entities but one single work: to make effective the redemption of Christ).

We should note that the Christological reference is very frequent in Lasallian spirituality and is one of its characteristic marks. To realize this it is sufficient to re-read some of the Meditations, e.g. 183,3; 196,1; 6; 189,1; 87,2; 199,2.

5. Religious instruction has first place in the Brother's life.

By his vocation the brother is a catechist. He gives religious instruction in the school. He draws inspiration for his apostolic work from the pure source which is the Word of God. Although the general atmosphere of the school leads to the practice of the Christian virtues, de La Salle insists on the explicit obligation to teach the Word of God. He reminds the Brother that God will ask him to account for the manner in which he fulfilled this obligation (Cf. Meditation 200,1).

I give here a summary, by no means exhaustive, of the practical means suggested by de La Salle to help the Brother to initiate his pupils into the practice of the Christian virtues:

— assistance at daily Mass (This was normal practice at the time)

— daily prayer and awareness of God's presence (cf. Meditation 202, 2).

— reception of the sacraments. (Initiation in the Christian life is not confined to learning the truths of religion speculatively. It means coming to love and receive Him who is the object of our faith).

— performance of acts of charity and living the Gospel values (cf. Meditations 196,2; 198,3; 207,2). In de La Salle's eyes Christian education is not confined to instruction alone. It is put into practice in the concrete circumstances of daily life. Begun in school, it continues outside school and reaches out to our neighbour.

— examination of conscience at the beginning and end of the school day. Helped by the Brother's questions the pupil examines his conduct to see whether or not it was in conformity with the teaching of the Gospel. (Cf. Declaration 44,3).

Conclusion

We have seen how the school, if taken seriously, creates conditions favourable to a true Christian education (Rules Ch. IX). Through his ministry the Brother shares in the work of the apostles, according to de La Salle. "The conviction that Christian education is almost a priestly ministry is characteristic of Lasallian spirituality".[3] The Brothers share in the ministry of the Word by giving a religious education to the young.

[1] Sauvage M. "Catéchèse et Laïcat", p. 668.
[2] Blain. "Le vie de M. J-B de La Salle". T. 1 p. 275.
[3] Poutet Y. "Le 17ème siècle et les origines lasalliennes", p. 116. You might also read Temprado A. "La Palabra, según La Salle". Colección Sinite, Salamanca.

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THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL (7)
THE BROTHER'S ZEAL EXTENDS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

To live one's life as vocation means much more than just living it as profession. It means living it with love and the total giving of oneself. It is knowing and experiencing in the depth of one's being the joy of having been called by God (Meditation 199,1) to work in his vineyard, which is the school, and which is of such importance to the Church (Meditation 155,1). It means being willing to sacrifice one's life to performing the humdrum duties of each day or, if needs be, in a more spectacular manner. Living thus I feel that I am realizing my full potential, that it is in my own best interest, and that my life is worth living.

The satisfaction and joy that come from dedication to a cause will be mine in proportion to my efforts. "Vocation comes with faith and, in the long run, is the key to true happines", says Marañon.

The Brother's interest in and care for his pupils are not limited to the time spent in the classroom. Faithful to the Founder's recommendation, he will interest himself in their welfare outside school, always solicitous that they live a Christian life. (Meditation 206, 2).

If the Founder creates in his schools the post of visitor to the absent and gives it a place in the "Management of Schools" it is to ensure that the teacher knows how his pupils behave outside school so that he may advise them at an opportune moment. If he founds boarding establishments it is a complement to, an extension of and a support for his main work, the gratuitous schools.[1]

The Brothers' zeal leads them to establish other institutions so as to extend their influence to their students who have left school. They keep in touch with them through the various stages of their lives and help them to remain faithful to the practice of religion.

In the following paragraph we shall take a look at the past and consider two post-school creations born of the needs of the period in France. This could help us to understand better our own times and the new initiatives undertaken as well as the reorganization of existing institutions. It is always easy to destroy. To construct and restore are slow and painful tasks that require much patience. We shall speak of the impetus given to the establishment of schools for adults at the beginning of the 19th century and the introduction of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin to our institutions in the middle of the 18th century.

1. Evening classes or schools for adults

We have already mentioned the foundation of the "Sunday School" by De La Salle at the request of M. de La Chétardye, for the parishoners of Saint Sulpice. The example of the Founder's coming to the aid of the ignorant, irrespective of their age, led the Brothers to make painful sacrifices. "They had to take on additional work-loads and work long hours". The Brothers met the need felt by working people and satisfied their desire for knowledge so that in their own homes "they could open a book and take a pen in their calloused hands".[2]

In the time of Brother Philippe, who knew better than anyone else the needs of his century, there was a marked extension of this form of the Brothers' apostolate. Begun in Paris, it soon spread to the principal houses of the Brothers in the provinces. The government, awake to the

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pressing needs of the times, encouraged the Brothers in their work and provided subsidies for it. The struggle against illiteracy, undertaken on a small scale by the Brothers, soon became a national preoccupation.

From France the struggle spread to Turin where the Brothers were established, and where they worked valiantly in the cause of popular education. They succeeded in arousing the interest of influential people in the area who supported them morally and financially in their efforts on behalf of the working class. One of these helpers was the writer and patriot, Silvio Pellico, author of "I Miei Prigioni".[3] What was done then is still being done today. The Declaration states, "The school can often become a centre for evening classes for those who want to learn to read, for cultural activities and for friendly gatherings". (52,4).

2. Introduction of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin.

From the founding of the first boarding establishments in the Institute the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin, under the title of the "Immaculate Conception" gradually develop.

The Brothers were not unaware of the strong spiritual appeal that the figure of Our Lady has for the young and of the role that the noble ideal that she represents can play in their lives.

A child imitates quite naturally the manner of acting of grown-ups and adopts the style of the social models he sees on television. Children identify with their parents and pupils "follow the example of their teachers" (Meditation 202,3).

No human attitude can be formed without reference to a model. However, the model, besides being appreciated and respected, must be loved and, in a manner of speaking, made one's own. Only then does the model become a force attracting imitation.

De La Salle does not fail to counsel his disciples to present Our Lady to their pupils as a guide and as a light on their way. He incites them to love her and to make her loved (Meditation 146). He does not doubt that the effort made to identify with Mary will awaken in them hitherto unsuspected capacities for good.

An atmosphere of genuine piety and a spirit of social commitment reigns in the Congregation: its members visit hospitals, teach catechism, hold evening classes for illiterates, give conferences, collect money and clothes for the poor and meet together faithfully on Saturday to honour Our Lady. All this helps to form them to the Christian life and soon vocations to the priesthood and the religious life flourish among them.

The future Brother Exuperien, so well known amongst us, was President of the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin in the college in Béziers. From there he came to join the ranks of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

As far as we can tell, it was Brother Irénée who first introduced the Congregation to the Institute. With Brother Barthélemy it was he who most closely followed the example of saintliness given by the Founder.

Filial piety towards Our Lady was an outstanding characteristic of Brother Irénée. His strong personality was welcomed in Saint Yon where he founded a "Society or Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception". It was finally approved by Pope Clement VII on 24th May 1746.[6]

It was not long before this confraternity spread to the boarding schools of the Brothers in France: Maréville, Saint Omer, Marseilles etc. Brother Irlide established it in all our houses.

Our Documents recommend that we keep in touch with our former students when they leave school. "They will continue to assist them with advice and friendship and also by establishing special groups genuinely inspired by the spirit of the Church". (Declaration 47,4).

The title we give these groups matters little. What is important is the spirit that animates them.

[1] Rigault, "Histoire Générale de l'Institut..." tome II, p. 523.
[2] Idem, tome V, p. 129.
[3] Idem, tome VI, p. 46.
[4] Bulletin de l'Institut, Année 1907, pp. 133 ss.
[5] Rigault, tome V, p. 442.
[6] Idem, tome II, p. 165.

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CHRISTIAN GROUP ANIMATION

This theme constitutes neither a novelty nor a change happening in the Lasallian Christian School. "By vocation the Brothers are catechists, this is their principal function". (Declaration 38,1). We ourselves think that Christian Group Animation for the young constitutes, by its relation to the Lasallian charism, a central, nuclear theme.

In the first place we shall specify that our reflections do not have as their object groups of youth in general; they are limited only to that part which is the Christian Group. Another supplementary distinction is that we are referring only to group animation. with a *Catechumen orientation,* that is to say which has for its end the Christian community. We divide into smaller groups which we designate as groups for aspects found in catechumen oriented groups.

Point of departure

The animation of Christian Groups has its origin in an indispensable experience on the part of the animator: to feel one's self a *member* of a community and of being *sent* by the same community. This is indispensable because the Christian group can in no case be as fruit, purely and simply on the particular initiative of an isolated individual; by definition, the catechumen oriented group presupposes a more or less immediate reference to the Christian community. At the base of this affirmation is found the words of the 1977 Synod: "The community is the *place,* the *source* and the fruit of catechesis".

Still more radically, and serving as a framework of the entire body we see the image of the church which is a sign of recognition and rallying cry of this entire pastoral: The Church, "*The Community of Communities*". This concept of the Church will constantly be the obligatory point of reference all during the process: at the beginning, the community, along the way, the community, at the culmination, the community. Thus the early consciousness of the church is found, as reflected in the Pauline epistle, as perceiving itself. above all, as a community.

In the course of history, the institutional element (the Church "Society") imposed itself rapidly and it has prevailed until our day where it continues to impose itself in practice. We thus arrive at the other "pole", the negative pole, we could say the antithesis, that from which the movement of this process begins. In fact, the youth whom we call upon to form a part of these Christian groups normally live their faith as far as "*belonging*" to the Church society, which implies the following characteristics:

— an inherited, sociological faith, which has not been personally accepted,

— characterized by individualism

— centered on accomplishments more or less faithful to religious practices and the reception of the sacraments,

— lived on the fringe of vital options,

— which hands back church responsibility to the clergy.

Point of arrival

The community should always be present during the achievement of the process and as its fruit. This can be achieved under two principal forms: the Christian group constitutes its very self a community, or rather more frequently, the members of the group integrate themselves into already existing Christian communities.

This has to do with a point of arrival which is realistic and not utopian. That means that the animator should shun the temptation or the error, of converting the process into a stable situation. After having gone beyond the stages proper to catechumen orientation, the group and each of its members on their own ought to propose the problem of constituting itself into a Christian community or of going to become a part of a certain form of Christian community, be it parochial, "basic", or consecrated...

This is a crucial step which must be studied at a chosen moment which will be constantly present to the spirit of the animator to dynamize the process within a certain perspective. To do this it is necessary to have a sufficiently clear idea of what should characterise it:

— on the part of the youth: to be able to *personalize the faith,* which means to live conscientiously in liberty, with reference to others, disposed to share, in an attitude of seeking and continual conversion, allowing to be called into question by this attitude, with creativity and responsibility.

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— on the part of the community (the one formed by the group or the one which receives each of its members) it should be able to be thus defined:

• a group on a human scale, that is to say with an identity already established, where fraternal relationships and profound union exist;

• which has decided to follow the course of Christ as it is basically explained in the Commandment of Love and the Beatitudes:

• which expresses and celebrates its faith: which knows how "to give a reason for the hope that is in you". (I Peter 3,15), prays in the presence of Jesus and celebrates the Eucharist in union with the rest of the Church;

• which is engaged in bringing about the Kingdom of God, strengthening and transforming the reality which surrounds it.

The process

Let us begin by specifying who can be responsible for this animation: the "*animator*" is the "adult in the faith" who having himself followed a process of personalization of the faith and living it in community, takes his place in the group of adolescents or youth and as a member of this group and to stimulate it in a Catechumen process, sharing with the young his faith experience and uniting the efforts of all in view of achieving their common objectives.

The *summons* consists fundamentally in an appeal for conversion, to *interest* one's self in the Good News, to feel in one's self the need of salvation. For many it will be the passing from a life of a sociological faith to a consciousness of this *identity* as Christians. One could find a good opportunity of concretizing this summons during a retreat of Christian reflection with a view of making the youth conscious of the religious dimension of the person, of the call to the faith which was its main purpose, in order to arrive at a kind of personal option and at the decision to live in relation with others, that is, the group.

The *discovery* of the elements at the base of the Christian faith is the objective of the first stage of the process. To the animator reverts the task of presenting Jesus and his Gospel in such a way that at the end of the first stage the youth will be consciously initiated to accept the love of Good in their lives, that they be decided to follow Jesus, to already feel the desire to abandon their wordly values and criteria in order to adopt those of the Gospel, and to make the decision of living their faith and to share it with the group.

Then for the formation of the group, the animator should assure himself that the objectives are very clear. It frequently happens that the young demonstrate the tendency of exacting from the group the satisying of needs which redound to the advantage of other types of groups: leisure, celebrations, friendship, activities... The Christian Group is above all, a group which tries to *give a meaning to life, without excluding the wish of satisfying other needs, but without ever replacing the other types of groups.*

After the discovery, there has to be a foundation stage, a catechumen period, properly speaking, in the course of which one endeavours to arrive at a complete personalization of the faith and at a methodical initiation to the Christian mystery by means of these four fundamental dimensions:

• knowledge of the Mystery,

• evangelical style of life according to the Beatitudes

• religious experience, prayer and sacramental celebration

• Apostolic and Missionary Commitment

The ideal would be that this stage be concluded with the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation.

The last stage is that of *consolidation.* One endeavours then to arrive at a complete development of the faith, endowed above all with theological rigor, a critical sense, a prophetic character, and an expression of a means of prayer and of celebration. One experiences the various manners of sharing in community. Each member concretizes his life engagement and a social project or a church ministry.

The method followed all through this long process is the *Christian reading of reality.* It supposes that one always starts with the experience of the young in order to help and deepen it and to interpret it in a Christian sense. The Word of God ought next to clarify this experience. From the confrontation of one with the other ought to arise a concrete commitment which little by little will give birth to a life project. All this will be discerned and animated beginning with prayer and celebrated, above all, in the Eucharist.

The *functions* assumed by the animator vary slightly during the course of the process. At first he fixes upon a number of functions which he ought to transmit progressively to the group in the measure that they become more mature. It would be well, however, to spell out clearly three of these functions, given their importance:

• in the first place, he is an animator: "not so much a teacher who instills the truth but more an elder brother who helps the young to discern in themselves the call of the Spirit" (Decl. 40,4).

• he is a *guide:* he shows the way, he helps in the advance not only for the group but for each of its members for "to catechise is, by spiritual counsel and a personalized education, to help each baptized person to find his place in the service of the church and of men, whether as a militant layman, in the religious life, or in the priesthood" (Decl. 32,2).

• finally he is a *prophet* who helps in discernment, who does not allow people to founder in their mediocrity, who uses language which is both prodding and personalized... He tries to see to it that the youth meet God, who calls them by name, through His catechist more than by books or words. (Decl. 40,5).

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07-C-28

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN VALUES IN FSC SCHOOLS

"Harrod's New Year Sale" announced the full page ad in the Sunday edition of "The New York Times" on 30 December 1984. Imagine, a London department store seeking customers from a metropolitan area of the United States, and successfully enticing them to cross the Atlantic and convert their dollars into pounds! Our world has become smaller, our interaction more varied, and our interdependence more obvious. Awareness of these evolutionary processes is growing.

Our belief in the brotherhood and sisterhood we share as baptized Christians is reinforced by the realization and affirmation of these trends towards a more unified world. To strengthen these bonds it is necessary that the flow of information among the parts be smooth and accurate. It is through such communication that understanding flourishes and the connectedness of the human family becomes more apparent. The technology afforded by computers has the potential to assist us in managing and sharing information with speed and clarity. It can bring us closer together. The significance of this impact must be conveyed to our students.

The era ushered in by the industrial revolution has passed. We are on the threshold of a new age. And while we herald the advances in the processing of information brought to us by computer technology, we must be on guard against the possibility of an analytic and antiseptic anonymity. A human person is not reducible to an identification number! The dignity of each individual as a unique creature of God must remain in focus. Respect for life is a value we must continually model for our students.

Furthermore, provision must be made to safeguard the privacy of individuals whose files in data banks contain personal and confidential information. Unauthorized access and clandestine tampering of such files are unethical acts whose immorality should be clear to our students.

Among the educational needs of our time,then, is the importance of educating our students to be aware of and attentive to the uses and abuses of the computer in our society. Several aspects of this issue are referred to above. It is important too, however, to consider the role computers play in the microcosm of society that is our school or classroom. How is this contemporary technology utilized locally?

It is imperative that the computer in the classroom be perceived as a tool. The advantages of its prodigious memory and lightning speed make it particularly helpful in a variety of school settings and decidedly inappropriate in others. There is need for discretion in assessing its practicality for a given situation.

Frequently it is advantageous to determine the relationship between the computer and the student. Is the computer the master and the student the slave? That is, does the machine lead the person through a series of rigidly prescribed steps? Or, is the student the master and the computer the slave? That is, does the operator instruct the computer how to proceed? The tendency seems to be that the former model is frequently employed in remedial situations, for example, with drill and practice type software. The latter scenario is more often seen in

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enrichment activities, for example with the study of programming languages. In a school, such as one staffed by the Brothers, where concern for the individual is a hallmark of the education offered, it is important to be sensitive to the self image a student might develop based on his/her role vis-a-vis a computer. Again, it is important to reinforce the dignity of the individual.

In the section of the Brother's Rule devoted to Apostolic Work it states that "To accomplish their mission the Brothers constantly adapt their educational activities to the needs of the Church and the world" (Chapter 9, Section j). Certainly both the Church and the world would be served by increased openness in communication and deeper awareness of the sacredness of the individual. These Christian values can be espoused through the new and captivating forum presented by computer technology. Our challenge as educators is to read this message from this sign of our times.

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07-C-29

THE MINISTRY OF TEACHING

I would like to begin by thanking the district for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts on the teaching ministry of the Christian Brothers. Though I am very much honored I have found it one of the most difficult things to do. It is difficult in that the Brothers are probably the most critically professional group for whom one could write. We are critically professional in that both as a group and as individuals we are always reflecting on, and putting into practice, techniques that are proven, suitable, "in touch" with the needs and desires of those who are entrusted to us. We are, I find, a group of dedicated teachers who, despite our human frailties and individual idiosyncracies, are out to give the best we have to our students and colleagues.

As stated by Brother Joseph Brienza in the first of this series of articles "teaching is an art and not an exact science". I in no way feel that I have mastered the art but I am the richer and wiser in appreciating it. Because of meeting and having been touched by many masters (brothers, sisters, laypersons, and students), I have developed into a good teacher. These masters have influenced me to appreciate what teaching is all about.

Let it be clear from the outset that the best I can do is to share by means of some random thoughts, in no particular order, what has been given to me.

Teaching always involves two things: exposing the student to new information and experience and trying to personalize the discovery of what it means. Information will affect a person's behavior only in the degree to which he or she has discovered the personal meaning of that information. The challenge is how to help students explore and discover the meaning. Unless I can communicate the facts with some degree of affect then the learning is unlikely to take hold or influence behavior. In the junior high curriculum here at Saint Gabriel's I, as Social Studies teacher, spend time on the Constitution. I do it because I feel not only that my students should be aware of it as a document but more importantly that they come to see it as a "living" document, the knowledge of which can give them power and a basis to understand what this country and its laws are all about.

If true learning is to take place, I feel that the teacher must address four even more basic factors. I would list these as self-concept, feelings of challenge or threat, values, and feelings of being cared for and/or belonging.

What students believe about themselves affects very deeply every aspect of their behavior and learning. Students who believe they can are more likely to try and thus are more likely to succeed. Positive teacher feedback and encouragement enhance a student's self-concept and tend to bring about success. I find this extremely challenging and trying because it means I must constantly be aware of my personal impressions of the student which may for some reason "go against my grain". Students, however, who believe they cannot avoid the embarrassment and humiliation of involvement are likely to experience failure—which only proves what they already thought about themselves in the first place.

The second factor is feelings of challenge or threat. How often have we heard or read that learning occurs best when teachers are successful in creating atmospheres that are challenging without being threatening? The student's feelings, attitudes and beliefs are powerful sources of motivation and if I am sensitive to them the learning situation will be more productive. There is no

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doubt that feelings of challenge are conducive to learning while those of threat are ultimately destructive.

The third area is that of values. Values can be defined as generalized belief that serve as basic guidelines and determine our behavior. They are deeply personal and charged with feelings or affect. They play an important part in the dynamics of all we do. We as brothers have values at the very core of our being. We live and breathe them and I have often pondered on what the Brothers really taught me as a student at Bishop Loughlin. Then and now we value knowledge, skills, critical thinking, lifelong education, good citizenship, faith in a loving and merciful God, zeal for what is best. When I reflect on my years at Loughlin, it is not the factual knowledge I recall but individual brothers "teaching" by example what it means to be human — "the glory of God fully alive".

If I know that I am cared for and belong, I feel excited, energized; I want to get involved; I want to get with it; I enjoy the activity. If I feel uncared for or left out, I feel discouraged, disillusioned, apathetic; I want to get out, to avoid embarrassment and humiliation.

As I reflect on what I have just written I find that I have only repeated far less eloquently what de La Salle wrote in his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat.* Phrases such as "Be faithful in order to do as much as you are able...". "If you want the instructions you give those whom you teach to be effective in drawing them to the practice of good, you must practice these truths yourselves". "You must also be full of zeal". "You must cheer the fainthearted, support the weak and be patient towards all". "Your zeal toward those you teach would not go very far and would not result in much success if it limited itself only to words. To be effective your teaching must be supported by your example".

My vision of teaching is dependent on the good teacher and I recall some advice given by Brother Francis Huether. (He will, I hope, pardon the liberties I may have taken with it).

1. Have confidence in yourself, your vocation, your natural ability, in the wisdom, advice and good example of your confreres.

2. Live by supernatural motives. You will achieve much if you live by high ideals.

3. Ardently desire to be an excellent teacher and work for it! Aim for clarity. Seek to challenge. Involve each student to his/her ability. Extend them, enlarge their outlook.

4. Plan your work, then work your plan.

5. Be patient. How well de La Salle put it: "Patience is the leading characteristic of great minds".

6. Be persistent. Keep working for the goals you have prudently set for yourself and for the class.

7. Evaluate yourself, your work and your results constantly. Don't become stagnant.

8. Cooperate with those who are involved with you.

Not only is the above applicable to the good teacher but also pertinent as to what we should be teaching those entrusted to our care.

As I read over what I've written, I wonder if education, like life, is never at an end or standstill. It continues to challenge (if we allow it to) us as we come in contact with new faces, different places and circumstances. Every situation presents an opportunity to grow and develop. That challenge is there every day in every student and colleague with whom I meet and work.

"Consider, then, that your reward in heaven will be as great as the good you will achieve in the lives of the children who are entrusted to your care. It is in this spirit that St. Paul told the Corinthians: 'You will be our glory in the time to come on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ' ".

If we fulfill our duty and accept the challenge of our ministry, there is no doubt we will be able to enjoy the blessing de La Salle wrote of above in the 16th Meditation and thereby "shine as stars for all eternity".

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07-E-18

THE LASALLIAN SENSE IN MY ACTIVITIES IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL (1)

Being in charge, together with a confrere, of the animation of the Catechetical programme and of the Christian School in the 23 primary schools of South Belgium, I can truly say that this animation is exercised in a Lasallian climate. If this climate draws its origin from the "practices of Jesus" it can not be less a spirituality of a disciple of Christ, John Baptist de La Salle, who lived his life in a very particular situation, that of a founder. And that marks out the *manner of living out my profession.*

I shall present here in the form of a small tapestry, sewed with several guiding threads and immersed beforehand in Lasallian spirituality. Looking at the different tableaux, we shall discover progressively these threads, which are the "soul of my work".

Let us start with the first tableau:

A catechism incarnated

Here we single out a group of Brothers and laymen listening to today's children, namely, the C.C.L. — Centre Catéchétéque Lasallien. It has been meeting regularly since 1976 to delve into the existential movement proper to the "Catechetical Programme for Primary Schools" as elaborated by a Commission which had been set up by the Bishops of Belgium.

Let us draw nearer to the tapestry to better discover the profound life of this group.

The Preface of this Programme contains an important passage: "The originality of this programme is manifest enough. It renounces a systematic plan, traditional before... It allows children to cast a tranquil glance on those who are alive and lets them discover at the same time, little by little, by reference to Christ the richness of the demands of their faith. Christian Education is rooted in a way in the habitual experience of children. Such a way is not always easy! But is it not thus with a truly evangelical pedagogy?"

We wanted to take that seriously. Seven encounters a year, of exchanges in class of our experiences, of profound questions to the level of our faith, the fidelity of the group and its sense of graciousness... all this constituted an assembling of *life* in order to accompany the child to the very heart of his own life story and to help him slowly towards the total growth of his person.

The thread of years will lead us to weave together catechetical themes proper to each age and a framework of five ages: experience of life, enlargement of this life, a deepening of experiences, the enlightening of this life in the light of Jesus, and an appeal to change one's life.

***Lasallian Filigree**: With which Lasallian threads is this first scene woven?*

** At first by the profound desire of John Baptist de La Salle to "Procure for children the means of salvation proper to their age". (MTR 1,3).*

** But we also see here, the threads of years, this "living tradition of the Institute... attached to integrate the Faith in Jesus Christ in the daily life of the young". (Declaration, 40,2).*
I shall always remember the following text read at a meeting of the C.C.L., as the very expression of their everyday experience:

"The catechesis of the Brother thus takes root in life and it is oriented towards life... The Word of God does not fall from above, abstract, upon anonymous individuals; it always comes to reunite, to enlighten and to deepen a human experience". (D. 40,5).

** I should like to add here, what seems to me essential in the framework of this article: The practice of a well determined catechetical step does not go by itself: it often poses a question and sometimes a doubt and discouragement. Two events — again life! — have however confirmed me*

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in this manner of evangelzing in the primary school!: First, CIL 79/2 with its particular method of forming persons, and second, at Easter 80, the Symposium on Catechesis, at the Mother House in Rome. That also is "Lasallian".

Let us pass on to the second tableau:

The animation of 23 schools

What can be done to animate the schools interiorly so as to render them Christian... situated as they are in a consumer society of religious indifference, of individualism, which lacks a sense of graciousness, etc.?

The service of animation works three sectors at a time: they compose our tableau in three scenes. Let us look at the nearest one.

Scene 1: the annual catechetical day

Organised for each school, this day affords a deepening of the numerous aspects of the Christian School.

The statement of the theme of the previous year will light up the tableau: the animation of the Christian school with a strong insistence on inter-personal relationship — our catechetical options — non-sacramental celebrations — what is faith? — what is religion? — to what temptations a school must not submit if it wishes to be christian?

A quest is hidden under each of these different themes: that of truth. To be true towards one's self, towards the children, towards God. And in knowing that the truth makes one free!

Lasallian Filigree: *Very modestly, I endeavour to rejoin St. John Baptist de La Salle: from the foundation of the Institute, he created a community of men so that he could form them to become adult in the faith and thus be able to educate children in the same faith in Jesus Christ:*

"You are entrusted with reclothing them in Jesus Christ and his spirit. Have you taken care that before undertaking such a holy mission that you reclothe yourselves so as to be able to communicate this grace to them?" (MF. 189.1).

Scene 2: meeting of school directors

After 1981, days were reserved for these meeting. They pursued a double purpose: to promote a global unity of spirit in the Brothers' schools and to create, by inter-personal relationships, a common soul.

Some themes studied: the catechetical option — how to make a school a place of fraternal relations for "the well-being of all — favourable and unfavourable elements towards a fraternal relationship in the heart of a group of teachers — my personal relations as Director with the children found in my school.... with particular regard to the "poor". This simple list will allow one to determine just how much fraternal relationships are reflected on all levels of the school.

We should like to remark that more than a rediscovery, it was an opportunity of deepening Lasallian spirituality. In particular: the first meditation for the time of retreat, reading done without disengaging if from the present situation of children, parents and the students of today; the great spiritual attitudes of de La Salle, according to Brother Jean Pungier.

Lasallian Filigree: *Fraternal Relationship is one of the keys "for procuring the salvation of children":*

"You exercise an employment which puts you under the obligation of touching hearts. You cannot do this except by the Spirit of God: pray to Him to procure the salvation of others". (MD 43.3).

It is evangelical. In following a certain Jesus "who goes through town and village in search of lost sheep who are awaiting a look of tenderness":

"Jesus Christ compares those in charge of souls to a good shepherd who takes good care of his flock; and one of the qualities which he ought to have, according to the Saviour, is that he recognise each one distinctly...". (MD 33.1).

Bro. Henri ELSEN

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07-E-19

THE LASALLIAN SENSE IN MY ACTIVITIES IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL (2)

Scene 3: meeting the children in class

On glancing on my years as animator in the schools, I ascertain that I have put the accent on two essential aspects of the local belief in man: fraternal relationships and the search for truth.

To make fraternal relationships live in the classes and to make them be practices by the teacher, nothing made me understand myself so much as my joining in with groups of children. "Whatever absolutely directs personal human existence is good... the relationship of love with another: to be is to be in a relationship..." (Jean Kamp, "Le Dieu de ma nuit", Casterman, 1977, p. 124). To work such a thing in a Christian school, is to wish to constitute small cells of "the kingdom of fraternity according to God".

To make the children discover the truth in themselves and to help the teachers in this mission there is nothing like participating myself in Catechesis incarnated as decribed above.

Lasallian Filigree: *It is necessary to read anew St. John Baptist de La Salle and commentaries on his writings.*

"God has made you ministers... He has destined you to announce to these young plants the truths of the Gospel and to procure for them the means of salvation which will be brought to them. (MTR. 1.3).

There you have the theme which runs throughout all of these contacts. With Brother Jean Pungier, one could say regarding this text. "It is the very condition of salvation of the young. And it is the responsibility of their educators. This is what gives dynamism to the existence of the Christian educator, renders him attentive to the true needs of the young and their milieu, and invites him to the pedagogical creation on two plains: scholastic and catechetic" (Spirituality for teachers and instructors, p. 38).

Is this not just a summary of the entire life of de La Salle?

Search for the truth starting from the very bosom of fraternal relationships: it is the entire vocation of the educator marching as a minister of Christ and following in his footsteps! Enthusiastically!

But that takes a lot of time and humility. That is why the Founder invites us to make ourselves "small" before God and to make the youth "our brothers":

"...being obliged to regard themselves as the older brothers of those who come to receive their lessons, they ought to exercise this ministry of charity with a loving heart". (Blain, C.L. 7, p. 241).

"The smaller you make yourself... the more you will touch the hearts of those whom you instruct". (M.F. 79, 2).

There once again is one of the keys which opens the door to "salvation!".

Lt us finish by looking at the third tableau:
Lasallian Sharing

This is the last born child. What is it all about?

It is at the same time a composite of meetings of Brothers and laymen on the Primary level and the name of the periodical which is being prepared for them.

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Lasallian Sharing wishes to provide the occasion to teachers who wish to more deeply discover John Baptist de La Salle so as to be able better to follow him in his passion for the young, in his wish to make them free ('salvation') in the educative style which he created (more fraternal than magisterial) in the pedagogical innovation leading youth more easily to a profession, in the challenge he issues: no education is possible without an association of educators.

Open to 400 teachers, of whom 21 are Brothers, the Lasallian Sharing does not yet see any congestion at its doors; in the course of the first three meetings, we had 15, 19 and 9 respectively.

If this tableau conceals also the Lasallian Filigree, it is easy for you to discover it. Without forgetting this: to abandon one's self to God, all the while safe-guarding one's interior peace and to continue to follow the road on which you started no matter what the number of marchers may be.

Let us now look at the complete tapestry

Let us go back a few steps to cast a slow and deep glance at the Lasallian tapestry: there remains in fact a final discovery to make, that of a current which passes through all the different tapestries considered. This current is to me, certainly, personal, but at least in my eyes, it is the thread of my life as a Brother.

I should like to speak of this desire to liberate the person. And there at certain moments of my life, I find myself following Christ:

"Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind see, the lame walk..." (Luke 7).

And I find myself following John Baptist de La Salle who affirms:

"You can work many miracles in your own regard and in your employment...; in your employment, by touching the hearts of the rowdy children who are confided to your care..." (MF. 180,3).

To touch the hearts to make the child capable of speaking, expressing himself, believing, listening, sharing, interiorising, growing... to become himself, progressively, a son of God, in the image of Jesus.

"These are the miracles which God will give you the power to work and which He will require of you!" (MF. 180,3).

This is the current which can live and which more than one Brother discovers in his own life: the minister of God to make possible the "mirabilia Dei" today and thus open the Paschal mystery of man.

A last word

To be conscious of the Lasallian activity in my life as a Brother today does not require me only to "retrace the sources" and thus to mention Saint John Baptist de La Salle, situated in Reims in the seventeenth century.

It is the wish also to draw the light of life with regard to the "Brothers" disciples of the Founder in this very twentieth century, from Brothers who for me bear a name and a face: Vincent Ayel, Joseph Famrée, Maurice-Auguste Hermans, Jean Pungier, Genaro Saenz de Ugarte, Michel Sauvage, Joseph Verdeur and the International Group of Brothers at CIL 79/2. Each one in his own way was for me a light — indispensable to a tapestry! — to progressively make a catechetical mission more precise, in drawing from the true life experience of the children, in view of "procuring for them the salvation of Jesus Christ" in the living present of their development.

Frère Henri ELSEN
Belgium-South.
March 1985.

P.S. I forgot to tell you that the tapestry is not yet finished!

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07-E-20

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LASALLIAN BOARDING SCHOOL

One week before school recommences, the request comes: "Could we please accept Adrian as a boarder?" Adrian had been adopted as a baby. His adoptive mother died when he was seven. By age twelve, the adoptive father, now re-married, said to the dead mother's brother, Alan "Either you take him or he becomes a ward of the State. I have had enough". Alan, although not knowing Adrian since Adrian had lived 2000 kms. to the north in Australia, accepts responsibility and Adrian enters boarding school. There is no place available, but somehow an extra bed is found by the Brothers.

An isolated case? Not really. Just the true story of one boy who commenced at St. Bede's College in Melbourne,. Australia this year, one boy whom the Superior General met when he stayed at St. Bede's in February, sharing mass and a meal with the boarders. There are many such boys in the Brothers' boarding schools.

It is a long tradition of the Brothers, dating back to the time of De La Salle, to conduct boarding schools.

Brothers who want to give their time, their efforts, their love to the underprivileged — boys with real needs — can find fulfilment in the most responsible and Christian task of educating resident students.

Since Brothers do not have the same family commitments as lay staff, the Brothers have a unique availability for work with Boarders and bring to it a wholehearted commitment that is recognized by both parents and boys. Parents have an especial confidence in the ability of committed religious to act "in loco parentis" in a boarding school.

The Brother is called upon to exercise a selfless love and care for the boys in his charge twenty-four hours per day. The Brother in a boarding school has a unique opportunity to exercise a Christ-like influence in the lives of the boys. Caring for boys in their physical, emotional and spiritual needs, the Brother has a capacity to touch them more deeply than day boys.

In normal circumstances the best environment for a boy is a good home situation, with father, mother, brothers and sisters. A boy's emotional needs are best catered for in a good home.

However, there are many circumstances which necessitate the alternative environment which a good boarding school provides.

Among the reasons for boarding are:

1. inaccessibility of a Catholic school which the boy can attend as a day pupil.
2. unsatisfactory situation at home, if there is a home.
3. qualities in the boy that make it desirable for him to spend a period away from home.

It is essential, of course, that a boarding department be well controlled with appropriate discipline and order. There is always the danger that a boarding section can become a harsh emotional environment caused by the closeness of boys living together, insensitive treatment of boys by teachers or by neglect on the part of the family that has placed the boy in boarding school.

Further, a poorly conducted boarding house could become a coarse social environment

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marked by bad language, untidiness, uncleanliness and, in general, a spirit of selfishness. Above all, it is imperative that a boarding school not become an erroneous moral environment wherein wrong attitudes to stealing, sexuality, truth, trust and other such matters develop. Anyone who has worked in a boarding school is very aware of the need to set high levels of expectations and demands in terms of the Gospel ideals.

Too often critics of boarding schools focus on a particular difficulty or shortcoming and make faulty generalizations. Without doubt, it is possible to run a very good boarding school in which excellent attitudes and values are developed.

Some of the values of a boarding school education for boys may be stated as follows:

1. Boarding schools develop in the students a ***manly independence.*** The boarder must learn to become self-reliant, to a certain degree, not only in managing his material affairs — money, clothing, travel and the like — but also in his emotional development. Mum and Dad are not around to shield, to protect, to assist. For this reason, boarding schools can be hard; but they do serve to toughen and strengthen the individual's character.

2. Boarding schools act as a great ***socializing agency:*** boarders must learn to get along with other boys. "Sharp edges" are rubbed off. Brash characters are frequently pulled into line by the other students. Boys from varying national and socio-economic backgrounds learn mutual understanding and respect.

3. In a boarding school a boy must learn to accept the demands of a strong system of ***discipline.*** To a certain degree life is regimented to a set pattern of schooling, study, recreation, meals and so on. Clear rules exist that govern behaviour. The development of a disciplined attitude to life is especially important in an age when informality is regarded as virtue.

4. The Catholic boarding school is a ***controlled religious environment.*** Traditional Catholic values are stressed such as participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation. There is reassuring religious solidarity in the boarding school environment.

5. In most cases, attendance as a resident student result in ***improved study conditions.*** There are set hours for study. Study is supervised. Extra resources are available both by way way of textbooks and tutorial assistance. Boarders do far more study than most of their day counterparts.

6. A boarder is provided with the opportunity for many ***extracurricular activities.*** The full range of school facilities are available to resident students. Whilst day boys are travelling home, resident students are normally involved in sporting activities, photographs, manual arts or some other interest group.

7. Lastly, and perhaps ironically, boarding school teaches a boy to ***appreciate home.*** The emotional warmth of the home environment and the uninstitutionalized, less structured routine are seen more clearly as something to be appreciated. Family love and the freedom of the private home are recognized for what they are.

For those boys who have never experienced a stable, secure home environment, boarding school provides a place of belonging where people care about the boy, his attitudes, his development, his growth, his well-being. Boarding school can stabilize emotional insecurity. Diligent pastoral care can bring about great changes for the better in boarders.

The boarding school remains the preferred field of apostolic endeavour for many Brothers. It has been my special privilege to have been the Headmaster of a boarding school for the past eleven years. There have been changes. Conditions are less austere. There is more personal space and privacy for each boy. Costs have risen. Yet so has the demand. Catholic parents value highly the Lasallian Boarding School. It is a work of special commitment for us.

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07-O-05

BROTHER SCUBILION (2): «A Brother for those afar»: The Missionary

The first document let us get acquainted with Brother Scubilion and to discover the great stages of his existence.

Now we must show what brought unity to this life: Brother Scubilion was a Missionary. He was a missionary in the sense given to this term and the end of the 19th century which saw great strides in this endeavour, turning from the countries of established Christianity towards the lands of Asia, Africa and Oceania. These were often old colonies or countries in the process of colonization. Without wishing to judge the ambiguities of these situations, it is an historical fact that they contributed in a positive way especially in the religious sphere.

Between 1822 and 1833 Jean-Bernard Rousseau had joined the Brothers of the Christian Schools and had lived his first ten years of the apostolate. At that time, after the turmoil of the French Revolution, the Brothers set as their priority the strengthening of their establishments in France itself. They really did not yet have foreign missions. Yet, a secret missionary fibre was beginning to vibrate in their Congregation. Requests began arriving from Louisiana, (a former French possession) and Guiana. Efforts toward both places were thwarted, the Institute turned towards a favourite direction, the Island of Bourbon. A fervent appeal by the Superior General, Brother Gerbaud, brought some volunteers. That was in 1817. The beginnings were very difficult: the sending of two groups of missionaries (1817 and 1826) hardly established a fragile "beachhead". The establishment of a solid mission had to wait until 1833.

Brother Scubilion was on his way (we already described this in the first instalment). So, from then on we had the "Brother for those afar". And the very farthest possible. A colony in the southern hemisphere, far from the city whose population had a definite Christian heritage but very neglected. It was almost a "spiritual desert". About 1820, for about 75,000 inhabitants there were some religious services on Sunday in the most important centres; yet there were no sermons, no catechism, let alone classes, and a lack of schools. The few schools there were existed for the white colonizers or the free Creoles. The slaves did not count at all, except for work. The majority of them were not even baptized. It was towards these that Brother Scubilion soon became inclined. (We will speak about this in the next instalment). Meanwhile, he will spend ten years in the apostolate of teaching primary classes and catechism in favour of the free population at St. Benedict's and St. Paul's.

So, here we have Brother Scubilion as a school teacher. He had to reckon with the character of whis pupils, rather given to laziness because of the hot climate. He is able to overcome their lackadaisical attitude and to win their affection. This he does less by his ingenuity (whose limits he recognized) than by his patience and self-mastery, and by his continual devotion to all. Being in charge of the domestic duties of St. Benedict's, he takes good care of the poor children for whom the Brothers provided lodging and food and sees to it that the black cook, a slave, prepares their rice well. This provides Brother Scubilion with an opportunity to discreetly give the children their first "homemade" and basic catechism lessons. The time was not yet right for "official" catechism classes for slaves after working hours.

For the moment, at St. Benedict's and St. Paul's, he taught catechism to the Creole children , who were not too attentive. Of course, he taught from the catechisms of his day: a summary of cut-and-dry questions and answers of the principal truths of our Catholic faith. Yet this catechist's convictions and enthusiastic presentation, and the strength of his example breathed into the exact and rigid pages the savour of the "Good News". Brother Scubilion never forgot the recommendations of his venerable Founder: "You should strive to make your questions and answers in Catechism easily understood, and explain them clearly by using words which are easily understood". (Meditation 33:3).

There is another aspect of Brother Scubilion's apostolate: although in charge of the lowest class, he extended his influence to all the pupils in the school. He had a spiritual intuition in detecting in the pupils the desire for a religious vocation, especially to the Brothers. The contagion of his own complete dedication was a kind of silent invitation: one wanted to become a Brother like him. Then, he sent at least ten young boys to the Novitiate. Later on, when he was finally able to catechize his beloved blacks (slaves) at St. Leu, one of them, thanks to him, became a Brother, the first slave to be vested in the habit of a Brother.

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But beyond his work and days as a school teacher and a catechist, I would like to sketch a portrait of a missionary, to set aside the movement of this existence, to identify the spirit which animated him.

First of all, it was his passion to evangelise: a certain interior turmoil for his own 'salvation' without doubt either naturally ingrained or from the constant preaching of his times, but above all for the salvation of others. And the movement of his heart, of his life, could be sketched this way:

* In the metropolis from 1823 to 1833 he gave himself completely to the children of Alençon, Poitiers, and Chinon. Yes, but... out there somewhere there are other children who need the Brothers even more to instruct and catechize them because they are the most abandoned. "Let us then go also to other places to proclaim the Gospel!" Out there beyond, one can give himself more completely, detached from his family and native land, without a desire of returning.

* Once he arrived in Bourbon, he gave himself completely to the children confided to him: he instructed them, served them, catechized them, and led to the Novitiate. *Yes, ...But* these were the free children. What about the others? The most oppressed, the most abandoned? Are not the slaves also the children of God? Who will take care of them?

* At last at the service of the slaves, God knows that he has given himself without reserve. *Yes... But...,* Bourbon is a Christian country, at least according to the Baptismal Register, the slaves themselves in ever greater number are being baptized and catechized. But way out there, some 800 kilometres away, is Madagascar, the Great Island, still pagan. He dreams of going there to bring the Gospel Message: "For the past twenty-two years I have been asking this grace of the Lord God (Brothers for Madagascar) and that I myself might be of the number of those who will have the good fortune of evangelizing these good Malagasee"! (Letter of December 8, 1855). He will become a missionary to Madagascar without going there himself. He has carried this mission there in his heart and prayers. And in 1866, he will be happy to bless, he the veteran, his confreres who are departing for Tananarive. "You are leaving for this island which I have so much desired to evangelize! I cannot follow you but I shall always pray for the success of your work. Now that we have schools among the pagans, I shall die happy".

Yes, a passion was burning throughout the life of Brother Scubilion: the obstinate will to ever widen his field of endeavour, to extend it ever farther towards the most poor, in a total gift of himself. In Lasallian terms, it is Zeal; Brother Scubilion is a person eternally unsatisfied precisely because of his zeal! There is nothing unstable about him: wherever he is, he flourishes, he gives himself without reserve to his apostolate of the moment. But receptive to the Spirit, he aspires along the lines of his vows to "procure the glory of God as far as he is able". Brother Scubilion lives to the fullest his mission here and now, but his zeal makes him sensitive to the appeals of all and the unceasing invitation "to get even farther".

The second characteristic which I should like to underline with regard to Brother Scubilion, is the successful synthesis between his perfect *esprit de corps* (together and by association) and the daring of his initiatives. We could speak here of an obedience-initiative, an obedience operated from within by a love (therefore zeal) which is irrepressible. Those duties which are not expressly prescribed in his list of duties, he discovers, and improvises to the extent that he perceives a need.

Obedience-initiative, obedience and zeal: he succeeds in reconciling the two virtues and in accumulating their advantages. Along with obedience is the assurance of a solid mission within the framework of a community which supports him and without which he would not have his influence nor his outreach, assurance of a mission devoid of the pitfalls of personal fantasies or of the divergences of temperament. As regards zeal, as regards initiative, this timid one was always audacious. He permitted himself all and was permitted all. Speaking about the apostolate at the end of his career at Sainte-Marie, one of his former confreres gives the following testimony: "His superior told me one day that he did not watch over him, he always managed to go out to help the sick and the sinners, without thinking whether or not he had to ask permission, such was his great zeal". This was a trait worthy of the "little flowers" of St. Francis.

We conclude, with the words of Monseigneur Aubry, adressing a number of pilgrims who had come to pray at the tomb of the Servant of God, 17 April, 1983.

> "Do not look foremost for the marvellous. Brother Scubilion was not a miracle-worker, but a missionary... go home and become missionaries".

There are many modes of being so. To discover them, Brother Scubilion has revealed his secret.

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1 February 1986

FOREWORD

In a few weeks, the International Year of the Youth will officially come to an end. This event was particularly celebrated with numerous local, national, and international celebrations. They have certainly left pleasant and lasting memories for a good number of people who have participated in them. I am convinced that, among the various regions of the Institute, the Brothers have not failed to undertake diversified activities, some rather original, always solicitous of promoting the aspirations of youth and having them meet together. In one of the Leaflets of N° 5, a year ago, the *Lasalliana* encouraged you to observe this year with many activities. Now we shall be happy to receive written accounts of your observances. They can eventually be reflected in future issues of this publication, since, for us Lasallian educators, each and every year is really a «Year of Youth» which inspire us to think up, and adapt new initiatives for improving our service to Youth. So whatever has been undertaken in 1985 should not come to an end with the new year but should constitute an encouragement to pursue these efforts further.

At about the time that Edition N° 8 of the *Lasalliana* makes its appearance, The General Congress on the OIEC will be meeting on the theme: «Educating the interior man, the source of personal dynamism and of social involvement». Without doubt, the vast majority of the Lasallian readers will not be able to participate directly in the Congress, but will find the opportunity to read its thoughts and conclusions in various newspapers and magazines in their own countries. It seems to me that the topic chosen has a «Lasallian» ring to it and the title should hold an interest for us. It is a modern consideration of the same essential concerns which Saint John Baptist de La Salle had in his educational plans for the children of the seventeenth century. Certainly, the words, «value», «dynamism», «involvement», were hardly in vogue in the vocabulary of that period, but the same realities were expressed in what De La Salle referred to as virtues, evangelical maxims, introducing children to the Christian life in order to make of them «true disciples of Jesus Christ». Is this not the very same thing that we are trying to do today in educating our youth toward values and helping them to make these values a part of themselves?

Also, the 41st General Chapter will soon be opening. Often the word «celebration» is used when referring to it. Is this not, in fact, the celebration of all that has been lived, undertaken, and accomplished in the course of the past ten years in the Institute, thanks to our Lasallian vitality? In this issue, we should like to single out the importance of this event and to devote two leaflets to it. The first deals with the first Chapter ever attempted in the history of the Institute. The other deals with certain important aspects of the one about to take place. This is another example of the *Lasalliana* trying to re-unite the two opposite ends of our tricentenary history. This celebration concerns all of us because we will be associated and represented there by our delegates.

The choice of these three events, the Year of Youth, the OIEC Congress, and the General Chapter, is very limited with regard to the great number our thoughts and activities as educators.

Brother Léon LAURAIRE

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08-A-40

JOHN-BAPTIST DE LA SALLE: THE MESSAGE OF HIS CATECHISM

At the beginning of 1985, Brother Jean Pungier, who is one of the Lasallian researchers in the Mother House, published in Rome a book entitled, *John Baptist De La Salle: The Message of His Catechism.* This work followed two previous studies by the same author, *Ministers of Grace,* and *If We Were to Re-Write «How to Run Christian Schools» Today.*

Lasalliana wanted to know what were the author's intentions and conclusions, so we interviewed him. Our questions and his responses follow.

1) **Brother Jean, why did you write this book?**

The title of the book is in itself explicit: «John Baptist De La Salle: the Message of His Catechism». It is neither a theological nor a historical thesis on The Duties of a Christian Towards God, but rather an essay.

What I have endeavoured to do, in fact, is to emphasize what the Founder wished to convey to his Brothers in the field of catechesis. I do this, not through the five books which comprise his catechetical work, but rather through the little «catechism», in question and answer form, which, following the lead of Brother Magaz, I call, Duties II.

Such elementary catechisms were multiplied in the seventeenth century. Every bishop either composed his own catechism or commissioned somebody to do so, and imposed it on the clergy of his diocese. Other manuals sprung up in response to more specific needs: many priests wanted to spread these «lessons» or «instructions» which they scattered to the four corners of France, during the «missions» either in the countryside or in the cities.

It was in this context that the Founder wrote his *Duties II.* As I said in the Foreword, «He composed it at Vaugirard, in a suburb of Paris, at a time when the Diocese had and was imposing its own text: when Father de La Chetardye, the pastor of the parish of Saint Sulpice where the Brothers were teaching, was a catechist of renown and who, several years before, had written a famous catechetical work». The question could really be asked as to why John Baptist De La Salle decided to write his own catechism. Was it to say what was closest to his heart? To render some service towards the Brothers?

I have tried to answer these questions. Have I succeded in doing so? Well, that is up to the readers to judge!

2) **Have some previous studies been done on «The Duties of a Christian» and, if so, where does your work stand with regard to them?**

To my knowledge, only one long and exhaustive study has been done on this Lasallian work. This was the doctoral thesis of Brother Manuel F. Magaz, now of the District of Central Spain. It is entitled, *A Catechism of France's Golden Age: The Duties of a Christian by Saint John Baptist De La Salle* (1968). I studied it very much before undertaking my own researches. This book gave me the general framework—both historical and theological—of the «Duties». Another thing for which I am indebted to it, in particular, is that it made me discover the interest in drawing minute parallels between the Lasallians texts and their sources. It is like suddenly coming upon our Founder at his desk, at the very time that he is working on his literary, theological, or spiritual creations.

The *Cahiers Lasalliens,* nos. 20 to 23, have provided me with reliable texts and indispensible bibliographies. The *Rivista Lasalliana* has given me very interesting studies on the theme. I am thinking particularly of the articles of Brother Dante. Thanks to this author, I have a better perception of how the Brothers at the beginning of the eighteenth century prepared their catechism lessons and how they developed them in class.

Many other works and articles have planted the seeds for my research and my reflection. I do not wish to drag out my answer, so I shall mention only the works of Brothers Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos, those of Sister Elisabeth Germain and those of Brother J.C. Dhotel, very particularly his «Origins of the Modern Catechism», which I am often inclined to quote.

Where does my work stand with regard to these studies? I would say, in an «original» way. At least that is what I think! In fact, it is not the text itself of the «Duties» which is the object of my concern (although it does hold a great interest for me) but rather the *plan of John Baptist De La Salle,* his message, and especially *his message for today.* For example, look at Chapter II of the First Part. I tried to situate the «Duties» within the total educational plan of the Founder. De La Salle wanted to take up the challenge which was presented to the Church and society of his time by the situation of the children of workers and of the poor, namely, their ignorance of knowledge essential to their salvation and their ignorance of the basic elements of culture and good manners. The chapter underlines the profound aim of this Lasallian educational endeavour to raise up true disciples of Jesus Christ, and to set up, and put into practice, the best means of achieving this result.

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3) **In your opinion, then, what is the essential message of this catechism?**

Before speaking about what is the essential message of John Baptist De La Salle which pervades «Duties II», I should like to say, first of all, that *this message is localized.*

My work insists on this aspect—at the risk perhaps of making what could be called the «present relevance of the message» less readable. The Founder's manual of catechism was produced at the end of seventeenth-century France. Its historical and culture roots seem to be in conflict with those of his source manuals of Claude Joly, Le Coreur and Paul Godet des Marais. The religious feelings of the period, its moral pessimism, ascetic and sacramental rigorism, are evident throughout many of the pages of the work. The manner in which the «Catechism lesson» was conceived, prepared, and delivered belong to pastoral and catechetical history.

I should like to add that because «Duties II» is «localized», it leads us to discover many of the aspects of the very personality of John Baptist De La Salle. It is very interesting to look at the writings of La Salle along side his original sources because what he chooses to use, how he arranges it, what he rejects are often very significant. It is a joy to discover it!

Let us get to your question, what in my opinion is the essential message of the catechism?. In answering the previous question, I have already said what, in my opinion, is the heart of Lasallian pastoral teaching and its aim: *to raise up true disciples of Jesus Christ.* It is the very objective of the entire first Instruction of Duties II. It is at the same time the starting point and the finishing point. You should read the very beautiful Treatise on Prayer with which the book ends. You will be as astonished as I was at the spiritual perspectives offered to these children of workers and of the poor who were enrolled in the Brothers' schools of that day. The Founder could not reveal his true self more than he has done in these pages: in them he explains his own way of praying, how he lived his own life under the gaze of a very loving Father, in union with Jesus Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Read with this fundamental perspective, «Duties II» clearly reveals a treasury of teaching which is ever up to date. I shall cite as some strong elements in the message of John Baptist De La Salle, the trinitary characteristics of his theological and spiritual thought; his care to lead the children to the God who acts through history; the importance which he gives to the Gospel maxims and the links he establishes between them and the Holy Spirit; his concept of prayer as a duty rendered to God in the Church, as a life of intimacy with God the Father, in Jesus Christ, and with the Spirit, as spirituality in action: all that makes up the material of the day of a Christian lay person is lived in union with Jesus Christ, in conformity with His own sentiments, His own actions. It is very difficult for me to mention everything. There are so many notations, sometimes said merely in passing, and other developments which are strongly suggested about the faith, the Eucharist, Christian practices, devotion, etc. To cite an example, here is a short quotation:

Q. What is meant by praying to God with devotion?

A. It means to pray with great respect and with a tender and inner devotion toward God and all that pertains to Him.

So few words to get across to us what is essential!

4) **In your opinion, what studies remain to be done with regard to the entire «Duties of a Christian Towards God?»**

If we should look at the *Cahiers Lasalliens* nos. 20 to 23, you will notice that there are five different texts in the Duties series. Each one of them deserves to be studied by itself. Duties I and II (C.L. nos. 20 and 21) have continued to attract attention even until the present day; their sources are rather circumscribed: they have been the object of a thesis, several articles and my own work.

Duties III (C.L. n. 22), which treats «Of the external and public worship which Christians are bound to render to God...» has not been the object of any systematic study; its sources are unknown. This «Catechism for Feasts», using the seventeenth century nomenclature, doubtlessly contains a «Lasallian Message» which we could also discover.

An attentive study of the two Abridgements, both the Large one and the Small one, without doubt, would be of interest for a better understanding of John Baptist De La Salle and of his catechetical writings.

The field of research is therefore immense. It is wide open for those who are inclined towards this type of research.

5) **Finally, how would you summarize the idea of your book?**

I have already had the chance of expressing it when I said that my work does not so much seek to be an erudite work but rather to be a witness to an ENCOUNTER. It is an encounter with the Founder during the very act of conceiving and writing his catechism. It is a research into his educational thoughts and total pastoral ideas. Above all, it is a communion with his most profound desire of raising up veritable disciples of Christ from among the Brothers and their students, Christians, in the true sense of the word, who share the sentiments of their Divine Master and live according to his teachings, thus rendering their «duties» towards the Most Blessed Trinity, within this Society where the Holy Spirit dwells, the Church.

6) **Can your work be of any help to the needs of the Brothers Catechists of today?**

The Brothers, and the lay teachers, who have read «John Baptist De La Salle: the message of his Catechesis» or in lieu of this, at least the account of this interview, can themselves respond positively or negatively to this question. Personally, I would respond positively. Even though the life problems to which Duties II addressed itself are not the same as those of our epoch, the «Lasallian plan» is ever valid and challenging. John Baptist De La Salle was engaged in a catechetical endeavour directed toward his time. What about us? He wanted to raise up true disciples of Jesus Christ, within the milieu which he was given evangelize. What are we doing in ours?

Yes, it is the Founder himself who, through his catechism, is drawing us to this research and writing endeavour so that we can put into operation a catechism for the young people of today!

7) Thank you very much, Brother Jean.

A Transcription made by
Brother Léon LAURAIRE of his
Interview with Brother Jean PUNGIER,
Rome, October 1985.

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08-A-41

THE VOCABULARY OF THE MEDITATIONS FOR THE TIME OF RETREAT

The project of the 'Vocabulaire lasallien'

Students of Lasallian spirituality will have learned with a pleasant sense of anticipation that a project of the Region of France is now under way for the issue in instalments of the massive compilation of Lasallian Vocabulary which has been in course of preparation at the Generalate, Rome, for a quarter of a century. Brother Maurice Hermans, General Editor of the *Cahiers Lasalliens,* began assembling the *Vocabulaire* in 1959 and, giving such time to the task as his many other commitments allowed, and working often alone but sometimes with valued collaborators, he has collected and card-indexed some 300,000 examples of the way the Founder used words in his writings. The source used for such references was the collection of the princeps editions of the Saint's works reproduced in Nos 12-25 of the *Cahiers Lasalliens.* The Region of France's project for issuing the *Vocabulaire* has been entrusted to Brother Daniel Hazard of 78a Rue de Sèvres, Paris. Brother Daniel envisages a total of six volumes of about 1000 pages each; a limited edition of 300 copies of each volume (in offset typescript format) will be available to subscribers. The first volume has in fact appeared and the others will follow, it is hoped, at approximate intervals of six months, the whole splendid undertaking being complete before the end of 1987.

A preview of what we may expect from the 'Vocabulaire Lasallien'

It so happens that we can obtain a good idea already of what we may expect to find in the *Vocabulaire Lasallien,* now that its volumes have begun to appear. As long ago as 1965, Brother Maurice Hermans, with the collaboration of Brother Michel Sauvage, compiled and published *Le Vocabulaire des Méditations pour le Temps de la Retraite*. 1104 words are listed in this, in alphabetical order, and the phrases exemplifying their use in the sixteen Retreat Meditations amount to 6376. As Brother Maurice explains in a preface to the work, the list of words presented is limited to verbs, substantives, adjectives and adjective-derived adverbs; it does not therefore exhaust the total vocabulary found in these meditations. Nevertheless, continues Brother Maurice, «such as it is, it certainly opens up the principal approaches to the thought of the author of the meditations.» Each word is accompanied by a list of brief phrases, sufficient already to give the reader an idea of how the word is usd. But a convenient and original system of reference makes it easy, if desired, to locate in *Cahier Lasallien No 13's* reproduction of the princeps edition, the full context of the quoted fragment.

The particular interest of a 'Vocabulaire' of the retreat meditations

A concordance of the *Meditations for the Time of a Retreat* is of special interest because it may be said that this work represents the full flowering of St. John Baptist de La Salle's spiritual teaching on the vocation of the Christian teacher. The studies of modern Lasallian scholars have shown convincingly that the retreat meditations represent the Founder's retrospective contemplation, in the evening of his life, of God's dealings with him through the successive stages of his spiritual journey. Brother Michel Sauvage has captured this idea in an expressive metaphor: «Irresistibly one thinks of an alpine climber who has scaled by arduous stages a rugged mountain-face and from the summit looks back and recognises and understands the route he has followed...» (*Cahiers Lasalliens No. 1,* p. XXXV). Brother Miguel Campos describes these sixteen meditations as the Founder's «peak experience», an experience in which he discovers a present point of time loaded with the fulness of past history and carrying within itself the full potential of history still to be made. In these writings the Founder reveals his grasp of God's action in his life, preparing the way for him, calling him, and urging him forward from one revelational experience to another in the work he had summoned him to do.

These are impressive claims for a writing so slight in quantity, but no-one who has read Michel Sauvage's *Catéchèse et Laicat* or Miguel Campos's doctoral thesis, published as Nos 45 and 46 of the *Cahiers Lasalliens,* can fail to be convinced of their appositeness or to accept Campos's word that the retreat meditations are one of the great texts of French spirituality of the seventeenth century. Such being the case, one approaches the Vocabulaire of this work with the expectation of making some interesting discoveries, and one is not disappointed. A few examples must suffice here.

Examples of what the 'Vocabulaire des MTR' suggests to us

Appropriately the substantive most used is *Dieu* which appears 187 times, and it would be possible to construct from these 187 examples a considerable Lasallian theology, using that term in its specific sense of the study of the nature of God. The God on whom the attention of the Founder is fixed in these meditations is the one addressed thus at the beginning of the first of the six new Eucharistic Prayers: «You do not leave us alone in our life's journey but are living and at work in the midst of us...». Merely looking through the list of usages we are aware that it is the immanence of God, rather than his transcendence, which here preoccupies the Founder.God, as manifested in the retreat meditations, is he who, having in his goodness created men, wishes that they all come to the knowledge of truth. He is himself this truth, but he has revealed it to men through Jesus Christ, the Apostles and the Church. He continues to call certain persons to be ministers of his word, so that salvation may be available to all. He is concerned about the plight of poor children whose lack of parental care exposes them to a life of ignorance and sin. He confides such children to the care of Christian teachers and calls upon those teachers to acquit themselves with zeal and love of the responsibility which he has placed upon them. He bestows special gifts on those

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whom he calls to this work to enable them to carry out their ministry well. At the judgment he will require those who have received these gifts to give an account of the souls confided to them even before giving an account of their own souls. But he is bountiful in the rewards he bestows on those who have carried out their ministry well, rewards they will enjoy even in this life and which, in the next life, will be proportionate to the service they have rendered to the children who will then be their glory. No fewer than 55 of the passages containing the word *God* are directly quoted from Scripture - an illustration of the extent of the biblical inspiration of these sixteen meditations, a feature of them which the studies of Michel Sauvage, Luis Varela and Miguel Campos have enabled us to appreciate.

Appropriately too, the substantive used most frequently after the term *God* is the name *Jesus Christ* which appears 95 times, 31 of them in direct quotations from Scripture. It is noticeable that in these scriptural passages the Founder, unlike his master St. Paul, never uses the alternative forms 'Christ' or 'Jesus' or 'Christ Jesus', variations which are a subject of discussion among exegetes of Paul's letters. But in this he is only following the Amelote N.T. translation which, as Michel Sauvage has shown in *Cahier Lasallien No1,* was his source for his sciptural quotations. What does, on the other hand, become clear, even from reading the mere list of phrases quoted in the «Vocabulaire» under the term *Jesus Christ,* is that the Christology revealed in the retreat meditations is profundly Pauline. All the quotations using the term are from Paul, with the single exception of one from the *Acts of the Apostles,* but the remaining 64 manifest no less convincingly Paul's influence on the Founder's understanding of Christ. (Paul's own name, it may be mentioned in passing, occurs 29 times in the sixteen meditations).

After *Dieu* and *Jesus Christ,* the noun having the greatest number of references in the 'Vocabulaire' is *enfant* which appears 90 times, and this fact seems to symbolise that synthesis which was at the heart of St. de la Salle's spiritual understanding in general and of the retreat meditations in particular. I mean the synthesis expressed in the well-known dictum found in the *Collection of Short Treatises:* 'Make no distinction between what concerns your salvation and perfection and your duties of state.'. Key notions in the Saint's pedagogy emerge from a mere numerical analysis of these 90 references. No fewer than 17 of them enshrine the idea that God, in his goodness, has specifically entrusted to the care of each Brother the pupils who frequent his classes. (A glance at the list of occurrences of the verbs *charger* — 25 times — and *confier* — also, coincidentally, 25 times — reinforces this concept). The Founder's finely-balanced awareness of children's capacity for ill and their potentiality for becoming 'true citiziens of heaven' likewise emerges impressively from this list. With these references in mind, one is less surprised than might otherwise be the case, to discover that the substantive *zele* has 46 references in this 'Vocabulaire'. One discerns the profound contemplation which had led the Saint to place the spirit of zeal alongside that of faith as the characteristic spirit of his disciples. The term *foi* itself occurs 22 times in the retreat meditations.

Thanks to the labours of the three Lasallian scholars mentioned above we no longer need to be told that the retreat meditations are impregnated with holy scripture. 212 direct quotations have been identified together with many other clear allusions to the Bible. The way, indeed, in which the Founder has steeped himself in the sacred text and has seemed to make its vocabulary his own is well illustrated by the words *ministère* and *ministre.* Both words make their appearance in the first point of the first meditation, in each case in direct quotations from St. Paul, *ministère* in two passages from *II Corinthians* and *ministre* in a passage from *I Corinthians.* The Founder thus, as it were, acknowledges his source for the two terms which he then continues to use throughout the series of meditations, *ministère* 26 times and *ministre* 11 times. But reference to a New Testament Concordance shows that, in the sense in which the Founder took over the two terms, Paul himself uses 'ministry' 9 times in the letters and 'minister' 7 times: so that the Founder uses the former word seventeen times more than Paul himself and the latter word four times more. It seems a fair assumption that our Saint had been so profoundly impressed by the richness of the concept contained in Paul's usage that he had absorbed the two terms into his own vocabulary and used them freely and unselfconsciously to describe the work and role of his humble disciples — apostles in their sphere as Paul had been in his.

Concluding remark

The writer of this paper is conscious that all the above offers only a superficial and very incomplete look (based only on the substantives of the meditations) at *The Vocabulary of the Meditations for the Time of Retreat.* But his modest purpose is only to offer a preview of what we may expect from the great *Vocabulaire* of Lasallian spirituality now in process of being published. One additional point may be mentioned by way of conclusion, though this does not refer specifically to the Founder's book we have been considering. Readers who have had occasion to consult No 10 of the *Cahiers Lasalliens* will know that Brother Maurice Hermans has there already made use of the unpublished *Vocabulaire* as a means of checking the authenticity of the texts the biographer Blain purports to be quoting from the Founder. As Brother Maurice explains in a foreword: 'It happens fairly frequently that, having quoted an authentic passage of the Founder, Blain goes on to provide comments, reflexions or amplifications which seem to be in a different vein, even though the biographer is presenting them as the teaching of the Founder. Recourse to the *Vocabulaire lasallien* makes it possible, more than once, to detect a use by the biographer of words and expressions which never appear in the written work of John Baptist de La Salle'. The examples which occur in CL 10 of this method of checking Blain's dependability in particular cases provide an additional reason for feeling grateful to the Region of France for undertaking the publication of the *Vocabulaire,* as well as (it goes without saying) to Brother Maurice and his collaborators who laboured successfully to provide students of Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy, within and outside the Institute, with this magnificent concordance.

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08-A-42

THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS: EMULATIONS AND REWARDS

The preceding two leaflets had to do with classroom relationships. In a certain way, rewards and corrections pertain to the same topic. In order to better understand what is said in The Management of Schools, it seems to me that it would be useful to say something about the situation of the family and the children with regard to the school, near the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth.

ELEMENTS OF THIS SITUATION:

Regarding attendance of classes

Instability, frequent absences from class, dropping out of school before the course was over were rather common. If school attendance was theoretically obligatory, in practice it was hardly observed. After centuries of more or less whimsical and irregular individualized instruction, the student body was not very well prepared to adjust to requirements and school behaviour required by simultaneous teaching. We know that one of the main concerns of John Baptist De La Salle and his first Brothers was how to keep the pupils in their places and how to make them more stable and regular.

Here are a couple of ways given them to arrive at this:

— Strong armed methods, based upon strict discipline or upon corrections were expected to act as deterrents. But we know that this type of «dissuasion» had uneven effects: many pupils quit the schools or left the teachers who made use of it!

— The softer way, which, it seems to me, was the choice which the Management of School favoured. What are the best ways of attracting the children, of making them interested in school, of getting them down to work, in spite of having to impose certain constraints on them to assure their continued progress? In this regard, you could not rely very much upon the parents for any help because they themselves had never experienced such a situation and they were not always convinced that staying many years in school had any value to it.

Interest in school work

The Management gives ample witness to the useful nature of the Lasallian school. This school should achieve good results so that the children, and especially their parents, would be convinced that attending classes regularly was not a waste of time.

The obvious success, preparing the children for occupations after they are finished with school, are the guarantees that the schools are useful. If certain pupils need further help and encouragement, then there should be no hesitation in providing such.

These orientations certainly explain to a great extent the success achieved by the first Lasallian schools. This success was attested by public opinion, by the proficiency of the students in these schools and by their stability. Here we present some of the concrete means proposed by the Management of Schools to achieve these results.

THE MEANS PROPOSED:

In the first place, the help given to the children individually:

«The teacher will help the pupils to apply themselves completely to catechism, which for them is not naturally easy and which is ordinarily of short duration, and they will achieve this by the following means:

1° They will take care not to scold or confuse them, either by words or in any other way, when they are unable to answer properly the question they have been asked.

2° They will encourage them and will even help them to say what they have difficulty in recalling.

3° They will offer rewards, which they will give from time to time to those who have been the best behaved and the most attentive—sometimes even to the slowest pupils who have made the greatest efforts to learn well. They will use various other similar means, which in their prudence and charity they will be able to find, to encourage the pupils to learn Catechism more willingly, and to retain it more easily». (page 133-134).

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They will make use of a «pedagogy of success»: Nowadays, the study of motivation and conduct acknowledges the importance of success, and of encouragement to facilitate the progress of the pupils. The organization of lessons and the methods used in the first Lasallian schools led to a normal assurance of success. Here are two significant passages:

«They shall be careful not to present any pupil to the Inspector for promotion who is not qualified. Pupils are easily discouraged when they have been admited by the teacher but have not been promoted by the Inspector». (p. 67).

Regarding those who have not been promoted, we have another passage on the way of encouraging them:

«They will persuade them by means of some reward, by assigning them to some office, such, for instance, as Head of the class, and making them understand that it is better to be the first, or among the first, in a lower grade than the last in a more advanced one». (p. 68).

Frequent Evaluation:

Today, along with incentives and motivation, frequent evaluation and its positive results are equally stressed.

According to the Management, the procedures in the Lasallian schools call for constant and immediate evaluation. However, it gives special solemnity to the monthly changing of the order or the lesson. This is not only a frame of reference of the pupil's progress but also a strong motivation and a positive re-enforcement of the learners.

Direct Emulation:

This depends not upon a search for equality but one of distinction. To create more dynamism in the class one must rely on mutual help, «the appeal to big brother» as certain psychiatrists say, to the model, to the «locomotives» who help along the less advanced, to help them become a part of the group:

«The teachers will come to an agreement with the Inspector upon those who might be promoted, but whom it would not be opportune to promote at that time: either because they are too young or because it is necessary to leave some in each grade or in each section who know how to read well enough to stimulate the others and serve as models for them; to train them to express themselves well, to pronounce the letters, syllables, and words distinctly, and to make the correct pauses».

«The teachers will take care, some time before the day the promotions are to be made, to inform those pupils whom the Brother Director or the Inspctor has agreed not to promote—either for their own good, because they are too young or for the good of the class and the grade, so that there may be some who can support the others. They will do this in such a way that these pupils will be content to remain in the grade or in the section where they are». (p. 68).

REWARDS, PROPERLY SPEAKING:

These occupy a very restricted place in the Management of Schools: only two pages, as if to indicate that recourse to such external and artificial means of emulation or motivation should be closely limited.

Elsewhere these recompenses aim more at the child's general conduct in school rather than towards his work properly speaking, his comportment being directed, in the language of that day, by «duties».

«From time to time, the teachers will give rewards to those of their pupils who are the most exact in fulfilling their duties, in order to incite them to do so with pleasure and to stimulate the others by the hope of the reward. (p. 160).

«There are three kinds of rewards which will be given in the schools: First, rewards for piety. Second, rewards for ability, Third, rewards for assiduity». (p. 138).

Further on, it specifies that the rewards for piety ought always to be the biggest and most beautiful of the prizes. Next comes assiduity, and finally, capacity. The objects given as rewards are equally classified into three categories: books, pictures or sacred texts. The books mentioned are always «book of piety» and sometimes constitute a way of making up for certain financial inequalities by giving them to the most needy.

«Hymn books and prayer books, Diocesan Catechisms, and other books that are used in the Christian Schools, may be given only to poor children. These will not be given to those who are able to buy them».

«Rewards for ability will be given only once every month. There will be but one for each grade. Every month, a reward may also be given to the pupil of the entire class who has excelled in everything, that is to say, to the one who has shown the most piety and decorum in church, and, during prayers, the greatest ability and assiduity». (p. 161).

IN CONCLUSION:

The last citation reminds us of an essential aspect of the educational aim of John Baptist De La Salle and can serve to conclude this brief study: whatever is proposed to the pupils never stops at the mere human level but tries to come into close contact with the child of God and to help him to become, more and more each day, a «true disciple of Jesus Christ».

Brother Léon LAURAIRE
Secretary of Education
Rome

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ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE, KINTBURY, ENGLAND: TEN YEARS ON. (3)

In the second part of his article (continued from the last Lasalliana), the first Director of this retreat centre for young people offers an outline of a typical session at St Cassian's.

For the first couple of years, the sessions were less structured than they eventually became, and included a few elements which we later discarded. I'll omit the details here. Called to formulate the theology of the Centre and to describe the process for a team which eventually came to include a few new members each year, I used to talk in term of the four «Becomes»: I. Become *relaxed.* 2. Become *aware.* 3. Become *reconciled.* 4. Become *good news.* In a few paragraphs which will not do justice to the variety of ways of opening up this pattern, let's try to show its internal logic - of how one «Become» leads to the next.

1. Become relaxed

The first task facing the team meeting a group of young people, coming to the centre from two or three different places, is to help the newly forming group to *relax* together. Fear, nervousness, self-consciousness and shyness are of course comon, especially on a first visit to the centre, and the work of the first evening must be to overcome these barriers which affect not only individuals in various degrees but the whole group. That means meeting in a big circle, after the evening meal, and introducing ourselves to the whole group — a painful business for many. The team tries to lead the way by offering models which the young people can use to talk briefly about themselves, their family, their special interests, and so on. Often a question, directly related to the main theme of the retreat, may be included, for instance «Can you remember ever getting lost or feeling lost when you were a child?» or «When you look back over the past few months, can you identify a high point and a low point?»

A few practical instructions and rules about the centre will follow, including such essential points as «no smoking in the bedrooms», «no disturbance at night», etc.. Then there is a chance to continue the discussion informally, mingling with new people before the evening ends with a night prayer. After singing some modern hymns (the participation being a good indicator of how relaxed the group has become!) and a couple of short readings and reflections, we would usually sit in darkness and pass round a lighted candle, each one being invited to make a short prayer before passing the candle to their neighbour. Prayers might range from «Please help my mum to get better from her sickness!» to «Thank you, Lord, for bringing us here!». to «God, I don't know if I believe in you!» to a period of silence, which might be awkward and embarrassed or reverent. Sometimes the silence spoke louder than words. The leader in introducing the prayer must recommend honesty: «Don't be afraid to be yourself!». Of course it may take some people the whole of the three or four day period to become relaxed, but if they make that step eventually (and the whole atmosphere of the centre is geared towards helping them to do so) they will have made a truly significant step, even if it is only the first one in our series.

2. Become aware

The task of «*becoming aware*» occupies the next full day of the retreat programme. After an informal morning prayer on the theme of the retreat (including some suitable Scripture, music and guided reflection), a presentation of the theme chosen for this retreat is offered by the team: the person directing this programme may give a talk, perhaps illustrated by extracts, music or slides, and often including a worksheet to be completed by individuals and then discussed after a coffee-break in small «sharing-groups» of about eight people (led by members of the team) to which each one is assigned, and to which they will belong for the rest of the

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retreat. The presentation is designed to help individuals become aware of themselves, of other people in their lives, of God (insider or outsider?) and to write down some answers to share in the small groups.

Having become aware of myself and some others, I can now become aware of *these* other members of my group and how they see life, what problems they face and where they look to find solutions. As time goes on, these groups can develop an intimate atmosphere of personal trust. This is always the intention, and much will depend on how skillfully the group is led — on the leader's self-confidence and sensitivity, including the ability to talk and be silent at the appropriate times, to encourage the shy and the reticent, to control the talkative, to challenge those who are hiding behind masks, to respond to and influence the dynamic at work in the group, and to encourage relationships to develop and deepen. You lead by example, of course, so you must be ready to share something of your personal story, if you are to ask others to do so. At the same time you must learn when to respect silence and how to help others handle silence and become at ease with it. Members of the team learn this by practice and by imitation, and by the mutual encouragement they offer to one another. Some have a natural gift for it, and their personal qualities make them fine leaders.

The growth in awareness of self, of others, of God in my life, is celebrated in a lively evening Eucharist, the different parts of which have been prepared by each of the small groups. The chance to work creatively together (say, in choosing readings and music, in preparing a collage or a mime, or in devising a penitential rite or a thanksgiving rite) enriches the relationships within each small group (even if it's often hard work and is another test of the leader's skills!), and the whole group benefits from this by celebrating a liturgy which is usually enjoyable, prayerful and lengthy (though the time is not usually noticed by the youngsters until the Eucharist is over). Exclamations of delight and surprise follow this unexpected success, which helps to consolidate further the life of this community which has existed for not much more than twenty-four hours, but which has been moving forward together — almost always at a rate and in a direction the young people had never dreamed of. We have just celebrated one of the communal and invididual highlights of our life together.

3. Become reconciled

It is to be hoped that the movement of the group has brought its members to the third stage, where the challenge is to «*become reconciled*». The increased self-awareness of the previous stage normally includes some sense of what is incomplete, unhappy, inconsistent, unhealed or wrong in my life. «Things go better with peace», so how do I find peace? How do I become reconciled? A considerable part of the next morning will be spent facing this challenge as an individual, but the whole group and then the small groups must explore the need for reconciliation and the various ways of seeking this. Each one will be helped to prepare a personal programme for a quiet period (of about one and a half hours), which might include a period of personal prayer and reflection outside in the gardens and woodland or in the attic prayer-room, where the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed. Selected portions of Scripture and personal experience, and sometimes creative writing (eg. a letter), might help. There may be an opportunity to go for an «Emmaus walk» with one other member of my group, with whom I choose to share more deeply my story and my problems; or perhaps the chance to have a chat with any member of the retreat-team I choose; or the opportunity to book a slot with the retreat chaplain for a personal experience of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This latter opportunity became an increasingly popular feature of the retreat, as the centre developed. It is a sensitive and delicate area, and its success depends largely on the help of a sympathetic priest with whom the young person can relate and can trust. This is far more important than the mechanics of the Sacrament, though these may need to be explained and simplified to help and encourage those who fear this often unfamiliar and abandoned territory, which, if I can become sufficiently relaxed, may open up for me an unknown country which turns out to be the land of the Lord's healing and liberating love.

Very occasionally, friends might want to celebrate the sacrament together; more rarely a young person might want to invite a non-clerical member of the team to accompany them a very touching invitation, which I have experienced. For me, the theological model of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to be found in John 21, where around the charcoal fire, Peter's symbol of failure and denial (See John 19, 15-18, 25-27), Jesus offers a new start to his friend, whom he calls by the name which recalls their first meeting (cf, John I, 42) and to whom he gives another chance to say a threefold Yes, in love and friendship which will take the relationship beyond that threefold denial, as well as healing it (John 21, 15-17). The conversation makes Peter «saddened» or «deeply moved» (verse 17), but this is a positive experience which ends with a new call to «follow me» and undertake a dangerous journey where he «would rather not go», an inevitable feature of his commitment to be a good shepherd of Jesus's lambs and sheep. The consequence of this third step may well be the difficult task of going home and making peace, perhaps with a member of the family with whom one's relationship has become sour or empty, and which Jesus wishes to heal.

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ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE: TEN YEARS ON (4)

4. Become good news

To try building up such a relationship is a good example of taking the fourth step - to «*become good news*», a step which follows the retreat and which is the main challenge of re-entry into the familiar world, which will not have understood my retreat-journey. The experience is, after all, not a «one-off experience», but an invitation to understand that this opportunity has been given to me so that it can be shared. The sharing starts at home and in school, in my place of work, among my circle of friends and acquaintances, wherever I belong. First I may need to hear some explicit good news about myself, and this will be the purpose of the evening activity in the small groups, which follows a Eucharist on the theme of Reconciliation, designed to offer a communal opportunity to acknowledge our guilt and ask for forgiveness. This second Eucharist of the retreat is a rather quieter experience than last night's, but, instead of helping to prepare the liturgy, each person will be invited to participate by responding simply and personally at key moments of the Eucharist which will draw on their personal experience of the third step, around which the day has been centred. There is no room here to present a detailed description.

For many participants, the affirmation experience of hearing *good news* about oneself turns out to be the most powerful experience of the whol retreat. Before the small groups are resumed, the leader explains the point of the forthcoming session to everyone and tries to create a suitable atmosphere. A rather theatrical but highly effective method I often used was one I picked up from Australia. I would start with a blank sheet of white A4 paper and tell the circle, «Imagine this is you, at 7-00am!» Then I would take them through a typical day, starting with a parental call («How many more times do I have to tell you to get up? You should go to bed earlier. And look at the state of your room! It's a disgrace.») and quoting remarks from other members of the family, teachers, schoolmates or workmates, and so on - which amounts to a constant chorus of criticism and depreciation. For each comment, I would tear off a small piece of the paper and drop it on the floor, until by the time the character whose day I was describing had ended up in bed, I had nothing left in my hand except a tiny corner of the once beautiful and complete page. And from where I stood, surrounded by «junk», I would remind the audience (who had been howling with laughter and recognition of the familiar situation) that when others fail to run us down we are accustomed to take on the role for ourselves, helping the destructive process by which we get torn to shreds each day by the hurtful criticism which we have been taught to level against ourselves. And holding up the little corner of paper left in my hand, I would quote St Bernard: «Man is become like nothing, brought to nothing. Indeed he is nothing... But how can he be nothing when God makes so much of him? How can be nothing, on whom God's heart is set? If we are nothing in our own hearts, there is another opinion of us hidden in the heart of God». (Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermo V, *In dedicatione Ecclesiae*).

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The groups would then be sent off to help their members discover that «other opinion» hidden in God's heart. Called to be God's voices, we would tell each member of our group what we liked or appreciated about them, what we felt to be their gifts or positive qualities. There were only three rules: one, that of honesty - it was essential that the exercise did not become insincere flattery; two, that the appreciative comment must not be qualified, or the entire effect would be destroyed («You have been very patient with me... *most* of the time!»); three, that the positive compliment must be accepted by the recipient and not denied («Oh, but you don't really know me!»). To start this conversation may not be easy — Another task for the leader's skills! — but once the youngsters start to lose their inhibitions and embarrassment, the effects can be extraordinary: tears of delight, broad smiles... When everyone has been complimented, the second half of the exercise begins. Each one thanks the group for the good news and is then allowed to speak briefly about one area in their lives with which they are dissatisfied («I'm lazy», «I don't get on with my younger brother», «I don't like such and such a person», «I'm very shy», etc). The group then prays with that person individually and aloud, asking the Lord to help them resolve the problem, heal the suffering and show a way forward. The experience of ministering to one another's needs in this way (unfamiliar to most of those who first take part in it) often proves to be a powerful and deep experience of Christian love, as it is described in I Corinthians 13.

The final morning of the retreat would involve all those who came from the same place meeting together to evaluate the retreat, discussing its high points, low points, values and challenges, and deciding in what way it had been good news. As a group, they would then be asked to work out one or two specific projects that they might apply to their situation at home, in school, in the parish or locality, with a view to sharing the good news. Each group would announce its intentions, plans and hopes (as «the Gospel according to so-and-so») in the course of the liturgy of the Word, during the final Eucharist - a liturgy of thanksgiving and looking to the future, before the final meal, preparations for departure and farewells, full (sometimes dangerously ful!) of tears and songs and promises, which marked the re-entry into the familiar world.

In the next issue of *Lasalliana,* J shall conclude this account of St Cassian's Centre by describing the effects of the experience in a few lives, as well as giving a description of the series of Yesweeks held each summer at the centre.

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LA SALLE
TEN YEARS IN THE AMAZON

Necessity and Hope

Two reasons can be adduced to define the presence of the Brothers of De La Salle in the Prelature of Xingu: one of local character and the other provincial.

The Prelature of Xingu with an area of 350,000 km 2, more or less, has the biggest territorial extension in Brazil: It is rooted in the State of Parana, between 05 and 9.8 degrees south latitude and between 53.5 and 55.6 west longitude. It extends from the majestic Amazon river to the State of Mato Grosso. In Brasilian terms it means a territory four times bigger than the State of Santa Catarina. In European terms, it surpasses in size all of Italy and a good part of Austria.

In 1975, this vast pastoral region was governed by a bishop with the help of 8 priests and a little more than a dozen religious sisters, the majority of whom were working in the school. With the designing, construction and opening of the Transamazon Highway, in September of 1972, which divides the Prelature of the East from that of the West, along an extension of more than 500 kilometers, many cultural, social, and pastoral problems began to arise. There was a veritable avalanche of immigrants from various parts of the country, giving rise to many serious problems: each family entrenched along the highway or its surroundings, came with its own peculiar customs and with its popular religiosity deeply embedded in their heart.

It so happened that the loneliness of the virgin forest unleashed a tremendous nostalgia for the homeland. The hopes of many immigrants were transformed into phantasms of poverty and misery and a spectrum of ignorance. In all this immense territory there was only one secondary school, situated in the city of Altamira at a distance of many kilometers. The improvisation of teachers was such that the families, in an almost desperate gesture, were confiding their children to a semi-illiterate whose pay was so ridiculously low that it hardly covered his transportation costs and his stay in Altamira where he had to go each month to collect it.

If these and other needs suffered by the people of Xingu brought us to the Mission, it is not less certain that these were not only reasons. Brother Francisco Alberto, Provincial, and a good group of Brothers of the Province looked upon this project as a sacred dream. They knew that it would awaken in the Brothers an impulse of renovation and would withdraw them from the routine of everyday life in the School.

The Church Brothers

Another factor which contributed and facilitated the choice of the Lasallians in the Province of Porto Alegre for the Mission in the Church of Xingu was, without doubt, the recent plan created by the Church Brothers. In Brazil, this movement originated in the Diocese of Caxias do Sol. In 1972, conscious of the soundness of this innovation, the CBNN took up the plan of approving the sending of missionaries of the South and Central region to the Amazon, totally deprived of anyone to care for their pastoral needs. The Archdiocese of Porto Alegre was able to adopt the Prelature of Xingu. In June of 1974 they sent the first two missionaries to Xingu.

The Lasallian Province of Porto Alegre, belonging to the *March-Misionera-Interna,* Movement for Local Missionaries, in March of 1975 sent its first contingent of missionaries to the city of Altamira in the persons of Brother Adelino Ferranti, student, Vanderlei Marostica, and Brother Pedro Bohnenberger, who was in charge of this small community.

The duties of the three were to serve in the formation of a faculty in the Maria de Matias Institute and to assume the pastoral and vocational care of the youth. In the latter work, for many years we accepted the direction of the Minor Seminary which was given over to the Clergy in 1981.

Missionary Anguish

The years passed by and with them we discovered that the activities in mission lands are ample and absorbing. The number of priests and religious have increased since 1975. Still, the 19 priests and the few dozen religious are hardly enough to attend to a population of 220,000 inhabitants scattered among 7 municipalities and 17 local towns. We Brothers are no longer 3 but 6 and we are totally submerged in, and in communion with, the local church, the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Here where the various and spectacular contrasts of nature live in harmony, a union of heart and mind are not always found among the people. The poverty and ignorance of the oppressed majority are the result of the ambition and the accumulation of wealth by some few privileged individuals. We feel that it is difficult to say «no» to the continual new pastoral needs. In fact, one cannot easily resist the pleadings of the heart when it is enamoured with the cause of the Kingdom. We have come to the point of discovering that the committed missionary, rather than sinning by omission, feels himself tempted to sin by the accumulation of pastoral tasks and activities.

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Education

In the city of Altamira, the Brothers have a headquarters whose administrator is Brother Beno Benemberger who also renders his services to the Community of Our Lady of Nazareth, in one of the sections of the city. His brother, Brother Pedro is committed to pastoral work at the Cathedral and also takes care of the Means of Social Communication of the Prelature.

In 1977, Brothers Waldemar Wolmann, Beno Benemberger, and Lucio Pauli opened a new community 180 kilometers from Altamira, close to the Transamazon Highway, in the very heart of the forest. There they took charge of the new public school, Malvin Jones. The then simple hamlet is today a respectable city with strong leanings toward political emancipation in a short while. Brother Ilirio Bertuol, who is in charge of the school today and who is assisted by Bro, Raimundo Zandomeneghi, has the responsibility of directing the 40 teachers and administrators and a school population of a bit under 1,000 in the complete elemntary school and in the lower section of the secondary school.

Since 1978, in addition to his responsabilities at the Melvin Jones school, Brother Waldemar took over the supervision of the schools along the Transamazon Highway and Alrededores from kilometer 180 to 235. Today, Brother Renato Thiel is in charge of this work. Since 1983, Brother Raimundo Zandomeneghi has been fulfilling the same function as supervisor in the State schools from Kilometer 130 to 180. These two Brothers serve a total of 57 schools, 145 teachers, and 3,023 pupils.

Upgrading Teaching

This contact with the teachers led Brother Jerónimo Brandelero to a new endeavour, starting qualifying courses for teachers during the summer months. They needed courses to complete their elementary education in order to facilitate their being admitted for secondary education. More than 100 students took the Basic Curse and of these 68 qualified as teachers. These studies were offered at the La Salle Formation Center in Uruara, km 180, which had been constructed by Brother Francisco Alberto. Other courses given there were those of «Literacy», Art Education, leadership, Hygiene, Secretarial, and Administration.

Keeping in mind the minimum value which the public authorities give to the teaching profession and the lack of solidarity among the teachers, Brothers Renato and Marino Testaolin dedicated themselves to organize the teachers and parents for the defense and restoration of their rights for the amelioration of the schools and of education. This work reached its zenith with the creation in 1985 of the Association of Educators of Uruará, ASSEDUR. Another Association of Parents and Teachers was organized also for the territory between km 130 and km 240.

Various Types of Evangelization

All the Brothers are engaged in pastoral activities outside of the schools. In Altamira, Brother Pedro gives courses on the «Christian Mystery» and partly cares for the finances of the Minor Seminary, Sao Joao Vianey, and since August 8, 1980, he has been daily directing the morning radio program, «Praying the Ave Maria». On Fridays, after the homily by the Bishop, «The Voice of the Pastor», Brother Pedro gives a brief commentary on the Sunday Gospel and gives a brief news report about the local, National, and Universal Church. The Brothers of the two communities are engaged in the formation of catechists and in catechesis for children, youth and adults, they animate the Bible Clubs for groups of youth in the neighborhood. In the absence of the priest, they lead the Sunday services.

In spite of the various types of work which do not facilitate the matter, nevertheless, the promotion of vocations is not neglected. This work for vocations is done through personal contacts in the Melvin Jones school and in the supervised schools.

Difficulties

During the year there are only two regular seasons, the rainy season and the sunny season. During the six months of rain, in the older houses, like our house in Altamira, the walls are damp, the whitewash comes off the walls, the roof becomes black, the floor begins to rot, and day and night the house has a mildewed smell. The streets, all of the land, are rarely in even a reasonable condition. In winter (the rainy season) there is much water erosion which enormously damages the surface of the streets.

In the summer there is soil erosion everywhere. There is clay and dust everywhere. A bus ride between Altamira and Uruará, which normally should take seven hours, can sometimes drag out for an entire day or more, but finally you make it. During the months of the heaviest rains, the only transportation company withdraws its vehicles from service. The sick, the sale of products, the buying of materials of prime importance, urgent messages, etc., all have to wait for their due time. The Air Transport Company, TABA, which brings the missionary to Belèm, Para or to the Mission at Xingu, does so in old and poorly maintained planes. It is so bad that recently TABA deserved to have its name mimicked as Transporte Aereo Bastante Arriestado, Air Transport Rather Dangerous.

There is one factor which we cannot omit: Among the good will of all those working in the pastoral mission in order to assume the «Preferential option in favor of the poor», and to put into practice liberating evangelization, there have arisen certain internal tensions which have caused a bit of difficulty in the work of the some of the Brothers. But we can say that this problem is now practically overcome. The 5000 or some kilometers which separate us physically from the other La Salle Brothers of the Province of Porto Alegre and the 200 kilometers full of difficulties which make our more frequent meetings between our two communities rather difficult, have in no way diminished our love, union, and enthusiasm for the Brothers, the Province, or the Congregation.

Brother Pedro BOHNENBERGER

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BROTHERS AT THE SERVICE OF DEAF YOUTH

For the past 140 years, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, together with a team of lay people, have been educating children and youth with defective hearing, particularly those profoundly deaf from birth, who cannot perceive the sounds of a word. They are, in fact, «those EXCLUDED from ORAL COMMUNICATION, those EXCLUDED from modern COMMUNICATION, which is so rapidly changing. These young people cannot speak at all or they speak very poorly, but that in no way means that the auditory deficiency exists only in the «one speaking». As with all people, to be in dialogue, there are things to be said, and the vital needs of relationships.

Our objectives

In terms of ages, our pedagogical and educational work endeavours:

— to make the very smallest children become aware of a «communication relationship» and to lead them to it.

— Through sight and touch to teach them the phonemes of our language (vowels, consonants, syllables) to lead them towards words, and then phrases.

— to introduce them to «lip reading» so that they can understand the message of those who speak to them.

— to teach them the oral and written French language, mathematics, science, etc... as other children.

— To give them, eventually, schooling, a professional formation which will allow them to take their active place in society.

This absorbing and difficult work always requires the teacher or the educator to be simple and precise in the use of the means of communication, following in this the advice of John Baptist de La Salle:

«You must study to word the questions and answers... in so clear a manner that they will be easily understood». (Med. 33,3).

For a specific total formation

The main purpose which a specialized teacher should have is to lead those with hearing deficiencies towards a complete mastery of the French language, to give them a place in the world of work, and to make them share as fully as possible in the mainstream of life. Still, to over-stress this aspect of things, there is always the risk of misunderstanding the deep realities of the handicap. A famous American psychiatrist has very correctly observed that «people who can hear decide what is to be done for deaf children and adults, without taking their real conditions of life into consideration». (H. Furth).

Deaf adults themselves, after many years, try to lay claim to «their right to be different»: What deaf adults are seeking... is that you help them to be TRULY deaf adults and not a hybrid, a hearing personality grafted onto a deaf body». (R.M. Raynaud).

The judgement is severe but, nevertheless has a partial basis. For it is true that a great number of specialists work in behalf of those with hearing deficiencies: doctors, audioprothesists, orthophonists, social workers, administrators, professors, psychologists! They are all dedicated to different kinds of research, all kind of divergent initiatives which unfortunately sometimes lose sight of the fact that a young deaf person is someone to be educated as a TOTALITY. And this is not always easy to say and to live! For example, when a father or mother discover this handicap, they are traumatized and thus tend to zero in on this difference — the absence of hearing — «they deny this initial wound» (R. Diotkine). They want, at any price, that their child should speak the same as others. They forget that other ways of true communication exist:

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«In giving a prime importance to the word which her child cannot hear, the mother loses the capacity of changing in another way, as she did without her own knowledge, when she spoke naturally to her child at a time when she did not know about his deafness... If this gap is prolonged, it can have serious repercussions on the communicative and linguistic abilities of the deaf child». (D. Bouvet).

This concept of totality finally implies that beside the proper techniques towards oral communication, our educational team should also allow the culture which specifically belongs to the world of the deaf to be developed and encouraged. This culture proceeds with the knowledge and mastery of «sign language», which is truly a language. This sign language allows those with defective hearing to see themselves as «different» but not «isolated». Two years ago a deaf teacher joined the teaching staff, and the proposal that there be frequent contacts between the school and associations of deaf adults seems to be a good one. Thus the young people will be able to identify themselves, and have a «model» or «reference», with someone who lives the same difficulties, the same hopes, and the same joys as themselves.

Further, the average time of studying in our school is between 10 and 14 years. For our former students, the school remains as «their home». They willing come back there, at first to renew acquaintances, and then to exchange views with their former teachers. They reveal their concerns and seek explanations and help. The discussions are always lively. A fraternal dialogue is establishedbetween the deaf and those who can hear.

Pastoral activities

While being attentive to the total education of the deaf, we do not neglect their spiritual and religious formation. Even more than in other fields, the RELIGIOUS AWAKENING of the young requires the catechists to understand the psychology of the deaf youth very well and to perfectly master all the means of communication at their disposal. It is for this reason that the team is essentially composed of both Brothers and lay people who are «specialists».

Catechism is taught to the youngest children, with the consent of their parents. Encounters and retreats are available to the older ones. They come willingly, but the difficulties of adolescence, peer pressure, etc. make the task rather difficult. All the preparations for such encounters require a lot of time and technical means: slides and also written texts have to be projected on a screen, significant gestures have to be studied, and simplified explanations of the riches and depth of our faith have to be present above all.

Another concern with regard to the city and the region is the support and deepening of the Christian life among deaf adults. A monthly Eucharistic celebration brings together the deaf community: adults, children, parents, and friends. This celebration is prepared by a mixed team: those who are deaf and those who can hear. Once a trimester, the group meets, together with the chaplain, for a day of prayer and reflection.

Once a year, to celebrate Easter together, a great group of former students from all over France come together within the premises of the Institution. Here, about 180 to 250 people can be seen together in a warm atmosphere of faith, friendship, and solidarity, erasing the barriers of space and time.

Within this spiritual domain, we also are called upon to live the difference. Of the 114 children who frequent our center, 28 belong to the muslim religion. A professor, who himself is a muslim, helps them in prayer and during the feasts called for by the Koran. Together, and with joy the Christians and the Moslems commemorate, by a little celebration, the great liturgical moments of each religion.

Conclusion.

In the nineteenth century, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, conducted five institutions for deaf children. Today, only one remains in France. Far from lamenting past history, we continue this apostolic work which fits in so well within the frame work of John Baptist De La Salle's initiatives in favor of the poor and which responds so well to the «Declaration of the Brothers in the World Today» (34,2).

For the service to the poor cannot be separated from the poverty which is a Christian attitude of mind, the humble acceptance of the gift of Christ, the response of love for Christ, and for all men. It also requires a genuine participation in the life of the poor, and effective union with them.

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08-B-39

THE LASALLIAN APOSTOLATE IN THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OF THE USA

In the United States of America, the Brothers operate seven institutions of higher education:

Manhattan College (NY), La Salle University (PA), Lewis University (IL), St. Mary's College (MN) Christian Brothers College (TN), College of Santa Fe (NM), and St. Mary's College (CA). In these seven post-secondary institutions, there are a total of 169 Brothers, who with a large number of religious and lay colleagues are engaged in educating 21,500 students.

These colleges, several of which were founded well over a century ago, represent an authentic expression of the Lasallian charism. They were begun at the call of the Church, as expressed by American bishops and clergy, and in response to «signs of the times»: the need of the immigrant American Catholic Church for institutions to preserve the faith of young Catholics and to enable them to take their place in American society with competent intellectual and professional preparation.

They continue in existence today, in spite of the unfortunate conflict over the «Latin question»; they are an important part of the American Catholic educational enterprise as well as of the Brothers' apostolic work, as Brother John Johnston, Vicar General stated in his address to the United State/Toronto Regional Convocation in August, 1984:

«I would favour giving high priority to our colleges in the United States. I am convinced that Catholic higher education is an important element in the mission of the U.S. Church and that many Brothers have a gift for contributing on this level. At the same time we must participate actively in the continuing search for the meaning of the Catholic college and university and commit ourselves to strengthening the identity and character of our institutions as Catholic. Furthermore, I believe the Brothers in the U.S. can help the Institute articulate the relationship of the FSC to higher education, an articulation that has not yet been done on the Institute level».

The Brothers' colleges offer degrees on the Baccalaureate and Masters' degree levels. These degrees are in almost all academic and scientific disciplines. All the colleges have teacher education programs, to prepare instructors for elementary and secondary schools. Candidates for the Institute receive their baccalaureate-level training at the Brothers' institutions for the most part. Higher degrees more often are earned by the Brothers at other Catholic and secular universities.

The principal source of operating revenue for these colleges and universities is the tuition paid by the students: they are aided by government grants and loans available to those who need financial aid to pay the college costs. Through this means, along with assistance from funds solicited by the colleges from benefactors, large numbers of low income students are being educated at the Brothers' colleges and universities.

The Brothers' colleges and universities are today fulfilling the call of Pope John Paul II when he spoke to representatives of American Catholic higher education at the Catholic University of America in 1979:

«...to be what it ought to be, a Catholic university must set up among its faculty and students, a real community which bears witness to a living and operative Christianity, a community whose sincere commitment to scientific research and study goes together with a deep commitment to authentic living». John Paul II.

The Holy Father's call to *community* is one to which the Brothers can respond with all the richness of our tradition of living and working as a corporate entity in the Church. Members of the Institute have been characterized as having a basic character of community, resulting from the nature of our apostolate in common, and from our concern for persons and for the needy. This communitarian emphasis affects the manner of learning, the growth in faith, and the way of living on our college campuses.

Certainly a concern for community is shared with other religious groups and the dioceses who sponsor Catholic colleges, but the Brothers' approach has a unique Lasallian cast. It is derived from the presence and witness of the community of Brothers on campus, who bring to the college their spirit of faith and zeal, together with a profound concern for the disadvantaged and the poor, in whatever guise such may present themselves. This is expressed by the manner in which the Brothers and their colleagues strive to build a five-fold community, one that is *caring, just, ethical, theological,* and *believing*.

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A Caring Community

In response to the fundamental call to «love thy neighbor», the Brothers work that their student and all on campus live together in love, concern, respect, and sensitivity. Today's youth, as well as adults, seek an environment where these qualities are present. The Brothers strive to be the guardians of community on campus, with the students as well as among faculty and staff. This serves to counter the natural spirit of competition which exists among students and faculty, and helps all to go out to the «lost sheep»: the poor, suffering, and discouraged on campus.

A Just Community

The Brothers strive that life on the campuses of our colleges exemplifies upright living in every way. Justice is observed, with everyone paying to God, to neighbor, and to self what is due, and each one's rights to his property and his reputation are safeguarded. Certain moral evils can be present to a marked degree on a campus because of the age level which predominates. The Brothers' tradition of «vigilance» is a powerful force in guiding students to moral maturity and preventing dehumanizing actions from holding sway over individuals and groups. They serve to guard the moral health of the community as well as of individuals.

An Ethical Community

The Brothers in the American colleges realize that they must not only see to right living while students are with them, but also do everything possible to prepare them with solid and upright consciences for the future, so that they will «walk in the ways of the Lord» as parents, as citizens, and as professionals. Ethical concerns are multiplying in every field of endeavor. Social justice issues infringe upon almost every academic discipline. It is possible on the college and university level to study intensively the ethical concerns relating to poverty, racism, nuclear armaments, genetics, pollution, and the like. The Brothers bring their ethical and moral sensitivity to these matters and their zeal for a better world into their classes and faculty meetings, and to their personal conseling of students. They play a prophetic role in the campus community in this regard.

A Scholarly, Theological Community

A Brothers' college aims at becoming a cohesive community of teachers and learners whose effects are crowned by a high regard for theology, the «queen of sciences». Whatever their academic discipline or administrative role, the Brothers are called upon to be philosophers and theologians. As «Apostles of the Catechism», Brothers individually and as a group on campus, see that theologians are in dialogue with scholars in all fields. They encourage students to confront religious questions and explore the religious dimensions of life. College departments of theology are given strong support. The Brothers are concerned that this area of intellectual study avoids the extremes of anti-intellectualism which might appear under guise of religious orthodoxy, or, on the other hand, religious indifference in the name of academic purity.

A Faith Community

In virtue of their zeal to make faith a pervasive element on the college campus, the Brothers in our colleges strive to form faculty, staff, and students into a community of believers, mature in adult faith and who acknowledge, respect, and strengthen faith throughout the life and learning of the college. This is manifested publicly by worship and celebration, and by the offerings of campus ministry staff who provide opportunity for faith growth through prayer and sharing. All of the colleges give priority to liturgy and prayer opportunities for the Catholic students and staff, while also providing ecumenical events and services for the many non-Catholics who attend our institutions. In many classes, the traditional recalling of the presence of God, followed by a brief prayer, is held in honor.

In addition to their direct efforts for faith growth, the Brothers exert a powerful influence in this regard by their presence on the campus. The witness of their individual consecration and the example of their community life incarnate the mystery of God and His action in the world for all the campus to see. The Brothers thus are «living symbols» of faith.

Uniquely American Community

The Brothers' colleges and universities in the United States have come to be challenging opportunities to carry out the Lasallian charism in an educational milieu which is highly significant to the American Church and to American society. These institutions largely serve the workers' and middle class, but the sacrifices of the Brothers, the generosity of benefactors, and, especially, the financial aid available for needy youth from government sources, enable large numbers of disadvantaged poor, black, and Hispanic youth to attend our schools. These, as well as all the Lasallian students, are empowered to take their place as active leaders in American business, industry, and professional life, as responsible citizens of our country, and faithful members of their Church.

Such is the contribution of the American colleges to the Lasallian apostolate in the world today.

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08-B-40

SOME INITIATIVES FOR THE FORMATION OF OUR YOUNG BROTHERS IN AFRICA

1 - A long way to go

The RELAF (The Lasallian Region of Africa) has just taken some common measures in view of the basic formation of their young Brothers. They had to travel the relatively long route of about fifteen years to arrive at similar decisions which are in operation throughout the world. This was so, for these decisions were the results of long and difficult negotiations and agreements.

It was in 1972 that the first meeting of those responsible for the Institute in Africa was held, and this was done with the effective assistance of the Central government of the Institute. A certain number of problems which are common and specific to the Lasallian religious life in Africa were thus grappled with. After this, more frequent meetings have been held and more exchanges and contacts have been established, sessions of permanent formation were organized in a systematic and regular fashion. Thus the CLAF (The African Lasallian Center) meets every two years with some twenty Brothers or other interested educators coming together to renew their ministry, their community life, and to reflect upon the inculturation of the Lasallian charism in Africa...

All of this enabled many Brothers to rise to a Continental level, permitting them to meet and get to know one another. It has contributed to modeling and making more precise the image of the RELAF which is made up of districts, sub-districts, and delegations which are so far away from one another geographically as well as historically.

Thus initial formation had been for a long time subject, if not a victim, of this disparity.

2 - Sporadic and mutual assistance

At the beginning of their history, the various Lasallian sectors of Africa relied very much on the founding districts of Europe and America for the initial formation of their Brothers. However, of late, for several reasons which can not be brought up here, because of the lack of time and of place, the African houses of formation had to appeal, no longer to people abroad, but to the Brothers in their own sectors. Thus was born a change of approach or an alliance among the neighboring African districts to solve the problem of the basic formation of their Brothers. The initiative for this mutual assistance first became a reality in 1977 in Upper Volta, which today is known as Burkina Faso.

The novitiate of Toussiana received the novices from Cameroon and Rwanda and received help from Madagascar to complete the staff. Next, it was the big island itself which opened its novitiate in Analabe to initiate Rwandese and Cameroons into the Lasallian religious life.

We must take note of a pragmatic characteristic of these initiatives. There are no available formateurs on the scene, and yet there are young men ready and waiting to begin their novitiate. Well then! They send the young men first to a fellow district which has a formation staff available and a novitiate which is too large for its own subjects.

3 - The Urgency of a common formation programme

The first initiatives of cooperation are waiting, however, to be completed by better thought-out planning. If you put novices from different sectors together into the same formation program, it is first of all necessary that they all have similar formation and background, enabling them to follow the same instructions in a common novitiate.

Thus, concretely, beginning with the actual practice, it can be determined that the postulancy program of such or such a sector is at fault because it is too short, does not have enough postulants, because the religious formation is too rudimentary, etc.

From these critical considerations was born the idea establishing one common formation program; and this idea would be all the more urgent because the orientations and suggestions coming from the Center of the Institute recommended taking the initial formation of the Brothers very seriously. It is a priority and must be handled as such.

To take up this challenge, the conference of the Brothers Visitors of Africa called together all those responsible for formation in the various districts, at Yaoundé in 1982. This meeting drew up a document, the

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biggest part of which dealt with «*Orientations for Initial Formation*». It is a document of reference intended for the councilors of districts, vocation committees, and for those responsible for houses of formation. These directives encompass successively the contents of the program of initial formation, their fundamental objectives, the means of realizing them, and the amount of time to be devoted to them. It is above all the formation of the novices which gave this group of formateurs the most to think about; they tried to determine the principal objectives of the novitiate and to suggest the best means of attaining them. To avoid a long and drawn out presentation, we shall point out only the main titles and their objectives:

— To follow Christ by living the spirit of the Beatitudes.
— To enter ourselves into the life of the Church.
— To form a Lasallian community.
— To form Brothers for today, capable of preparing the adults of tomorrow.
— To endorse the inculturation of our religious life into the people where it is present.

With regard to the pedagogy to be followed, the following was recommended:

— Take great care in beginning with life and finishing with life.
— See to it that each Novice takes a hand in his own formation.
— Discover the needs of today in order to undertake new modes of educational presence to the poor.

A summary of the programme is drawn up following these objectives in order to give the formateurs some concrete guidelines for implementing them.

4 - The decision is taken for a regional novitiate

The implementation of this common program could have been given to each district as its own responsibility. However, this would require sufficient personnel, which is not available in these Lasallian sectors of Africa. Thus, the idea came up of grouping the novitiates together and thus make use of the competence of the various formateurs available. This would also enable the Novitiate programme to be extended to two years, which had been the object of serious discussions and frequent dialogue between the Center of the Institute and the RELAF. Finally, during its annual meeting, held in 1983, the conference of African Visitors decided upon establishing a regional novitiate in Kinshasa. It would assure two years of initial religious formation for the young African Brothers belonging to the various districts of RELAF, following the formation plan established by the regional conference. At present, this decision is being implemented in the following way:

Some twenty novices, coming from five districts, sub-districts, or delegations, are following a common formation programme in Kinshasa. The direction is confided to a team of four Brothers of four different nationalities. Of these, two are Europeans and two are Africans.

This is a great accomplishment of the RELAF. It is hoped that it will last and that it will develop for the benefit of the initial formation of our young African Brothers.

We can point out, also, that the Visitors' Conference of the RELAF is already looking towards extending this cooperation even to a Post-novitiate. For the moment, the organization of this Post-novitiate is left up to each district, the professional or academic studies which the young Brothers should pursue during this time being the function of the official programme of each nation.

Still, the preparation time just prior to perpetual profession is again assumed by the Region. Thus, the decision has been made to create a Lasallian African Center (CELA) beginning in 1986. The CELA will be designed for all the Brothers who come to the year of their definitive commitment. It is proposed that they follow an entire year in order to deepen their sense of religious consecration, the meaning of the vows, the ministry of a Brother, to help them in inculturating the Lasallian charism within the African context. This decision still remains in the planning stage. But the young Brothers who are preparing for this definitive commitment are there. They are awaiting the opening of CELA. The problem is in providing the staff.

Conclusion

The RELAF is without doubt one of the most diverse and least homogeneous of the Regions in the Institute. In spite of this, it is always obliged to meet together and to do certain things together, not only to affirm its existence, but also to express its dynamism and its will to life. Thus, the CLAF (Lasallian African Center) has continued to function until the present. Still, it is for the benefit of the formation of the young, those Brothers who will carry on the work in the future, that the RELAF has centered all its attention during the past few years. Without doubt, there exists a willingness to listen and to implement the orientations coming from the Center of the Institute on the Apostolate of vocations and initial formation. (cf. Circ. 418). But, at the same time, it is felt that the Region is seeking to find itself further; it is exploring the need of reflecting together on the Lasallian religious life in Africa; it realizes the urgency of restating a programme of serious formation in order to take care of the young people who in sufficient numbers seem to be interested in our way of life. It is this above all which has justified these different decisions of the RELAF. However, not everything has been accomplished; very much remains to be done. Cooperation should be further developed and opened to the other Regions of the Institute.

Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly
General Council

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08-C-30

PASTORAL CARE OF YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY (1)

«If the meeting did not devote as much time to Lasallian Associations as to lay staff, it was through shortage of time rather than lack of interest. It was indeed evident from the discussion that the associations are experiencing the spirit of renewal in many areas. It is affecting former pupils, parents and sympathizers and is evidenced not so much by campaigns for a numerous membership as by an increased interest in the Founder and in the Brothers and by increased generosity in sharing our mission. It is more especially groups of young Lasallians who are making their presence felt in a number of regions and with a pronounced inclination to prayer, brotherhood and the cause of justice.

To speak of a Lasallian spring would perhaps be an exaggeration or too rhetorical. But it is true that «something» is taking place under our very eyes. The discussions enabled the representatives of areas where such movements are occurring to inform those where they are not of the apostolic interest aroused and to show them that it is possible everywhere provided that one takes the local circumstances into account.» (P. 26-27).

In the document just quoted, it is affirmed that «'Something' is taking place before our very eyes» and it is important to see it and discern it with clarity. When the Brothers Visitors met in 1981 they did not have time to analyze the theme, as affirmed by the General Council, but since that time until 1985 many things have happened which will give a much more significant importance to the theme in the forthcoming General Chapter.

What is this Lasallian Youth Movement, with its various names, styles, and methodologies, which seems to be spreading all over the Lasallian world in such a significant manner? How far can those Brothers go, without falling into a trap, who try to «free themselves» from big and complete structures so that they may serve the poor better? Is it not a new attempt to continue to forbid the young to get involved with the local church? What does that have to do with being a Lasallian?

Without doubt, these questions, and many others, could be asked at this time by those of us who are working and by those simply witnessing the development of these Lasallian youth groups which often strive, even without the help of the Brothers themselves to establish a faithful enthusiasm for St. De La Salle.

Youth Pastoral Work and the Brothers

This article is being written in Argentina, at the very southern tip of Latin America, a continent which, since 1978 has established two priorities in a joint apostolate: the option for the poor and the option for youth.

We in no way exaggerate when we say that this is an option in which the majority of the population is united, seeing that the greater part of the population is young and poor.

Pastoral care for the young, in one form or another, has always existed in our Institute. Nevertheless, what is really new is a definitely Lasallian profile in the style and formation of the very leaders of these movements. Let us look at some of these characteristics.

My district, during the last chapter, set up Youth Pastoral work as a priority area and assigned two Brothers on a full-time basis to take charge of the emerging MOJULA, as this movement is being called by the youth. The principal task was to form leaders (animators, conselors) who would arise from among the Brothers (especially, the young Brothers) at first and then among the older students.

Little by little, the style of this very Youth Pastoral went on affecting other areas of the District and mutually enriching them by reflecting on what has been accomplished in each one of these (the Apostolate of Adults, Education, Catechesis, formation, etc.).

The entire district gave its explicit support to this «model» apostolate, in the meeting of all the Brothers of the District in 1984.

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Lasallian characteristics of the lasallian movement

What seems to give the meaning and solidity to the Lasallian Youth Movement is its possessing a spirituality and a mission.

The Profile of a Lasallian Animator

Our youth leaders, who are anywhere between 16 and 24 years of age, at present, possess these characteristics:

— A great love for the Founder and a more or less good knowledge of his life.

— A life of faith expressed by a frequent and lively consciousness of the presence of God, daily reading of the Gospels, attendance at the Eucharistic celebration and sacrament of Reconciliation.

— A «plan of life» which is centered on the love to follow Christ in some virtues which He practiced or in the practice of a particular aspect of each of them, which is transformed into an important element of discernment.

— Active service to the Movement expressed in the weekly participation in the community meetings, in the preparation and animation of the younger groups, participation within the activities organized for the strengthening of the life and and commitment of our Movement.

— A disposition of service to the Church and her People, particularly to the most poor which is expressed in the realization of «Lasallian Service». Lasallian Service is the name given to the mission carried out in the rural areas, far from the large urban centers, camps and outings for poor boys and girls, support for poor schools or poor neighborhoods of the city, in many capaigns of solidarity, leadership courses, etc..

— Participation in pastoral activities on the local Church level as well as on the national level.

— A desire to be helped in their own personal spiritual growth and discernment, which is often neglected because of the lack of counselors or Brothers who understand these matters and are willing to get involved in them.

— A sincere attachment to the Brothers' Institute and its works. It is an attachment which does not prevent them from being critical in situations which they cannot understand or find in contradiction with the life of the Brothers.

A Common Mission

The movement assumes distinct types of commitments in keeping with the mission received from God through our Founder, Saint John Baptist De La Salle. These activities differ according to the needs of the place and the abilities of the groups. Among these, we consider that the most important ones are helping slow students with their school work, catechizing their own companions, the children in areas near Lasallian centers, help given to children's homes, etc..

Other possible activities:

— COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, that is, those done as a group, not individually. Planned, carried out, and evaluated as a group.

— CHRISTIAN-ECCLESIAL, that is, something beyond mere philanthropy or good fellowship.

— EVANGELICAL-EDUCATIONAL, that is, engaged in what we refer to as the ministry of the Word, in harmony with Lasallian spirituality.

— DIRECTED ESPECIALLY TOWARDS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS OR TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF PASTORAL OR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS.

— CARRIED OUT PREFERABLY AMONG THE POOR.

These activities are carried on by the older of the members of the movement but are supported in various ways by the younger groups.

Following the example of the Founder, their activities have the mark of authenticity by being gratuitous.

Bro. Alberto CROCE

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08-C-31

PASTORAL CARE OF YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT OF LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY (2)

Some difficulties and challenges

We believe that in this pastoral work, recently done, we are beginning to detect certain common grounds for the future. This pastoral work cannot be planned «from the drawing board». It is a question of living among the youth and to discover the way together with them. It is the youth themselves who best understand the realities of evangelization.

We believe that the Lasallian Youth Movement does not have for its objective to be a life-long commitment in the Christian life on the part of those who join it. There are already movements in the Church for those who want to live their Christian life «within a movement». The Mojula is a stage in ecclesial incarnation and discernment. Our youth ought to find «their own» place of commitment with the world and with the Church. We have to rediscover the meaning of «being secular», of being in the world. Our Latin American people possess too great a richness of cultural values in order to start on another road which is not that of encarnation to revivify the evangelization in them.

Some youths, nevertheless, will discover that the «Lasallian style of living the Gospel» is what God is inviting them to embrace. How? Where? With Whom?

There are some timid responses and other spirited witnesses, but this is only the beginning.

Among the poor to whom we are offering some educational services, members and leaders continue to emerge who give us a new pastoral style which is more suited to the poor and the deprived. How do we respond to this new reality?

The young people of the movement who open our schools to the poor areas often come into conflict with some of our Brothers. Some among us are literally stuck by the internal working of a school, which beside overwhelming us, does not permit us to see what it going on 100 meters away from our lecture halls. This creates conflicts. How can we profit by this instead of allowing it to destroy us?

The Brothers, so scarce and tired, see in these youths the illusion of a reserve of future replacements who will finally allow the work to carry on, which they have continued up until now with so much sorrow and sacrifice. How can we make them accept the fact that our young people want «another thing»?

At times, some Brothers find these youth leaders and animators to be closer and easier to understand, more in tune with their own ideals than their own Brothers in the community. What do we do when confronted with the risks and problems which are evoked by such a situation?

Associating with the older youth necessarily implies a greater or lesser involvement in the realities in which they themselves are living. Sometimes these are union activities, university, political, and economical matters, etc.. These activities invite our participation in spite of our rules and the strong resistance on the part of many Brothers. What can be done

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so that the Brothers who are working with youth will not be rebuffed or criticized by their own community?

In summary, the challenge facing us here is the relationship between the Institute and the Youth Movement. The document cited at the beginning of this article manages to deepen the reflection on this matter which cannot be resolved in these few lines.

Youth pastoral apostolate and recruiting vocations

I have left for last this topic, which, unfortunately, is for many the only thing at present worth talking about. We are not engaged in the Pastoral Apostolate among Youth so that there may be more Brothers. This is not fair in itself. It is not a question of changing the method of «recruitment», and instead of showing a swimming pool and a house of formation to now show a Brother playing a guitar because it is more attractive to the young.

It is the intention of our Youth Pastoral Apostolate to have all the young people in our group find in themselves the elements which will lead them to discern and choose the life style which will let them find their own vocation, in its most profound and widest sense: to put into reality their Plan of Life.

Still, with the same force with which we affirm that we cannot be forced into a trap or be subjected to pressures of any type, we say that we believe that in the measure that our young people go on learning our spirituality and sharing our mission, they will have the elements which will allow them to freely choose to «associate themselves» with us within the Institute.

This is not a question of a theoretical affirmation. Those who said this same thing many years ago without being able to prove it, suffered very much. Today, thanks be to God and to the efforts of many, our novitiates continue to be repopulated by youths belonging to these youth groups. This is cause for hope and rejoicing.

But our joy is just as great when we see so many young men and young women opting for teaching among the poor as a way of life, by becoming catechists, by choosing service to the Church, by a commitment to the liberation of our people. Both God and our Founder wish that we in the Church of today should take up this challenge of our times. The Institute must take up this challenge if it wishes to be faithful to God, to the service of man, and to the dignity of life, according to its charism.

Brother Alberto Cesar CROCE, FSC
Commission of Youth Pastoral
District of Argentina

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08-C-32

HOLISTIC SPIRITUALITY AND THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

Einstein, the physicist, remarked that we did not need to think more in this age, but we need to think differently: we need a new paradigm for the sciences. Carl Rogers, the psychologist, calls for a new paradigm in the human sciences. Fr. Mattew Fox, O.P., a theologian, calls for a new paradigm in theology. Much has been gained to this end by looking to the American Indian and to the Orient. The new paradigm sees life holistically: as unified, interrelated, interdependent — a rhythmic, cyclical, dynamic harmony between polarities (*yin* and *yang*). Jesus was born in a culture of a similar perspective. From the late Plato and through Augustine, however, thinking in the West evolved to be dualistic; and with the writings of Descartes and Newton the separation of body and mind and spirit became absolute. The body and all of nature (including women) were denigrated as being nothing but machines to be manipulated and eventually dominated and brutalized. In the language of the Orient, the West exaggerated *yang* and diminished *yin.* An imbalance and disharmony was had.

What does that have to do with spirituality and the Christian Brothers? My contention is that our spirituality suffers from this inheritance. It is overly intellectual, and in its denigration of the body (and therefore nature) is incomplete and inadequate. One needs simply to remember the lives of the saints as portrayed by hagiographers of dualistic thought. Saints were praised for not having seen the windows of the church, so great was their asceticism. Confessors to women were touted as never having looked a woman in the eyes. With the elevation of the intellect, spirituality suffered from a lack of grounding—was a thing more of image. Perfection was the image that was used. But perfection is an abstraction, an illusion. Illusions cannot be lived by human beings: and when it is tried and the illusion becames apparent, depression, disillusionment occurs. Nothing in nature is perfect: but in nature harmony exists. The Indo-European root, *hal,* gives us the words whole, hale, hearty, holy, health and hello. A saint is *sano:* whole. Wholeness is about harmony—a dynamic functioning of parts in a system: it is not about perfection.

What are some of the practical applications that might be offered to Brothers about living a whole life? It has been my observation that much of what we did in formation and our lives previously were the right things done for the wrong reasons. The difference is in the attitude with which life is lived; we need to think differently. The difference comes with adjustment. Fritz Perls, founder of Gestalt Therapy suggested that we «Lose our minds and come to our senses!» With the marriage of the body and the mind, we have an organismic wisdom—a whole knowing. «If the Lord speaks today, harden not your hearts». Much of the new direction in Humanistic Psychology and its psychotherapy has to do with an emphasis on the body. This is a result of the general fact that people do not listen to their bodies. They have bodies, but they are not their bodies.

People would sooner have their symptoms diagnosed as a physical ailment than one of the mind—the mind is really me; the body is not, and therefore there seems to be less shame involved. Re-owning our bodies (and all of nature) puts us in touch with the Cosmos which is made of the same stuff. «The Kingdom of Heaven is within». It is in our bodies that we live in the moment, can hear the stirrings of the spirit, have the accumulated wisdom of our predecessors. Alexander Lowen, the founder of Bio-energetics, writes that faith is rooted in the body. How else does one know? Where else is revelation made apparent? One need only to read Meister Eckhart or Julian of Norwich to see that the mystics were practical and of the earth. With the collusion of the Church and Science: the spirit belongs to the Church; the body and materiality belong to science—we relegated the spiritual life to the intellect and lost touch with the rich mystical tradition of Christianity up to the 14th century.

Therefore, the following samples are suggested by way of thinking and living our spiritual lives differently. Fasting from foods cleanses the body which eats its own poisons; thereby creating a cleaner receptacle for the whisperings of the Spirit. Chanting resonates—includes the body-mind. Chanting in a foreign language diminishes the tendency of the vernacular to address the intellect. Talking dulls our senses; reflect on sermons one has heard. The body-mind is opened, made receptive by sound such as Gregorian chant (which has on occasion been the vehicle of conversion for individuals). The body was designed for movement; sitting still needs to be varied or atrophy sets in. In prayer this suggests that we have alternatives to stalls or pews which

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physically and psychologically tend to imprison the souls. Movement opens the potential of the person to hear within. Note how this emphasis shifts from the tendency to put the source of truth outside: in catechisms and pulpits. Conversion rarely comes from exhortations. For every action there is an equal and opposite re-action. Force of oratory has short lived and often adversarial effects.

We are what we eat. Eating of red meats, sugars, chemically treated foods, mineral-depleted grains dulls the senses and leaves one feeling less than alive. How can one be joyful in the Lord when the body is clogged and not free to be spontaneous. Spontaneity is from the body. In this spontaneity is playfulness, creativity, compassion, free flow of energy—aliveness in the Spirit. This body needs to exercise, to move, to breathe, to obtain adequate oxygen (aerobic effect), and to open up the free flow of muscles and emotions. With the typical routine of the average Brother—as with most professionals—we become sedentary and preoccupied with thought. While we are intellectualizing, we are not capable of focusing on and not present to our inner (kinesthetic) senses. To this extent we lose out on the moment, and the opportunities for awareness—and it is awareness that frees us from the restrictions of life conditioning and our environment. Because of the body-mind-spirit connection (touch the one and you touch the other), what we do to our bodies is done to our mind and spirit, and vice-versa. How we think and how we formulate our attitudes is incorporated into our nervous system and musculature. Our character is written into our bodies. Through the use of many possible body-mind modalities such as Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, Rolfing and massage, we may find the more natural and grace-ful way our body-minds may be in the world. Trauma of earlier life and rigidity of character can be freed, often together with counseling, creating an open temple for the divine presence. Massage may be thought of as an exterior meditation. The Chinese have a meditation form in *tai chi.* Might we not do something similar?

The modern physicist is dialoguing today with the mystic and theologian. They are noting the unity of being at the atomic level. In the new age, we are at a crisis of survival as a human race. We, as Brothers, see ourselves in crisis in terms of a Congregation—will we survive? The Chinese characters for crisis are composed of two words: *danger* and *opportunity.* We are being thrust into a challenge. If we do not creatively accept the challenge we will surely not survive on any level—including the religious life. Many are hungering for rich spirituality with their whole being. «As the hart pants after water; so my soul pants for Thee, O Lord». In misguided ways, youth look to alcohol and drugs. Jung called alcoholism a «lowgrade spiritual disease». Perhaps we could look to this notion as we study the problem of alcoholism within religious orders.

The suggestion is being made here that true spirituality will be enhanced by the perspective that sees the unity of the cosmos—that sees an Incarnate spirituality. «The Word was made flesh». As Francis knew, the birds and beasts, sun and moon and all of creation are our Brothers and Sisters. It was Francis who apologized to «Brother Ass» for abusing it, on the eve of his death. It was Francis who called Death, Brother; knowing that death is an integral part of life. Our spirituality will, then, make us ecologists who speak for the rights of those creatures which have no voice in a society that vaunts the intellect and the wealthy. When the Earth and the feminine (*yin*) are diminished, then we are all diminished. Do we, as Brothers, adequately own our feminine component? Holistic thinking is not linear thinking, but cyclical; it sees the interconnectedness of all events. We cannot be unconcerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons or the suppression of people's rights. Death is not the end of the line, for us, but the cyclical dimension of life with its continuous comings and goings. Poverty will mean simplicity when we own our bodies; bodies know that they need but the basics of food, exercise, rest, and human connection—not the illusions of images. Obedience comes from the word *ob-audire;* to listen. Listening requires being «yin» or soft to our inner and outer worlds. Holistic spirituality knows that we do not end at our skins, and that when we are most alone (celibate) we are most one with all. It has long been said that grace builds on nature. In a changing world—a new age—perhaps more of the young will see and be attracted to whole men who practice in the world such spirituality as this.

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08-C-33

CAMPUS MINISTRY (1): «... the grace to be able to touch hearts»

ST. LA SALLE.

«Hey, Brother, got a minute?»

«Good morning, Brother; can I see you today? It's really important... I just need to talk».

«Bro. I got accepted at the University! Thanks for that recommendation you wrote».

«My grandmother's being operated on today, Brother. Would you say a few prayers for her please?».

... And so my day as coordinator of campus ministry begins. I haven't even unlocked the door of my office yet, but I've learned to expect the unexpected. I've learned to listen for what young people are not saying. Often it is in their silence that my role as minister is born.

Most of my time is spent organizing a four year sequential retreat program and coordinating the Christian Service of over 275 seniors here at La Salle Academy. It's a challenge, but one that I accept with the humility of knowing that I'm not in this alone. Because of his intense belief that the Gospel must not only be studied but «experienced», Brother Jerome Corrigan, our principal, has provided four full-time Campus Ministers. We are fortunate to have one Dominican Sister of Blauvelt, New York, and two Diocesian priests. Together we serve the pastoral needs of La Salle's 1,200 boys and girls and almost 100 faculty and staff.

Just what is Campus Ministry? This is certainly a tough answer to pin down but can best be addressed by taking a look at the different areas which comprise the work. It should be noted here that Campus Ministry most often reflects the talents and resources of the minister. One person may approach it from a religious-political view point and direct efforts to Advocacy stances. Another may see the role as purely pastoral ie counseling in areas other than college guidance. Yet another may stress service to community and liturgical celebrations. The list could go on. Here at La Salle we try to integrate the different modes by providing an experiential religious complement to the rest of the school's curriculum. It should further be noted that while addressing most of our attention to the students themselves, the faculty, administration and staff are also served through this ministry.

The four areas which form the nucleus of Campus Ministry at La Salle are: *Retreats, Christian service, pastoral counseling* and *special projects.*

1. Retreats

Each of our students is expected to make a one day retreat every year. We conduct the retreats by homeroom which means that each group numbers about 30. The homeroom teacher is invited to attend with no responsibility other than equal participation. I have found this invaluable for gaining teacher support of the program. Teachers themselves marvel at the rapport they are able to enjoy in a non-classroom environment.

All retreats are conducted by our campus ministry team in the recently dedicated St. Miguel Retreat Center located in the Brothers' House adjacent to the school. The facility houses four small group rooms decorated with student-painted murals and one large conference room decorated with student-painted murals and one large conference room for presentations, movies, lunch etc.. There's also a modern chapel and a screened-in porch where students can relax and recreate. For retreat purposes, I strongly recommend using the sections of the Brothers' House that are no longer occupied. This brings students into the house who may never have had the opportunity to see how the Brothers live. Also, it saves time and the cost of transporting students by bus or car to a retreat center.

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Many weeks we find ourselves conducting more than one retreat. Because of the size of the school, about 50 retreats per year are needed. All retreats begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 2:30 p.m. Students must bring their own lunch.

The approach on each retreat is an integration of theology, spirituality, psychology, and group dynamics. The Freshmen day's theme is *Belonging:* to God, to school and to family. The Sophomores' day deals with *Values.* While the Juniors address the question of *Personal Identity,* the Seniors look to their future in a experience of *My Dream.* Large group presentations and small group discussions and/or exercises punctuate the day. Every retreat concludes with a Eucharistic Celebration tying together the day's theme.

I would also like to mention here that much of the Freshman and Sophomore program is conducted by trained Seniors. In January of each year a letter goes out to interested seniors to solicit help with the underclassmen. Actually, the seniors come into my office as early as September asking when they can sign up for the workshops to be trained. This is peer ministry at its best. The seniors give most of the talks and run the small groups for their younger classmates. An adult is always present to provide encouragement and guidance but the students themselves minister to their peers.

2. Christian service

The Campus Ministry center coordinates a 9 week Service program for each senior at La Salle. This is a requirement for graduation and exposes the student to direct service with the poor. Two days per week are spent in a classroom setting teaching a spirituality of ministry as a gospel response in today's world. Once a week for 2 hours, during school time, each student is involved with the poor in some way. They are grouped in car pools and travel to work with the blind, the hungry, the mentally handicapped, the illiterate, the abandoned and the abused of our community. Later in the week they gather in small groups to process their experience and share their feelings. Sister Liz Engel, O.P. and myself not only teach the class but visit all of the agencies, almost weekly, to encourage the students and witness the many miracles which they perform in the hearts of the poor. However, the grace of the program rests in the transformation that takes place in the hearts of our young people. They are changed. Even the toughest kids who almost refuse to go out to serve are soon won over by the warmth of a child who needs them or the hollow look in the eyes of a woman who hasn't eaten for days.

The Gospel comes alive for the first time. They begin to see themselves as «holy» people. Learning that they *can* make a difference in the life of another person calls forth the best from them. Now Jesus doesn't seem all that distant or impersonal. He visits His people through them.

3. Pastoral counseling

When I am not on retreat or accompanying the seniors on their Christian Service, I am usually found in my office listening to the needs of individual youngsters. Each day before I enter school, I pray the words of St. La Salle - «Love those entrusted to your care with all the affection of your heart». Some days this is easier said than done. Some days my heart is overwhelmed by the pain and confusion these young people must endure. For some it is physical or mental abuse at home, for others it is the pressure to succeed that causes them to hurt. So much of their suffering these days is self-inflicted and seemingly hopeless. Many talk of suicide, alcohol and drug dependency, abortion and crime. They cry out for adults who are compassionate and willing to walk along with them as they make sense of their lives. The moments when a young boy or girl allowed themself to be vulnerable with me have been among the holiest moments of my life. Their trust in me continually shows me a new face of God; I am called to recognize Him again and again.

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CAMPUS MINISTRY (2)

08-C-34

4. Special projects

Before I launch into a particular project of *this* Campus Minister allow me to mention 2 projects that the priests on our team accomplish. We have a high percentage of students from singleparent families in our school (i.e. over 50%). Father Roger Gagne conducts a ten week group session for those students who wish to explore their family situation vis-a-vis themselves. Hundreds of students take advantage of this peer situation to find solace in the fact that they are not alone. My fear is that this need will become much greater in the future.

The second project is directed by Father Jim Hamilton. His hope is to make the liturgy more accessible and meaningful to the students. He visits each religion class 2 or 3 times a year asking for a small group of student volunteers to plan a liturgy based on the current theme of their course work. This gives him an opportunity to educate the students to good liturgy then to actually celebrate the student planned service the following week. Both of these programs have received wide-spread approval from students and teachers alike.

A special project of mine is Christian clowning. My office is «cluttered» with clowns; sad clowns. I take very seriously St. Paul's exhortation to be «a fool for Christ's sake». Only the fool knows the price of fidelity. Only the fool can laugh in the face of despair and see hope. And so.. I'm a fool'.

Many times I put on the white face of the clown to portray in mime and dance that the Gospel is possible, personal, joyful and demanding. My clowning leads me to many diverse audiences in many different places, but one point is always clear: The fool merely captures the attention of the crowd so that it can then be directed toward the main act. My role as clown and brother is always to call others to the presence of God and never to be ashamed that I am His. The best way for me to do this is just to be myself. This is really the core of my ministry. It invades all that I do.

In August of 1984 four other brothers and I mimed and danced the Last Judgement story from St. Mattew's gospel for over 600 Brothers at our Regional Convocation in California. The response was profound. From the youngest to the oldest, the brothers were inspired by the reverence, creativity and imagination shown. It was a new way of worship for us; opening up new avenues and freeing the creative spirit in prayer.

This past spring Brother Michael McKenery (Auxiliary Visitor L.I.N.E.) Sr. Liz Engel and I worked with 20 students to put on a Holy Week Mime Experience for our student body. Listen to a student's reaction as it appeared in the school newpaper:

«On April 2nd the La Salle Student body filed into the school auditorium expecting a boring and drawn out prayer service. We did receive a prayer service, but it was in no way boring or typical. When the students settled down the lights went out. Bro. Charles appeared dancing on stage wearing fluorescent gloves and clown make up. Rock music and wild dancing appeared throughout the play as the parable of the Prodigal Son was retold through popular songs. Then there was the retelling of the crucifixion as the fool for

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Christ, played by Bro. Charles, was brought down by imaginary gunfire while scenes of war and famine flashed on a screen. A resurrection followed; the fool brought back to life by the power of God, gathered the other clowns into a circle of light with him. The resurrection occurred, the narrator recited a message of celebration and sharing of our love. In brief, this was the most creative, ingenious and enthusiastic play I've ever seen...».

A reporter from our local paper had this to say:

«Peppered with colorful costumes, intricate dance steps, an engaging opening number complete with black light and a fog machine and a variety of pop and rock tunes depicting scenes from the Gospel the show was a delight to the senses yet delivered an important message - that fools for Christ's sake can make a difference in this world».

The show ran about an hour and a half and demanded everything we had. From the day I began to write the script to the final bow on the stage it was a prayer. The message was always clear: By putting on Jesus Christ we can touch a world that so desperately needs us.

The spirit was contagious. We presented the service on another occasion for parents and raised $ 850.00 for our missions in Ethiopia. Students are already asking to be included in the next service planned for the Spring of '86! This ministry of clowning has enabled me to find creative and innovative ways of expressing the age-old symbols of our faith within the culture of our own day. To mime, to clown and to dance are each a strong part of me. Now I use them to be brother, to be minister and to be teacher.

In conclusion

My work in Campus Ministry has provided me with the freedom to expand horizons; my own and those whom I serve. I think the task is vital in any school that calls itself Catholic and especially one that is declared Lasallian. The *gospel* must be the core of the curriculum and permeate each discipline. St. La Salle inspires us to pray «for the grace to be able to touch hearts». Isn't this what it's all about? We have to educate minds but if we can touch hearts at the same time - that is Christian Education!

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08-D-14

SIGNUM FIDEI'S VISION: A FAITH-FULL RESPONSE

In a beautiful example of the way scholars can build on and refine each other's work, the writer unfolds a vision through a review of the life of St. John Baptist De La Salle, the founder and inspiration of the Signum Fidei Association, selected documents of the Church and the Institute of the Christian Brothers.

St. John Baptist De La Salle's life is a glowing example of deep faith and profound dedication. As one goes through the stages of his life, he can systematically draw-out the processes he had gone through in developing that kind of faith. A review of his life explains the schema that led the founder to be a man of faith and zeal. Consider the following highlights in his life which moved toward relevant dimensions in building and extending his work:

— Known as wealthy young French priest he gave away his fortune and abandoned his promising career in church;

— People misunderstood him, maligned him and many of those who were his friends deserted him. Often discouraged, nonetheless he never lost faith;

— A few supporters who later became his disciples understood what he was trying to do. He called them his brothers and trained them to become good teachers;

— With his trained teachers he established several schools open to everyone at a time when education was a privilege for the rich;

— As a leader he ably encouraged his disciples to follow him. He did all this because he felt called by God to give the poor and the young the good news that God loves them. His life is what it means to live the gospel.

Following the patron's journey, important implications easily surfaced which are related to the problems of today's world. The analysis below show some important components necessary to build that vision.

— A radical decision in one's life is a real challenge if one takes the responsibility of following Christ and serving this disordered world.

— Conflicts should not in any way discourage one to continue to lead. Prayer is a must; indeed an essential part in this process. Acting in faith is the response of a person to God who reveals himself in the twists and turns of life.

— Good leadership and good followership including a good organization can help deliver good results.

— A prayerful life and increased apostolic commitment are ingredients for greater faith and service.

— Members' modeling of perseverance, dedication and confidence are characteristics to be considered if one wants to succeed in recruiting members to the Signum Fidei Association.

Citing passages from Church documents like «Gaudium et Spes», «Populorum Progressio», other Vatican II documents, directives from local Churches, conferences of bishops and inspired priests will help strengthen the point being stressed here - the great lack of faith. A situation where the most serious threats weigh on the fundamental values. Man has accomplished much in scientific knowledge and technology but at the same time is confronted with serious problems of materialism, power struggle, economic disorder, injustice and social imbalance. On the other hand, on the spiritual side, attacks on human liberty and dignity, rise of atheism, and the wave of secularization are getting more and more prevalent.

In the light of all these circumstances the writer traces some attributes and traits of the founder that can help alleviate this situation. He demonstrated faith and zeal in his life. There are two dimensions of faith to be considered, they are the development of:

— faith in the ability of ourselves and others to improve and grow;

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— faith in God, that He is at work in this world. That man discovers the Lord when he discovers what is best in himself; and when he discovers other persons and give them the chance to live, grow, and develop.

Of particular interest are some statements from the documents of the Institute of the Christian Brothers. Directions are seen to be directed toward the organization of a project that will help the Institute and the Church.

— Schools must be aware of the ubiquitous, political, social and cultural changes taking place and consequently are given us no other alternative except to update themselves in their objectives, programs, and methodologies.

— The Brothers strive continuously to «awaken a greater sense of universal brotherhood among individuals and peoples». As such they will do all in their power so that the young who live in affluence and good fortune understand their responsibility to share their resources with those who are poor, deprived, oppressed, and exploited.

The La Sallian family or the La Sallian Brotherhood lives in the ideals of St. John Baptist De La Salle. These are notably, the Signum Fidei, members of a young association solicitous of promoting Christian education.

La Salle schools can act as the nucleus, the center for the development of the Spirit of Faith needed in the world today. Through innovation of school programs and projects, the La Sallian teachers, parents and students can emerge as leaders in propagating the association in this troubled land. Important events that will involve a greater role of the Signum Fidei, Philippines are envisioned; to wit,

— An innovative school will emerge and take the lead in building, and propagating the work of the founder.

— Programs and projects for teachers, parents, and students will be launched as basic tools for the development of faith.

— A strong nucleus will take a radical stand that will bring forth good leadership and good organization.

— Conflicts which are inevitable will not discourage the majority of the members because of their deep faith in God.

— Organized activities will be launched inviting other schools to participate. National and international assemblies will also be witnessed.

— Various chapters will be organized in different La Salle schools and will even spread to other non La Sallian schools and parishes.

— Cooperation between the Christian Brothers and the Signum Fidei will be felt more in almost all areas of the Brothers' apostolate.

In conclusion, there are several interpretations yet to be considered, particularly with respect to the growth of the association and these are being addressed by other La Sallian associations. This analysis will help the members to continue the search and build stages of developing and extending the work of the founder. At this point, the work of the Signum Fidei seems clear. There can be no further doubt that the association can and will be able to accomplish what God and the founder would want the believers in his ideals to do. Lastly, this association deserves favorable attention from all those who are in search of the propagation of faith that leads to the salvation of mankind.

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08-E-21

«TAKE UP YOUR PALLET AND WALK»
In the service of young wanderers

1. A Personal Odyssey

«Consider that the usual thing in the case of laborers and the poor is to leave the children free to live like vagabonds, running hither and thither, until such time as they are old enough to be applied to some trade. Such parents take no interest in sending their children to school, partly because poverty prevents them from paying teachers, and partly because they are obliged to go out to work and thus must of necessity leave the children to their own devices.

The results, however, are disastrous, for these children become accustomed to a life of idleness, and afterwards find it difficult to acquire industrious habits. Moreover, through evil associations, they learn to commit many sins from which they subsequently have great difficulty in disengaging themselves, owing to the strength of the habits whose growth has been of many years' standing.

God has been pleased to supply a remedy to so sad a condition by the establishment of Christian schools...» (Med. 194,1).

* * *

This text has been engraved in my memory since my entrance into the Brothers. It has made such an impression on me that it constitutes for me an almost continual reference. What St. John Baptist De La Salle expresses here coincides perfectly with my personal aspirations. It is more by a natural leaning than by an ideal that I have always taught the weakest students, that I have tried to be attentive to their problems, their feelings of frustration, their fears, and their aspirations and that I have tried to encourage them always. It is also by natural taste that aid to the Third World has always been one of my sidelines, without, however, having heard the call to a missionary vocation «from afar». My mission country has been my own.

At the age of 35, I wanted to perfect my education and the study of languages appealed to me. For this purpose, I enrolled in an American University. As luck would have it, at this time I was in charge of an extremely difficult class. All during the year, I accompanied my lessons with experimental psychology in my scholastic work. The result were very positive. This happening became a «SIGN» for me. I decided that I would make a study of curative pedagogy and psychology. In my Thesis at the end of my studies, which were devoted to Saint John Baptist De La Salle, I pursued two objectives: to study deeply the thoughts of our Founder on the «maladjusted child» and to do a historical study on the «reform school» at Saint Yon, a work established by the Founder. This work fascinated me and became rooted in my ideal of a BROTHER.

Having become in charge of the District of Swiss Brothers, I tried to share the best I could the thoughts which were animating me. This was a time of intense research. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian School has always been in full evolution and in search of identity: who are the poor with whom De La Salle would be concerned today? what works would he found if he were living here today? How can the Brothers rediscover the charism of the Founder in this final part of the Twentieth Century? While this type of questioning is fruitful to give us a true prospective, it also engenders incertitudes and all kind of problems.

After my term of office ended, it was only logical that I should return to the center for the rehabilitation of drug addicts, which the Brothers of our district had founded, a few years previously, in the locality of our «Abbey of Fonatine-Andre. It was with great enthusiasm that I rejoined this work, but conscious all the while of the fact that cures for heroin addiction cannot be improvised. I applied myself the best I could... It was a very difficult apprenticeship. After a bit more than a year, I

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became convinced that my place was not there, especially because I could not truly identify myself with the existing concept of the Center. Disappointed and totally uncertain about my future work, I found myself in the dark and full of qualms of conscience that I, just like three other Brothers before me, had abandoned our confrere who continued to work there alone.

* * *

I set out in search of the LIGHT. Among other things, one day I packed up my bags and went to spend a week in the mountains. I prayed quite a bit... Sometimes I bewailed my troubles as much as I articulated my hopes... I struggled with God and with myself. But, alas! the mountains did not provide me with the light I was seeking, so it was with feelings of dissatisfaction that I took the road back. (On the way, I stopped at the place of a friend of mine who was a clinical psychologist and, at great length, revealed my troubled inner feelings. It seemed to him that I was showing rather evident signs that my future was not in the Brother's vocation...) That only increased my confusion...

At the railroad station in Zurich, by chance I bought a newspaper... and suddenly I saw the light! I read a long article about a center which cares for runaway youth in this city which was founded two years before by two courageous women. Suddenly I felt a stirring within myself, within the very fibers od my being: this is the work which answers all my longing. I had very clearly determined that this work would be the ground of my future apostolate. Hardly a year later, I rejoined the Brothers community at Zurich and I began my work at Schlupfhuus. Such was my odyssey.

* * *

The Schlupfhuus (house of refuge) of Zurich was founded in 1980. In five years more than 1,300 young people passed through there. At present the animation team is made up of five women and four men. There is also a small team of voluntary helpers. The house is open 24 hours a day and is frequented by youth between the ages of 12 and 17 who have run away from home. The average age is between 14 and 16. Girls are the most numerous. Many of the teenagers, before coming to us, have spent several days in the streets and have met for the first time the hard realities of the streets in a big city. All those who come to Schlupfhuus must do so voluntarily. All they have to do is ring the bell and say that they need help in their present situation. They. They must authorize us to take care of them. We are able to help a number of young people to get off the streets and to find solutions for their future which will be acceptable to themselves as well as for their parents. In this sense we are preventing future trouble.

About two-thirds of the young people who come to us get back to their families the very same day or two or three days after their arrival. It stands to reason that for a short time we remain in contact with the «walk-in» cases and their families. About one-third categorically refuse to return to their family. The length of stay of our «permanent residents» varies from a week to two and a half months, even three months. On an average each night of the year we give shelter to five or six youths. In order to avoid financial complications, the first week is free. The assistants of Schlupfhuus have then a double role: that of counselors and a pedagogical function as in any other boarding school. It is the young people themselves who have to look after the kitchen and the cleanliness of the house.

In the role of counselor, our task consists in resolving the bitter crisis between the teenager and his parents. The first objective which we pursue is always the reintegration of the young person into his family. In those cases where such proves to be impossible, it is necessary, with all those concerned, to find another suitable alternative. We could also add that the Center has an SOS telephone. Many young boys and girls make use of this for making their first contact with us; some distressed parents also call us... Schlupfhuus is a private institution which is subsidized in the amount of 60% by the government.

Bro. Othmar WURTH

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08-E-22

«TAKE UP YOUR PALLET AND WALK»

2. A Lasallian apostolate

Allow me to enumerate the problems which I face here. Crises in puberty, run-aways, drugs, pregnant girls, juvenile prostitution both among girls and boys, suicide attempts, self-inflicted wounds, states of depression, problems tied up with divorce, abortion, contraception, rape, school problems, generation gap conflicts, etc. I must admit that all this was something new for me, a 47 year old Brother who had lived mostly in a school atmosphere. An almost entirely unknown world was suddenly revealed to me. The text of St. John Baptist De La Salle, quoted at the beginning of this article, suddenly took on a new hitherto unknown dimension. For me, without any doubt: these youth are «the farthest from salvation»; it is they whom we must help to «live good lives», «to straighten out their lives».

Schlupfhuus is not a Church Institution, although it receives financial support from both Protestant and Catholic Churches. Still, religious qualities do not play a role in my work. Only professional and humanitarian qualities are taken into consideration. Nevertheless, the team of animators, the greater part of whom are non-practicing Christians, were perfectly aware of my religious state, even before I joined them. In spite of these differences, I feel that I have been accepted by both the men and women who operate the shelter as well as by the young people. I know that seeing me in this work, these young people have a new experience with a man of the Church which is quite different from the image they had of us.

Some of my confreres ask me what a Brother could be seeking in this institution. For them, I am doing laudable work but one which is not Lasallian. I have to explain myself: They find that there are two essential Lasallian elements missing in my work, that is: proclaiming the gospel and working «in association» with other Brothers. I am not insensible to this criticism.

The best response, undoubtedly, can be found in the stages or steps which progressively led me to this work. It might be well if I recalled them briefly:

— The first step was the personal reflection and self-examination. It was not the end of this phase of delving that set the process into motion.

— After much thought and counsel, I made the first verbal contact with the Zurich Center, simply for informational purposes, without any obligation on my part nor on the part of the Center. It was necessary to know something about what really goes on there beyond what one can read in the newspapers. This first contact proved to be very positive, but was by necessity limited.

— After a discussion with the Brother Visitor of the District, I met together with him and with the administrators of the Center and we decided upon a month's trial period without any obligations on either side. This allowed me to get better acquainted with the people and the concrete conditions of the work. This stay was very positive and it served as a good evaluation of the Center by me, and of me by the Center. This mutual satisfaction led to a firm offer on the part of the Center, when it had to replace a collaborator who left in May of 1982.

— Before accepting, I referred the matter to other Brothers in Switzerland
  - The Council gave its consent, specifying that I should be a part of the Community in Zurich.
  - By a circular letter, I next consulted the meeting of Swiss Brothers. Meeting in General Assembly, these Brothers voted in the majority in favor of this project, without doubt with

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some hesitation on the part of some of them, which explains the questions mentioned above.

— The project having been confirmed by the Brothers, I became a member of the Community of Zurich. Upon my arrival, it numbered only two Brothers. The community was a bit jammed after that. I believe that the Brothers of this community accepted my work very well, and strongly wished that I continue to live with them, even though other interesting possibilities could be envisioned in Zurich.

— The activities of each of the Brothers were shared in community, even with the Brothers of Neuchatel. Because of the diversity of apostolates, this important sojourn was also a way of working «by association». We had to find a better rhythm in our community life, one more adapted to the diversity of our activities. It is true that in my work I did not display my quality as a Brother and in 90% of the cases I was not explicitly proclaiming the GOOD NEWS of Jesus Christ. If I had done so, I probably would have been opening the door to my departure. In fact, most of the time I was dealing with young people without any Christian background, even though they may have been baptized. When they spoke about church, it was in rather a derisive and aggressive way. I would not say that they are totally closed to the faith, but still, I did not think it wise to address them in missionary language when they come to the Center.

First of all, it is necessary to help them become upright people. After having spent three years in this work, I have learned that the youth run away from home not because of the poor conditions existing there, but because of the number of times that they have felt helpless in ameliorating the situation. They run away because they are discouraged: they think that there is no viable solution for them. I often think of the numerous healings related in chapters 8 and 9 of St. Mattew's Gospel. Jesus is very much concerned with the health of people. He wants them to be «upright» persons. «Take up your pallet and walk». As far as I am concerned, to help these young people to regain confidence in themselves and in a viable future is a Christian task, it is announcing a part of the «Good News». A number of former clients come to see us and tell us about their difficulties and success. Thus, slowly sincere friendships are formed. These reacquaintance meetings are propitious occasions to talk about faith and about God. He who plants, and he who waters is seldom the one who harvests...

In going to work on my motorcycle, I almost always get caught in tight traffic. Amid this noise and confusion I often hum out loud:

«Lord, you are my strength and my patience, my light and my counsel, it is you who dispose the hearts of those young people confided to my care. Do not abandon me to myself even for one moment. Give me for my own guidance and those of youth the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of your holy fear and zeal, ardent for procuring your glory. I unite my work to that of Jesus Christ, and I pray the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, the Guardian Angels, and St. John Baptist De La Salle, to protect me today in the fullfillment of my duties. AMEN.

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08-O-06

THE GENERAL CHAPTER

On Monday, April 7, 1986, one hundred and seventeen Brothers of the Christian Schools will gather together at the Mother House in Rome for an assembly whose duration is expected to be about two months: *This is the General Chapter.*

Who are these representatives?

The composition of the group of 117 representatives originates from three sources. First of all, there are eight members by right: the present Superior General, the former Superior, Brother Nicet Joseph, and the six Brothers Councilors, elected in 1976. The second group is the most numerous: 105 delegates elected by direct vote by all the Brothers in the 64 Districts and the 8 Delegations which constitute the administrative elements of the Institute. Finally, four can be designated by the Brother Superior General and his Council. The maximum number then is 117, which will be verified, but there may be a few delegates less because certain delegates may find it impossible to attend.

What does the Chapter do?

The Chapter fulfills two principal functions. The first is *elective:* to choose the Superior General and his Councilors; the second is *legislative:* the Chapter is the only authority which has the power to decide upon the norms and the orientations which regulate the life of the Brothers and that of the communities.

But before doing any electing or deciding upon directives, the Chapter must first define its policies. To do that, it begins by verifiying the impact of the decisions of former chapters, the manifest needs of the apostolate, as well as the conditions of individuals and communities which make up the Institute. It will particularly give an attentive ear to the suggestions which every Brother or every group of Brothers has the right to propose. From this investigation as a body, a general program of action will be decided upon which will be broken down by Regions and Districts. It is only after having defined this general political set-up that the Chapter will be able to choose the men capable of translating it into reality.

The Chapter meets every ten years, but there are quite a number of suggestions for reducing this period so that the Institute can benefit more often from the impetus which such as assembly generates.

A particular task for the 1986 Chapter

One particular task incumbent on the Chapter of 1986 is that of approving a «Rule» which will be presented to the Holy See for approval. Actually, a Chapter does not invent all the legislation which governs the Brothers. Every religious family possesses «Constitutions» or «Rules», which are a combination of spiritual texts and regulations expressing what this Institute is, what it does, and how the life of the Community and its religious are organized. Generally, these texts come from the Founder and have been approved by the Church. Still, the ravishes of time render some of these regulations burdensome or even warped.

Therefore, Vatican Council II has asked that all Institutes rejuvenate their Constitutions. Accordingly, the Brothers adopted in 1966/67 a provisionary Rule. After twenty years of experience, the moment has now come to enact a definitive text which will be submitted to the pontifical organization which concerns itself with religious: the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes (C.R.I.S.).

The essential for the Chapter

The alert reader will already have noticed that every serious enterprise which is preparing for a general assembly sets up a parallel apparatus. It suffices, in the case of religious, to sprinkle about a little bit of prayer and the model seems ready for operation. It functions so well that it constitutes a trap into which more than one Religious Order has fallen. While it is necessary to oil the mechanism, one must go a step further to what is most essential.

Still, the essential lies elsewhere. It is tied up with the original nature of the vocation of the Brother and that of his Mission. Vocation and Mission come from God and from Him alone, but He has confided it to men of flesh and blood. Vocation and Mission include a human profession, socio-educational activities, and the like.

The essential work of the General Chapter, is then to take into account this original reality which has sown the divine seed in the ground of human realities. The Chapter ought, at one and the same time, to listen to God and answer the appeals of men, then to decide in favour of both. This is possible since the Risen Christ has opened the way.

Faith enables the Brothers to evaluate everything in this world in the light of the Gospel. They see that the totality of creation, with Christ as its centre, is ordered to God and destined through His love for the happiness and salvation of all mankind.

The above quotation, taken from the Brothers' Rule, demonstrates that this task should not take the capitulants by surprise, for it is nothing other than putting into operation the spirit of faith and of zeal, which is the spirituality of the Institute, The Rule continues elsewhere in these terms:

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Faith makes it possible for the Brothers, little by little, to see in everything that happens, in every person they meet, especially the poor, the unwanted, and the persecuted, a sign and an invitation of the Holy Spirit.

The capitulants, therefore, are called upon to live together the spirit of faith and of zeal in the three well-known stages: beginning with realities, seeing the spiritual meaning in them, and translating them into action.

...Beginning with realities:

A Chapter never leaves ideological positions, but rather examines: the youth, particularly the poor ones, together with their needs and their appeals—the living conditions of the world in which we exercise our apostolate—the paths and the obstacles which educators meet—the daily life of the Brothers—the appeals and aspirations of the lay people around us—the Church and its demands, etc. In brief, a «cloud of witnesses» which are invisible to the eyes of the capitulants, but very much present to their heart, since they constitute this part of Creation confided to their care.

...Discern the spiritual meaning:

Our God is not the Sphinx questioning Oedipus. Discernment is not the deciphering of an enigma, but the result of listening and a coming together. It is listening to the word of God in silent meditation, and the convergence of the elements of response perceived in the course of this meditation. Nobody possesses the Spirit as his own exclusive property, but it is given to those who come together in the name of Jesus. The rise of these con vergences is one of the most impressive moments in the course of Chapters: the group of capitulants little by little gets together on the manner in which such and such an event, which depends on us, can be directed so that it will serve the cause of justice and truth, and will lead to God. Little by little it becomes of one mind on the way of helping youth, the Brothers, our friends the laity to give to their life the fullness of the love of God intended for them, without forgetting about their individual human differences.

...Translate the spiritual meaning into action

The Brothers have enough texts at their disposal, so they would rather get down to practical measures. For example, the Chapter of 1976 refused once more to define the ideal community. On the contrary, it asked each community, at the beginning of the school year, to come together to decide their prayer program, apostolate, and social life. These are *practical* measures which concern daily life, but they are also inspired means, carrying with them clear spiritual significance: the unity among the Brothers and among those with whom they come into contact.

By way of conclusion

As far as we can determine from listening to the Brothers and from reading their suggestions, this is a rapid review of the great agenda to which the Chapter will probably address itself:

1 - The Chapter of 1986 is not going to discover America, others before them have already done this so it will be up to them to fall into step lest they become incoherent. It seems useless to launch into new endeavours and seems more profitable to bring to fulfillment those already started.

2 - *Spiritual renovation* seems to be the major priority: we must take the time to *pray* better and to better *discern* the meaning of events. Certain currents of renovation lack inspiration, or, at least, the inspiration, which is the Holy Spirit: we must take the time and make the effort to receive it and listen to it.

3 - *Service to the poor and the promotion of justice* through education has greatly caught on among the Brothers. It is hoped that it will reach a «critical mass» in which the majority of the Brothers will be engaged in this work. A true contact with the poor ought to inspire the prayer of the Brothers, simplify their life style, and direct their activities better.

4 - The Brothers participate in the *educational ministry* of the Church. The Chapter will set about drawing all the logical conclusions from this participation: the practical priority of catechesis and evangelization, more «pastoral» relations with youth, mutual enrichment between the religious life and the proclaiming of Jesus Christ, more decided overtures toward the Church for constructing faith communities, etc..

5 - For the past fifteen years or so, a growing number of *lay people* have been discovering in Saint John Baptist De La Salle a source of inspiration. This will be one of the major questions to be discussed by the Chapter and one which will lead the Institute to pass through a historical stage: that of sharing, without any confusion, our spiritual richness and our apostolate with the laity.

6 - The Institute is making an effort *to extend its service* to the young countries. In other countries, the Institute is ageing. Elsewhere its presence is sparse: how can mutual help be better organized from the center towards the communities and between the districts and the regional centers? How can we better assure our service to the Church by a better cooperation between sectors and with the local Churches?

7 - Finally, the question of *vocations,* their awakening, their growth, and their formation are all linked to all the movements of renewal. The Chapter will give the Brothers an opportunity to more clearly give witness to who they are and will invite them to enthusiastically transmit this appeal for future service within their ranks.

* * *

If some of these paragraphs have proven of interest to the readers and has moved them to pray that the Kingdom of the Lord progress among the youth, then this will be the first positive result of the Chapter even before it opens!

Brother Patrice MAREY
General Councilor

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08-O-07

THE PROTO-CHAPTER OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, SPRINGTIME 1986

At least three times, at Rheims, Vaugirard, and then at Saint-Yon, St. De La Salle called a number of Brothers together, to form a deliberative assembly to study the current situation and to make several major decisions. Without perhaps being designated as such, these assemblies were in fact «General Chapters».

The last two are known, not only from the accounts given by De Maillefer and by Blain, but also from the register of vows and even from the first capitular register which we possess even until today. The first assembly, that of Rheims, is known to us only from the accounts of Brother Bernard, and of two other biographers.

1. A Slight Doubt: 1686?

The four accounts of the first biographers, Bernard, Maillefer 1723, Blain, Maillefer 1740, are unanimous in fixing this first assembly around the feast of Pentecost. Still, they are less in agreement when it comes to fixing the exact date. Bernard seems to waver between 1686 and 1687, the two Maillefer acounts adhere to 1686, and Blain mentions 1684 twice. Yet, Blain does not hesitate to contradict himself, not only in the matter of chronology, but even when he brings up the deliberations and decisions of this same assembly.

Explicity, for example, he sets this first assembly as following the return of Adrien Nyel to Rouen. This departure obliged De La Salle to take over the schools of Guise and Laon. Because he was already in charge of the teachers in Rheims, Rethel and Château-Porcien, in the future he would also be seen as the head of a little congregation, to use the very words of the biographer. It is precisely because of this new fact, that De La Salle takes the initiative of calling the Brothers of the different communities together to meet with them on a certain number of points concerning community practices. It is, therefore useless to fix this assembly to the date 1684 or even before the Autumn of 1685, since Monsieur Nyel, at the time, was still running the schools in the Diocese of Laon.

There are other contradictions: Blain contradicts himself in affirming that the Brothers assembled there made only the vow of obedience, since this biographer elsewhere claims that since 1684, the Brothers had taken the vows of obedience, stability in the society, and teaching gratuitously. All this anticipates by ten years the pronouncement of vows at Vaugirard in 1694, in such a way that there would be no need to further delay such a formula of profession.

If we discard the date 1684, the year 1686 seems to offer the safest guarantees, which explains why it is generally accepted as the actual time of the first assembly convoked by De La Salle.

2. An attempt at a calendar.

Neither here are the biographers perfectly in agreement. Yet all of them assert that the assembly from the outset was a common retreat. Certainly deliberations were carried on, but only in the climate of a spiritual retreat. And this would remain a constant factor of all General Chapters of the Institute: the chapter always opens with a retreat, which is often extended beyond one week.

According to the biographies, the assemblies of 1686 and 1694 were essentially times of spiritual retreat. There were not two separate times, first a retreat, and then the chapter; the deliberations were rather included within the retreat program as another spiritual exercise. It is true that these deliberations had to deal with questions which were vital to the community: the rules (in 1694) and the vows (in 1686).

Two of our accounts set the beginning of this assembly-retreat on the Feast of Pentecost; two others have it begin on the vigil of the Ascension. For these latter two, it was supposed to close on Pentecost Sunday, but it was extended another week to Trinity Sunday, the closing day then being unanimously fixed for this same Sunday, the first after Pentecost, and the Feast of the Blessed Trinity. This would give us for the year 1686, successively, May 22, as the Vigil of Ascension, June 2, as Pentecost Sunday, and June 9 as Trinity Sunday.

3. The Participants.

Twice we read, «The Principal Brothers»; and even «The twelve principal Brothers» according to Blain; which again seems to be an anticipation. In 1694, The Brothers Capitulants would truly be twelve in number. But in 1686 how could there be twelve principal Brothers when the total number of Brothers hardly passed that figure by two or three?

The two accounts of De Maillefer try to be more precise: the superiors of Laon, Rethel and Guise, with those of the house of Rheims made up the complete assembly, he wrote in 1723. «The principal Brothers were distributed among the three cities where they had schools», he wrote in 1740 to which we have to add, without any doubt, some Brothers or maybe even all the Brothers of the house in Rheims.

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De La Salle, then, did not call all of the Brothers, but he reserved to himself the choice of some Brothers in preference to others. He must have done the same thing for the assemblies of 1694 and 1717. Following suit, the first general chapters convened by the successors of De La Salle, also seem to have been made up of Brothers designated by the authority of their superiors. The Bull of Approbation of 1725 limited itself to merely fixing the number of capitulants, without specifying how they should be chosen.

What can be understood by the «principal» among the Brothers of 1686? The «superiors» of whom Maillefer speaks? The word «directors» would have been more in line with Institute language. Could it refer to still other Brothers who, by their age or by their seniority in the community, were designated as those who could speak in the name of all? How many would this be? The figure of twelve, proffered by Blain, and repeated more than once in his account, could be a maximum one, and there are strong reasons for considering this an exaggeration. One thing appears to be certain, and that is that each of the five or six houses which made up the Community was represented by one Brother or another.

4. The Object of the deliberations.

The Community of the Brothers had already been given a name and religious habit; the details of the exercises of the house and of the school had already been set down in a fixed schedule. With regard to the rules proper to the Community, De La Salle considered that it was still too early to propose the first codification of these. It was necessary first to follow the experience of the first years, to at first loyally live this life of laymen consecrated to the ministry of education, before dreaming about formulating concrete needs and their guiding principles.

Still, it was necessary that this Community be given an ever stronger coherence, to affirm its identity, to call it Brothers of the Christian Schools, to wear a habit which was a way of professing that it was a religious community, in fact if not by law, and that the members of this family were already bound together. Yet, in 1686, nobody, not even De La Salle himself ever dreamed that the community had to be guaranteed by a new title or by several formal observances. Therefore, written into the agenda of the assembly was the following reservation: should it be proposed to the Brothers that they bind themselves by vows? If this should be answered affirmatively, then by which vows? Should they at once be perpetual vows, or should they only be temporary? What should be the object of these vows?

Such an agenda came to the knowledge of the biographers almost in this form. But how were they informed of this since they wrote about thirty years after the event itself, and for two of them, nearly forty years after. They wrote at a time when the Brothers were not familiar with this period of beginnings and had not taken part in the assembly of 1686.

5. The interventions of De La Salle.

The biographers themselves present an opening address: Bernard and Maillefer are rather concise, Canon Blain is prolific, as usual. We can very legitimately refuse to accept his account when he pretends to reconstruct the propositions of De La Salle, word for word, and even and especially when he puts them within quotation marks, which for him never had the precise meaning that we are accustomed to giving them today.

But then, should we deny all credibility to the account given by this canon biographer? That would be excessive and pitiful. Still, looking at other passages by the same author could help in determining a just assessment of things. In 1717, for example, at Saint-Yon, Canon Blain is in the house itself where the assembly of the Brothers takes place. He is in the house but not in the chapter room. This in no way prevents him from extensively reproducing the speech which he attributes to the Founder. Very fortunately for us, he further adds: «With these or similar words, the Servant of God put his disciples into the disposition which he desired for them». (Blain, II, p. 135).

It does not then seem offensive to the memory of Canon Blain to evaluate such an avowal each time we gather from under his pen the words he himself puts into the mouth of De La Salle: «these words or others similar to these»!

All the same, it is in May-June of 1686 that De La Salle and the Brothers grapple with the question of the vows. Immediately, it seems, the Brothers present wish to bind themselves by the three vows common to religious orders: poverty, chastity, and obedience. Such a proposal on their part should come as no surprise. For the past two years at least, the Brothers' community had taken on the aspects of a religious house. The Brothers were certainly not the last to notice this ever stricter affinity which was absorbing them into the religious life. Not only were they aware of it, but they accepted it whole heartedly, and they wanted it to become ever more perfect. From this frame of mind came their proposal to bind themselves by the three traditional vows.

It would take the authority of De La Salle to convince them not to press so soon for the realization of their desires. This intervention of the Founder seems to have been decisive and for the next forty years, the Brothers would not pronounce the vows of povery and chastity. With regard to the vow of obedience, it was binding for a limited but extensive time: three years, with the possibility of renewing it each year for another three-year period.

De La Salle himself, bound himself by vow, and he took his obligations to obedience very seriously! This time he was vowing obedience not to his ecclesiastical superiors, but to the superiors who were within this little community, and then soon to Brother Henry L'Heureux whom the Brothers would elect to replace him. This took place the following year, in 1687.

Brother Maurice HERMANS
ROME

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08-O-08

BROTHER SCUBILION (3)
Catechist of Slaves:
A Gospel of Freedom.

Inthe previous article in the Lasalliana, we introduced you to the Missionary, «the Brother called to those afar»: far from the big city, far from salvation. In Brother Scubilion we have found a precocious and authentic apostolic vocation, a true passion to evangelize, which burned throughout his entire life. He had been a missionary at Bourbon, La Reunion, with his Brothers, and as his Brothers, he shared their modest task as teachers and catechists. But he went further than they in the gift of himself, tormented by the desire to always do more good, which was a bit difficult to do within the framework of the school which completely ignored the world of the slaves who, we should not forget, made up half the population of the island.

So what did he do? Without any special mission, but by a true instinct for evangelization, he gave himself to the disinherited, he went to become their indefatigable catechist, also to teach them the rudiments of education. Such catechetical and elementary instruction was forbidden for slaves at that time in 1843 when he arrived in Saint-Leu, which was located in the West and which had the richest coffee and sugar cane plantations on the island, and therefore, had the biggest number of slaves. From the depths of his vocation as a Missionary Brother was born his true vocation: Catechist of the Slaves. This in the future would be his name, his identification; in due time it will become his veritable title of glory. But to understand the difficulty of his task, the obstacles and efforts to vanquish him, and to judge the merits of his apostolic work, we must study the true situation.

Slavery? Much has been written about this sin of «Christian» nations from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the ignoble but lucrative traffic in «ebony timber» (the black slave trade) practiced on a grand scale on slave ships, to furnish cheap manual labor for the colonies and for the cotton, sugarcane, and coffee plantations of Louisiana, the Antilles, La Reunion, and other places. That Islam preceded the Christian nations in the slavery is a historical fact but not an excuse. People can go out of their way to justify the unjustifiable even by theological reasoning, but, behind all the beautiful rhetoric, we always find the profit angle. People have tried to legalize slavery, to define the slaves' rights under the law to avoid excesses, but perhaps all they were doing was legalizing barbarism. Once the slaves arrived at their destination, they were sold like cattle, they became mere chattle of their masters, without any real rights, simply tools of labor. On the Island of La Reunion, the masters were Christians, yet they tolerated religious instruction only after working hours, that is after a burdensome day... but only if you could find some catechist who would be interested in teaching them!

Brother Scubilion was one of those. He had lived through the time of slavery. He had lived during the transition period, which was inevitable, especially around 1840, from slavery to emancipation. This emancipation, which for a long time was restrained by vested interests, finally became a reality in 1848. The courageous and persevering anti-slavery politicians (Victor Schoelcher, among them) had forced the decision; the strong influence of the Church and her missionaries assured the non-violent passage from slavery to freedom.

Among these missionaries, the Brothers, as a rule, played a more discrete role in their schools: the primary instruction of the children of settlers or free creoles. Brother Scubilion had, of course, in his little class, to rigorously steer clear of this movement and to follow the traditions of his institute. Yet it was at this time that he was going to, we might say, «invent» together with God his specific vocation. Without being disobedient, he was going to be daring. What he was going to undertake was not a chance happening, nor a passing fancy, nor a desire to be different but it was rather to be a profound faithfulness to the intuition of his Founder. In effect, he was not going to «invent» catechism for the Blacks, for Father Alexander Monet had already been the pioneer in this domain since 1840. Rather, Brother Scubilion was going to start night classes to catechize the slaves in the school itself, beginning in 1843 at Saint Leu. Without doubt he would continue to teach the lower class. But he would add to this, catechism classes for the slaves. How does one explain this change, this conversion to the Blacks? It is very simple, now that we know a little bit about Brother Scubilion. Instinctively, he had a great love for the most abandoned: his zeal, his secret longing, his quest was to enlarge the horizons of his ministry. He did not have to go very far to search for this. Numerous slaves populated the rich plantations and, we might add, made them profitable. The truly poor were not too far away: they were at the doors of the school without having an access to the school. This was no time and place for a directly evangelical type of action: go toward these outcasts. I deliberately say «go toward...» because the planters and their slave bosses, and supervisors would not look very kindly upon having their manual laborers leaving their place of work to attend catechism lessons which would lead to who-knows-what? Perhaps, in the long run this could be truly dangerous for these slaves to become conscious of a certain dignity, that of being sons of God, and to inhale a few breaths of the air of freedom.

So there we have Brother Scubilion, leaving his school, which was not very readily seen among the Brothers, to

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go to visit the rich colonists, to talk with them, to exhort them in the name of the Gospel and request of them a few hours of free time for their slaves. Elementary classes during the day and catechism classes for the Blacks in the evening (which would be unthinkable during working hours). There we have, to use the words of Monsignor Aubry, Bishop of Reunion, the completely devoured «Slave of the Slaves». Thus, little by little, like Saint John Baptist De La Salle, he allowed himself to be led by God, event after event, until he was totally absorbed in the service of the Blacks. For him, it was not enough just to be inclined towards the slaves, but more effectively he had to do much more: in a sense to participate in the innermost part of their distress, not as a mere pretence, but in true imitation of Christ who «took upon himself the condition of a slave». Scubilion was assimilated into them: he the free slave of Christ, taught them that they were all freemen in the Lord. This was a marvelous transformation of roles already formulated by Saint Paul: «A slave who has been called by the Lord is the Lord's free man: in the same way a free man who has been called by Christ is his slave». (I Cor. VII, 22).

To catechize the slaves was perhaps the best way of preparing them for their liberation without knowing that the time of their emancipation was now very near. It would be at Saint-Leu that he would be living with the slaves and their children on December 20, 1848, the day of the abolition of slavery. And when, in 1850, he would leave Saint-Leu for La Possession, he would find a number of freed slaves whom he would make into ardent catechists: they would be exclusively catechists to their own people, this is the epitome of the missionary vocation. For the other Brothers there were day classes; for him there were evening classes for the newly-free. This happy division of labor was not a personal whim but was a work sanctioned by his Superior, Brother John of Matha, who recognized in Brother Scubilion an evident charism for the religious education of the former slaves. This was the apostolate to which the indefatigable catechist would concentrate his maximum effectiveness. He did not allow himself any other respite or break other than to multiply elementary classes and religious instruction for the slaves. It was probably more difficult now teaching the new catechetical pupils and more difficult to assemble them than it was during their time of slavery. Now they were far from the plantations, so replete with bad memories for them. The greater majority of them were now scattered in the Highlands of the Island. He had to go looking for them, and once having found them, he had to intreat them, convince them, and finally to lead them to the evening catechism classes, during the week, and to those given on Sunday before divine office time. These were the «Apostolic excursions» of Brother Scubilion.

What should we say about the Catechesis of Brother Scubilion? Their content interests us the least. The subject matter is more or less fixed. It is the style, the manner, the art of the catechist that make the big difference. He knew marvelously well how to adapt his lessons to these simple, totally illiterate people. He knew how to teach the slaves, and later the free people, the great truths of salvation, the commandments, the Sacraments which they were called upon to receive, and the Christian prayers which were to be recited each day. Brother Scubilion made all of these ingeniously inventive. His catechism classes were lively, with dialogue, a round of questions and answers, sometimes alternated between choirs, and topped off by a refrain given by the entire class. Besides the words there was the chant: The Creed was engrained in their memories because of the natural rhythm which the Blacks have in their blood.[1] But let us listen to Brother Scubilion himself talk about his lessons in catechism:

«Yes, I was the happiest with those good former slaves, and when I was seated among them it was a place better than to be seated on the throne of the greatest monarch in the world; they listened to me speak of God as if they were listening to God Himself, speaking through my mouth. These poor unfortunate ones took great pains to learn the main truths of our holy religion. They would say to me in their own language: «I understand what you are saying to me. You tell me that there is only one God. He made me to love Him and to enter into His paradise...».

For the Saint's catechism lessons, before the Sunday office, there were sometimes as many as three hundred Freedmen who gathered around him. Then, during the first pastoral visit of Msgr. Desprez to La Possession, in 1854, «His Excellency was amazed by the success obtained by Brother Scubilion in the teaching of catechism. More than six hundred Blacks were chanting in chorus and in a most admirable manner the principal truths of our religion». And the witness continues: «His Excellency cited this as the most moving episode in his pastoral tour. Long after that he talked about it and was always pleased to hear some news about Brother Scubilion».[2]

Let us say again, that even at Sainte-Marie, during the last eleven years of his life in «active retirement», he remained the catechist of the poor up to the very end. In the territory belonging to the parish there were still a number of people who had not been evangelized. There were many among the emancipated slaves who were more or less ashamed or recalcitrant, or who just neglected being instructed and baptized, and there were others who were «hired help» who came from India, Africa, or Madagascar to work on the plantations or in the sugar mills. They were free in principle, and by law, but how unprovided for they were! Once again Brother Scubilion would travel around the countryside, visiting the sugar centrals, searching out the poor, convincing them and leading them to his night catechism classes, preparing them for baptism, and later for a Christian marriage, and for many it was only after many years of delay.

I shall finish this very long testimony about Brother Scubilion, the catechist of the slaves and emancipated, with the account given by a young Brother of 22 years who met the «old Brother» for the first time in 1865: «Brother Scubilion, I might say, took possession of me, and inspired me to devote myself to the glory of God. When I told him that I was teaching catechism to the Blacks, his already smiling face became radiant. Then he explained to me his method of teaching catechism. Then he taught me how to sing the Commandments of God and taught me the melodies of two or three religious songs which he either gave me or had me copy».

The poor people whom Brother Scubilion evangelized must have had good memories. Perhaps that is what explains why even until this day, he is still venerated by the people in La Reunion.

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[1] For more details about the catechism lessons of Brother Scubilion, see pages 122 to 131 of my book, *Brother Scubilion, Jean-Bernard Rousseau* (Editions Declée de Brouwer).

[2] Brother Gonzalvien, Visitor of Madagascar-La Reunion, in his «Biographical Notes» in 1899.

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1 June 1986

FOREWORD

Many of the readers of Lasalliana must have received the recent issue of "Documents and Witness" regarding "The Catholic School Throughout the World".

If you have had the curiosity and patience to read this publication, you have probably come to realize how many diverse questions Lasallian schools throughout the Institute are facing. You can get an idea about which of these problems we ought to face:

— in an individual way,

— in solidarity with all other Catholic schools.

I would simply like to underscore some of these:

1) The recognition by the various governments and the respect of freedom which Catholic schools either enjoy or are demanding. In a number of countries there are the threats of reducing or suppressing these legitimate freedoms.

2) How to maintain, or even enrich and develop a Lasallian educational plan in schools where the number of Brothers is diminishing? How to help and work along with schools which wish to remain under Lasallian inspiration and affiliation when the Brothers are no longer there or are not there? In certain regions of the Institute this case is multiplying.

3) How to continue to work "together and by association" when State contracts introduce very strong constraints in the exercise of the Brothers' teaching careers or when the employment situation within the country practically no longer permits moving from one school to another?

4) Financial aid from the State allows the Brothers to more easily admit the poorest students. This then is a positive aspect because it permits us to get back to gratuity. But how do you "proclaim the Gospel" when the schools are submitted to tight controls by the public authorities and when these demand neutrality as the counterpart to their aid?

5) The contracts with the Government also give us a professional status which can allow us to work with greater solidarity with the educational efforts of the country. Our schools then can operate as being complementary to the public schools, and no longer as being parallel to them or in opposition to them. What are the positive aspects of this collaboration? What are our contributions to the betterment of the educational system?

6) Normally, a Lasallian school is characterized by its attention to the needs of the young and to their future life and professional career. To what extent do these schools contribute to pedagogical research? What accomplishments can we show in this regard?

7) Often, the Brothers's schools enjoy an excellent reputation thanks to their organization, efficiency, and the quality education which they provide. Do we always avoid the risk of a certain complacency which such success brings? Are our schools careful about regularly evaluating their operation and pedagogy?

8) We know that the success of a school depends above all upon the quality of those who teach there. Are we careful about the training and up-dating of our teachers, lay teachers as well as Brothers? This is the key to renewal and progress.

Other questions also certainly present themselves. Lasalliana can help find some solutions to these problems by proposing some reflection on our profession and ministry, various accomplishments, and by accounts of a variety of personal and communitarian commitments to new educational endeavours.

So, we count on your fidelity and zeal to make Lasalliana known to others. THANK YOU!

With this Issue No. 9, we complete our third year of publication. See you next year!

Brother Leon LAURAIRE, FSC

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09-A-43

AT PARIS, 31 MAY 1686

Soon, it will be exactly three hundred years ago that a Minim religious of great reputation, Father Nicholas Barré, reached the age of 65.

Ever since, his name has without fail continued to figure into the biographies of Saint John Baptist De La Salle. Truly, he was for our saint a trusted counselor, even though their personal contacts were not very numerous. The austerity of the Minim religious was not at all displeasing to the canon from Rheims. His initiatives in favor of the education of poor children further recommended him to the one whom God was leading to create in his home town the community which would become the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

1. Some particularly significant dates

On December 17, 1621, at Saint-Germain d'Amiens, Nicholas was baptized, the son of Louis Barré.

On January 31, 1642, in the convent of Nigeon (Paris), Nicholas Barré made his religious profession in the order of the Clerics Regular Minims of Saint Francis of Paul.

In 1643, at Place Royale in Paris, the young professed cleric began a stay which would continue on until his departure for Rouen in 1659. He had hardly been ordained in 1645 or 1646, when he was named preacher and confessor.

Here, as later in Rouen, he merited the confidence of his superiors and of his confreres in religion, under various titles as librarian, professor of philosophy, then of theology, local superior, provincial, etc..

Besides that, he would be appreciated above all as a confessor and spiritual guide.

In 1659, Father Barré was in Rouen, and he would remain there for a dozen years. It was there above all that he would become interested in the work of the schools and the training of women teachers for the various types of teaching which he advocated: elementary, trade, and Sunday schools, catechetical schools, normal schools for the training of women teachers.

In contact with Canon Nicholas Roland, with Adrien Nyel, and Madame Maillefer, he would encourage the opening of a free primary school in Rheims before working closely with John Baptist De La Salle for at least two attempts. On December 27, 1670, Françoise Duval and Anne Le Coeur, who were working in Rouen in a school for little poor girls, arrived in Reims by the order of Father Barré so that they could take charge of the good work begun by Canon Roland and which would become the "Congregation of the Holy Child Jesus" of Rheims.

In 1675, Father Barré was to return to Place Royale, Paris. It is there that John Baptist De La Salle paid him a visit more than once and especially during the years 1681-1683.

Between 1678 and 1679, at Rouen, Madame Maillefer, another benefactress of the work of Father Barré, organized the departure of Adrien Nyel, up until that time the econome general of the poor, and sent him to Rheims to open a charity school there.

In 1679, very probably in March, Adrien Nyel met Canon John Baptist De La Salle for the first time.

In 1679, or a bit later, Father Barré took a great interest in the training of some men school teachers whom he envisioned to even form a community similar to that established for the women teachers of the girls' schools, which he had brought to such a success.

This plan is clearly affirmed in the texts. It is more difficult to find out what point of success it had reached. The teachers had, without doubt, considered themselves as followers of Father Barré. Yet, it seems that they did not really form a "community".

In 1685, the *Statutes and Regulations of the Christian and Charitable schools of the Holy Infant Jesus* were published in Paris. This draft was planned and drafted by the women teachers even if once or again explicit mention was made of men teachers to whom it would equally apply. Such a reference is already found in the complete title of the pamphlet. It is not found in another draft of the "statutes", which remained in manuscript form and which seems to have appeared in the year 1677.

In 1687, a work was published in Paris, entitled, *Meditations for the Teaching Sisters of the Charity Schools of the Holy Infant Jesus, of the Late Rev. Father Barré, Minim, Principally for the Time of their Retreat and their Spiritual Exercises, on the Principal Duties of their State; Which can Serve also for all Men and Women School Teachers to Make them Aware of the Importance and the Obligations of their Profession. By R.P.P. Giry, Exprovincial of the Minims and Director of the Same Institute.*

In 1694 the work, *An Abridgment of the History of the Institution of the Charity Schools of Father Barré... Spiritual Maxims of Reverend Father Barré* was published in Paris.

In 1697, also in Paris, appeared the work, *Spiritual Letters of Reverend Father Nicholas Barré, a Religious of the Order of Minims.*

2. Barré and De La Salle

The first information that we have is that of Brother Bernard when he mentions Nicholas Barré in his account of the "Admirable conduct of Divine Providence in the person of the Venerable Servant of God, John Baptist De La Salle". (Cahiers Lasalliens 4, which reproduced the manuscript of Brothers Bernard after a copy date of 1722).

Brother Bernard, who wrote in 1721, was aware of the existence of the Congregation of teaching women which Barré had been the soul of until his death thirty-five years earlier. He twice recalls that Barré dreamed not

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only of the education of young girls but he wanted to join to this work men teachers whom he would train for boys' schools.

"Having happily succeeded in the schools for young girls, he wrote, those which he had established for boys in several places and above all in Saint-Gervais, where he had six teachers, were not, in fact, very successful; for the teachers were so disorganized that soon they succumbed to all kind of disorders and all of them left, one after the other (Bd. p. 37).

Bernard was not a historian by profession; but he was able to discover and present a certain number of "memoires" concerning events which he himself had not known personally. Sometimes he expresses himself rather awkwardly; but his unpretentious style is perhaps the best guarantee of the respect with which he treated some sources. If we indeed cannot ask him to give here a perception of all the initiatives which De La Salle may owe to those of his predecessors, we cannot help but appreciate the veracity with which the Brother biographer recounts the two interventions of Father Barré in close associatio,n with the Canon of Rheims.

The cause of beatification and canonization of Father Nicholas Barré being at the threshold of the Roman Congregation for Saintly Causes, a thick volume of XC-618 pages contains the efforts to gather together all that might serve to justify the introduction of this cause. The wish to be thorough is seen all throughout the 700 pages of this "Positio". But it falls short of having all the "proofs" given being of equal value. They would have to be approached with a sound critical spirit, especially perhaps in what concerns a claimed continuity between some Parisian school teachers pertaining to Barré and the disciples of De La Salle.

There is no doubt, that directly and through intermediaries, John Baptist De La Salle got wind of the educational work founded by Nicholas Barré. Also, without doubt, at one time or another, some thin connection could be made between certain passages in the writings of the two founders. Perhaps the most remarable note of the apparent connection could be found in some of the spiritual maxims of one and the other. And it could be said that this spirituality of abandonement to Divine Providence which so deeply marked the existence of these two men was of their initiative and their apostolic endeavours!

But all this must be re-set within a much larger context before trying to establish a connection between two works which could have benefitted each other by helps other than those held on to by the authors of the "Positio".

3. Two decisive moments in the life of De La Salle

A few precise points given by Bernard fortunately confirm the role played more than once by Father Barré in the beginning of De La Salle's work. De La Salle was examining himself then on the meaning of the renouncement which God seemed to be asking of him.

"Seeing, says Bernard, that he had rented the house for the teachers for only a year and a half, that is, until the feast of Saint John the Baptist of the year 1681, six months before the end of the lease, he hesitated about continuing to rent a house for them or to lodge them in his own house so that he could look after their conduct more closely and have them lead a more regulated life... In this perplexity, God furnished him with an opportunity of making a trip to Paris for certain affairs. He took advantage of this to go to visit Reverend Father Barré who at that time was at the convent of the Reverend Fathers Minims at the Place Royale. He related to him all that had transpired in Rheims with regard to the school masters. This worthy son of Saint Francis of Paul, full of experience, did not hestitate in a similar predicament and at once advised De La Salle to let the school masters live with him in his own house". (Bd pp. 36-37).

The Canon hesitated no longer. When the lease expired, the following June 24, he received the teachers under his own roof. This was the beginning of a common life which would lead him ever more strictly to share the conditions of some young men who had been recruited, however too quickly, to run the three schools in Rheims. And a modern commentator has remarked: The fact that De La Salle lived among his first companions had to be the determining factor in the birth of a true comunity. His position as a secular priest allowed him to do what Father Barré, a religious minim, could not have envisioned for himself. Obliged to live apart from the teachers, he would not be able to assure them of the support of his presence and of a type of formation which was indispensable for them.

But De La Salle had the means. Should he use it for "founding" schools and above all his community of teachers? Many of his friends advised him to do so. But, Bernard continues,

"He was dissuaded from this by Reverend Father Barré whom he often saw when going from time to time from Rheims to Paris, and who told him that he should not fund the schools, because, when Our Lord Jesus Christ said in the Gospels: the foxes have their dens and the birds of the air have their nests but the Son of man has not where to lay his head, he meant by the foxes the people of the world who are attached to the goods of this earth, by the birds of the air, the religious who have their own little cells, but those who set out to establish schools should have the same lot as the Son of man". (Bd p. 48).

This paraphrasing of this text of the Gospel could very easily be rejected, but the council was clear, and De La Salle resolved to follow it, he would sacrifice his canonry and personal fortune. Again, Father Barrré led De La Salle down the narrow path. He shared not only the daily existence of the first Brothers, but voluntarily, he chose the poverty or at least the insecurity which would in the future be their common lot:

"This community, De La Salle would later write, is at present founded on nothing else but Providence". (Treatise on the Habit).

And this "at present" would last for the entire lifetime of De La Salle. No matter how decisive they may have been during these early years, these directives of Father Barré do not warrant making of the religious Minim a true "spiritual director" of the canon of Rheims. Bernard and other biographers furthermore are quite explicit in this regard when they make, and with what authority, this director intervene in the transactions of La Salle in renouncing his canonry.

A simple counselor, if you will, Father Barré is not less than one of those who helped John Baptist De La Salle the most and best in recognizing what was "the will of God in his regard", this will which, on his death bed, our holy Founder would adore in all things.

Brother Maurice HERMANS
Rome

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09-A-44

DE LA SALLE'S DEALINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS TIME (1)

Contrary to what often appears in works concerning schools for the poor, it is not true that Louis XIV was not interested in charity schools and purely and simply left them up to the Church and her clergy. It is certainly true that the royal authority delegated the right and the mission of supervising the elementary schools of the cities to the bishops and precentors, who were the forerunners of our present day Diocesan Directors of Schools. Yet, the King, religiously consecrated in the cathedral of Rheims, held the highest authority over all school matters. It was the royal authority which, by an edict of December 1606 (article 14), periodically renewed, required the school teachers to have the approval of the parish priest or of the ecclesiastic in charge of such matters. But in case of a disagreement, each party had a right to appeal to the king for justice. The royal justice alone decided definitively. We are limiting ourselves here to the scholastic period during which John Baptist De La Salle lived.

1. The King or the church?

There is a royal edict, registered by the Parliament of Paris, 12 January 1686, which requires that children of Protestants "between the ages of five and sixteen" should be placed with the Catholic families of their relatives, if they have any. If they do not have any Catholic relativies, then the judge will assign them to families which will rear them. It was Louis XIV who asked the bishop to increase the number of gratuitous schools in their dioceses and drew the necessary funds for their support and development from the revenues derived from the assets of the Protestants who had emigrated. It was he who gave the orders on 13 December 1698 that men and women teachers should be assigned to "all the parishes where none yet exist, for the instruction of children", and especially for the children of former Protestants, and that they should be taught catechism as well as the reading of scripture. He specifies that teachers' annual salary should be guaranteed by local taxes. Article 10 of this "Declaration" specifies that school attendance will be obligatory "until the age of 14", without prejudice, however, to the right of families to hire their own tutors.[1]

After 1651, in fact, Louis XIV reigned as an absolute monarch. Theoretically, all the legislative, executive, judiciary, and financial authority and even the possibility of operating within the religious domain, depended on him. Let us, therefore, not be too hasty in blaming the Church for certain situations which she rarely had complete control over in the seventeenth century.

2 — The interventions of Louis XIV and of Louis XV

All appearances to the contrary, the royal authority was implemented by intermediaries who strangely rendered them democratic. These were the people "elected" by regions, those who bought parliamentary seats as one would today pay to study law or would buy a law office, the "Assembly of clergy", town magistrates or councilors, always elected, the "notables" of the parishes, etc. who proposed the decisions to be taken or presented their "objections". Often some or other of these people were not restrained from implementing the point of their objection, with the understanding that it would eventually get royal approval. In fact, everyone thought that a decision could not be judged good and therefore liable to approval unless it was first put into a life experience to demonstrate that it was worthwhile.

If it was not easier to approach the king to ask a favor of him than it is today to personally ask a favor of the President or one of his ministers, still everything went up to him. They got all the way up to him the same way as the execution of royal decisions passed through a number of intermediaries who could, if they so wished, cause some difficulties. The State Secretaries, military governors, managers, all had their little say. It was essentially through such intermediaries that John Baptist De La Salle approached Louis XIV and the future Louis XV when he was still a child.

2.1. *Financially*. Louis XIV considered as normal the annual salary of 150 pounds for men teachers in the charity schools and only 100 pounds for lady teachers. To maintain the same purchasing power in spite of inflation, Louis XV would raise this amount up to 250 and 200 pounds. La Salle accepted these financial conditions in the contracts for his founding gratuitous schools. This was with this provision however: each time that four classes were founded, he would have to provide the school with a fifth Brother without asking the least remuneration for him. This "extra" Brother was intended as an assurance of the school's continuity when a teacher is sick or to oversee the entire school and assuming its direction. This revolutionary pedagogical innovation was possible only because of the vow of poverty which the Brothers obliged themselves to follow, in 1694, "to live on bread alone" rather than require the pupils to pay.[2]

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Blain declares with reason that Louis XIV did his utmost to multiply gratuitous schools all throughout his reign. He was a witness to this effort. At Calais, upon the insistence of the magistrates, the king ordered the financial services to pay the Brothers 450 pounds a year, which was the salary of three teachers. It was Louis XIV who offered them the land needed for the construction of a school. At Boulogne-sur-mer, also, the land for the school was provided by the royal authority.[3] At Alès and at Fontainebleau, it was likewise the king's order which guaranteed the financing of the teachers. In the first city, the funds were raised by the "clipping" tax levied against land owners. In the second, a capital of 10,000 pounds was raised to provide the annual payment of 500 pounds for two Brothers who would be provided for a Lasallian school. This latter school was not opened until after the death of the King, but without him it would not have become a reality so soon.[4]

Under the Regency, the proposed payments to the Brothers of Calais seemed to have been forgotten. A renewal by royal decree was often needed after the death of a monarch to preserve the executive binding force. Also, after the time Louis XV had reached his majority, the requisite funds were again blocked. It was he again who stood up to the various enemies of the Lasallian schools, within his Council, to award "Letters Patent" to the Brothers. These conferred a legal personality with the right to receive legacies and to acquire property. Louis XV did even more: he gave his agreement to the Pontifical Bull which approved the Institute. He pressured the Parliament to register it. As usual, a cascade of intermediaries came into play in both cases, but the will of the King and strong arguments overcame their opposition.

2.2. *Pedagogically and Morally,* Louis XIV on many occasions moved the bishop of France in general, an sometimes certain bishops in particular, to watch over the continuance of the separation of boys and girls in the schools. He also took many measures to see that the ecclesiastics could never be suspected of the least familiarity with young women. Louis XV acted in the same way.[5] The pupils who learned to write in the charity schools were sometimes between 12 and 14 years old. The men and women teachers held their hand to guide it. Even in the Lasallian schools, in this field, the method could not help but be individual, after a more or less collective instruction. This sociological context with its moral and psychological consequences, hardly concerns us today except, perhaps, with regard to instructing illiterate adults. We would have to take this into consideration in our evaluation if we want to understand the advice and prudence of the king.

On the other hand, the question of the liberty of conscience, at this distance, seems to have been misguided. In the area of Cévenol, the number of former Protestants who had become "new Catholics" after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, was quite large. The children were baptized as soon as their parents had declared that they were renouncing Protestantism. These were the children whom the king obliged to attend the Brothers' gratuitous Christian schools in Alès, Mende, and Vans. The governors, administrators, and local authorities were pressured into having the royal decrees respected. The Protestants — it is too often forgotten — retained the right to rear their children in Protestantism because the legislation imposed fidelity to Catholic convictions only upon those who said that they no longer belonged to the "Pretended Reformed Religion". In fact, there was a lot of hypocrisy in all of that: not all the children thought, at the age of 12-14, as their parents. The catechesis of the Brothers in a milieu so disturbed by the general insincerity was not easy. The royal pressure, with its financial sanctions (fines) or its transfers of parental authority to the judiciary authority (placing chilren in homes) only increased the difficulties of evangelization and of a true Catholic education.

2.3. *The king also worked through intermediaries* who were anxious to please him or at least to please personalities who had a great influence over him. Thus, Achille de Harlay, President of the Parliament of Paris, did not even for a moment dream of displeasing Madame Maintenon, whom Louis XIV called "his firmness" when she wrote to him on July 3, 1698 (or 1699 'it is not certain').[6] "Sir... I am not afraid to make a recommendation to you today in behalf of the charitable schools of the parish of Saint Sulpice... The men and women teachers sometimes cause trouble there... I therefore, beseech you, sir, to procure the relief of the parish priest of St. Sulpice".

It was thus that La Salle won the case which was filed against him under the pretext that he was receiving gratuitously children who were not entirely poor. He absolutely refused to follow the demands of custom which would make his schools into ghettos reserved for the poor. This was a radical innovation because it made the least cultivated pupils come into frequent contact and conversation with the favored class of pupils who had come to profit by the exemplary educational value of his schools.

A short time after the interventions of Madame de Maintenon, Louis XIV who was protecting the Irish friends of the king of England who had been expelled from their country by an anti-Catholic persecution, asked Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, to look after the education of some fifty immigrant children. The usual cascade of influence poured down from one level to another. The Cardinal passed on the request to the parish priest, and he, in his turn, referred the matter to De La Salle. Financially, it was evidently the royal treasury which re-imbursed the parish priest for the advances which he had to make.[7]

In 1709, "by order of the king", the Duke du Maine, the illegitimate son of Madame de Montespan and of Louis XIV, grandmaster of the artillery and lieutenant general of the army, gave the Center for the Training of Country Teachers, which had just been established at Saint-Denis near Paris, the gracious permission to allow passing troops to be lodged there. It is known also that his mother, who died in 1707 after many long years spent far from the temptations of the Court, had greatly shown her devotion for the thousand children who, about 1698, attended the Brothers' schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice in Paris.[8] More than strict regulations, more than legislation, often enough quite flexible, it was human relations which allowed institutions to be established and to prosper. In this regard. La Salle is seen to be at one and the same time a prudent and determined founder and a polished diplomat, very sure of his arguments based on experience as well as on strict reasoning.

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DE LA SALLE'S DEALINGS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS TIME (2)

3 — The role of the administrators

After the king, there were Administrators of provinces who served as relayers of the central authority. On the 31 provinces, only ten Administrators, or one-third, were involved with Lasallian activities. These implemented royal ordinances. Such implementation did not always truly reflect the intention of the king. Thus, at Macon and at Moulins, the local authorities obstructed the wish of Louis XIV of extending the benefits of free elementary education to the entire French population. But at Guise, the Administrator obliged the municipality to support the school of the Brothers. At Calais, the Administrator Bignon implemented the royal decision of an annual disbursement of 450 pounds to the Brothers. At Boulogne-sur-mer, the sub-delegate of the Administrator used his personal rights and his own authority, to establish a second poor school for the sons of sailors. At Saint-Yon, it was a visit by the Administrator, accompanied by the First President of the Parliament of Normandy, which permitted the Brothers to pursue their educational work jointly for the most needy of the region and the children of merchants capable of paying tuition. At Mende and Alès, Lamoignon de Basville, the Administrator got the bishop to develop Catholic schools to permit these schools to receive, without any restrictions, all the children of the "new converts" whom the royal ordinances constrained to attend Catholic schools. The Brothers were limited to accepting the children presented by those parents who were forced to do so by the constraints of the law. They did this with great care to educate these children with all pedagogical and catechetical independence.

At Vans, in the diocese of Uzes, it was again the Administrator Basville who paid a visit to the little village in order to assure himself that a peaceful climate existed between the "former" Protestants and the Brothers' schools. Sad to say, the conversions were not sincere. The families asked the Brothers to treat their children, who were baptized Catholics, "as if" they were still Calvinists. The Brothers put up with this, believing rather naively in the supposition of the sincerity of their conversion. Here we can see the distortion between the sociological position taken and deeply-felt convictions. This reminds us of Vatican Council II speaking about the freedom of conscience. Consciences are always individual. It is at the age of seven, canonically defined as the ordinary time for reaching that age of reason, that "freedom of conscience" is born.[9]

4 — The role of the governors

Of the 39 territories ruled by Governors which existed between 1679 and 1719, twelve of them availed themselves of the services of John Baptist De La Salle and his Brothers. In 1705, at Dijon, it was the principal officer of the Governor of Bourgogne, who was in charge of the military, who settled on the spot the disputes between the royal administration and the local population. The tactics of Louis XIV were actually very centralized. It consisted of inviting the great Lords who theoretically governed the provinces to Versailles and then finding some pretext for keeping them there. Thus their local representatives would have to refer back to Versailles for all important decisions. When it was a question of Dijon setting up a Lasallian school, the officer in charge, Claude Rigolley, personally intervened with his authority. But, financially, he did not have to appeal for public funds because he relied upon his own personal contributions.

It was quite different with Armand de Béthune, lieutenant general of the government of Picardie. Thanks to his intervention with the royal authority, the city of Calais easily obtained both the authorization and the funds necessary to introduce the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the city. When the Jansenists' disputes broke out following the precise doctrinal definitions of the Bull Unigenitus (1713), it was the Governor of Calais who defended the Brothers who were opposed by certain members of the clergy hostile to Rome.

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In the same city, it was the Marquis de Collemberg who defended the Brothers. He represented the Duke of Aumont, the legal Governor whom the king kept at Versailles. He did not contribute his personal fortune but all the public services which he directed. Among these, he favored the creation of a second school which had become necessary because of the success of the first school. Plans were drawn up. A location was chosen for the new establishment. Certain materials were given without charge. All of this was done with the collaboration of La Salle himself.[10]

Conclusion

Tis quick examination allows us to conclude:

a) Contrary to the contentions of Marxist theorists, Roland Mousnier has clearly demonstrated that the society of the seventeenth century was not a "class society" rigidly and unchangeably fixed by exclusively economic barriers, but it was rather "an ordered society". Individuals were differentiated, in fact, not by the laws of economics, but by a hierarchical order which was based on the differences of functions among those who prayed (the clergy and religious), those who worked (the bourgeois and common people) and those who defended the country and maintained peace (the nobility). The king was "the father" to one and all.

b) This hierarchical society permitted social progression for the betterment of living conditions. This was an amelioration which supposed instruction and an apprenticeship, theoretical and practical knowledge, without forgetting the "know-how" of good manners to which La Salle paid so much attention for he knew that it was indispensable to all social mobility.

c) In a context marked by a fierce fight among various trades and professions as well as among privileges of all kinds, La Salle did not want his Brothers to benefit either by the "privileges" of the clergy or by those enjoyed by "religious with solemn vows", or by those of the nobility. He wanted them to be like the poor people with whom they worked, without excluding those who were not so bad off, all of whom were immersed in the mass of the French populace.

d) Instead of relying primarily on alms from the people or on rich benefactors, the Saint demanded of the local, regional, and national authorities the amounts which the State, and each city had the social obligation of giving to the poor schools which wanted to be gratuitous without the civil authorities intervening into the religious domain and without interfering with the free choice of parents in their God given right, by natural law concerning their responsibilities toward their children. (MTR).

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[1] Yves POUTET, Laws pertaining to schools and religious differences in France (16th to 19th centuries), in "Christianization and Dechristianization", 9th colloquy of Religious History and the History of ideas". University of the State of Angers-Fontevraud, 1985.

See also Blain (Cl 7 and 8), t. I, Page 81, 372; t. II, p. 53. It is important to point out that the harsh edict of January 1686, starting with the error on the number of Protestants remaining in France without any desire of being converted to Catholicism, was hardly applicable. Consequently, from the month of May, Louis XIV wrote to the Administrator of Paris instructing him to no longer speak about "Protestants" but only about "new Catholics", in order to get him to observe the edict about their attending school. If one neglects this most important fact, then later decisions, which were less radical than the initial official legislation forebode, could no longer be understood.

[2] Cahiers Lasallien 2, p. 42, BLAIN, t. I p. 54, 81; t. II. p. 53.

[3] BLAIN, t. I p. 373; 383-384; t. II p. 71.

[4] BLAIN, t. II. p. 51-52, 127.

[5] BLAIN, t. I. p. 52, 54, 141.

[6] Yves POUTET, "The Seventeenth Century and Lasallian Beginnings" — Slepa, 134, Cours Gambetta, 33400 Talence. t. II. p. 89.

[7] BLAIN, t. I. p. 368. Yves POUTET, "James II, MacMahon, Kennedy", "French Review of the History of Latin America", volume XXI, N. 3, December 1967. Under this humorous title which caught the attention of Joseph Kennedy, the father of the former President of the USA, and Grace Kelly, Princess of Monaco, this article deals only with the Irish youth educated by John Baptist De La Salle and some of the Brothers around 1698-1700. Photocopies can be gotten from: Slepa; 134-Cours Gambetta; 33400 Talence (France).

[8] BLAIN, t. II, p. 75; t. I. p. 354.

[9] Yves POUTET, "The Seventeenth Century...".t. II. p. 55-74.

[10] Ibid, t. II. p. 49-54.

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THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (10): CONCERNING CORRECTIONS (2)

1 — An Overview

> "The correction of students is one of the most consequential aspects of the Schools and concerning which much care should be taken that it be administered properly and with good results, not only on the part of the one receiving it, but on the part of the one administering it as well; for this reason there are many procedures to be observed if the use of punishment in the schools. We will speak about these in the following articles, after having explained the necessity of joining kindness with firmness regarding the conduct of children". (Cahier Lasallien 24 - Page 140).

Schools where Good Order and Meaningful Work Prevail

The entire second part of the Management of Schools is devoted to the following theme: "Means of establishing and maintaining order in the schools".

This insistence on establishing and maintaining order without doubt gives the early Lasallian schools a severe and rigorous image. Games, enjoyment, play, etc. did not seem to have a very big role here.

A text to get the setting in time

It will be sufficient to observe what is practiced today in various countries or what we learn from the history of education, to be convinced that the idea of school discipline and recourse to certain punishments depend essentially on what is practiced in this sphere among the people in general and particularly in the family.

The school cannot but help being a reflection or echo of society and its mentality. To mention it is not to render a value judgement.

It seems to me, however, important that there be a homogeneity between the school's system of punishment and that of the society, if not, the child would be disorientated or would favor attending that institution which he feels is the most favorable. It can easily be verified that a permissive society engenders a school with liberal discipline; a liberal milieu brings about a let-them-do-as-they-please school atmosphere, etc. Thus, the concept of authority and the ways this authority is exercised are revealed. It is the education of the child's personality which comes into play here.

"The Management of Schools" does not escape this school-society inter-relationship. The history of education and the scholastic iconography of the seventeenth century often present us with teachers as possessors of a discipline which they are supposed to exercise without weakness. Their main teaching aid is often the whip or the rod, symbols and instruments of their authority. "Corporal punishment" is taken for granted, but they can be substituted for by an arsenal of reprimands, punishments, penances, dismissal, etc.. It even seems that certain teachers abused these sanctions to the point of discouraging some pupils from attending their classes regularly. This was one of the reasons for the instability of the schools of this period. The rough character of certain pupils, the poor organization of the school, the occasions of mutually dragging out the time between one lesson and another, etc., were, without doubt, excuses for such conduct. It would be hypocritical to be shocked today by an authority which seemed to be so natural to the parents of that period.

It is, therefore, in such a context that the chapter "On Corrections" in the Management of Schools must be read. However, the topic must have preoccupied the authors of this work because they devote to it no fewer than 40 pages, after having spent only 2 pages "On Rewards".

The following is the dilemma in which John Baptist De La Salle and the first Brothers who produced the Management faced:

— How to establish sufficient discipline in school to have the good order necessary for serious work;

— All the while avoiding any abuse of punishments which would so discourage the pupils that they would quit school?

This discipline also contains various considerations regarding the personality of the child; respecting him as a child of God, touching and winning his heart, making him see the punishment as being just and accepting it as coming from God.

This is why, these forty pages contain an abundance of explanations and precautions which clearly try to show how to prevent devious conduct on the part of the pupils so that they do not have to be punished. It is interesting to recall briefly the scope of this reflection and that it remains strongly instructional for us today.

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A brief description of possible punishments

In view of assuring order and maintaining discipline in class, the Management proposes to the teachers five kinds of sanctions for possible trouble makers.

"The faults of children can be corrected in several different ways: 1. By reprimands; 2. By penances; 3. By the ferule. 4. By the rod. 5. By expulsion from school". (Cahier Lasallien 24 - Page 144).

• By reprimands:

As one of the principal rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to speak rarely in their schools (Page 145):

— the use of reprimands ought to be very rare,
— it seems even much better not to use them at all,
— threats should be used only with great circumspection,
— If a threat is given, it is necessary to punish without pardon, for simple threats would not be effective,
— and threats should be usually by signs, although it might be possible to speak to certain pupils in a strong manner in view of intimidating them.

• By Punishment:

"The use of punishment will be more usual in the Schools than corrections, they dishearten the pupils less, cause less pain to the parents and will be a lot more useful". (Page 174).

Punishments should play a curative role and even sometimes a preventive one. They should never be given with ridicule, should not be limited to mere words, and should be administered without disturbing the silence or good order of the class, and without wasting time. They should be give principally to those repeatedly late, those distracted during the prayers, catechism or Mass, those who make mistakes in reading, those not following the lesson, who show negligence in the writing exercises, have a bad posture, lack proper decorum during the religious office, have not learned their catechism, or have not fulfilled the duties of their "office" well, etc.. In the these circumstances the punishment should fit the fault committed. However, "The penance which would be the most appropriate and the most useful is to give the pupils something to learn by heart". (Page 179).

• By the ferule:

"The ferule is an instrument consisting of two pieces of leather sewn together. It is about from ten to twelve inches in length, including the handle, and ends in an oval of two inches in diameter. The inside of this oval is stuffed, so that it will not be completely flat but somewhat rounded on the outside". (Page 146).

The teacher can have recourse to the ferule when the pupil has not followed the lesson or is fooling around, when he has arrived late for class, when he has not obeyed the first signal, or for other similar reasons, that is to say, not too serious.

It is prescribed that the teacher should give only one blow, never more than two, on the left hand so as not to bother the writing hand, and never to one who has a bad hand, to avoid further injury.

• By the rod:

the reasons justifying recourse to this correction are:
— for not wishing to obey,
— for the habit of not following or not studying one's lessons,
— for scribbling in the notebook instead of writing there,
— for fighting in school or in the street,
— for not having prayed in church,
— for lacking decorum during the catechism lesson or at mass,
— for being absent from school, Mass, or the Sunday catechism lesson.

Still, it is important to have recourse to such corrections with the greatest moderation and presence of mind, without allowing one's self to get carried away by "passion". The punishment is ordinarily three blows, and never more than five without the particular order of the Director.

• By expulsion from School: This is the supreme punishment. It ought to be rare and justifiable.

"One can, and sometimes must, dismiss pupils from school; "Pupils may be, and sometimes ought to be, sent away from school; but this should be done only upon the advice of the Brother Director. Those who should be sent away are the dissolute who are capable of ruining others; those who absent themselves often from school, from the Parochial Mass or from Catechism on Sundays and holy days through the fault of their parents, and with whom it is becoming a habit; the incorrigible, that is to say, those who, after having been corrected a great number of times, do not amend their conduct. It should, however, be an extraordinary occurrence to send a pupils away from school". (Page 148-149).

In Summary

It is necessary to act

"in such a way that you are firm in order to get the desired results but gentle in the way you achieve it; you should act in such a way that it is evident that it is a great act of charity, accompanied by zeal, you must have great perseverance, without allowing, however, the children to try getting away without being punished or letting them do as they well please, for in such matters there should be no gentleness; you must know that gentleness consists in never allowing any harshness or anything whatsoever that savors of anger or passion appear in your reprimands, but showing therein the gravity of a father, a compassion full of tenderness, and of a certain gentleness, which must be, however, lively and efficacious; let it be made clearly to appear by the teacher who rebukes or punishes that it is a species of necessity and that it is out of zeal for the common good that he does so". (Page 144).

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THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS (11)
CONCERNING CORRECTIONS (2)

2 — How not to punish

"If it is desirable that a school be well regulated and in very good order, then punishments must be rare". (Page 149).

1) Some preventive means:

It seems that it is the teacher who is the cause of the need and frequency of corrections in the class because of the way he conducts the group, how he exercises his authority, and by showing mediocre teaching methods. This is why the Management affirms:

"To avoid frequent punishment, which are a source of great disorder in a school, it is necessary to note well that it is silence, restraint and watchfulness on the part of the teacher that establish and maintain good order in a class, and not harshness and blows. A constant effort must be made to act with skill and ingenuity in order to keep the pupils in order while making almost no use of punishments". (Pages 149-150).

Other means are likewise pointed out:

— do not always use the same method, for you run the risk of having the pupils get used to them

— however, in this regard, if a teacher wishes to make some innovations, he should first have his ideas approved by the Brother Director.

— If circumstances should constrain him to have recourse to "extraordinary punishments", then he must receive authorization for such:

"*and for this reason they will defer them, which is, at the same time, a very proper thing to do, in order to have enough time for thinking about it beforehand and to give more weight to the punishment; thus causing it to leave a greater impression on the minds of the pupils".* (Page 150).

2) Concerning dissuasive conditions:

"In order to be useful to the pupils, punishments should be accompanied by the following ten conditions."

The Cahier Lasallien 24, pages 151 to 152 can be consulted to find these ten conditions which are simply mentioned here. Punishments ought to be:

— Pure and disinterested, that is to say, administered for elevated and religious motives
— Inspired by pure charity: "He who loves well, chastizes well".
— Just, and should appear so to the eyes of the pupils;
— Appropriate to the fault committed;
— Moderate, that is, neither too light nor too strong;
— Given and received calmly;
— Prudent and free from any subsequent anger by the pupil;
— Voluntarily accepted by the pupil who recognizes his fault;
— Respectful on the part of the pupil who receives it with submission;
— Silent, both on the part of the pupil and that of the teacher.

The needs prerequisite to each punishment are then very numerous. Before punishing, we must take these into consideration before punishing and we should recognize that punishment should be a last resort and one almost impossible to avoid.

It is significant to likewise note the religious and moral components which enter into account. In the seventeenth century, in the schools, one meted out punishment as exercising God's authority. Those who broke the laws were indebted toward God because they compromised their own perfection and also gave bad example.

On the personal plane, it should be understood that correction ought to show the self-mastery both of the one receiving it and of the one dispensing it. The subjective elements of the desire for revenge, anger, passion, or indignation and resentment, should never come into play. This self-mastery is one of the essential objects of education, in particular in the search "of good manners and Christian politeness", as the title of another work of De La Salle indicates.

Accordingly, the punishment should never sever the good relationship existing between the teacher and pupils, nor their mutual affection.

3) Punishing with discernment:

This chapter on punishments also contains an article concerning "Children who should not be punished". It is an attempt at a psychopedagogical differentiation, which was the result of prolonged observation and the experience of the Brothers who re-edited the "Management".

"There are five faults which ordinarily must not go by without punishment, 1. lying, 2. fighting, 3. stealing, 4. impurity, 5. poor behaviour in church".

Brothers of the Christian Schools
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The Management next gives some explanations of each of these five "vices". Still, it can be easily seen that these deal with "relational" conduct and not with personal conduct: these failings concern either pupils or God. Here again, the idea of "good example" re-appears as it does so often in the Management. Each student, as well as the teacher himself, must unceasingly give good example in his relations with others and in the worship he is called upon to render to God.

It is for this reason also that penances or punishments should be given and administered publicly, for they have an "exemplary" value. It is precisely this exemplary-value which justifies the unbending attitude expressed in this paragraph.

On the contrary, the psychological observation ought to dissuade one from punishing certain pupils if it is judged that the punishment would be ineffective or even would lead to negative consequences for the child. Thus, one should avoid punishing:

— stubborn and ill-bred pupils who could be brazen, insolent, haughty, or frivolous.
— The stubborn who resist or murmur.
— Excessively timid children and those who are meek, dull, or pampered by their parents..
— Children who are sick, the smallest ones in the class, new-comers who are not yet familiar with the set up in the school.

Definitely, here we run the risk of having a large number of pupils "exempt" from punishment. It is very interesting, in the context of the period in which the Management was written, to examine the reasons which are given each time to justify these exemptions. It shows that the teacher ought to develop, through a series of empirical observations, what we would call a psycho-pedagogy.

4) Faults to be avoided in punishments:

Still, sometimes necessity obliges a teacher to correct certain pupils. However, in view of avoiding any abuse, error, or over-haste, it is fitting that certain rules of prudence be respected. On reading article 4 on Corrections, one can see more than fifteen elements to be taken into consideration:

— Judge whether or not the punishment will be advantageous for the pupils and his companions.
— If possible, and after consulting the Director, see if the punishment could be deferred.
— Be sure that the punishment will in no way be harmful to the pupil concerned.
— Be sure that it does not lead to disorder in the class nor cause such bitterness at home, that the child will quit school.
— Examine yourself to be sure that you are not led by a certain aversion or lack of esteem for the one about to be punished.
— Do no correct after the pupil has shown a lack of respect or out of spite.
— Do not talk to the pupils too familiarly when meting out punishment nor use language which is too domineering.
— Do not use any words which are injurious or unbecoming.
— Do not use any other punishments that those planned.
— Moderate your anger and do not strike the pupil on the head.
— Do not exceed the number of blows authorized.
— Do not make any swift punishment, nor when moved by anger or impatience.
— Do not permit or allow any unbecoming posture, etc..

It is quite evident that the teacher who respects the prerequisite conditions, who exempts certain categories of pupils, who has enough self-mastery to respect the above rules, should not have too many occasions for punishing!

5) Instructions on moderation

The preceding phrase finds its confirmation in some passages of the Management. In fact, here are some definite ones:

— That the ferule should not be used more than three times in a half-day, in a class of less than fifty pupils, "and to be used the third time, there would have to be some extraordinary reason". (Page 149).
— That usually only one blow should be give, with a maximum of two, and always on the left hand so as not to interfere with the pupil's writing, and never to any pupil who has an injured hand.
— That the rod should not be given more than three or four times a month, and generally three blows, or five, at the most.
— That a teacher who is less than 21 years of age cannot use the rod without the permission of the Director or whoever else is in charge of the school. Such a person should watch closely what goes on in the schools and should report to the Director twice a week.
— That teachers who are over 21 are subject to the same prohibition during the probationary period of six months and during the entire first year of teaching.

In conclusion

The wealth of precautions very evidently show that the teacher ought to really examine himself when he finds himself confronted with the question of punishments.

The essential thing is in the conducting of the class and in the affirmation of a serene and balanced authority. I do not think that anyone could speak about the first Brothers having a repressive pedagogy, for the Preface of the Management exhorts them in the following way:

"The Brothers will apply themselves with great care to being faithful to observe all that is contained and prescribed for them herein, persuaded that they will have order in class only to the extent that they are exact in not omitting anything, and that they receive this book as being their gift from God, through the instrumentality of their superiors and principal Brothers of the Institute". (Preface of 1720)

Brother Leon LAURAIRE
Rome

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09-A-48

THE "CONDUCT" WAS BORN IN LIFE

«If I had but known...»

V.O.

Not an exception

These words that Canon Blain has put in the mouth of St. John Baptist De La Salle are indicative of his conduct as founder and of his complete abandonment to the hands of Divine Providence. The full river that the Institute came to be began to flow in that quiet parlor of the College of the Most Holy Infant Jesus.

The daily happening, through his entire life, culminated in the royal and the pontifical recognition of his Institute.

The code of rules which he left to his sons, the Brothers, was begun with a pen dipped in the inkwell of the daily duties fulfilled in the very lives the ones for whom the rules were intended. It was set to writing only after having been fixed by innumerable experiences and even then was left open to further and well-thought out amendments.

La Salle wanted the *Conduct* to be what the *Rules* were for the Brothers. Like the *Rules* the*Conduct* was written by students and teachers in their everyday fulfillment of classroom duties; it took on shape in "the experiences over several years of the Brothers who were the most competent in the classroom". All that it contained had been tried out by them and proven effective. They constantly weighed the advantages and inconveniences of what was prescribed. The founder himself approved the revisions and adaptations whenever they were shown to be necessary; a measure dictated by the changing circumstances of place and time.

It begins with life itself

Contrary to today's practice, the *Conduct* required the student to know how to read both French and Latin correctly before he would begin to write. Shouldn't we transpose this practice to the revision of the *Conduct*?

Life speaks to us though living beings. We have to learn to read it in those signs. Humanity wrote down the signs and gestures many centuries after they existed in fact.

The *Conduct*, like a precious stone, was prised from the quarry of life. Many years of experience went by in which teachers practiced in the classroom what was later put down on paper. Before the regulation, was the practice; before theory, experience; before the inert letter, student life. Such was the ordinary procedure of De La Salle.

Vital structure

The reader who looks for an organized treatise on pedagogical principles in the *Conduct* will end by being disappointed. The same thing will occur to the one who looks for subtle disquisitions on theory and methods of teaching in the *Conduct*.

But what *is* found by an attentive reader is the organism of a being which is quickened by a collective soul and the vivifying breath which that soul has given it. Such is the structure of the *Conduct*; the vigorous life that flows through each of its pages.

Open the first chapter with "*The entrance of the students in the School and the beginning of class*": this is school life as it begins each morning. In an uninterrupted litany it goes on to describe in detail all that the students must do, until it arrives at the matter of the following chapter.

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The second chapter is devoted to "*Breakfast and the Morning Snack*": These are pages enlivened with the responsibility,liberty and social participation of the scholars.

After their breakfast, they continue with "*Reading*", which is the third chapter and which is described in the most minute detail. It goes on to specify all the prescriptions for "*Writing*" with the same attention to the least detail. "*Arithmetic*" and "*Penmanship*" are the subjects of the fifth and sixth chapters respectively.

The seventh chapter, entitled "*Prayer*" goes on to ennumerate all the occasions through the day in which the children pray in class and is the invisible, vivifying chain that binds together each and every one of the activities that Lasallian students perform in the school day.

The morning session in the school of De La Salle would generally finish with attendance at Holy Mass. Here too the *Conduct* enters into a wealth of detail to demonstrate how the children should actively participate in the Mass. This is all treated in the eighth chapter.

The culmination of the afternoon session is constituted by the explanation of the catechism class which is the meaty part of the text. No student was excused from this class and in the ninth chapter both catechists and students of catechism have their duties clearly spelt out for them for the time of catechism class. The "*Singing of Hymns*" forms part of the explanation of the catechism and the *Conduct* treats of the matter in chapter 10.

The scholastic day is about to come to an end. The doors of the Lasallian school which opened at seven-thirty in the morning are going to close at four-thirty in the afternoon. If entrance into the school follows its ritual and importance, the departure in the afternoon is given equal weight and is thoroughly treated in the eleventh chapter which is the last of the first part of the *Conduct*. Day after day, with the uniqueness of the living organism which can never be repeated, all takes place against the unchanging background of the Lasallian school.

The second and third parts of the *Conduct* are devoted to behavior, norms, attitudes and pedagogical procedures which should be applied within the existential framework of the first part. The very expression of each chapter speaks of an experimental praxis rather than abstract theory. Thus: *Of the signals that should be Used in the Christian Schools* (2nd part. C.2.); *On Absences* (3nd part. C.6); *On the Admission of the Students* (3rd part. C.2); *On the Transfer of Students from one grade to another* (rd part. C.4):These are based on real, living situations.

Once again, the realistic, empirical and pragmatic manner of De La Salle is set forth in his authorship of the *Conduct*. Its pages channelize the torrent of teaching experiences of the most competent Brothers whom De La Salle could count on in the beginnings of the Institute.

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ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE, KINTBURY, (5)

In the last two issues of *Lasalliana*, I tried to describe how the retreats at St Cassian's developed a pattern, and style which seemed to work very effectively as an instrument for youth ministry. I left the Centre in 1982 to undertake further studies in theology, and I know that things have continued to develop at St Cassian's, as new people have come to work in the team, bringing new insights and modifying the vision and techniques they have inherited, to suit changing circumstances. That is how it should be. It shows that the Centre is alive and growing. Here I want to conclude my account with information about two other aspects of youth ministry as it has been exercised by those associated with this Lasallian development in England.

1. Are the aspirations of the centre being realised? How can you tell?

When people ask if the aspirations of the Centre are being realised, obviously I cannot offer any objective way of judging that. No professionally-conducted survey has ever been made, but I can point to the hundreds of letters received by members of the team over the years, in which the young people who have visited the Centre express (often very movingly) their joy and gratitude at the difference it has made to their lives. From the early days, a constant question was whether the effect would be *lasting*, and obviously it would be foolish to generalise. Neverthless from the number of Kintbury contacts who still write to me from to time, and from the stories and bits of news I hear in various places, I have reason to believe that a high proportion of those who have experienced a retreat at St. Cassian's have been permanently affected by it in a positive way, some quite spectacularly, especially those who came back to deepen and continue their search for the new life. At times it was necessary to discourage some from returning, and to point them away from the tendency to treat Kintbury as a kind of drug, suggesting an alternative future direction for their search and a more realistic approach. All shrines and retreat-centres tend to collect their share of "groupies" (as pop-singers and filmstars do) and the team must act responsibly and charitably to help the people who develop an unhealthy fixation with the place. A small number of young people have been actually banned from returning to the centre. Of course., most of those who become friends of the centre eventually come to realise when the experience offered by Kintbury has served its purpose and look for other ministries to serve their present needs. Sadly these can be hard to find.

To illustrate the successful way in which Kintbury has helped those who have used the centre, I can mention three or four examples from recent correspondence with people who are now in their middle twenties. To avoid any possible embarrassment, I will change all the names (except for David's, whose letter prompted this account).

Jack, who is studying with a view to training for the priesthood after some years of setbacks and disappointments, including bad health, wrote to tell me of coming across one of my letters to him encouraging him to thank God for his personal gifts and not to waste these. I cannot recall writing the letter, but its effect, after some months of darkness, was to lead Jack into praying again. Let him speak for himself: "Through this new deep prayer I had begun, I found I was like a new born child, searching for answers to unasked questions, In the Book of Sirach, chapter 2, the words, 'Accept all that happens to you' struck very deep. I realised that he had not left me but rather had been supporting me; he left me to find him, my own way... I felt I had to let you know that I found my path in life. Whether I achieve the priesthood or not, my path is always with and for God".

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Silvia first came to us as a young police-woman, shocked by the Brixton race-riots which she'd been called upon to police. In Kintbury, at a key moment, she experienced God's healing love very deeply and learned to pray more personally, a feature of her daily life to which she has remained faithful. Having left the police, she's now doing a two year programe of youth and community studies, which she finds very challenging as her tutor is a Marxist. She is searching for a vocation to which she is almost ready to commit herself. She writes very openly: "It's a funny feeling — I definitely feel I have some kind of vocation — but he's not letting me know yet — which is fine by me — I'm enjoying myself — perhaps it's to be a youthworker — something that I've always had my heart set on — so we shall see... I still blame you for getting me into all of this — so thank you — I always remember you during my prayers".

I have already spoken about *David*, in the fourth year of his education degree. He worked with us on the Kintbury team for a year, after leaving school (not a particularly easy year, either!). You'll recall that I'm answering *his* questions here, which have stimulated me to go back over the familiar territory and re-tell Kintbury's story. I think David will make a fine teacher, and I found the concluding paragraph of his letter very moving: "While we are on the subjet of St Cassian's I suppose that it would be only right for me, once again, to thank you from the very depths of my being for the chances you gave me to help me to become alive! We must sit down one day and I'll tell you an interesting tale of a young man's growing awareness of the God not out and beyond him but at the centre of his being".

"Work-in-progress"

What interests me about all these examples is that they are extracts from a "work-in-progress". The search is not concluded and the young adults know they must keep moving. Is it unrealistic to see these examples as the tip of the iceberg? I don't think so, for I could quote many others. Let me offer one more, from *Judy,* in her final year as a student nurse, who received a great deal from Kintbury and came back to help us a few times with our summer programme. She writes: "I think of you often and remember with affection the time that I have spent at St Cassian's over the years. You and many others had a profound influence on me during those often troubled times. Thank you!".

To Jack, Silvia, David and Judy, what can I say in my turn but, "Thank you!" (the Eucharistic dimension of Kintbury memories and the letters in which these are expressed)? What they, like so many others, have taught me is that to accompany others in the way of faith is always as much a matter of receiving as of giving; and that where "two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them" (Matthew 18,20) is a promise that we can *know* to be "a saying that you can rely on" (I Timothy 3, I).

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ST CASSIAN'S CENTRE, KINTBURY (6)

2. One way in which the centre has tried to deepen the initial response it evokes

The articles would be incomplete without at least a cursory account of the summer programme of "YESWEEKS", five of which are organised each year between late June and mid-August at St Cassian's. I am delighted to say that the custom has spread to other centrs, and even to other countries. They have been devized as a follow-up to the usual three to four days retreat and their origin lies in two events. The first was the wish expressed by a number of those who had been to St Cassian's during its first year to return for a week's reunion, open to anyone who had made a retreat before. The team organised a special programme for this group, and the following summer two such weeks were arranged, the numer increasing year by year until the present total of five weeks each summer was fixed in 1980. This was when the Brothers were celebrating the Tercentenary of our foundation and were encouraged to look for some needs which we were not meeting and to respond creatively to them. For us at Kintbury it was an opportunity to revise the formula of these weeks (until then popularly known as "jamborees") and to redesign the experience, giving it a more positive and challenging spiritual character. As a name for these attempts to deepen the initial retreat experience, we hit upon the term, "Yesweek". "YES" was an abbreviation for "Youth Encounter Sharing", although this was soon forgotten with the "YES" coming to mean its standard positive sense of openness and willingness to respond to the invitations and challenges provided by others and by God. The idea is beautifully expressed in *2 Corinthians,* when Paul swears "by God's truth, there is no Yes and No about what we say to you. The Son of God, the Christ Jesus that we proclaimed among you... was never Yes and No: with him it was always Yes, and however many the promises God made, the Yes to them all is in him. That is why it is 'through him' that we answer Amen to the praise of God". (2 Cor. I, 18-20).

The "Yesweeks" attracted a significant number of tertiary level students and young workers or unemployed. They were designed to cater for the sixteen to twenty-six age-group, with the understanding that many taking part would have left school and would have chosen to come to St Cassian's as individuals or with small groups of friends. The weeks are a joyful experience but sometimes a difficult one, since they are intended to encourage further growth rather than to pander to a sort of re-living of the original Kintburuy experience, as though this were some kind of drug to "get high" on. Each season of "Yesweeks" has been based on a theme, usually the exploration of a particular New Testament book:

1980: My Relationships: Yes to others, Yes to myself, Yes to God.
1981: *St John's Gospel:* deepening my Christian life.
1982: *Colossians* and *Philemon:* Paul's vision of life in Christ.
1983: The challenges of *St Luke's Gospel.*
1984: The sacraments in the Christian life.
1985: (projected) An exploration of *Acts.*

Facing the challenges which life presents

The study of the Scriptural texts follow imaginatively designed patterns, and though these are soundly based academically, to show that my religious education does not stop when I leave school behind but moves into a new phase for which each one must assume personal responsibility, the real point of the week is to face the challenges which life at home, at school or work, in college and in society generally offers the individual who is trying to live a mature Christian life. We need the help and support of our brothers and sisters as well as of Christ to grasp these challenges, and the "YESWEEK" makes this available. This is not the time to go into details, but one aspect of the experience deserves special mention: the practice of devoting one twenty-four period in the middle

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of the week to examining the implications of the theme being explored for one's sexuality, especially in view of the choices which young adults face in our society. Obviously this is an important aspect of life which most who come to Kintbury need to discuss, though usually the lack of time and the nature of the situation do not allow the topic to be opened up by groups during the standard retreats. Remember that the retreat-centre attracts young people from a wide variety of backgrounds and points of view (including many which are confused) and that the intention is to cater for sinners rather than for saints, so all can feel at home here (as they are at home in the gospels). I shall never forget the moment at the very beginning of an early "Yesweek" when, during the introductory meeting, I asked for a volunteer to give an example of a personal problem or difficulty they wanted to face during the week, and an eighteen year old girl whom I shall call *Kathleen* announced immediately, "Well, my problem is very clear-cut: I'm in love with Mike, a married man who at this moment happens to be serving a prison sentence. Do I leave home and move in with him, when he comes out! I know how my parents will react". (So did I, since I had come to know her devoted and strictly Catholic parents!) The temptation is to *over*react and speak out in a very condemnatory way, or to *under*react and fail to speak out at all. I have lost touch with Kathleen, but I do know that she eventually moved in with Mike, though fortunately she did not totally break relations with her disapproving and concerned parents. I think about her from time to time, and I pray that her life will be happy and that she will not lose touch with Christ, whatever becomes of her. For me, Kathleen was another invitation to stand beside so many anxious parents and educators and share their anxiety as well as their childrens'. Elsewhere I have called it "sharing the darkness". But to return to the "Yesweek", needless to say other members of the group were encouraged by Kathleen's willingness to share her problem so openly and frankly. She made it easier for them to share their own, and to keep a sense of perspective.

Another point about the "Yesweeks" is that the team insist that the last twenty-four hour period of the week be dedicated to coming to terms with the practical implications of what one has discovered during the week in relation to everyday life, the context in which I live with my needs and my gifts and my choices. This may be a strong contrast with the Kintbury atmosphere of joyful personal support. Kintbury is not about escaping from life, but facing up to it. The danger for all retreat-centres, as I have said, is that they can become havens for those who are seeking refuge from realities which are too hard. The challenge is to show that God goes with us, goes before us indeed, inviting us to move forward. *Marcos* wrote from Chile (to which his family had eventually returned from political exile in London) to tell us that the memory of two visits to Kintbury was a continuing inspiration for him to try to do something about the desperate poverty in which some of his fellow countrymen were living and to try not to lose sight of God in the whole mess, because "life without the love of God is too hard".

After a "Yesweek" in 1982, *Jim* wrote from South Wales about his efforts to work with friends to organise some lively youth liturgies in his own parish, of his continued praying over the topics discussed in the retreat, of further reading to deepen his own faith ("Now I'm in the middle of a fascinating book by Thomas à Kempis called *Imitation of Christ...*"), and of his discovery of the needs of his older spastic sister, whom he has taken for five walks in her wheelchair: "I really thank God for that sister of mine and I really love her a lot". He goes on to reflect about the meaning of suffering in human life, especially in his own experience, to which Kintbury has opened his eyes.

A final point about the connection between centre and school. We have seen what the centre is about: *opening eyes and broadening the vision.* In my view, too often the education given in school seems to be about narrowing the vision; not in theory, of course, but that is the way it can work out. The pressures to conform (in terms of curriculum and pedagogical method) must be resisted, and the experience of a few days in a retreat-centre may offer a necessary Christian alternative, which could otherwise be lacking. In my view, the centre need not be too concerned about tying in with existing patterns in school-based R.E. Let it concentrate on opening up a fresh vision and experience of what the Christian life is really about for those who choose to try it outside the organised sphere of classrooms, assembly-halls and so on, and, in opening up that vision to present a personal challenge to "choose life".

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THE SPRINGBOARD: REPAIR SHOP FOR SCHOOL DROPOUTS

This is all about a private school, started through the initiative of two Brothers of the Christian Schools of Quebec. This school comes to the help of young people who have prematurely abandoned their regular school course, especially the first cycle of the Secondary school, but who want to make it up, either so that they can continue with the regular course or to more easily get employment which requires the completion of the first cycle.[1]

We also accept youths who, during the pursuit of their courses in school, find some difficulties particularly in French, English, mathematics or the sciences. The latter take courses either at night or during the summer vacation.

I — The history

1 — Upon returning from Africa, two brothers noted the amazing phenomenon of some 50,000 young school "droupouts" each year, that is, youths who leave school prematurely during the first cycle.

2 — After seeking advice and after getting the authorization from the Superiors, in October 1981, they began giving private courses at first to two students. By the end of the year, 23 young people between 16 and 25 years of age were taking advantage of these courses.

3 — During the second year, we were helped by other confreres, then by some religious Sisters and by a Marist Brother. Some young people got interested in our service and spontaneously offered their collaboration, free of charge.

4 — At the time we are writing up this report, 26 October 1985, around 200 boys and girls have taken lessons with us.

A first Observation

We are aware that we are working on behalf of young people who can not principate normally in the development of their potentialities in scholastic life as it exists today.

What also encourages us is the testimonies furnished by the students themselves. We should like to cite a few here:

a) "Seeing that my course begins at 9 a.m., I have to get up early. Before, I used to get up at noontime because I used to go to bed at two or three in the morning. Now I feel better disposed".

b) Many have indicated that they found *confidence in themselves* once again because of the attention given to each one as a person, which is the way at Springboard.

c) Certain ones say that they have found answers to questions on religion and on life in the world today, even though no courses are given on these subjects.

d) One of them writes: "In order to work, I must have a calm atmosphere, and here I have found the atmosphere I need".

e) "I have found a moral support which I have not found elsewhere. I feel myself freer and more at ease with myself".

f) "I have confidence in my abilities, and with this help, I can progress in my classes and thus have a good future".

g) "Since coming here, I have been getting along better with my family".

h) "I have learned to work; now I have a method for working".

i) "Here, they take the time to explain the difficulties which we find, the reasons for our mistakes". (a student from the GEGEP).

These testimonies speak for themselves

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II — An idea of the results achieved

a) Many of our former students have proceeded to the GEGEP and even to the University.
b) Some have re-enrolled at the polyvalent, either in the general course or in the vocational course.
c) Three have taken the Secondary VI intensive course, and now are in the market for a job.
d) Some are now attending the Boudralut school in Quebec which receives them beginning with Sec. III.
e) Others have returned to work better equipped than they were before. Already some of our former students come to visit us.

III — The weak points of our organization

a) The young people who come from unfavorable environments or from difficult family situations are still at the mercy of the same milieu.
b) Many "dropout" again, for the same causes produce the same effects. Further, the offer of a little work, even at a reduced salary, attracts a certain number of them.
c) Often the fathers do not fulfill their role towards the boys. It is too often the mother who has to take the initiatives. At the beginning of last year, we had in our course six boys, and only one of them had a father living at home.
d) Also, if the two parents work outside of the home, the child is often left to himself; he does not get up in the morning and his homework is neglected.
e) If, upon leaving the classes, these youths again find the same gang which had an evil influence of them before, nothing has changed and their work is haphazardly done at home and the young man or woman come to day dream here in school.
f) *It is not easy* to find experienced teachers who will accept the work willingly, to be patient towards the youth whom life has misled but who are trying to make a comeback. We mentioned that we are being assisted by three religious Sisters of St. Louis of France and by four young people who are more advanced but unemployed. This week, a Marist Brother begins to give courses here in French.
g) Sometimes, we have grouped students of the same level: five, six, and even eleven students in the same course. However, experience has taught us the fact that they are not on the same level and that they do not work at the same speed at all. It is therefore evident that we ought to take them individually, or at the most, we could take two at a time. The students feel that they are better undestood and their output is at least doubled.

IV — Financial aid

A question which is frequently asked is "Who supports this gratuitous service?" It is neither the State, nor the local school system. The Brothers' community supports us but we should like to strongly underline the fact that our *former students* have supported our service. They have offered money for the sake of less fortunate students and, only recently, they have made a big financial investment and they have worked willingly to assure us an adequate location. Probably a rather rare enough phenomenon in the annals of Associations: our students have endowed the Service as a *small school.* They devoted a number of days of work, going out to round up a few more students helping us find some new teachers of good will.

Conclusion

The Springboard is a humble organization in face of all those who need our help; but, as many confreres have affirmed, this work seems to fully correspond to the wishes of Saint John Baptist De La Salle. It is a great consolation for a retired Brother to be able to continue on for a few more years in a work which demands all his strength and which keeps him in the orbit of De La Salle and of Christ, up to the age of 70 and beyond.

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[1] In Quebec, the secondary course is divided into two cycles the same as elsewhere, but these are found in different schools and in different places. The first cycle is given in schools called "Polyvalent"; the two other years are taken in schools names GEGEP (Collège d'études generales et professionnelles) Schools of General Studies and Vocational Studies.

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THE LASALLIAN YOUTH CENTER: Gallipoli

Foundation and purpose

In the past few years, a series of unfavorable conditions led the Roman Province of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to close some institutions which were operating in Southern Italy: Benevento, Torre del Greco, and Salerno. As a consequence of this, the Provincial Chapter of 1981 decided upon the orientation of creating something which would substitute, at least in part, for the previous presence.

The introduction of summer camps into the vocational program suggested a different way by means of which the Brothers could come into contact with the youth in our institutions in a way beyond the class room contact and in a more diversified way. Such a novel method brought to maturity the conviction of the possibility of a work which, without having the school as it primary scope, could open itself to youth by offering opportuniites for contact and education different from the traditional kind.

Upon the fertile soil of such availability fell the seed of Divine Providence. At Gallipoli, in the province of Lecce, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd were no longer able to maintain one of their works because of the lack of personnel. Wishing to preserve, in keeping with the wishes of the Bishop, a Christian presence, they turned to various religious congregations hoping that one of them would be interested. The offer which was sent to the General House of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, was forwarded to the Rome Province. This request was given serious consideration by the Brother Provincial and his council, and after careful study, an affirmative decision was reached.

On September 18, 1984 the doors of the LASALLIAN YOUTH CENTER "Villa Rosa Virginia" were opened. The Community is made up of three Brothers.

The scope of the institution is to offer a place for getting together for the youth and children of the city; a place where they can meet and make friends with one another; a place where, as they while away their free time, they can grow physically and intellectually, but above all, morally and spiritually. Hence, the Community is open to any type of recreational, athletic, cultural, or religious activity.

It was not difficult to start. It was enough just to open the doors, prepare the athletic field, set up some meeting rooms, and above all to show our availability to dialogue and to "waste time the boys".

No official invitation was necessary; in fact, there was no advertisement or notice at all. The boys and girls just came spontaneously, calling their friends in turn. Now, that we are in the second year of operation, the LASALLIAN YOUTH CENTER is frequented by more than three hundred boys who find herein an outlet for their physical exuberance, their need for friendship and appreciation and for their thirst for a consoling word in their sorrow, insecurity, or confusion, just a little bit of help along life's difficult path.

For a sizable group of children and youth, the Center has become a kind of second home, where you cannot help but go everyday, a door to be looked upon longingly should it be closed.

Activities which have developed

We are convinced, first of all, that the main activity and the most efficacious instrument are our being kind and understanding, our being available for whatever kind of intervention or help: simply being together, helping them in their studies, and counselling and giving them educational guidance.

In particular we offer:

a) *In the field of religious formation.*

— Every Saturday there is a course in catechesis for all the children divided into three groups according to age. This is followed by a half hour of singing in preparation for the Sunday liturgy.

— Every Sunday the Holy Mass is celebrated, festively enlivened by the boys.

— The liturgical seasons are strictly observed with prayer encounters and special celebrations.

— The observance of Holy Week is notable with a well attended and well prepared celebration and with the organization of a spiritual day of retreat.

— One Brother prepares a group of children for First Holy Communion.

b) *In the area of sports and recreation.*

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— Introductory courses are organized for playing and for tournaments in football, volleyball, basketball, track and field, etc. We take advantage of every opportunity to offer our youths time for relaxing and for enjoyable games.

c) *In the area of Culture.*

— The boys can come to us to do their homework assignments and can avail of our help in our fields of competence and they can use the library, which is at their disposal.

— At Christmas time and during the Carnival we have had very successful performances.

d) *Activities outside of the institute.*

— By the invitation of the Bishop of Gallipoli, two Brothers teach religion in the State secondary school to children between 11 and 14 years of age. In their twenty classes, they teach more than 500 students. Their teaching is very much appreciated by the students, their families, and by the school.

— Whether as a community of Brothers, or as a Youth Center, we strive to be present and involved in various civic organizations and we contribute toward the organization and accomplishment of various presentations.

Entrance to the Lasallian Youth Center and participation in the various activities is open and absolutely free of charge. Its facilities are offered to the youth of the city without any distinction. However, this does not preclude having the boys regularly sign up for the various activities to guarantee the seriousness and the accuracy of their involvement.

Evaluation and prospective

The journey through the first year of activities naturally registered the type of difficulties characteristic of new operations, and especially because it was a type of work completely different from that usually done by the Brothers of the province. Things progressed with trial and experimentation, attention being paid to the fact that the activities should be enjoyable to the boys and girls and should offer them opportunities for growth. The Brothers were always available to increase or to subsitute the activity offered depending on whether or not it responded to the needs of the young. It is thus that we proceeded gradually in the organization of sports, of periods of instruction, and then more varied activities. The children and youth were given the widest latitude in participating in the various activities proposed and the great variety of activities they belonged to could be noted; from the curious visitors to those who occasionally participated in something; from those who regularly frequented a course to those who where habitually found to be open to any kind of suggestion. Among these last mentioned, it was laudable and encouraging to see a group of bigger boys who not only took part in everything but who also actively cooperated with the Brothers in making things easier and in bringing about an increase of initiatives. To these youths we express our approval, gratitude, and best wishes; together may we follow a path which will help each one to grow and mature and to express, with the help of the Lord, what is best in each person.

Our obligation for the immediate future is to make sure that those things which were born, perhaps too hastily, can now be consolidated. Now that the euphoria of the beginnings have passed, the necessary consistent measures must be taken to guarantee their permanence.

There are some parents of our children who help us so much by their availability and their enthusiasm, but in general, so far there exists only a limited dialogue with the majority of them. We propose, as the opportunities present themselves, to find together with them the best means of knowledge and cooperation for initiating enterprises which could be beneficial even to the parents themselves.

We truly wish that our Center will become the center of true and meaningful life where the needs, preoccupations and joys of this part of the city find an adequate resonance, and within the necessary limits, prospective solution and direction.

Brother Bartolo PARIZI
Centro Giovanile Lasalliano
Villa Rosa Virginia
Lungomare G. Galilei, 119
73014 GALLIPOLI (Lecce)
Italy

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09-B-45

BARTOLO LONGO INSTITUTE OF POMPEI (1)

The sanctuary

The story of the Madonna of the Holy Rosary of Pompei begins in November of 1875 with the arrival of the "picture" and its exposition for the veneration of the countryfolk in a dilapidated country chapel within the estate of Countess Marianna De Fusco.

The reconstruction of the Sanctuary, which was necessary because of the great number of the faithful coming there, was done in 1891.

The fact that in such a short time such a lively devotion developed, attracting a continual influx of pilgrims, is truly incredible. In 1985 more than 3,000,000 pilgrims had come from all parts of the world, 11,000 Masses had been celebrated during which about 612,000 received Holy Communion, 5,211 people were Confirmed, and 764 pilgrimages were officially registered.

In mentioning then the "Sanctuary", we should also mention its auxiliary institutes, with more than 500 young guests, the shelters, elementary, junior high, and high schools, a community for elderly women, and a center for drug dependents. Caring for all of these are 150 Religious Sisters, 40 priests, 20 confessors, 17 Brothers of the Christian Schools, 70 lay teachers, and some one hundred employees and workers.

Attorney Bartolo Longo

At the beginning of all this was a layman who was a lawyer by profession. His name was Bartolo Longo and he was born in Latiano (Brindisi) in 1841. As a child he had been educated as a Catholic, but at the University of Naples, where he had gone to study Law, he became so anticlerical that he enrolled in a spiritualistic association and participated in some of the most vociferous antiCatholic demonstrations which were quite common in Italy during the second part of the nineteenth century. Then came the change brought about in him because of his frequent contact with Catholic intellectuals who aroused in him an interest in the theological and patristic studies which transformed him into "God's Cyclone" which he thereafter remained.

Atty. Bartolo Longo was named one day as the administrator of the financial estate of a gentlelady, the Countess Marianna De Fusco, in the Pompei countryside, on the outskirts of the ancient city which had been buried in 79 BC by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. It was there that the young professional slowly turned towards the faith, discovering the life of the country people—or rather, their non-life. He saw how they were isolated by the lack of good roads, completely ignored by the authorities, exposed to banditry, illiteracy and to all kinds of illnesses.

That all this must change was his Christian reaction to this sum total of injustice. With the support of Countess De Fusco, who would become his wife in 1885, Bartolo Longo began battling for the restoration of the human dignity of those country people: he obtained streets, drainage, two railroad stations, two police stations for the security of the citizens, and he gave them the initiative of meeting together, of learning, and also of celebrating festivals which molded those people into a community. All of this, however, was engrafted upon the spiritual life, upon prayer, and especially upon the rosary. Longo started the Confraternity of the Rosary at the end of 1875 and this ran parallel with his realization of a multi-graded school, geodynamic and meteorological observatory, a Vesuvian museum and scientific stations. This battle for the emancipation of this people was linked with the national and international struggle concerning the problems of people. Longo wrote, polemicized, participated in congresses in Italy and abroad, and took up anthropological and juridical compaigns which ran absolutely counter to the existing situation.

The liberation of man from the network of crime was one of his greatest battles. At that time, the scientific theories and studies linked with atheistic positivism were riding high. These claimed that criminality was a species of irreparable damnation in which the structure of the brain determined physical and moral behaviour. Not only that, it even claimed further that the children of criminals were also hoplessly beyond reclamation.

Bartolo Longo was indignant at this. God is the Father of all, God redeemed all, and the Blessed Virgin protects all. And so he unleashed not only a spoken and written counteroffensive but even hurled a loud

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challenge to the positivists: give me these men and their sons, let us treat them with justice, as well as with Christian love, let us give them respectable work and we will see that they will become exemplary citizens. He took the sons of those in prison and confided them first to some of his zealous collaborators and then to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. For the girls he himself founded a Congregation of Religious Sisters, the Dominican Sisters of the Holy Rosary. The results: the first "reclaimed" boy became a priest and then later a pastor in Calabria; all the others became craftsmen, employees, managers, religious, and also disciplined and scrupulous keepers of good order. A resounding victory!

Bartolo Longo was the firebrand also of another institution: the reformed children, in their turn, could save their own parents. In fact, at the end of the first years of the functioning of this institution, the sons became ambassadors of good for their parents, because Longo, in addition to the frequent correspondence which he encouraged between the boys and their fathers, each year had them accompany him in visiting their fathers in the jails. He gathered together in a volume entitled "The Work in the Pompei Valley, and the Moral Reform of the Prisoners", numerous letters from the directors and chaplains of the jails attesting to the great amount of positive fruit, which resulted from such methods.

And as a result of all of this, there was such a change of public opinion that Bartolo Longo instituted the so-called "the fathers of children orphaned by the law", persons, that is, from all classes of society who, at Confirmation, took one of these children of prisoners as a "godchild" and followed his progress not only during his stay in the school but possibly for the rest of his life. This tradition continues on even until today.

"The Educational Hostel for the Sons of Prisoners" and the Brothers of the Christian Schools

Among the works which have sprung up under the shadow of the Sanctuary, the one which has aroused the deepest echo within the world and which continues to be the greatest victory of faith operating through charity is, without doubt, "The Educational Hostel for the Sons of Prisoners".

On May 29, 1892 the first stone of this great building which opens onto the Via Sacra was laid and in May of 1893 the first little group of 15 boys entered the new institution.

The continued growth of the pupils imposed upon Bartolo Longo, who in the opening days had confided the few children to the charitable works of his zealous collaborators, the problem of assuring their education with bigger and better means.

At this point we begin the dealings between Bartolo Longo and the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In truth, he had thought about the Brothers even before the beginning of the grand construction, as is evidenced by the answer which the then Visitor, Brother Casimiro sent to the lawyer, dated August 2, 1891. Again, in 1894, the same Brother Visitor answered Atty. Longo, who was insisting that he send at least one Brother to help him with the direction, in this manner: "Our rule forbids a single Brother to live outside of the community. I would ask you, who are so much favoured by the protection of the Virgin, to recommend our Institute so that we may obtain an increase in our personnel...".

Then Bartolo Longo tried again with a letter of recommendation and for this he had recourse to His Eminence Cardinal Monaco La Valletta. But even this was not effective and he had to resign hmself to waiting longer.

In 1907 the direction of the Sanctuary and the Works of Pompei were entrusted to the Pontifical Prelate, Monsignor August Silj. He, taking into account the need for stability, in keeping with the wishes of the Founder, and the definite systemazation of the Hostel, appealed directly to the Holy Father, Pius X. The Pope immediately arranged for the sons of St. John Baptist De La Salle to report to Pompei. To the Brother Visitor who bewailed the lack of personnel, he answered "Nothing should be impossible when the Pope wills it".

Thus, in August of 1907, the first Brothers arrived in Pompei. Why was there so much insistence on the part of Bartolo Longo in wanting the Brothers that he discarded "a priori" all other collaboration? Because the sense of education which he possessed, found its surest and most reassuring counterpart in the educational norms of the Saint from Rheims and the method adopted by his sons over the past two centuries. In his celebrated discourses which he delivered on May 27, 1894 and May 23, 1894 on the occasion of the "Civil Holiday", initiated by him, can be found the cardinal principles of his educational concepts. In these discourses he affirmed that in the choice of children, he intended to follow only the rule of charity, receiving and loving all without distinction, as was practiced and taught by the Divine Master.

With regard to the educational method, Atty. Longo insisted on three points: Prayer, Study, Work. But above all, Love, that love for children which exacts a total dedication and continual sacrifice; which requires that one live the life as that of the child in order to be always ready to receive him, to correct him, and, if necessary, to punish him with dignity and firmness.

These were the ideals which the Brothers of the Christian Schools represented for Bartolo Longo, "the pious, modest and hard-working Sons of St. John Baptist De La Salle... belonging to a remarkable order because it is made up of all laymen, without any priests, which disposes them for only one mission, humble in appearance but most noble in reality: the moral and intellectual education of children...".

Bro. Rodolfo MEOLI

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BARTOLO LONGO INSTITUTE OF POMPEI (2)

Organization

The one who gave the efficient and definitive organization to the Work was Brother Regolo Battaglini. He directed it for the first time from 1908 to 1916, the year he was called by the Superiors to direct the Province of Rome as Visitor.

He put discipline into the inner operation of the house and wisely set up rules to govern all the complex activities of the Institution. One of his first acts was to abolish any notion or atmosphere of "prison" out of honor for the principles that the educator rather than command fear, should make himself become loved if he wishes to succed in his mission; that is, he should know how to put himself into the soul and intelligence of the young with perception that only the heart can give.

A very effective imprint on the place was made also by Brother Adriano Celentano, who was a Neopolitan by birth. Attached to Bartolo Longo by a deep and devoted admiration, he brought to the work the enthusiasm and innovative activity which his great heart suggested to him. He had new facilities built and was helped in this by Brother Costanzo Daudet, who was a talented architect and artist. He also established the Professional Training Courses in a very systematic and more complete and reasonable way. Thus, he established courses in typing, bookbinding, mechanics, metalware, carpentry, cabinetmaking, tailoring, and shoemaking. Amid all this, the boys cultivated the art of singing, and learned to play musical instruments so well that they were able to be included in the School Band which was to become one of the most admired artistic elements of the entire Institution. He, moreover, through his interest and knowledge which led him all the way to the person of Mussolini, obtained permission for the territory of Pompei to be constituted as an autonomous Commune. This earned for him quite a bit of animosity on the part of the administrative authorities of Scafati and of Torre Annunziata, because these two communes had to cede part of their territory to the nascent Commune.

The celebration of the 25th anniversary of the arrival of the Brothers in Pompei was an important moment for retrospective reflection. The Brothers and students prepared a grandiose scholastic, professional, and historical exposition which gave promincence to the work that had been done in the first 25 years of their permanency in the Institution.

Thousands of pilgrims came to visit the place, including illustrious government officials, directors of Houses of Correction, teachers, prelates, and religious of all kinds. Among the thousands who have signed the Golden Book of the Exposition we read the names of those who in themselves resound gloriously in the complex educational and rehabilitative activities of the Institution.

Among the most illustrious visitors who have come to the Institute during the course of its history, we should like to single out Prince Umberto of Savoy, The Honorable Luigi Einaudi, President of the Italian Republic (30.9.1948), The Honorable Alcide De Gasperi, Head of State (29.12.1949), the Honorable Giovanni Leone (on June 3, 1951, he gave the keynote address for the Third Centenary of the birth of St. John Baptist De La Salle; 9.10.1975, he returned here when he was President of the Republic); numerous Cardinals and other high-ranking Italian and foreign prelates.

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Statistical Data

Since its foundation, the Institute has admitted 2,544 boys from the age of 5 to the age of 20. The number of those admitted annually has risen from about 10 in the first years of operation to 400 in the years following World War II. After World War II, the Institute began accepting orphans.

At present, the Institute accepts only 130 boys because in 1966, the boys of the elementary classes were transferred to another building and confided to the care of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. At present the sons of prisoners form only a small part (20 of the 130) of the students. The others are orphans, abandoned children, children belonging to very big families which are poor, and boys who have been sent by the Courts for minor offenses.

At present the boys attend the Middle school, beginning with the first grade of that level, for three years and the Professional Institute for Industry and Arts for three to five years, with the possibility of choosing between the specializations in Electro-mechanics and mechanics. Specialization in Graphics, which for many decades was the pride of the Institute, is being phased out as an official academic course. It will remain as an apprenticeship department for some students who lack the capability of taking the two required academic courses officially offered in the Institute.

In all, 419 Brothers have served in the educational apostolate of this school. Among the first ones were 15 French Brothers, followed by 6 Germans, 3 Greeks, 3 Eritreans, and one Austrian. The scholastic courses offered and the diplomas received by the students after completing these courses, are equivalent to those of the State schools.

Conclusion

From what has been written here, it is easy to understand the great contribution made by Blessed Bartolo Longo * to the education of abandoned children. Here in Pompei, such children are found in four Institutions: an elementary school and kindergarten for boys and another one for girls. A junior high school and high school for girls, and the same for the boys. It is this school for boys which bears the name of its founder "Bartolo Longo".

This is the "New Pompei": a hundred years ago it was an inhospitable and unhealthy place. Today it is a country town pulsating with life, a majestic temple with a monumental belfry, and within, the marvelous charitable works, supported by the Christian solidarity of the faithful, flourish.

Brother Rodolfo MEOLI
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Via Sacra, 39
80045 POMPEI

* Bartolo Longo was beatified by His Holiness, Pope John Paul, II, on October 20, 1980.

N.B. - Frequent reference has been made to R. Esposito's "The Lawyer and the New Pompei", and to R. De Filippi's "The Bartolo Longo Hostels and the Brothers of the Christian Schools on the 25th Anniversary of Their Arrival in Pompei".

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09-B-47

FOR THE PAST 120 YEARS: THE BROTHERS IN MONACO

To better understand the following text, particularly the initials and names used, some preliminary explanations are necessary.

In the French school system, at the secondary level of instruction of the first and second cycle, classes and sections of study are provided with the view of accepting students having scholastic difficulties. The school in the Principality of Monaco functions along the same model.

We find, therefore, in these establishments:

The "College" level for students between 11 and 15 years old.

- S.E.S.: Section for Specialized Education.
- CPPN: Classes at the Pre-professional level.
- C.P.A.: Classes preparatory to Apprenticeship.

At the "Lyceum" level for students between 15 and 18 years old, there exist a number of possibilities of professional training, with various type of specializations, among which are:

- C.A.P.: Certificate of Professional Aptitude.
- B.E.P.: Brevet (Diploma) of Professional Studies.
- G1, G2, G3 leading to the Baccalaureate in Management, Accounting, or Secretariate.

After a rather long time, the Brothers of the Region of France have decided to develop these types of study because they see them as a means of taking care of "the poor" within the school system.

Speaking about Monaco-Monte Carlo today is often equated with speaking about the richness of the gambling Casino, the gold of the great hotels or the celebrations of such or such an international festival. However, the Principality of Monaco, today as in recent years, and despite a rather recent demographic and architectural explosion, is inhabited to a large extent, by people somewhere between the rich and the poor, and where the permanent element is not so prosperous as the tourists who pass through.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools were invited to Monaco by the Sovereign Prince in 1868, during the generalate of the Most Honored Brother Philippe. There, they were to open a primary school, which was popular from the very outset and whose school population increased very rapidly, going from 3 Brothers teaching 110 pupils in 1868 to 13 Brothers and 322 pupils in 1899. Then there was the establishment of three schools, primary, complementary, and commercial, so that it was true that wherever they were established, the sons of Saint John Baptist De La Salle adapted themselves to the needs of the young, moving by instinct toward the type of instruction most helpful to the least favoured and the most abandoned children.

A decisive change: 1969

One hundred years after their arrival in the Principality, the Brothers were invited by the government to fuse their work with that of the Sisters of Saint-Maur in order to work with them in a co-ed institution capable of educating both boys and girls together who were not studying towards getting their classical baccalaureate from the Albert I Lyceum.

Thus, it was up to the Brothers and the Sisters, who established their respective communities in the two wings of the new building to receive, instruct, and educate all those who had no attractation for philosophy or for pure mathematics.

Within the same building, with the same happy atmosphere, under the same direction, with the same teachers, 1,200 students from 11to 21 years of age attend 17 classes in the College, 15

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technical classes (G1 and G2), 3 classes of S.E.S., one class of CPPN, 2 classes of C.P.A., 26 classes preparatory for the C.A.P. and B.E.P. of the industrial, commercial and hotelery sections.

What is most significant among the 64 classes of the establishment, is that 47 are classes of youth who either abandoned, or who were rejected by the "classical" type of education. And so, it was with great reason that a lay teacher declared to the Brother Director upon his arrival in 1976: "In this school we accept for admission to the second cycle or for the end of the first part of the first secondary cycle, the students who failed elsewhere, and we make them succeed". Yes, they do succeed. In great numbers they qualify for entrance into professional life with a CAP or a BEP or a Technician's certificate. But they succeed above all in blossoming within a homogeneous student population, with all its diversity, by pursuing studies at the level and according to the system which is most suitable for them.

For many students, life is not all "roses"! Daily, or almost daily, we entertain the questions of distressed young people who come to the Director or to another Brother seeking advice which will be instantaneous solutions to their problems. A young lad from the "4th Preparatory" comes and says, "In the last two months, I have changed "fathers" four times and I really do not know where I live, so how do you expect me to do any serious work?" There is another student who can no longer bear the humiliation of being compared to another boy his age whose parents vaunt his scholastic success in a neighboring Lyceum: "Tell them that I am not a mere nothing and that here I am perfectly happy to be preparing myself for a trade". Then there is the student of the Ist G who by his manual work at night supports his unemployed mother who stays at home with a handicapped young child. Then we have one in the third year of CAP who by the third month before the examination is completely lost and we are the only ones who can restore his self-confidence.

But the students' confidence is restored once they have discovered the spirit of the true Lasallian teacher in their teacher-pupil relationship. Then they feel that being better understood and counselled, they can begin to live better lives. Each student is conscious of the confidence which is placed in him as well as being aware of the spirit of companionship which binds the students one to another within a given section. Above all, no one is isolated and it is one of the characteristics of the school that it creates opportunities and occasions for the students of the SES, CPPN, CPA, CAP, and BEP to meet one another. They mix together in the same corridors and in the recreational activitiés, as well as in the documentation and information center. The social-educational facilities are open to all. This recreational hall, in particular, which is open to 26 different Clubs, multiplies the possibilities of meeting together and having friendship and cooperation flourish.

For everyone the instruction is entirely gratuitous because all the services, facilities, and equipment are paid for by the Government of Monaco.

Not only is the teaching gratuitous, but it is also Christian teaching: the time of religious instruction forms a part of the regular schedule and the periods of catechesis are taken care of by the Brothers, Sisters, some lay people and two chaplains.

An ideal situation without problems?

Certainly, the working conditions are very favourable.

Still, for this abundant harvest, the workers are becoming too few in number and are getting old. Such a propitious field of endeavour and the young people themselves need a rejuvenated Lasallian community.

Collège de Monte-Carlo
Rue des Orchidées
Principality of Monaco

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
Via Aurelia, 476 – 00165 ROMA, Italia

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09-C-35

YOUTH RETREATS

"Hello and welcome to your senior retreat here at the Christian Brothers Retreat House in St. Helena. I'm Brother Richard Moratto, and on behalf of our staff, I am happy that each one of you decided to say YES to making this 3 day retreat. Let's pause for a moment as we sit in an unbroken circle here in this little chapel and remember that we are in the Holy Presence of God...".

Thus begins one of the most important personal and spiritual experiences we are able to offer teens during their four year career as high school students. Its importance can be found, if you will, in the invitation of Jesus to his own first disciples following their recent involvements..." come aside awhile with me and rest" (Mark 6).

The tensions, stresses, secular values and frantic activity of our day-and-age have truly filtered down to today's teens. It is they who have told us of the importance of "coming aside awhile to rest..." and to think and to feel and to pray in a retreat atmosphere that allows them to review and re-direct the best of their desires, values, hopes and dreams. It is they who say to us, "these 3 days of retreat have been the best experience of my 4 years of high school", and at the end of the retreat, "do we really have to leave; I wish we could stay a day or two longer", and, "I have been closer to God on this retreat than at any other time in my life". Such frequently heard testimonies have convinced the Brothers in California that the investment we made in our student retreat house way back in 1962 has been more than worth it.

It would be impossible in this short space to write about all the things that we do with the students while on the retreats, or to attempt to capture the exciting movements of the Spirit as we observe and accompany the students as they go from initial moments of shyness, incertainty and even, for some, apprehension when they first arrive to a true deepening and flowering of the Spirit within them by the end of the three days. It is important, however, to offer the reader a sense of what does take place that aids the students in such a transformation.

The students, usually, in numbers of between 40 and 50, arrive at 4:30 in the afternoon. Following their registration and assignments to rooms in the dormitory, they are formally welcomed to the retreat in the chapel. Introductions of our staff and a slide presentation are then given in a room in our old mansion. The slides act as the on-sight orientation. After supper, they have a recreation period (there are a number of these periodically placed throughout the three days) which is followed by an activity called "icebreakers" — a fun and nonsense time intended to help them become more relaxed with one another in this new and strange place. They are then divided usually into four or five small groups of eight to ten each with a staff member as facilitator. It is in these small groups, especially, that they are invited to explore the theme of our senior retreats: "Journey — where I am at this time in my life with self, with friends, with family and with God". During these three days, these small groups meet four times. The final small group will deal with how their goals were accomplished on this retreat and an affirmation of each by their fellow students and the staff-facilitator.

Other activities (large groups) include a trust walk, a dyad (an exercise in the skills of listening), a period of community recreation and a number of specifically religiously oriented activities. Among these, we include creative and imaginative morning and evening prayer services (themes center around the topics of hope, praise, thanksgiving, service.. etc.), a quiet time/meditation in chapel the second afternoon, an informal Liturgy of Reconciliation (among the most popular of large group activities) and a Liturgy (the Mass) as the culminating event on the final day. This liturgy is prepared by the students with the guidance of the staff members. A particular period of time is set aside the night before and labeled "liturgy prep" on the

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schedule. Students select both scriptural and non-scriptural readings (often to be presented in a dramatized way), the prayers of the faithful, the offertory gifts (bread and wine plus other symbolic gifts of the retreat). They further prepare the music and create several decorative posters for the walls of the chapel.

For the 17-18 year old seniors we offer a two nights/three days retreat. For the 15-16 year old juniors we offer a one night/two days retreat. Junior retreats, usually done in the Spring of the year, have *Values* as their theme. The juniors are asked to participate in large and small group activities in order to explore just what it is they value most. These exercises in values clarification help them to understand and appreciate more fully not only what they believe in but how best, as Christians, they may put these values into operation in service to their fellow human beings. We consistently find that most juniors return to the retreat house with much enthusiasm for their senior retreat the following year.

I would be remiss if I failed to speak to speak of our staff and the unique gifts they bring to our retreat ministry, especially in terms of their strong Christian and Lasallian orientations. It is our belief, as a staff, that we are firstly a Christian Community from which we derive the positive psychological and spiritual energy to minister to the 2000 to 2500 teenagers who come to us every nine months. We are a community of men and women, lay and religious who take seriously and enthusiastically both the message of the Gospels and the spirit and intent of St. La Salle. The students come to us for only two or three days, we give wholeheartedly of ourselves, and then they are gone! This is, at times, difficult and draining. Yet, it is through the strength we derive from being a sharing community of student retreat ministers, and it is in the knowledge that we are a significant part of the students' overall experience of the person and message of Jesus in their lives that we find the faith and energy to keep this special ministry alive and well. If at the end of their retreat the students are more trusting, more caring, more personally honest, more Spirit-filled, then their two or three days with us is a grace we are more than happy to have shared with them. A grace we have come to find out, for most, lasts for many years after.

In his book. *Adolescent Spirituality,* Father Charles M. Shelton, S.J., speaks frankly of very clear trends, interests and values of today's youth:

"Noted pollster George Gallup provides an insightful overview of adolescent religious behavior. In an address before the National Family Life Conference, sponsored by the Department of Education of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Gallup noted that youth are very concerned about meaning and prize human friendship. He stated that young people (1) tend to be more tolerant than their elders toward persons of different races, religions, and backgrounds; (2) continue to be remarkably service-oriented in their occupational choices, with many seeking careers in medicine, teaching, social work and other "helping" professions; and (3) are a particularly religious segment of the population. Although they tend to be "turned off" by organized religion, their levels of religious belief and practice are as high or higher than those of their elders.

Gallup urges that strong support be given to family life because of its centrality in youth's development. He also finds that two encouraging areas for ministering adolescents' spiritual development are Bible study groups and *youth retreats.* Both of these activities are highly popular among youth today and obviously need fostering in youth ministry programs".

And for we who choose to minister to today's youth, these words of challenge and encouragement:

"Since you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you must act as representing Jesus Christ himself. He wants your disciples to see him in you and receive your teaching as if he were teaching them. They must be convinced that the truth of Jesus comes from your mouth..." (Meditations/Retreat-3).

Brother Richard MORATTO
Christian Brothers Retreat House
St. HELENA, California

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09-C-36

TOWARDS A PLAN OF LASALLIAN FORMATION

In the Lasallian Region of Spain and Portugal, two positive realities have come to be the cause of a new profile of the Lasallian formation of the Brothers. On the one hand we have the awakened interest in a knowledge of the Founder and of his work, and on the other, the presence of a fairly numerous group of Brothers from the several districts in the novitiates and scholasticates. Both realities were carefully considered by the National Commission of Formation, made up of all the Brothers of the Region who are encharged with the formation of Junior Novices, Postulants, Novices and Scholastics, as well as the Pastoral Teams.

1. The Process of Drawing up the Plan

The National Formation Commission together with Brother Saturnino Gallego undertook the task of elaborating a possible plan. The first version of the plan basically brought together:

a) Material available in Spanish with reference to:
- a.1 Biographies of the Founder.
- a.2 Works of the Founder.
- a.3 Works about the Founder.
- a.4 Biographies of Brothers.
- a.5 The History of the Institute.
- a.6 Lasallian publications of interest.

b) A program guide for the Lasallian formation of each formation section: Aspirancy, Postulancy, Novitiate, Scholasticate and Permanent Formation.
- b.1 The biography of the Founder.
- b.2 The history of the Institute.
- b.3 Books and materials within the scope of the young men in formation, according to their level.
- b.4 Books and materials suitable for the formation teams.
- b.5 Suggestions for methods: Time sequence, activities, readings, tasks to be accomplished.

In a later development, each district assumed these program guidelines, adapted for their own specific character, and looked to implant the program in their formation groups. Several of the Spanish Districts, having already joined for the two-year Novitiate and one year of Scholasticate, decided to concretize and adjust the Formation Program according to that fact and, consequently combined for the two years of the novitiate and three years of Scholasticate. This Plan is presented in the following outline as section 2.

Lasallian Plan of Formation for Novitiate and Scholasticate

2.1 *Plan for the First Year of Novitiate*

a) Complete biography of the Founder.
- a.1 De La Salle and his Times.
- a.2 Place of Laymen in the Catechetical Movement of the France of the 17th C.
- a.3 First Biographers of the Founder.
- a.4 Important traits in the Life of the Founder taken from the works of Bernard, Maillefer and Saturnino.

b) The Human Personality of the Founder.
- b.1 Portraits of St John Baptist De La Salle.
- b.2 Handwriting analysis of the Founder.
- b.3 Human Personality of St. John Baptist De La Salle.
- b.4 Most important features of his relations with the Brothers.

c) The Spiritual Thought of St. John Baptist De La Salle.
- c.1 Sources and originality of Lasallian spirituality.
- c.2 "Called by God" to bring about "the Work of God".
- c.3 To announce the Gospel to poor children.
- c.4 Consequences of Lasallian spirituality for the Brothers of Today.
- c.5 Spiritual Writings of the Founder.
- c.6 Pedagogical Writings of the Founder.

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2.2. *Plan for the Second Year of Novitiate.*

a) The spiritual journey undertaken by the Founder.
   a.1 Four fundamental Events.
   a.2 The first community and how it was structured in Rheims.
   a.3 The spread of the work and the consolidation of the community.
   a.4 The great crisis and the "dark night" of the Founder.
   a.5 Evangelical principles found in the whole course of the Founder's journey.
   a.6 Lasallian spirituality for the Brother of Today.

b) History of the Institute
   b.1 The destiny of the Institute is in the hands of its members.
   b.2 Landmark events in the history of the Institute.
   b.3 The Institute today in its most representative regions.
   b.4 The Institute in Spain.
   b.5 Lives of the most representative Brothers:
      — Biographies of the first Brothers.
      — Lives of Brother Saints, Blessed and Venerables.
      — Lives of Brothers known of the Novices.

c) The Institute Today
   c.1 The Institute Today in different countries.
   c.2 Organization of the Institute.
   c.3 Informative organs of the Institute.
   c.4 Perspectives for the future.
   c.5 The Institute in Spain Today.

2.3. *Plan for the First Year of Scholasticate.* Theme: The Brother as Christian Educator. Course on the "Theology of Education" for the Brothers.

a) The Founder's work of Christian Education.
   a.1 Reading of the life of the Founder from the standpoint of his work in Christian Education.
   a.2 The pedagogical work of the Founder and its antecedents.
   a.3 The catechetical work of the Founder in 17th Century France.

b) Pedagogical-catechetical writings of the Founder.
   b.1 The literary output of St. John Baptist De La Salle in relation to Christian education.
   b.2 Three significant works of the Founder: *Meditations for Time of Retreat, The Conduct of Schools* and *Christian Politeness and Courtesy*.

c) The theology of education of the Founder.
   c.1 God, the principal agent in Christian education.
   c.2 The child, subject of Christian Education.
   c.3 The teacher, instrument in the Hands of God.
   c.4 The teacher, sent by the Church.
   c.5 The end of Christian Education.

2.4. *Plan for the Second Year of Scholasticate:* Theme: the Brother as Catechist. Course on "Pastoral Theology" for the Brother.

a) The Brother as Catechist, according of the Founder.
   a.1 Some of the most significant writings: *The Duties of the Christian, Instructions and Prayers* and *The Spiritual Canticles.*
   a.2 Gifts which God has granted to the Brother to announce the Gospel to the poor.
   a.3 To announce the Gospel to the poor by means of the gratuitous school.
   a.4 God calls the Brother through the community to announce the Gospel to the poor.

b The Brother as Catechist throughout the history of the Institute.

c) The Brother as catechist as described in the *Declaration,* special study of numbers 25 through 42.

2.5. *Plan for the Third Year of Scholasticate:* Theme: the Brother as Teacher. Course on "Lasallian Pedagogy" for the Brothers.

a) The Brothers as Teacher according to the Founder.
   a.1 The essence of the teacher: the spiritual, moral, professional and technical formation of the teacher.
   a.2 The work of the teacher: profound knowledge of his students, love of his students, example and dedication of the teacher.

b) The Brother as Teacher throughout the history of the Institute.

c) The Lasallian Christian School Today. Special study of numbers 43 through 52 of the *Declaration.*

Brothers Gregorio DE FRUTOS, Vis. Aux.
Hermano Carmelo BUENO H.
Arcas Reales
VALLADOLID

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09-C-37

PERPETUAL VOWS AND INCULTURATION

Introduction

This article does not attempt to present a theoretical study on inculturation; it will merely limit itself to recounting some related facts which have been experienced in different periods of history. It deals with the perpetual profession ceremonies of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. If the deep significance of the vows has remained unchanged, for they continue to be a total consecration of one's self to the Lord, the rite or the manner of pronouncing these vows has changed enormously, especially in the course of the last ten years, during which much has been said about inculturation. Thus, during one of his African visits, Pope John Paul II himself said: "Africanization encompasses a wide and deep domain which as yet has not been sufficiently explored, when it comes to the language in which to present the Christian language in a way which will touch the spirit and heart of the Africans, and when it comes to the catechesis, the theological thought, and the expression best adapted to the liturgy or sacred art, and the communitarian modes of Christian life".

What follows here is precisely a presentation of a Malagasy experience of this "more adapted expression" of the ceremony of vows.

1 — Concerning a clannish ceremony where everything is a mystery to the uninitiated

I should like to recount here a personal experience. In 1958, I pronounced my perpetual vows in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the course of a ceremony in the private chapel of a community of Religious Sisters. During the course of the ceremony, I was well surrounded by my Brothers in religion, both local Brothers and foreign missionary Brothers. They were both happy and proud to accept me as a another member who would definitely commit himself to the Society for better or for worse.

As regards my parents, whom I discreetly invited on my own, they occupied the last pew in the chapel. They were like silent and mute spectators during this ceremony which interested them so deeply but whose significance escaped them; either because they were so far behind the human curtain formed by my religious Brothers or because it was a ceremony which was carried out in a language foreign to them. They were the uninitiated and so they could not understand the language of our "clan". Furthermore, is the religious life not conceived as an abandonment and a forgetting of one's own and a world apart which rises above all cultures? It did not have any other points of reference except tradition (the classical view of the religious life). One can be inculturated only within the patrimony of the clan.

2 — Towards a more ecclesial celebration

Now we are in 1978, that is, twenty years later; Brother So-and-so is also pronouncing his definitive commitment to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. But, the rite has taken on a different appearance. The ceremony takes place in the original parish which prepared for this happy event for some entire weeks, with a catechesis concerning the vows of religion and the meaning of consecration.

Now it is not only the parents who have been invited, but the entire family and even the entire parish, with privileged guests being the young people and the students. The celebration will be intensely spiritual, but as is said here, there cannot be any kind of a celebration without "*vary be menaka*" (rice and a lot of other food) with each one bringing a little something for the meal of all those present. For the religious celebration, it is the bishop himself who presides at the Eucharist; an imposing number of men and women religious are present; but above all the large parish church is packed to the doors with the ordinary faithful who make up the ecclesial community.

Invited by the Brother Visitor to approach the altar to pronounce his consecration, the young Brother rises and after bowing respectfully towards his parents, asks them for their blessing.

The voice of an old man, the oldest person in the family, arises like an enchanting hymn calling the grace of God down upon "their child and their Brother", asking also for the protection of ancestors and for the benevolent love of all the living. The extraordinary silence which pervades the immense assembly during this moment speaks eloquently of the weight and value which the Malagasy people attach to the paternal blessing. For many this is not only the most moving moment of the ceremony but also its summit and culminating point. However, the rest of the ceremony is followed with enthusiasm and sustained interest by this Church which sings with full voice and praises God in dance.

Doubtlessly, there are certain things which would have to be clarified, but the fact remains that it was the entire people of God who took part in this act of consecration of the Brother. This event was not the private act of a closed religious community acting alone, but it was rather one of an entire ecclesial community which made this consecration of vows an authentically public act expressed within the Church.

3 — The vow celebration embraces the Lasallian family

If inculturation is a rather recent movement in the Church, the notion as a reality is even more so in the Institute. Yet, more and more young people and adults feel themselves attracted to the mission and spirituality of De La Salle;

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they experience a wish to draw a bit more closely to the Brothers; they desire to share a bit of their live and participate in their mission. The parents of the Brothers themselves willingly subscribe to become members of this Lasallian family, following the lay teachers, former students, the youth, and other sympathizers.

Now we are in 1985; God continues to send vocations in the District of Tananarive; and thus it is that five young Brothers are going to pronounce their perpetual vows. They are prepared for this by a month of spiritual reflection and prayer. It is interesting to note that some years before, this spiritual month, or thirty days' retreat, was directed by a preacher who was competent in his own right, but who said nothing or almost nothing about Lasallian spirituality. By contrast, the spiritual month we are referring to here was a preparation for perpetual profession largely animated by the Brothers or by other spiritual guides who were open to our family spirituality of the Founder.

And now comes the day of profession. The parents also have been advised some days earlier so that they also can prepare for this grand event of definitively offering one of their children to the Lord. Time truly, the parents did something more than to bring us into the world. Were they not the first ones who initiated their children into the Christian faith? Had not their example influenced our choice of a vocation? Are they not interested in our religious process? Why then should they not be involved a bit more in this definitive decision which perpetual profession truly is?

It is in this perspective that the five Malagasy Brothers who are making their final profession have conceived of a ritual where the parents, the Institute, and themselves enter into a dialogue which includes and concerns everybody in this final profession.

It is not possible for us to relate here everything that was said on that occasion. We shall merely transcribe a summary of what was said in such deep and captivating Malagasy that we cannot give a translation which would do justice to the original.

The parents addressed the Institute and then the Brother Visitor in words suitable for the occasion, and then a bit later, they pronounced the following words:

"Here in our presence, Brother So-and so and Brother So-and-so are ready for their wedding; it is not a question of taking a wife, as required by our ancestral traditions; but it is one of binding themselves forever to Jesus Christ in the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This congregation and our sons have known, studied and mutually appreciated one another for the past seven or eight years. The time for reciprocal probing has come to an end; now comes the decisive day when they will bind themselves to the Institute until death, for better or for worse. We wish to make it quite clear that they are making this commitment without any constraint or force upon the part of anyone. This commitment is being made because of the love which binds them to the Lasallian Congregation, by the love of God, love for children, and by love for their Brothers in religion...".

Acceptance by the Institute

The Brother Visitor, in the name of Institute, then speaks up and expresses himself in the following way: "The Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools expresses its gratitude to you, dear parents, who have succeeded in your educative mission and have come here today to offer back again to the Lord, the sons he had confided to you to rear. It is neither gold nor silver, nor any other material things which you are offering today; you are offering your own children for the extension of the Kingdom of God, through the education of children especially poor children. The Lord Himself will surely reward you a hundred-fold for the sacrifice which you have offered to Him".

Then addressing himself to the young men themselves, Brother Visitor continues: "I address you, young Brothers. The people of God is here assembled because of you. Your parents have expressed their intention to offer you to Christ, to espouse you to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. But we want you yourselves to tell us of your deep intentions. The people of God here present await a clarification from you, to which they will be the witnesses. Tell them of the profound meaning of the commitment you are about to undertake; they await that testimony for their own edification and to motivate the intentions of the prayers which they will address to God for your behalf".

Declaration of future profession

"It is willingly and with full knowledge that I commit myself definitively to the Institute. I sufficiently understand its history, its way of life, its apostolate, and its spirituality. I have gotten to know the Brothers well enough, having lived with them in community and having together with them worked for the Christian education of youth. These experiences seem to me to be sufficient and conclusive. Hence, I herewith decide to bind myself forever to them as a witness in the world today of a truly evangelical brotherhood for the service of youth".

Combined blessing by the Family and by the Institute

After these declarations of intentions, the Brother Visitor as well as the fathers and mothers of those about to pronounce their perpetual vows, bless one after the other, the young Brothers seated in front of the altar, facing the people. This blessing is spontaneous and charismatic. Placing their hand, moistened with holy water, upon the head of each candidate for profession, each pronounces a formula, expressed in the words which spring from their maternal and paternal heart under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, fortified by this blessing as well as by the prayers of the congregation who took part in this ceremony, the candidates for perpetual profession join in the eucharistic celebration, during which they will pronounce their perpetual vows according to the traditional formula of the Institute.

This experience is unique in its kind, so there is no general conclusion to be drawn from it. What is proposed is to become aware that the ceremony of perpetual profession, which is highly ecclesial in nature, should be something truly significant for those participating in it.

Now it is up to each one to devise a procedure in conformity with his own culture to arrive at this desirable objective.

Brother Vincent RABEMAHAFALY
Rome

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THE LASALLIAN ASSOCIATION IN FRANCE

1 — Introduction

The decade of the 1970's saw the progressive development in France, to the level of Lasallian middle and secondary schools what had existed up to that time in the primary schools and in certain middle schools: The transfer of the Direction of these Institutions from the Brothers to Lay persons.

Often it was the case of conferring such Direction on a layman who had been with the Brothers as a student or as a teacher in a Lasallian school having a community of Brothers.

In other cases, a lay Director, who has not had this "Lasallian experience" takes charge of a School which still has a Community of Brothers. Such lay Directors between 1970 and 1980 could be called the "First Generation", that is those having known and lived in one way or other within the Lasallian educational climate under the strong influence of Religious.

2 — The origins of the Association

Around 1975, some lay Directors of Lasallian elementary and secondary schools of France wanted to reflect together on their mission as well as on the future of the establishments which were confided to their care. After having met together several times, they opened themselves to the influence of the Institute of the Brothers and were particularly well received and listened to in their search by the Brothers in charge of the Institute in France.

There was a period of concerted study and openness over a three year period which led to such very diverse questions as:

— A Lasallian pedagogy for today

— The connection between pedagogy and spirituality

— Openness to youth, especially the most deprived.

— What connections exist between the Institute and the Lay Directors? How can these ties be strengthened... Where can new ones be created?

— The isolation often strongly felt by lay Directors

— In case of a conflict between a Lay Director and members of the Educational community, does a way of seeking arbitration exist?

(This type of protection is hardly talked about at present).

— How to find and form successors to the Directors?

In the course of these exchanges, the Brothers and the Laymen were very attentive to one another and probably each had to go out of his way to better understand the "other fellow".

The Brothers Visitors participating in these meetings insisted on the fact that John Baptist De La Salle made as his plan that of working "together and by association".

They understood that the lay people — in their present position — wanted to bring the Lasallian educational message to youth, and in particular wanted to be attentive to those students having difficulties in these schools, "open to the world", where an evangelical climate is developed. The Brothers very rightly underscored the point that the Founder was solicitous not only of pedagogy but he also was a guide prompting us to bring to the world a "view of faith and a view of love".

If not everything was simple during these dialogues (still the educational stakes were important and the questions profound...) we could say that all the participants enriched their life and their love for education during this period.

3 — The creation of the Association

In 1978, conscious of the necessity of working "together", the De La Salle Association was created. What were its original aims?

— *Object of the Association*

The purpose of the Association is to develop the educational and spiritual values proposed by Saint John Baptist De La Salle and by his Institute, to maintain and promote a Christian education for the young within educational institutions, such as are described in the document "Points of View on Christian Education and on Education in the Faith" (Please refer to the General Chapter of 1967 and to the National Chapter of 1969).

For this purpose, The Association multiplies the links of mutual help and cooperation between, on one part, the members of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and on the other, the Directors named

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or recognized by it to direct the school establishment and those who wish to belong to this Association.

In 1979 another role of the Association was carefully studied: that of a trusteeship of the members institutions, the Brothers Visitors of the French Region having adopted the following two resolutions:

1. The Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian School can also exercise, through the La Salle Association a trusteeship when a school run by a layman belongs to the Association.

2. For this relationship, the Brother Visitor of the District within the territory where the school run by a layman is located, should first of all give his consent to the Administrative Council of the Association.

It must be noted here that when a school hands over its trusteeship to the Lasallian Association, an agreement is signed between the Association and the Diocesan Community for Catholic Education in the diocese where the school is located in order to establish good cooperation between the two entities.

4 — The composition and function ot the Association

— *Composition*

The Association is made up of founding members, associate members, and corresponding members.

a) The*founding* members are:

— The members of the Conference of Brothers Visitors of France, members by right;

— The lay directors of the Catholic schools, who together with the Brothers Visitors, had set up the Association.

b) The *Associate* Members can be:

— Everyone who exercises the function of head of a school or of an Academic Director;

— A representative of the management of the institution whose statutes are in keeping with the aims and purposes of the Association;

— The national secretaries of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools;

c) The *corresponding* Members are those physical persons who have proposed their candidature and have been accepted by the Council of the Administration.

— *Its function*

The Administrative Council of the Association meets on an average of twice per trimester. It is composed of eleven people: The Brothers in charge of the Region, five other Brothers, and five laymen.

The President is always a layman and the Secretary is a Brother. In order to collaborate more closely with the Association, the Institute has released a Brother for the post of "Secretary of Education".

Our reflections and our common Brothers-Laymen endeavours have led the Secretariat of Education to publish regularly a magazine "Lasallian Educational Activity". This magazine contains numerous educational topics and pays great attention to the daily existence of our Institutions.

In 1981-82, a "White Book" entitled, "Schools for the Young", about the Lasallian Schools, was published and widely diffused, in particular to selected regional and national institutions, as well as to the Ministry of National Education.

The Association and the Secretariat for Education have taken the trouble to organize meetings of Directors, both Brothers and lay, and each year some Lasallian week-ends to which all educators are invited. It was during these national and regional meetings that, among other themes, the deepening of the Lasallian educational plan in all its different forms, was tackled, work has been the object of an article in the magazine cited above.

In 1984 and 1985, meetings were organized in each district of France.

Occasionally, the President of the Association and some lay members of the council are invited to one of the meetings of the Visitors' Conference of France.

Likewise, the Assembly of the Brothers of the Region of France received a delegation of lay Directors during its meeting of 1982 and devoted some time to the work of the Lasallian Association.

As can be seen very well, the Brothers and the laity have thus decided to cooperate with one another in the study of the living tradition coming down to us from the Founder.

These meetings with the members of the Institute are also a privileged opportunity for the lay people to have an exchange with the Brothers in all simplicity.

Still, there is yet another mode of action which is very important in the Association and that is the *Visits to the Institutions.* These are of two kinds:

a) When a school asks to join the Association, an "Introductory" visit of two days is made to the place. One Brother and one lay member of the Council of the Association, accompanied by the Brother Visitor of the District, come to the school to meet the administrators and all the others who make up the educational community.

The Director is invited to prepare the programme of the two days which delves also into the financial and administrative conditions of the school as well as the spiritual and pedagogical matters, future plans, etc..

Recommendations are made on accepting the institution into the Lasallian Association.

b) Periodically, the member Institutions are visited, usually for a day or for a day and a half. This is an opportunity of strengthening the ties, of mutual examination and of enrichment.

A report, drawn up in collaboration with the Director, is sent to the Council of the Association.

At present, six institutions spread throughout France are Associate members of the Association. They educate close to 15,000 children, of which a relatively important proportion are in Technical Training.

E. ARQUILLERE
Director of the
John Baptist De La Salle
Learning Center of Lyons

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LASALLIAN ASSOCIATIONS IN AFRICA

During the months of November and December, 1985, I made a trip through the French-speaking countries of Africa. I visited some of the works of the Brothers in seven countries: Burkina Faso, Togo, Cameroon, Zaire, Rwanda, Madagascar, and Egypt. As you can imagine, I returned with my soul filled with memories, experiences, hope, and gratitude. I discovered things which left me astounded and filled me with respect. I should like to share with the *Lasalliana* readers some of my experiences because I feel that everyone will find satisfaction in finding out about Lasallians far beyond.

Purpose of the trip

I am the Brother Moderator of the Lasallian Associations and a bit of an "animator" of the Signum Fidei spiritual movement. For both of these, it seemed that it was opportune to make contact with the various African Districts in order, on my part, to clearly explain to the Brothers the scope and the evolution of the Associations and the meaning of Signum Fidei. Also, I wanted to offer to our secular Lasallian friends the possibility of being integrated into these Lasallian movements, in case they have not already been so, in keeping with the changes and progress in the spirit which has taken hold recently within the Lasallian family.

Common characteristics

So that I do not repeat myself in some important things, I want to cite a few of them which were the leit motif in all these countries:

— The Brothers, and especially the Visitors, everywhere, received me fraternally: they always made me feel that I was among Brothers. But, I was among, let us say, "special" Brothers who give their life's strength, living at times in very difficult and poor circumstances, even the most poor. The Brothers went out of their way to help me. The local Brothers are not only our hope but are La Salle Brothers of the highest calibre.

The Lasallian lay people paid close attention and showed extraordinary interest in my "message".

— In each District, arrangements were made for me to meet with numerous secular organizations.

— With these groups I had meetings, friendly, leisurely chats, about La Salle today.

— The immediate result everywhere was full acceptance, far surpassing my fullest expectations.

— I believe that in each case, I left with a new understanding of the local Association.

— I think that I have left the basis which, with time and goodwill, will lead to the founding of a national federation.

— The Signum Fidei has been for many a pleasant surprise and the seed of this organization has been well sown.

Other kinds of Characteristics

The work of these districts shows an extraordinary vision of the future, and at the same time, and in the founders, there exists a total confidence in the result of a quality Christian and human education.

— Many of the buildings which were constructed from the very beginning of the Brothers' activities are very astounding. They are big, well laid out, quite functional, and architecturally aesthetic. It is evident that the districts of origin gave themselves heart and soul to their missionary work, and it is equally evident that the local Brothers, lacking the personnel of former times, use their innovative genius to carry on these same activities with many students and with the cooperation of lay teachers who work together with a notable Lasallian spirit.

— The "inculturation" of our communities in these countries is evident.

— Equally evident is that our schools are packed with a multitude of students who are hungering for education and learning. They are full of life and joy, very versatile and curious about the young people in the old world.

— Still more outstanding is the desire to be joined in La Salle with so many friends from other places and together to seek the realization of what De La Salle had envisioned in this world.

— Finally, what was very striking was the identity of the Lasallian spirit which I was able to appreciate in the Houses of Formation: postulants, novices, and scholastics. It was great to see the fascination of these young religious who are thinking of delicating their life to the same ideal to which I, myself, and so many other Brothers have dedicated ours. This was a source of joy and hope. It is no wonder that Africa is called "the Continent of Hope".

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BURKINA FASO — (Upper Volta) — I visited Ouagadougou, Bobo-Diuoulasso, Tunuma, and Tusiana.

Everywhere it was a delight to see the afternoon dismissal from class. And you think about how, thanks to the Brothers, these countries are made up of well-prepared and responsible citizens. Thanks to the Church, they are good Christians. In Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, after dismissal, another wave, this time adults, enter the same classrooms to learn how to read and write. It is the students from the final year themselves who help their fellow countrymen to rise from their illiteracy. Admirable! I met a multitude of them in Tounouma, a smaller group in Ouagadougou, and I talked to the boarding students in Toussiana. This is beautiful work because all of these students are admitted free. Brother Dominique, Visitor, promised his assistance.

TOGO — I visited Lomé and Togoville

In Lomé, I had a meeting with the National Lasallian Directory, who were well disposed and attentive. In Togoville, there is another great spectacle of a new large school for young people, right along side the common people who are still guided by mysterious ancestral tribal rituals. What a contrast! Here, the Spanish Brothers are carrying on some extraordinary work. I spoke with a young promising group, had a dialogue with the Postulants in Lomé and spoke with various classes of students in St. Joseph's.

CAMEROON — I visited Yaundé, Duala, Mbanga, Bafang, Efok. The Brother Visitor was my guide.

I had many meetings in Yaundé, Mbanga and Bafang which were outstanding. Still, one of the best of these was in Duala where I was told that more than 300 Lasallian youths already have a meaningful association. I saw various groups of the Signum Fidei and Lasallian Cameroonian Youth. This was a very fruitful as well as enjoyable encounter. Apart from this, De La Salle College of Douala, for example, is very impressive in every way: its shops for trades are first class as are its classrooms, campus, building, and its room with 20 computers, which the young students operate so very well."Cameroon would not be what it is without the Brothers, "Brother Pouliot, Visitor remarked. In Efok, the Brothers offer help to the farmers in the region. I spoke with the postulants and scholastics. I met with another Group of well disposed Lasallian Youths and with another fervent Signum Fidei Group.

ZAIRE — I was in Kinshasa, Tumba, Boma, Matadi, Mbanza...

All these names are very important in the history of the Brothers in Zaire. The Lasallians there impressed us with their great openness to, interest in, the "new" Association, which is less new for them because two of their friends who had attended the meeting in Mexico brought news back. Many alumni hold important government posts and among them is the Prime Minister, who received us graciously. Also, the Bishop of Boma, who invited us for dinner, offered words of welcome and sent his regards to the Brothers who had forged the great center at Boma and he expressed his desire that the Brothers return there. There was a visit to the center with Brother Visitor, who promised this return of the Brothers. There were meetings with Lasallians in Boma, with an encouraging group in Kinshasa, Matadi and Tumba. All these places have good buildings filled with students. I had the pleasure of talking to the French-speaking novices and postulants of Africa who are in Kinshasa. It is a good and promising group. I spoke to them about our mission. A thing of great interest was the Museum of Zairean Modern Art which is under the care of Brother Michel and the Ancient Art, under the care of Brother Cornet, National Director of Museums. I am grateful to Brother Visitor who prepared my work schedule and acted as my guide.

Here is another interesting detail. I had brought with me from Rome some copies of the Draft of the Rule for the Brothers to discuss prior to the General Chapter. The communities in Zaire had not received the copies sent to them by mail. However, one former Brother came to the Provincialate to give the Brothers a copy which he had found and purchased at the public market!

RWANDA — I visited Byumba, Butaré, and Kigali.

Byumba is a big boarding school for poor boys and is well taken care of by an excellent community and outstanding faculty. I had a long conversation with the former students, with the "Lasallian Family" and with many students. In Butaré I met with the Rwandan Federation Directory with whom I had a long dialogue. Brother Visitor accompanied me and promised to help form a national Federation. Brother Willy Joegens will help also from Butaré itself. I took the opportunity to speak with the Brothers Scholastics who are studying in this university city. There are about ten of them and they are very promising. Kisaro is an agricultural school. Rwanda is a country of a thousand hills. When it rains, soil erosion causes quite a bit of damage. The water saturates the ground and ends by eroding it. The Brothers direct the Agricultural School and teach the boys how to convert the hillside into terraces. There are two planting sessions and two harvests each year. The young students learn how to select seeds, raise animals, make flour, sausages, bread, etc..

MADAGASCAR — I visited Tananarivo, Tamatava, Ambositra, Analabe, Soavimbaoaka, and Moramanga.

In the absence of the Brother Visitor, the National Moderator of the Lasallian Association, Brother Edmon, was my mentor and excellent guide. We visited Tanarive where the schools of St. Joseph, the oldest of the Brothers' schools and Holy Family school are located. Here I was overwhelmed by the warm reception which I received. The house of formation in Soavimbaoaka contains aspirants who are now my friends and Brothers who refuse to retire. In Tamatava I set a new record for meetings, having given six hours of talks in one day in the three magnificent Lasallian schools which have more than 3,00 pupils. It also has a "Lasallian Family", three sections of graduating students with more than 60 students in each section. We visited the provincial Governor who expressed his admiration for the education in La Salle. Here the pupils sang "Honneur à Toi" very enthusiastically even though they did not understand the meaning of the song.

Analabe is the place of the Novitiate where a dozen Novices offered an emotional and unique liturgy. In Ambositra we visited with some forty teachers connected with the school of Saint Louis. We met for another two hours with the Lasallian Family, presided over by General Councilor Brother Vincent Rabemahafaly, and the meeting was impressive by the quantity and quality of his help. In Madagascar there were three Signum Fidei groups, headed by Brother Marcellin. Together with him, we prayed and reflected and encouraged one another to continue in our fervor. In Moramanga I spoke with students, alumni, and teachers in St. John of Matha College. The Sunday Mass and the meeting and prayer with the La Sallian family were memorable.

EGYPT — I visited Cairo (Daher) Khoronfish, Alexandria, and the Regional Novitiate.

Also here, the Daher community received me fraternally, the head of the Region, Brother Regis prepared contacts for me, and Brother Raymond Berzi took me to the various meetings. The Association of Daher in full session took part in my presentation of the Lasallian Association. The chapter is young and well oriented. In Alexandria, in the famous St. Mark's College, the Association explained its activities, among which is blood donating, which is very difficult in the muslim atmosphere. There I saw their social hall, full of young people. We had a meeting about the new Association and the idea was received without reserve. I visited the Regional Novitiate for the Near East and met there with four Lebanese novices and one Egyptian who show high hopes for the future. I had a meeting with some young people which was called, "Youth-Brothers" with Brother Yves in charge. This meeting left me very impressed. They spoke of the Brothers' vocation as a blessing for Egypt. In Egypt they prepared for me a visit to the sounds and sights of the pyramids. It was magnificent!

CONCLUSION — In Africa I found the loyalty to the Brothers, devotion to the Holy Founder, and the acceptance of the "New Association" on the same high level as in Europe. We met alumni everywhere, even et the airport where they facilitated certain formalities.

— I sincerely wish that I have left as good memories as those which I have taken with me.

— My purpose was to awaken an understanding of the Association and I believe that I have succeeded.

— I wish to express my astonishment at the work being done by the Brothers who are giving their health and life to present the Christian and Lasallian message in such exemplary and fabulous schools.

— I must express my gratitude for the overwhelming hospitality I received everywhere and in return I affirm my respect and admiration for the richness and generosity of the African spirit.

Brother Manuel OLIVÉ
Mother House Rome

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09-E-23

HELP TO CHILDREN WITH DIFFICULTIES IN STUDIES

Project

After ten years of teaching regular classes on the primary level. I asked myself in what apostolate I should continue my work. Three possibilities presented themselves to me: become a missionary in Cameroon, teach teenagers in the secondary school, or continue on in the primary but directing my attention only toward that clientele of children having difficulties in adapting themselves to their studies. After discussing the matter with my Brother Visitor, I decided upon the third option.

Seeing that I lacked the scholastic credentials for working with such children, I enrolled at the University of Sherbrooke where I received my Masters Degree in Education, with orthopedagogy as my major. I sought employment at the Educational Commission of Rivière-du-Loup, where we have a community. My services were accepted at once.

Now, for the past eleven years I have been engaged in this work.

The task consists of coming to the assistance of pupils who have difficulties in learning and in adapting themselves at the beginning of the primary course. I do this work in two public schools. "The Open Class", which is the name given to my class, indicates my availability to accept for three to five lessons a week, pupils from the Home Rooms of the first three primary grades, in view of giving them personal pedagogical help.

Special Pupils

These children, who are usually intellectually gifted, are referred by the subject teacher and those in charge of the school, because they are presenting some problems or have a very slow rhythm in language learning, in reading (this is the majority of the cases), in mathematics, and sometimes in writing.

The length of the special help varies between three months and two years. When the child attains the level of reading or of calculation equal to his proper grade level, when his language usage has become adequate, he ceases little by little to profit by this form of help.

From the first meetings, I evaluate the level of each child by a diagnostic test. The results obtained serve as a guide for the assistance which I will give to each child.

For the help sessions, the child comes either alone or together with one or two other pupils experiencing the same difficulties.

Main activities

On the language level, the children are at first given exercises in articulation in view of loosening up their jaws and tongue, in view of mastering such or such a sound. Other exercises develop proper respiration and the quality of their hearing. Then they are led to pronounce everyday words better and better. Progressively, through game activities, their oral communication develops.

The syllabic method is further used as an aid to reading. The child goes from the level of letters to that of syllables or sounds, then to words, and finally to phrases. A certain number of words are learned totally. A reading program is adapted for each child.

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The children arrive at an understanding of mathematical systems by learning how to handle slide rules and logical blocks. Also they learn to correctly perform the arithmetic operations according to their level of studies.

In the course of the meeting, some psycho-motor exercises give the pupils a little rest from their effort and help them to acquire greater self-mastery. Certain exercises develop a better awareness of their body, its symmetry, equilibrium, the coordination between the hand and the eye, and the loosening of the wrists. From other exercises they learn to relax.

Some reactions

The parents are invited to work together with the school during those times when special attention is being given to their child. They can come to meet with me especially when they return the "scholastic bulletins". These relations with the parents are important for the development of the child himself.

All the pupils benefiting by the "open class" appreciate the help sessions and they always find the time too short. The initiatives for helping them are personalized as well as multisensory. Because of the climate of confidence and the motivating framework which surround the sessions, the pupils, beside learning how to speak better, read better, and count better, feel better "in their own skin", are more open and happier to be alive.

Development

After some time, the helping formula evolved. Thus, in the two schools where I work, the teachers are in charge of a double class. That is to say that they have two groups of pupils of different levels. To free these teachers and to achieve a better pedagogy, I work with one of these two groups.

Sometimes I take the ten best pupils of a class of the same level, the homeroom teacher works with the others. On occasions, I help the teacher during the French or mathematics courses, staying with him in the same class room, as a type of "team-teaching".

Conclusion

I really like my work in the two schools which were assigned to me by the Education Commission of Rivière-du-Loup. It has been for me a great joy to assure a good start, at the beginning of the primary grades, to those pupils who need assistance in their first school training.

To collaborate with the teachers, parents, and school administrators, all of whom are solicitous of giving a quality education to each child, is for me also an elevating task and very Lasallian.

Brother Benoît Gagné
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09-O-09

BROTHER SCUBILION (4): BROTHER SCUBILION'S SPIRITUAL SCHOOL: PRAYER AND DEDICATION

What are we going to do with Brother Scubilion once the Church has glorified him by declaring him Blessed? That is a big question. For the Church intends, by this distinct honor to a very modest teacher and catechist, to present him to us as a model and guide. Yet this was a man who never aspired to diffuse avant guard messages, but tried to grow ever more closely (like Christ with regard to the lepers) to outcasts of a slave society. Thus he practiced the Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, and so he is able to arouse in us evangelical attitudes.

Before trying, in conclusion, to bring some of the traits of this attractive figure out in relief, I should like to draw attention to what seems to me to be the unifying factor of this life, in following Christ: prayer and dedication. By his fidelity to prayer, even if the form of certain of these prayers is no longer in vogue, he modeled himself after the Heart of Christ the Saviour and was dedicated without reserve, like Him, "to teach the Good News to the poor".

Now numerous authoritative voices (the hierarchy, theologians, pastors, etc.) are today forcefully proclaiming the indissoluble links between prayer life and the dedication towards one's mission, with the preferential option of the most poor. This dedication is, as it were, the evangelical test of the authenticity of our prayer. An eminent present day theologian writes: "He who prays and seeks redemption in the name of Christ, cannot come to terms with oppression. And the more Christians dedicate themselves to the lives of the hungry, the rights of the oppressed, and in association with the forsaken, the more deeply they are led to incessant prayer". To pray and to dedicate one's self are two complementary beats of every Christian heart.

And Helder Camara, so well-known for his firm but non-violent stance in favour of the oppressed among his people, affirms in his turn: "Prayer and Christian dedication are but one. A horizontal arm, by itself, will never become a cross; neither is an arm raised vertically a cross; there must be a crossing of the two to have the cross of Christ, the total of the love of God and of love for men".

On this subject, Brother Scubilion could help us to acquire the Christian reflex and to unite in an indissoluble way in our life and prayer, "the spiritual life" and dedication. I should very much like to resort to a term which, without doubt, would be astonishing because it never figured into the vocabulary of that epoch: a "mystical dedication", on the part of an adorer, a contemplative, a searcher for God, hungry for prayer; on the other side, an indefatigable servant of the most oppressed of his Brothers.

He was neither a thinker, nor a theologian, nor a theorizor on service. But he was an image of God which he would certainly not disavow and which thoroughly inspired his humble service to the slaves; an image of "that God, so poor, so great, so vulnerable, that no one can love him without loving man, and whom one can wound so gravely by wounding man". (Liturgical Hymn "Who Then is God?").

At a time when, in the Church so many people are talking about a "preferential choice in favour of the poor", Brother Scubilion could light the way for us, he who, with a very sure theological instinct and without "reasoning things out" joined them in their distress, in the name of that God who Himself has declared that He is affected when a hand is laid upon them or harm is done to them: "God hears the cry of the poor!" (Psalm 34,7). "Will all these evildoers never learn, they who eat up my people just as they eat bread?" (Psalm 14.4) Without any theory, without any perception of the social order, spontaneously (evangelically) he addressed himself to the real needs of these people, and he brought himself to love the most poor: the slaves and newly liberated slaves. The permanency of his memory in La Reunion finds herein, to a great extent, its explanation.

Brothers Scubilion was not a "politician". He did not campaign for the suppression of slavery, which he felt was above all so inhumane and constituted a defiance of the Gospel. He was not a militant abolitionist after the manner of a Victor Shoelcher, of the same period, in the Mother land and in the Antilles.[1] But when slavery was officially abolished (1848), he had personally and a long time before, abolished any distance between himself and his friends, the slaves: 1848 was as much his own celebration as theirs! We shall recall that he was then at Saint-Leu.

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After the emancipation, he was not a firebrand, after the manner of Father Joffard, who was the parish priest of Saint-Leu, only for three months (February-April 1849), then his own parish priest. Eschewing the polemics of this confused priest, Brother Scubilion led a more discreet activity with the liberated populace, which exercised a real influence over them and which irritated the colonists and led to his departure for La Possession (1850).

Thus, in action, as well as in prayers, Brother Scubilion invites us to follow the path of the Gospel which he followed. This is a path which each must discover for himself, "rediscovering" it in another way than that of the nineteenth century. For the poor and the victims of injustice are still among us. How do we find them and attach ourselves to them?

On this point, by his attitude and practice, Brother Scubilion could help us acquire this sensitivity toward injustice, to feel this "raising of the heart" which leads us to resist and combat injustice by our pedagogical, social, civically adapted, and effective activity inspired by the Beatitudes: these are the weapons of those fighting for justice and peace.

We do not ask this mystic, this devotee of the Holy Eucharist, the Sacred Heart, and Mary to instill in us and bog us down with lethargic devotions, because purely personal and timid devotions merely lend themselves to the acceptance of an unjust social order. Contact with Brother Scubilion is not meant to assuage our conscience but it rather ought to awaken in us at the same time a more authentic prayer and a concrete and effective evangelical solidarity.

Of course, there are numerous Christians, especially in La Reunion, who confide to the saint their sufferings and their anguish, and ask of him a favor of a cure. But perhaps we ought to turn the problem around and ask ourselves how each one of us today can become a sign and witness of the tenderness of God for those among whom we live, and thus accomplish for others the true "miracles" which only, and in secret, the Father in heaven will see?

In conclusion, I shall try to put into digest form some of the characteristics of the spiritual physiognomy of Brother Scubilion. Being a man who was a "transparency of God", as a witness, he communicated what he lived so deeply. He had a simple heart and a life devoid of artificiality or complication. Faced with the situation of his time, He did not advance weighed down by problems or armed with abstract principles, but with the quiet certitude of faith.

He has been called the "smiling ascetic". His devotion to the cross goes a long way back. We know for certainty what Jean-Bernard's bed-side book had been for nearly twenty years. It was a book of not less than 270 pages of Meditations on the Passion, wherein one reads "Whatever you want to know, you can learn from the cross". He was impregnated with this doctrine, leaving to others less generous, "bargain basement graces". He lived a rough life: the climate without doubt was rigorous, at least during some months in the suffocating tropic heat of the coast, but there were also the voluntary privations he imposed upon himself. "He was very strict with himself, never given to self-pity, but he never carried mortification to a point where it would render him incapable of fulfilling his duties and obligations".

Even if Brother Scubilion shared in effect the rather lugubrious fervor which was in the spirit of that period, it was above all in the perspective of mission, as St. Paul writing to Timothy. "Suffer along with me for the sake of the Gospel". He lived under the seal of the cross, the tree of life.

Brother Scubilion was also a man of peace and reconciliation. This is not to downplay our own troubled times when recognition cannot be achieved without confrontation. Our missionary never practiced the Manicheism which classifies, judges, opposes black and white, rich and poor. "He refused to engage in an apostolate of classes and of races. He gave himself to everyone", (Msgr. Aubry, Bishop of La Reunion, homily of April 17, 1983). This was prompted by an evangelical impulse, we repeat, which directed his energies toward the pariahs of his day. Brother Scubilion quite naturally furthered the "grace of dialogue" for La Reunion. He can address the same fraternal message to everyone, not of course, to dissuade us from justifiable political problems or social action (cf the present position taken by the Church in Latin America), but so that they would be treated in the manner and spirit of the Gospel.

In conclusion, we express the wish that, beginning from the Island of La Reunion (where his reputation is well established), throughout the whole world, and among the Brothers, in any case, the apostle of the humble, "the slave of the slaves", be better known and that his message — not written but lived — would arouse us from our tepidity, and render us docile in spirit, daring, and inventive.

Brother André FERMET
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[1] Or after the manner of a Wilberforce in England.

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FOREWORD

The LASALLIANA launches into its fourth year...

During the General Chapter, we profited by the presence of most of the Brothers Visitors here in Rome to conduct a little evaluation of the first three years of this publication. We submitted a brief questionnaire to them to get their personal opinions of the publication and to solicit their suggestions for the future of Lasalliana.

We received 37 responses to this questionnaire, which represents about 50% of the Districts and Delegations. The capitulants who were not Visitors believed that they should not respond, and this was regrettable but understandable. Å greater percentage of responses would have had a still greater value.

By way of a foreword to this number, we should like to present here a faithful echo of the responses to the first question: "What is your personal opinion of the Lasalliana?".

All the responses were positive. They expressed appreciation of the following aspects:

★ The Lasallian vitality, the richness and diversity of topics presented by the articles.

★ The instrument of communication and information which gives the readers a better knowledge of the Founder and of the Institute today.

★ The brevity of the texts in no way, however, detracts from the seriousness and profundity of the subjects because they are the result of research or personal experience.

★ The useful, practical, and concrete aspects of the articles lend to their being used with groups of Brothers or Lasallian lay people.

★ The summaries of Lasallian spirituality, the exercise of the ministry, and the pivotal points of education which can be found here.

★ The stimulating dimension these articles hold for the readers and, without doubt, for the authors themselves.

★ The convenience of classification and reference, thanks to the type of format and the enumeration of each article.

This collection of responses reveals also the main uses which can be made of this material, even in those countries where the texts must first be translated into the national language. It can be further garnered:

— that the use of the articles is often selective: the texts chosen are those which essentially are more directly adapted to local situations. That is both natural and legitimate and very much in keeping with the purpose of the publication;

— that the formation groups are the most frequently cited;

— that the articles are also used for all kinds of Lasallian encounters;

— that the various constituents of the educational community can also derive profit from this publication.

Sometimes this general satisfaction was continued on with expressions of gratitude not only toward those in Rome who are responsible for its publication, but also towards the authors who have contributed articles thus far. I am happy that these authors were also thought of because it is they who give this review its true value.

Among the expressions of gratitude, I should like to quote verbatim one of the opinions received: "The Lasalliana is the best publication which we receive from the Motherhouse. It is appreciated by everyone!"

The 41st General Chapter was very much marked by the theme of the "Interdependence" of the Institute. It is encouraging to ascertain that the Lasalliana seeks to be a means of expressing and spreading this interdependence.

Brother Leon LAURAIRE

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10-A-49

THE FIRST NOVITIATE AND TRAINING SCHOOL FOR COUNTRY TEACHERS

At Rheims Three Hundred Years Ago:

1. Continual Formation as well as, and in addition to, initial formation

When he deals with the history of the initial years of De La Salle's Community, Brother Bernard observes that as yet there was no noviciate. And he adds a few words which we could find quite humorous:

> "It was enough for an applicant (later on called, 'postulant') to have been about a fortnight with this holy man to be prepared to be sent out teaching, such were the examples of virtue that he gave them; he and his Brothers were such an inspirations". (BD 79)

When these two weeks, which, let us say, were spent in an optimum manner, were over, the young Brother continued to live quite close to De La Salle; in contact with him, the young man's formation continued for many years.

Here is how Brother Bernard explains the opening of the first novitiate:

> "Since he was a man of faith, he looked for the hand of God in everything that happened to him, and this is what could be noticed in what we are about to relate. A young man, fifteen years of age, who had presented himself for reception into the Institute, was sent to the Servant of God while he was still in Rheims. He was accepted even though it was not customary to receive candidates so young. After a short time, three more like him came. Then, the Servant of God, recognizing in the acceptance of these young men that God was offering an occasion favourable to the Institute, decided to establish a community with these four plus any others like them who would subsequently come. It so happened that God so blessed this enterprise that in two months this little community was composed of twelve young men, for whom a rule was provided and an older Brother was assigned to live with them in order to win them over to Christ, according to the example of the Apostle". (BD 84)

Maillefer and Blain also speak about the opening of this "little community".

> "This little seminary, 'writes blain' served as a preparation and as a novitiate for the Institute... The schedule there was somewhat like that followed today in the novitiate". (I.280)
> "The exercises followed there", adds Maillefer, "were a bit like those in practice at present in the novitiate of the Institute". (Ms Re, 68)

These clear affirmations made no impression on those in the nineteenth century who would be the creators of what was then called the "Junior Novitiate", presented as the restoration, after 150 years, of the institution created in Rheims in 1686 or 1687. This often led to treating these "little novices" as if they were equal to novices and to giving them a schedule of rules and practices which could very well have the validity of the canonical year of formation.

2. A certain lack of precision: 1686 or 1687?

The first three biographers, Bernard, Maillefer, and Blain, place the opening of this novitiate before the departure of De La Salle for Paris. That, then, would be before 1688. Their accounts lead us to believe, that this was not a last-minute operation: The Founder certainly would have valued following the initial steps of these three in the novitiate above any advantage he might gain in Paris.

On the other hand, our oldest register of admissions contains, for the year 1686, the admission in October of that year of a youth named Jean Jacot (or Jacquot), the future Assistant of Brothers Barthélemy and Timothy, who was then only 14 years old. He was probably one of the first novices, if not the very first. No other name of a 14 or 15 year old boy appears in the register for that year. Still, we have to be prudent because we do not have the actual register of that distant year in its original form, rather we have merely a compilation dating back to 1714 which does not contain the names of all of the Brothers then living in the Institute.

Until we are better informed, let us leave the choice between the year 1686 and the year following.

In 1689 or 1690, when he would write the Treatise on the Holy Habit, the Founder would present the novitiate at Rheims as an institution in full operation:

> "Also in this community, youths of good disposition and piety are trained, and when they are judged to be, and reckon themselves to be, prepared, they then enter one of the teaching communities.
> They are accepted into the formation community at the age of fourteen or older".
> "They are trained in mental prayer and in other exercises of piety. They are instructed in all the catechetical materials and they are taught to read and write perfectly". (MH, 7)

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3. A Seminary for Country Teachers. A Training School for Country Teachers

The Brothers of De La Salle would go only to the towns; only there could they lead a community life which was for them so indispensable. Still, very soon, the Founder demonstrated his concern for the needs of the rural population. It was said that he was available to take charge of the training of young candidates who intended to become teachers in rural areas. Thus, since April 2 1683, in a statement made by the above mentioned, Canon Remi Favart declared:

> "He did not wish to retain any right over the said house (acquired by him) which would be used by the venerable and discreet person, John Baptist De La Salle, priest, doctor of theology, canon of the said church, for lodging there gratuitous schools begun in the said place in Rechtel, and to lodge the teachers who apply, even to establish there, if he can, a training school for country teachers for the said diocese of Rheims". (Cf. BEC 161, April 1960).

It was not until 1685 that De La Salle formally committed himself, and this twice, to furnish "Brothers" for the training of school teachers for rural areas: the first time was for the diocese of Rheims, the second time for the diocese of Laon, but each time it was for the land of the Duke de Mazarin. The first contract would not be valid without the agreement of the Archbishop of Rheims; when the Archbishop met the Duke and De La Salle, he unceremoniously showed them the door: "Both of you are fools", he told them. Now, the second contract for a foundation outside the diocese of Rheims, appears to have never even gotten started.

Yet, in 1686 or 1687, things changed: it was no longer the Duke, a *persona non grata* with the archbishop, but it was the priests of the diocese of Rheims who asked De La Salle to train auxiliaries for their parishes who would also be at the same time school teachers. This time the Saint could no longer escape.

For Bernard, the opening of this training school for country teachers followed that of the Novitiate (Bd 85) but remained prior to the departure of De La Salle for Paris. Maillefer holds on to the year 1687 (Ms Re, 68). For Blain, the novitiate and the training school were opened "about the same time". (I 279)

In his "Treatise on the Habit", the holy Founder presents the "Seminary" with a certain detail:

> "Here (in this community) efforts were made to train teachers for country schools in a house which was separate from the community and which was called a seminary.
> Those who were trained there, lived there only for a few years until they were entirely trained in piety as well as in the work.
> The only habit they wore was that worn ordinarily by people of the world, except that it was black or at least very dark brown, and they were distinguished from other lay people by a rabat and by wearing their hair shorter.
> There they were taught to sing, read, and write perfectly. Without any charge, they were given room, board, and laundry. After that they were placed in some town or village where they acted as clerks; once assigned there, they no longer had any contact with the community except for some friendly social one. However, they were accepted there to make their retreat". (MH 4, 5, 6).

Thus it was that three hundred years ago, that would be from the very first years of its existence, the Lasallian work appeared happily diversified: the Brothers themselves took charge of the children in the city parishes; by their training of clerk-teachers, they assured the education of the children in the rural parishes, which perhaps had been more neglected. Upon their entry into the "Community", the postulants were trained under the eyes of the Founder in a novitiate where it was desirable that their preparation be well adapted for what they would do next.

Rome, 22 March 1986

Brother Maurice HERMANS

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10-A-50

A PEDAGOGY BASED ON PARTICIPATION

As man goes along unveiling the secrets of Mother Nature and taking charge of her resources, he discovers the necessity for cooperating with his fellow man in order to speed up and intensify the fulfillment of these objectives.

Communication, dialogue, participation and exchange of views-these are all activities that have been coming to the fore in all organizations and social groupings. The multinationals, diverse international scientific projects, political bedfellows, and the Common Market are but a few everyday reminders of this phenomenon.

The school, in its several levels, must prepare its students for a critical apprenticeship and a future exercise of this active participation. For this, there is nothing more effective than the application of practical exercises with the students. Such has been the method of the Lasallian school from its very beginnings. A cursory perusal of the *Conduct of Schools* amply attests to this. Consequently, I will omit the pages that deal with the "Officers" of De La Salle's school; I will limit myself to refer to passages which are less known but none the less significant.

From the moment the Lasallian school opened its doors at seven-thirty in the morning until they were closed again at four-thirty in the afternoon, the cooperation and participation of the pupils in their scholastic activities, both personal and group-oriented, were active and constant.

The students were accustomed to enter the class a half hour before the teacher. The minute regulations that governed this waiting period didn't leave a moment to chance that disorder of lack of discipline would take place; rather, as small boys are mightily tempted to act up, the *Conduct* foresees such an eventuality in this fashion:

> "The first master and the inspector of the schools will name one of the more sensible pupils to take note of the students that cause noise while they are arriving. His job is to simply write this down without saying anything. He will afterwards pass this information on to the teacher in such a way that the other students do not realize it". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. 1, art. 1, page 8).

The most effective way (to avoid) disorder in the schoolroom is to restrain curiosity; for that end, the students reviewed their lessons before class; and in order that the little ones would not waste time:

> "The teacher should designate two students from an upper level to teach them the letters and syllables". (Ibid., page 9).

Now classes have begun. After the prayer comes the reading period. During this class the pupils help the teacher constantly. If one of the little boys does not know a letter:

> "The teacher will ask another child who does know it". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. III, art. 2, section 2, page 31).

When the student is breaking words down into syllables and mispronounces a syllable, if he is not able to correct himself:

> "The teacher will point to another so that he may correct it". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 1, art. 1, page 119).

A bit further on the *Conduct* indicates just what the limits of this help should be:

> "The teacher will only intervene when there is no pupil that is able to help his companions". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 1, art. 3, page 124).

During breakfast and the morning snack the students would review their lessons and the catechism. As the teacher had to attend the general order of the class:

> "He would name a boy to help him who, for this occasion, at least, would be be the inspector". (Cf. 1st part, Cap. II, art. 2, page 15).

If someone had to fulfill a punishment for being absent without permission:

> "A companion would be named to proctor his reading". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 6, art. 4, page 198).

Even more than the reading class, the maths lesson lent itself to the practice of mutual assistance among the pupils. In a case in which a student would make a mistake in doing one of the functions:

> "The teacher would indicate to another boy of the same grade or of an upper level to do the correction. And only when there is no child that is able to do so will the teacher himself make the correction". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. 5, page 74).

What teacher hasn't had to pick up, just about every day, objects that can distract the attention of the class to the matter at hand? The *Conduct* indicates that, in these cases:

> "There be a student in charge of picking them up, putting them away and, at the end of the class, will give them to the teacher who will then return them to their owners or do with them what seems most proper". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 1, art. 2, page 121).

In spite of the fact that the *Conduct* recommends that teachers punish their pupils very little (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 5, art. 2, page 153) it does recognize that there are times when they must do so, but not

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during the catechism explanation, prayers or Holy Mass. At these moments:

> "a student will be encharged with taking careful note of those that deserve a punishment, that will be given to them at another time". (Cf. and part, Cap. 5, art. 9, section 1, page 178).

There were cases, of course, in which the teacher should have to apply a punishment at a later time and would possibly forget it. To avoid that situation:

> "The teacher would name one or more of the pupils to observe that a punishment would be carried out, and if such were not the case, to remind the teacher". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 5, art. 9, section 1, page 178).

While assigning them to places in class the teacher will take into account the help that some will be able to lend to their companions.

> "He will place the newly-arrived at the side of those that fulfill their duties very well, so that they will learn by their example". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 5, art. 6, section 4, page 169, and 3rd part, Chap. 3, art. 1, page 250).
> When a child would begin his ABC's...
> "So that he can learn to follow in the book while the others are reading, the teacher will assign a companion to teach him how to follow. He will give him this help for as many days as are necessary". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. 3, art. 3, page 35).

The teacher will adopt this same strategy on assigning places for the writing class:

> "As far as possible he will place the students who are being promoted a grade at the side of those who are able to make elegant flourishes *so that they can learn from them*". (Cf. 3rd part, Chap. 3, art. 2, page 253).

The participation that the *Conduct* proposes to the students borders on the heroic when it suggests that they consciously and freely not be promoted a grade so that:

> "they may contribute to the progress of their companions and the good order of the class by remaining in the grade which they have completed". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. 3, art. 1, section 3, page 27).

So the class day ends; however, even outside of class the *Conduct* demands the collaboration of the students in the task of education. The attentive and discreet vigilance of the teachers couldn't reach to all the streets and squares that the students would cross on their way from school to home. For that reason:

> "Since the teachers could not observe what would go on in the streets other than the one in which the school stands, the director or the inspector, in agreement with the other Brothers, would assign certain boys to take careful note of the happenings in other streets, especially the ones in which most of the students lived, and to report back the information that he would have jotted down". (Cf. 2nd part, Chap. 11, art. 3, page 114).

Conclusion

The above lines are but a pale reflection of the *participation* that the students contributed in the De La Salle school, for we have omitted to mention the most original and detailed part-the OFFICERS who had such *outstanding responsibility* for the good government of the classroom. What is treated here is a mere completion to all that has been already written about in this regard.

If we wish to answer today to the charism of La Salle and his first Brothers we must look for ways to bring about the active and intense participation and cooperation of our students in the good management of our centers with a view to their preparation for the future.

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10-B-48

A FORGOTTEN MISSION (1)

The section of Brother Superior's 1985 Christmas Letter which he entitled, "Our work for the more distant poor through our Missionary Service" lends a special interest to this account of a Lasallian missionary venture of some seventy-odd years ago. It shows how a small group of German Brothers sought to respond to "the logic of the gospel and the logic of a religious profession" referred to in the Superior's letter. We are glad to be able to offer readers of LASALLIANA the author's own summary of a more extended account, based on original research and soon to be published.

LASALLIANA

Between April 1914 and April 1921 a group of German Brothers of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools conducted a special school within the mission complex of Vunapope, in what is today the East New Britain Province of Papua New Guinea, but which was, in 1914, the German colony of Neupommern or New Pomerania, part of the German Protectorate of Melanesia and Micronesia.

Because of the historical context in which the foundation was made, and because of the untimely withdrawal of these German Brothers after the conclusion of World War 1, the history of this mission seems to have been largely forgotten.

This article is an attempt to make some atonement for such neglect or oversight.

There has always existed within the Australian District of the Institute a tradition of the existence of this mission, and in 1984/85 I set myself to find out what I could, including a visit to present day Rabaul and the still-flourishing mission centre of Vunapope.

But, first, to glance at the antecedent history of our German confreres:

As may be found from a study of *Rigault* (Tome VIII) our German Brothers were, after 1879, because of the Kulturkampf, in *diaspora*. About one hundred of them, at their highest number, were scattered throughout various large boarding schools conducted by the Brothers of Belgium where they set up German language sections for their faithful clientele from the Fatherland. Eventually they managed to set up at least one establishment directly under their own control, the *Johannineum* at Grand-Halleux, near to the Luxembourg frontier.

They also had succeeded by the early 1900's in getting entry into the Reichland (the Imperially – controlled annexed territory of Alsace Lorraine). At Guénange, a village in German Lorraine, they were allowed to take over an orphanage. This establishment under the direction of the vigorous Brother Philippus Neri, quickly developed into a *de facto* Mother House for the German Brothers dispersed throughout the Reichland and Belgium.

To return to the foundation of the Vunapope mission: at the end of 1913, in reponse to repeated requests from the Vicar Apostolic of New Pomerania, Monsignor Louis Couppé M.S.C., the Superiors of the Institute agreed to send a community of Brothers to assist in the mission's educational activities.

One factor contributing to the choice of German Brothers was first, and obviously, the fact that Vunapope was a German mission in a German colony, staffed — as German colonial policy demanded — almost exclusively by German nationals, with an admitted objective of promoting German language and culture as well as implanting the Gospel.

But further to this, within the Institute itself, in May 1913 at the General Chapter held at Lembecq in Belgium, a German Assistant had been elected, the remarkable Brother Petronius who took responsibility for the communities of Central Europe, within the Hapsburg Empire and beyond, where German was the accepted common language. In October of the same year, Brother Philippus Neri of Guénange was named Visitor for the German Brothers, though as yet there was no German District in the geographic sense.

There was also very probably a political calculation, the establishment of a successful educational mission in German colonial territory might eventually be used as means of assisting the re-establishment of the Institute in the Fatherland itself.

So, by February 1914 a group of five Brothers had been designated, and having been farewelled at Guénange, they made their way by train to Genoa where on 23 February they embarked upon the North German Lloyd Bremer Steamer, the *Roon*, for a seven week voyage to New Britain. They travelled in company with a group of German M.S.C's, from Hiltrup, the German M.S.C. Centre, who were returning to the same destination.

Our F.S.C. group consisted of five Brothers whom we shall now introduce individually:

... the Director was a mature age man of forty-four, Brother Viktorinus Bruggemann, a religious of considerable experience in the teaching apostolate, and at the time of his appointment, teaching at Metz-Montigny (which may possibly have been at that time a Scholasticate for the young German Brothers).

According to his subsequent *Notice Necrologique* Brother Viktorinus was not an original choice, but was named to head the mission when the original leader-designate fell sick. Among his confreres Brother Viktorinus enjoyed a reputation of being "a

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true son of De La Salle" as exemplified in his unswerving regularity and his equally uncompromising insistence on having the Rule observed by those in his charge.

... Brother Bonald-Urbain Hinkes (whom I shall call Urban) was a man of twenty-seven, who had also had several years' teaching experience, and was possibly the Sub-Director, though at this time he was not yet finally professed.

... the remaining three were younger men; of these Brother Otto Franz Thalheimer was the youngest. Though he was remembered afterwards by some of his pupils as the physical culture expert, he was in fact a man of poor health, who suffered sea-sickness on the way out, was frequently unwell during his stay in the tropics, and whose poor health was one of the reasons urged upon the Superiors for the withdrawal of the — remaining — Brothers after the end of the War. (We shall return to Brother Otto later).

... Brother Hermann Hahn (officially known as Macédone-Adrian) has left little impression other than that he played the organ at Church services while Brother Urban directed the singing. Like Brother Otto, Brother Hermann was not yet twenty at the time of arrival in Vunapope.

... the last is Brother Edmund Hubert (Peter Noss). Brother Edmund was twenty-three at the time of his coming to the tropics. He seems not to have been happy in his community relationships, and at some time during the war years withdrew from the Institute (probably at the expiry of his temporary vows). It seems that he took up employment on the property of a neighbouring planter, a Herr Wolff, a man of considerable standing in the local community. After that he is lost to memory. There is presumption that he lived and died in the area, but there is no mention of his death or burial in the local Church records.

To return to Brother Viktorinus. It seems he suffered ill health on the voyage out, though his surviving letters give no indication of this. He also contracted malaria early after arrival, but what occasioned his early demise on 21 November 1915, was septicaemia arising out of a tropical ulcer.

The death of the Director occasioned appeal to the Superiors of the Institute – not easy in war-time conditions. But the result was a visit from the Provincial of Australia, Brother Paul Andrew, some time in 1916. In May 1916 Brother Urban, after making his perpetual profession was designated Director of the remaining group. (Whether Peter Noss' withdrawal was before of after the death of Brother Viktorinus and the visit of Brother Paul, there is no evidence to determine).

The three of them, Brothers Urban, Hermann and Otto continued as best they could to run the school which had been entrusted to them but already now working under quiite different conditions, drastic reduction in their own personnel and a changed political situation, with the colony being under the administration of the occupying Australian military forces, and with English coming gradually to replace German as the medium of instruction and the language of future development...

The school of which our Brothers were given charge was the *Sacred Heart School for Mixed Races* (a title which contained fewer pejorative overtones in the colonial world of 1914 than it would today). Up till now, since its establishment in 1898, this school had been conducted first by the mainly French Sisters – Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and then, since 1902, by the German Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. It was the boys' section — consisting of some fifty lads of a wide-age range — which was to be the Brothers' charge. One of the Brothers' pupils in 1914 is still alive today, living on the Mission property where he has been employed all his life as a motor mechanic.

This *Sacred Heart School* catered for the offspring of European settlers and traders and native women, whether legitimate issue or, more probably in most cases, otherwise.

Bishop Couppé had great ambitions for this group of children. He hoped that because of their racial origin they might come to serve as a bridgehead for wider contact with the native population and that they might be educated to become the nucleus of a Catholic peasantry (whom he would settle on Church-acquired land as small proprietors) in a Catholic indigenous culture. Unfortunately for these hopes of his, history moved too fast and within a generation these "demi-blancs" were absorbed into the indigenous mass. But it must be admitted that many such men and some women lived to take positions of relative prominence, especially in the period of de-colonisation that followed the Second World War.

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10-B-49

A FORGOTTEN MISSION (2)

The Brothers' charge consisted of some fifty boys, ranging from school beginners of five or six up to the "grands garcons demi-blancs" one missionary Sister (O.L.S.H.) referred to in a letter describing the situation. This figure of fifty is derived from the official returns sent by Brother Urban to the Generalate at the beginning of 1919.

Our Brothers taught as best they could a German elementary programme, but there was also considerable emphasis upon trade skills, in the imparting of which they co-operated with the M.S.C. lay-Brothers. One very old gentlemen of mixed race who assisted the Brothers in their work died only a few years ago. His son is today a prominent man about the mission.

When the Brothers withdrew in 1921 the M.S.C. Sisters who had continued to run the girls' section of the *School for Mixed Races* resumed charge of the boys' section. The girls' section of the school has continued its existence under change of names and locale until the present. The boys' section more or less petered out in the early '30's', and forms of schooling for the native Catholic population replaced it.

Vunapope was a flourishing centre of a very active and extensive missionary endeavour, at that time under the guidance of its first Vicar Apostolic, Monsignor Louis Couppé (Bishop from 1890 to 1923). Monsignor Couppé was an outstanding administrator and, despite the fact of his French nationality, succeeded in working harmoniously not only with his German missionary colleagues but also with the German colonial authorities. And during the Australian occupation his French nationality proved of considerable assistance in helping the continuance of the smooth running of the mission.

Scarcely had our Brothers been established in Vunapope (they arrived on April 12, Easter Sunday 1914) than World War 1 broke out; Australia moved in to the conquest of this isolated German dependency, and by the end of 1914 the whole of the former German holdings in present day New Guinea were under Australian administration. Happily, the German authorities, who had so little military resource at their disposal, saw the futility of sustained resistance and the mission complex suffered no damage or disruption beyond a little initial excitement.

Under Australian military occupation the German administrative structures were allowed to continue to function and the planters were left in possession of their estates for the present. At the *Sacred Heart School* instruction went on as before except that gradually (as the fortunes of war on the European front became clearer) English came to supplant German as the medium and content of instruction. (The oldest surviving witnesses of that era among the native population are still able to recall their German).

Unhappily for our Brothers, as has been mentioned earlier, Brother Viktorinus died, on 21st November 1915, and some time probably soon after this Brother Hubert (Peter Noss) withdrew from the community and the Institute.

Following the death of Brother Viktorinus, Monsignor Couppé, unable to make contact with Europe, appealed instead to Brother Paul Andrew Phelan, the Australian Provincial. Exactly in what sequence is not clear, since on the Australian side there seems to be no record remaining. Brother Paul visited Vunapope and, on his recommendation to the Superiors (via the American Assistant), Brother Urban Hinkes was named Director. In subsequent correspondence Brother Urban dates his obedience as Director from May 1916. Some time subsequently, probably in 1917, Brother Fridolin Blackwell visited Vunapope as Brother Paul's deputy.

The community now consisted of three Brothers, one of whom, Brother Otto, suffered progressively worsening health.

With the ending of World War 1 and the definite loss to Germany of her colonies and overseas dependencies, the position of our German Brothers' mission was quite uncertain. The Australian civil administration which replaced military rule was less benign; the German planters were expropriated and extradited to Germany. For some time the fate of the Vunapope mission was in grave doubt, since there was question of expelling all German nationals. However, by the end of 1921, the Australian administration had decided to grant the missionaries seven years' reprieve (and before those seven years had elapsed their continuing presence was conceded without further difficulty).

In Germany, Brother Philippus Neri was still Visitor, and he was anxious to avail himself of the opportunity afforded by a more tolerant Republican Germany to re-establish his "District" in the homeland itself; and seeing that the Vunapope mission was now in alien territory and noting the evident distress of the three remaining Brothers, decided to bring them back to Germany. Because, however, of the canonical complexity of the mission structure and the natural reluctance of the Vicar Apostolic to lose the services of the Brothers, negotiations dragged on until 1921.

Finally at some date not now ascertainable (but towards the end of April or beginning of May 1921) our Brothers sailed via Australia, to Europe and reached the newly established provincial head-

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quarters in Kirnach-Villingon, Baden before the end of July of the same year.

On return to Europe one member of this group of three left the Institute within a few months (he was still in temporary profession). This was Brother Hermann, whose official religious name was Macedone-Adrian (also known in Germanic style as Leonhard-Siegfried) and whose civilian name was Georg Hahn. It is sadly ironic that, despite his seven years of missionary work in the Institute, there is practically nothing recorded of him other than this exotic range of names.

Of the remaining two, Brother Urban Hinkes spent another four or five years teaching in various schools in the newly constituted District of Germany; he also made his second Novitiate at the Generalate in Belgium in 1924. After considerable hesitation (including leaving and returning) Brother Urban finally left the Institute at the end of 1925. He became a school teacher in the state service and eventually a primary school principal in the region of Lake Constance. It was there he died in 1975, having survived the vicissitudes of personal and national life until the advanced age of eighty-eight.

Brother Otto Thalheimer returned to study to acquire the qualifications which his early departure for the mission field had precluded his obtaining before. He then taught for some years in various parts of Germany, though his health continued to be uncertain, and was for a short time Director of a community. In the late thirties, foreseeing the Nazi menace, he transferred to the London Province of the Institute and was a member of the Beulah Hill community for two years, 1937-1939. Again, probably foreseeing the ambiguity of his position in the case of the inevitable war between Britain and his native Germany in May 1939, he moved once more, this time to the mission fields of South America. He spent the next decade of his life in Columbia and Equador, exercising various charges and was for a short time Director of the community of Riobamba. Finally in 1950 he went to Chile to join a community where there were other German refugees like himself. By this time, however, he was suffering from terminal cancer and he died 4th November 1950. Despite the Impression of instability which his wanderings suggest, Brother Otto seems to have left behind him in Germany and in the various parts of South America where he lived the memory of a fervent religious and a devoted teacher. We may with some confidence assume that his many uprootings had contributed to a corresponding spiritual detachment, and that his wanderings may be interpreted as a determined loyalty to remain true to his original religious commitment, (which is not to discount or overlook the many individual German Brothers who have served so generously in so many mission fields).

To my knowledge the foundation of Vunapope was the only missionary enterprise founded directly on the initiative of the German Brothers as a District. Hence the greater need to appreciate and preserve its memory.

The Australian District has a special interest in the venture. First, by reason of the intervention in its fortunes of Brother Paul Andrew, Visitor and his deputy, Brother Fridolin of Mary, in the years 1916 and 1917, and second, because the Australian District in 1946, after a lapse of a quarter of a century renewed the Lasallian presence in New Guinea, even if in a different region.

It is the Congregation of Christian Brothers (of Ireland) who may, with some historical credibility, be considered to be the real successors to the German Lasallian Schulbrüder of the First World War period, in-so-much as with their secondary school at Vuvu and their Teachers' College at Vunakenau, as well as other enterprises within the area of what was originally Bishop Louis Couppé's jurisdiction, they have realised most of the hopes that vigorous and courageous prelate entertained for the Christian education of the people of New Britain.

The De La Salle Brothers thank and congratulate them for taking up the burden which historical and human circumstances forced them to drop.

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POSTSCRIPT: We are pleased to announce that the full study on which the above articles were based has now been published in a handsome, well-illustrated volume of seventy-five pages. It is available from the Author at the above address, at the price of 10 dollars (U.S.A).

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10-B-50

SOCIO-CULTURAL ANIMATION AT THE SAINT CHRISTOPHER AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE (1)

The innovative school schedule at St. Christopher's, based on eleven class days and three holidays, requires close attention to the organization of the daily routine of the boarding students especially after school hours.

In fact, having 640 young boarding students living together requires strict cooperation between grown-ups and youngsters. Sports and leisure activities play an important role in school life and are the source of equilibrium in the lives of the youth. From the teachers who work within such a framework, this requires a great deal of availability.

ORGANIZATION

The adults play a prime role in initiating, maintaining and coordinating activities. To the best of their ability, and for the sake of the students, they try to find within this framework a certain rhythm of activities which are smooth flowing and precise. This is most remarkable in the field of sports. There are twenty-nine sports teams at Saint Christopher's with eight additional teams only for adults. This calls for effective participation and help among the young people in the scheduling as well as in the training and refereeing.

All the teachers, both lay people and Brothers, meet together once a week to coordinate the activities for the following fortnight and to mutually share problems which might be encountered. The group in charge is made up of 5 gymnastics and sports teachers, the chairman and seven members of the socio-cultural department who help in the animation and effective participation, those in charge of the various scholastic cycles, the Brothers, the Chaplain, and the General Supervisor. All these, plus the Director, add up to some twenty adults.

SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

These activities are as diverse as possible so that they can involve the greatest number of youths. Their essential purpose is mutual cooperation, but also openness to others by taking on meaningful responsibilities, and exposure to the world outside (trips, conferences, various excursions), the creation of a family spirit, where each one contributes whatever he can by participating in the preparation and the celebration of Christmas Eve, and the School's Foundation Day, for example.

For the first and second scholastic cycles, some fifteen conferences are programmed each year with big and well-known associations in the country, such as "Knowledge of the World", "People and Images", "Great Report", or with conferences on current and relevant subjects.

The Cinema: among the scope of activities for Sundays, six full-length films are shown each year in the school auditorium for those who are interested. These films have an essentially recreational value and are shown near the end of the afternoon. The recreational facilities of the school remain open for those who are not interested in the films. The average attendance at these films is about 350 pupils per film.

The Cine-club: During the week, on Thursday evenings, film showings for the older students of the second cycle have been organized. The seven films which have been scheduled are of a more serious nature than those shown on Sundays. They possess an educative value and are artistically superior. They form the basis of thought and discussion between the teachers and the students in class after the film has been viewed.

Presentations, Dramas, various Socials: In general we provide two performances each year either of the classical theatre or modern theatre, performed by one of the theatrical groups of the region. We also have social gatherings in the boarding students' recreation hall where there are audio-visual presentations, a raffle, video cassette presentations and dances. All these depend upon the initiative of the individual classes. There are also informational presentations such as "The Church in Distress", "Amnesty International", or talks on various careers and professions.

Trips and excursions: For the past few years, the students of the terminal year have organized trips abroad, with the help of the teachers and more particularly those in charge of the cycle. Thus, three trips were organized to Tunisia, three others to Italy and Greece, one to Yugoslavia, two to Morocco, and one to Spain. These journeys take about twelve days and take place during the Easter holidays. Other shorter trips, of three or four days, are likewise organized each year to England and Spain for the younger pupils, who are accompanied by the language professors.

During the vacation in February, two teachers organize skiing trips to the Pyrenees, and during the summer, to the Basque territory along the ocean, for other volunteer groups.

Those in their final year of the short cycle vocational course make a six to eight day trip to Paris and the region around Paris during the International Agricultural Exhibition.

Finally, during the Sundays of Winter, a ski club,

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organized and run entirely by the students themselves, arrange regular trips to the mountains.

CHRISTMAS EVE AND THE SCHOOL'S FEAST DAY

The pre-Christmas holidays constitute a very special time of vivacity for the first scholastic trimestre and in a spirit of joy they finish off the first three months of the school year. Three performances are organized by the students with the help of the Socio-Cultural services, as well as of the administrators and teachers. Each of the three performances are prepared by a group of the same grade level.

Parents, former students, and friends are invited to these festivities, and the 630 seat auditorium is too small to accommodate all of those who are interested in coming. This is especially true for the festivities of the older students. These performances are free; however, collections are taken to finance particular projects: Truckloads of goods for Poland, sending grain to Sahel, constructions for teaching literacy in Rwanda, etc.

The programs for these evening festivities include modern dances, folkdances, and classical dances, depending upon the year level; there are dramas, modern songs and folksongs, orchestral music, gymnastic performances, and poetic montages. Many of these numbers are created within the school itself, either by the students or by the teachers. These performances thus allow a significant number of students to express themselves, to create, and even to discover talents which they never knew they possessed. The atmosphere which is created progressively with the repeated performances are often excellent and greatly promote personal rapport between the youth and the adults.

The School's Festival, which takes place on Ascension Thursday, brings together within the premises of St. Christopher's between 2,000 and 4,000 persons on one day. The students participate in the creation, decoration, and animation of numerous stands for games or performances given in the open air or in the auditorium: dances, gymnastics, synchronized field demonstrations, etc. The more spectacular performances are open to the public: The cow-chasing contest, maiden helicopter flights, parachute jumping exhibition by the army, etc., according to the theme chosen for the festival.

FACILITIES

For all of these activities, St. Christopher's makes use of rooms and equipment adapted to the purpose:

★ three important rooms as the students' recreation centres: one for the girls, the other for the short cycle, and the third for the second cycle. The equipment in these centres have been improved over the years: intellectual games, table tennis, electronic games, television sets, tape recorders, etc.;

★ an auditorium fully equipped for films, music, theatre and a sound and lighting system largely set up and operated by the students and teachers;

★ audio-visual rooms for courses or for use by small groups and for class meetings;

★ outstanding audio-visual equipment such as over-head projectors, slide projectors, video cassettes, films, etc.

All of this equipment is used for the above-named activities, but also for the enlivening of the Wednesday and Sunday activities, for it is important that the 600 young people who live there can participate to the fullest and thus avoid becoming bored. Efforts are made to develop in the students the ability to use leisure time well, which is an important part of their human and social development.

Other young people prefer to express themselves through shortlived clubs. They appear and disappear each year according to the tastes and whims of the group: cycling club, electronic club, manual activities, music club, judo, horses, tennis, model airplanes, and other miniature model making, etc.

The Socio-Cultural Service coordinates these various activities and participates directly or indirectly in their animation. They are financed by the annual dues of each student and to this are added the receipts from the school festival and from the snack bar. The cultural activities are usually free. The socio-cultural service is closely related with the sports services which is the other important factor in the animation of the lives of the young people at St. Christopher's.

Of course, we must also speak about the Christian animation of the institution.

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10-B-51

SOCIO-CULTURAL ANIMATION AT THE SAINT CHRISTOPHER AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE (2)

SPIRITUAL ANIMATION

Masseube Saint Christopher, being a Catholic School, religious animation there has by no means a neglected place. Still there is always room for improvement.

The "Big Family" spirit which was given to this place from its very inception, even after some forty years, is still maintained today in spite of the considerable increase of its boarding department.

The Brothers' community has been the "leaven" and remains the "dynamo" and the "soul" of this institution with regard to the students as well as with the team of teachers. A great number of lay teachers have joined into the work of the Brothers' community now that the latter has gone down so much numerically. Still this view of religious education is shared by the majority of the teaching staff so much so that the cooperation is close and effective, and this explains the reality which is St. Christopher's today.

Moments of Lasallian spiritual formation sets the rhythm of life in the school for the parents, by certain meetings called by the Brother Director, for the teachers, either at the beginning of the school year or during the course of the year, and also for the older students by regular meetings and contacts with the Brothers. The Mass on the Feast of the Ascension, the school's official festival day, allows us to reach in an outstanding way a great number of persons, parents and friends, and indirectly, is for us an auspicious time for passing on this Spirit which animates us and which leads us to advance.

For the teaching staff (which is composed of some twenty lay teachers and Brothers) there are six to eight times a year, where we take out two hours to work, reflect, share our thoughts, and pray together in order to weld our team more tightly together and not be content with the professional and disciplinary aspects of our teaching but to breathe a new soul into all of our educational activities, based upon the Gospels. For two years we worked on the Old Testament, keeping alive the connection between it and our present era. For the last two years, we took "Gaudium and Spes", the Church in the world today, which is not without its close relations to our life as Educators in the Faith.

For the young, the hours of "CULTURE AND FAITH", or CATECHESIS, are still an element of formation which we hold on to. The rhythms of the classes are different but we relish these privileged moments which are for the Brother his Mission of priority. The chaplain, as well as a priest from the outside, help the five out of eight Brothers who teach catechism, administrators as well as teachers. The young people of 14 and 15 years of age are guided toward the Sacrament of Confirmation which is a phase of deepening and commitment in the life of Faith. There is also the Youth Eucharistic Movement (M.E.J.) which reaches a number of youths, and there are regular activities which oblige the students to get involved in the work of problems existing outside of the school.

Every other Sunday, the students remain at the college and we have two Masses because the chapel is too small to accommodate 600 pupils. We see to it that all the students attend because it is the only religious activity we are called upon to celebrate together. This initiative was well thought out and discussed many years ago in consultation with the parents, older students, the teachers, and, of course, with the Brothers themselves.

There are religious services by class level on a voluntary basis, according to the liturgical season and the presence of the youths in school.

At present the atmosphere is not conducive to the religious plans and practices of twenty years ago, so we must restudy, reformulate and adapt our Faith Education to the youths we accept into our schools. This is a problem we have had to face especially in recent years. Because we are working together in a common apostolate with Haute Vallé du Gers, to which we belong, we ought to adapt our instruction to counteract the "bad faith" which is becoming ever more prevalent.

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ANOTHER NEW PROJECT

The Brothers' community up until this time has always been intertwined with the school. (We use the same buildings). The community was completely immersed in the care of the young, the good running of the school and its activities. Perhaps we have been "sinning by excess". This was so much so that the community was perceived by the youth only in its professional work; our life of "Consecration" completely escaped them.

To remedy this situation, we have taken over a small section of a building which has become "the residence of the Brothers Community". The Brothers will thus have a place to live a meaningful community life together. The community will be able to invite, and receive, others and will be able to share our life with them. Thus we will have more visibility with regard to those who live around us. We can even go so far as to say that "we shall be called even more" to this Mission which the Church has confided to us.

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10-B-52

ACCEPTANCE, HELP, PRAYER: A COMMUNITY AT THE SERVICE OF YOUTH

In the religious life it can happen that obedience coincides with the deep aspirations of a Brother. I actually had the opportunity of experiencing such a situation when the Brother Visitor assigned me to a new community created in the heart of Lyon, on the border of neighborhood with a large immigrant population.

The origins of the community

The community was started by the Brother Visitor and his council in response to a directive of theDistrict Chapter of 1982, in joining two initiatives into one perspective where the spirit of FAITH and the spirit of ZEAL overlap:

★ an initiative of FAITH, in receiving large groups of young people between 17 and 25 years of age, and giving them spiritual encounters from time to time and weekly periods of prayer, but putting this work into practice requires contant ZEAL;

★ an initiative of ZEAL at the service of less-favoured youth and notably teenaged immigrants, but this zeal, in its turn, presupposes a solid FAITH, to advance against all hope.

It is ardently wished that these young men for whom this double initiative is intended could associate with the Brothers and live in community and become their "observers"; likewise that the young girls could enter into relations with such or such a congregation of women.

But we have not gotten that far yet!

The community

At first, four Brothers were assigned by Brother Visitor and they were gathered together with a community plan which was just summarized in the preceding paragraph. Although there was a consensus at first, we must recognize that two of the Brothers have their principal activities outside of the quarter. And then when, at the beginning of the first year, there was a partial change in the community, still there were only two Brothers at the service of the Maghrébin immigrants. But, on the contrary, the entire community gathers together to receive the students or young workers who come to pray with us.

As far as creature comforts are concerned, the community lives rather simply. We do our own cooking, cleaning, and maintenance. We are living, under a precarious lease, in an old building scheduled for demolition. Our relations with the other tenants in the apartment are cordial. They are so much so that the majority of the tenants, representing five nationalities, came to our modest New Year's reception.

Despite the difficulties in scheduling, arising from the variety of our commitments, we try to find time for prayers together, office, mental prayer, as well as for a weekly community meeting. Taken up by so many activities, we hardly have time to watch television!

Receiving more mature youth

We should say a few words about our weekly prayer meetings in which an average of twelve to fifteen young people take part, even though this is not the purpose of the present paper. Actually, the two initiatives of the community are inseparable, as we have underlined above; and the attention given to the students supports our activities in favour of the least privileged adolescents, as will be explained later on. And what is more, playing host to these youths allows the entire community to share in the same activity.

To get these meetings going, we took advantage of the great fortune of being able to tie in closely with some forty young students in Lyon even before the establishment of the new community. These youths whom we knew, generally former students of the Brothers, had already taken part in weekend recollections — which continue to be held about twice each school trimester — so it is quite natural that certain ones among them should get into the habit of meeting together each week to pray with us.

The Immigrants' Quarter

As a result of various circumstances, and notably because of the failure of the local government to make any provisions, a veritable ghetto has sprung up in the very heart of Lyon. The workers are packed into this quarter, which has never been maintained, and to make matters worse, in the course of the past ten years, entire families have come to join their fathers who were working alone in France. The packing has reaching an unbelievable density: for example, a family of six or eight persons can be found occupying a small apartment of twenty square meters!

Ever since this populace has been afflicted by unemployment, crimes of all sorts have grown up and delinquencies have spread among the 20 to 25 year-olds who are so often unemployed and without hope.

Our entrance into the quarter

It was not very simple to effectively set our selves up near such a locality. We were able to do so because we met at the very beginning a number of people who accepted us and set us on the right track. On our part, that demanded of us some initiatives and contacts made with great simplicity in favour of peo-

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ple at all levels, with the Christians as well as with the non-Christians: priests, social workers, nurses, public school teachers, association heads, etc. On the part of all these people, there was a quality of remarkable acceptance: they inspired us with confidence.

Youth Problems

We have mentioned above how the reuniting of families in the past few years has attracted to Lyon women, children, and teenagers, certain of whom have grown up. A serious examination of the situation pointed out the need for a number of activities in favour of these people, which we have carried out over the past dozen years. By contrast, there exist very few initiatives designed to help the older youths. Therefore, we Brothers let it be known that we will willingly be available to work for the good of youth.

And so, two months after our arrival, Brother Gerard Coudoir, the former director of a technical school for the poor, was asked to work as a voluntary monitor in one of the "quarter's shops". This shop, set up by a local group, provides young boys between twelve and sixteen years of age with some activities after school. The role of Brother Gerard is in the carpentry section. He guides the young men in their various work which they have undertaken to fabricate certain articles which they want.

In my regard, I had to wait a much longer time: I had to wait for seven months after we got ourselves established before I received a definite request to help in the scholastic training of some immigrant adolescents. The request came from the "Association of Immigrant Families" of the quarter. The beginnings were quite modest with four to ten pupils entering in January and June, 1985. We had no place for our classes. We had to depend upon the good will of the association itself which itself was very deprived of means and we had to suffer from the cold during the severe months of January of 1985! We went through some difficult times until September of 1985 when the situation was remedied thanks to the kind intervention of the president of the General Council who put an unused place at our disposal and thanks to the District which assumed the costs of repairing the place.

Educational support for youth

Since the month of October 1985, there have been plenty of young people. They have been directed to our place by the Social Assistants as well as by the moderators of associations. At present we know about forty youths between 12 and 17 years of age, half of whom come to us regularly, that is, two or three times a week. The help which we give them is usually individual, but sometimes we take them two or three at a time if they belong to the same class.

We have to recruit monitors. We seek out students for this and quite naturally we do so among those whom we already know. Thus, it is in this area where much interaction is found between the two initiatives of our community plan. Right now, there are eight student volunteers who devote an average of two hours per week helping in school. We also are benefitting by the services of a young girl who has finished her higher studies and whom we have assigned to help within the framework of "Work for Mutual Help".

We have set up a formal association. Our costs are minimal but, all the same, there are a lot of expenses, especially for heating. At present those helping us the most financially are the former students of La Salle, Lyon.

Our relationships with these young people are very close. Without seeking them out particularly, they come to us with their problems, not only scholastic ones, but also, for example, their concerns about their living accommodations or work for their families. It sometimes happens that we speak about God during the course of the explanation of the lessons. The student monitors also have excellent relations with their pupils and often enough we exchange ideas on their volunteer work as well as on their progress in their own studies. All of this is quite enrichinjg for a Brother.

Relations with the families

The families appreciate very much having someone concerned about their children and having someone help them in their studies. This brings about an easy access to the adults. They do not hesitate to ask for help, for example to help a single person move. It is likewise because of this simplicity and openness that they have asked me to become the treasurer of the "Association of Immigrant Families" of the quarter, which entails a certain number of duties and initiatives far surpassing the simple keeping of accounts.

By way of conclusion

I shall limit myself to a few remarks:

★ Having been away from teaching for some years now, I should like to express, first of all, my joy in having students, and pleasant students at that.

★ For the first time in a long time, I know that my work will not bring in any income for anyone (neither for the community nor for me): so I feel that I am therefore "a Brother maintaining a school gratuitously". That is possible because, having reached the age of retirement, I receive the corresponding pension.

★ The greatest joy that I experience in this work is that I find myself engaged in a truly Lasallian work, because I am at the service of the poor.

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10-B-53

SAINT MARY'S PRESS: MINISTRY THROUGH PUBLISHING

Around the world, the Brothers of the Christian Schools are involved in many forms of ministry. Essential to our charism is that we are "catechists by vocation". A natural extension of our vocation is publishing. Saint Mary's Press of Winona, Minnesota makes its focus very clear in this Mission Statement approved by its Advisory Board on 16 January 1986:

Mission Statement

"Saint Mary's Press is a contemporary expression of the traditional educational apostolate of the Christian Brothers. As an activity of the Christian Brothers of Minnesota, ... the Press is a working community dedicated to publishing materials that advance the catechetical ministry of the Catholic Church, primarily as that ministry relates to adolescents...

"In pursuit of this mission and ministry, Saint Mary's Press seeks to accomplish the following specific tasks:

1. Our *development* tasks are to acquire and to create materials that further the ministry of the Word in school and parish settings. This ministry, which centers on initiating adolescents into the Catholic Christian community, encompasses pastoral as well as educational concerns.

2. Our *marketing* tasks are to promote, sell, and distribute materials to religious educators and youth ministers as well as to provide customer service before and after sales.

3. Our *production* task is to provide attractive and durable materials on schedule and produced at reasonable cost. ...

4. Our *economic* task is to insure that high quality materials are produced efficiently and are marketed at fair prices that permit us to continue to pursue our mission.

5. Our *communal* task is to strive for the financial well-being, personal safety, job satisfaction, and professional growth of the members of our working community".

A Brief History

Saint Mary's Press began in 1943 when the Catechetical Commission of the Lasalle Brothers asked Brother Alphonsus Pluth, to write a series of high school religion texts that would replace the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine (1911).* Brother Alphonsus brought enthusiasm to the task because he was aware that teachers and students had a great need for materials to help make religion classes more alive and meaningful. By the end of 1943, he had finished writing *Living with Christ, Course I* for first year high school students. Courses 2, 3, and 4 followed in due time.

In 1953 Brother Alphonsus bought a used printing press and spent his Saturdays as an apprentice in a commercial printing plant, becoming proficient in the printing craft. Thus, he not only wrote and edited, but also, printed *Living with Christ* and a journal for religion teachers that developed a national following. In addition, Brother Alphonsus taught full-time at De La Salle High School in Minneapolis.

In 1954 Brother Alphonsus moved to St. Mary's College. Working out of a small basement room, he published a steady stream of religion textbooks and guides. In 1967 the Press moved into a spacious new building. Seven years later, after thirty-two years of leadership, Brother Alphonsus resigned as President. Brother Damian Steger assumed direction of the Press.

Scope of Press Publications

Publishing high school religion textbooks has been the central work of the Press since its foundation. This work continues, but it is now complemented by other areas of publications. *Sharing* by Thomas Zanzig is a comprehensive parish religious education program for high school students. It is the most widely used parish program in the U.S. In addition, the Press published books and manuals for use in parish youth ministry and in campus ministry. PACE (Professional Approaches to Christian Education), edited by Mary Perkins Ryan, is an award-winning monthly journal for religious educators. Saint Mary's Press also publishes resource books for catechists, like the *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics* edited by Professor Michael Warren. Recently the Press has begun publishing books on prayer. Finally, *Ministry Management*, a complimentary, quarterly newsletter, is sent to all high

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school principals, campus ministers, and chairs of religion departments.

Saint Mary's Press is always looking for new areas in which its publications can be of help. Consequently, a resource manual for those ministering to young adults is being prepared. Frequently young adults are a large, overlooked portion of the church community. There is a growing awareness in North America that these people need to have specific programs to meet their unique faith-development needs. Presently there are no other sourcebooks for young adult ministry available. Another area of development at the Press is a parish religious education program for junior high school age adolescents: those in grades seven and eight. Research into the needs of students in this age-group is being undertaken, and an entire religious education course will be published for them. In the immediate future, the Press will undertake research into the religious education and ministry needs in the ever-growing Hispanic community in the United States. One estimate says that by the year 2000, one-half of all U.S. Catholics will be of Hispanic origins. The Press will try to develop materials specifically tailored to this community.

The apostolate of religious education is flourishing at St. Mary's Press. Thousands of teachers and hundreds of thousands of Catholic students are benefiting from the work begun in a small basement office over forty years ago by Brother Alphonsus. Given the success of the Press, the work of publishing in the Lasallian tradition will continue into the indefinite future.

Bro. Carl KOCH, F.S.C.
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POST-SCRIPTUM: Some weeks after sending us his article, Brother Carl has written to inform us that Brother Alphonsus Pluth, the founder of Saint Mary's Press, died peacefully in his sleep on 23 April 1986. Brother Carl adds the comment: "This was sad news for those of us here at the Press who will have to work on without his inspiration and good cheer". May he rest in peace.

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10-B-54

THE A.C. SOCIAL ACTION MOVEMENT

The great City of Mexico, the capital in which the economic, industrial, artistic, and cultural development of the nation is centred, is not removed from the multiple problems of inadequate housing, unemployment, the lack of basic education, and in general, it cannot escape from the hundreds of thousands of persons who, in one form or another, fall within the ranks of those who are barely-subsisting.

As the centre of cultural development, Mexico City has large universities where the desire for scientific and liberal education reigns. These are educational centres which strive to educate people and to enable them to become useful to their society and to their country.

Among all these universities, we find our own La Salle University, whose objectives render it different, original, and unique, being that it is striving after the human and intellectual advancement of its members and to this end promotes its ideal of Christian formation; this is to look further and beyond itself; to come into contact with all the realities and, above all, to commit itself to the poor, to those most in need, to those who make up this "sub-society" of the barely subsisting.

In order to establish a concrete plan of social action, rooted in the knowledge of the realities of those most in need, there exists in La Salle University (ULSA), the movement for Social Action, A.C., known by the acronym MAS.

WHAT IS MAS?

MAS is a lay association whose fundamental object is to make the students of ULSA conscious of the social, economic, and cultural realities and thus to harmonize theory and practice.

Although MAS ought to fulfill its obligations as well as any other institution within the university, it considers its obligation to do so to be even more exacting because of the fact that ULSA is a Catholic university.

Education must not only bring about the development and spread of a sense of obligation which teachers ought to fulfill in a Christian manner in the economic and social field, but also it must see to it that they learn the method which renders them capable of fulfilling this obligation.

The best education is one which is realized through continued activities, that is to say, putting into practice in the ordinary dealings of life the principles which have been learned. The formation of a definitive conscience in order to know and transform reality requires that the education be simultaneously an act of knowledge and an activity upon the reality in order to transform it.

The university zealously prepares professionals who are very much aware of their human quality, the obligations of their destiny, and the purpose of their knowledge and science. The ULSA, by means of the MAS, endeavours to have its students commit themselves to society and to face up to it, not in a shallow and fleeting manner, but in a way which will permanently transform it.

MAS endeavours to make the commitment of our young university youths surpass the simple and paternalistic "social work" in forms of projects, and urges intense, deliberate and strongly critical actions which can analyze and transform society. MAS seeks to combine an interaction of dialogue between the academic disciplines and research on one hand and the concrete practices of society on the other.

Educational institutions such as ours, orient the teaching of academic content towards the synthesis among science, life, and faith ordered toward the attainment of justice. To attain this, there is nothing so effective as to personally participate in the concrete situation of the deprived and barely-subsisting people in the urban ghettoes and poor neighborhoods through demonstrations, campaigns, and by living among the people themselves, as does the MAS movement.

Love of our neighbor, charity, and justice are the essential elements of Christian thinking, but if these values are not carried over into practice, they will remain nothing but empty concepts. The programs of MAS develop along these lines and their inclusion in the training of the students to a certain extent succeeds in contributing to the purpose of the University of serving the community. This is done, not in a cold and formalistic manner, but rather in the sense in which this service becomes a permanent and heartful activity of social change, which cannot be accomplished without an understanding of the realities which make up living together.

THE BASES AND OBJECTIVES OF MAS

Social service ought to be formative and educational, and therefore must have the following bases and objectives:

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1. An understanding of reality. That is to say, TO UNDERSTAND people, the community, the realities among which life devolves-their life, to know their history, etc... this knowledge should be objective and free of all prejudice.

2. A prioritization of necessities and human values. That is, to ACCEPT people as they are; to understand, even if you do not agree.

3. A knowledge of existing institutions, groups, and social works. That is, TO RESPECT A PERSON in his reality is to promote his growth, it is to progressively help persons take possession of their own decisions and responsibilities, it is to further initiative and creativity.

4. To inform and question those people affected by poverty and to make them think about their problems, courses of action, and possible solutions to them. In a word, to discover the needs in themselves, in others, in groups, institutions, and societies. To not only discover the obvious needs, but rather the deepseated needs.

WHAT MAS REALLY DOES

Since its foundation in 1969, MAS has been able to establish social action programs based on a formative model of analysis and research for concrete solutions to the principal problems of the present person; building his field of activities at the urban or rural level.

Among those which continue to work at the urban level, the most notable are those devoting themselves in the areas of assistance and rehabilitation. Among these are those working with the mentally deficient, with young drug addicts and those working for the integration of adolescents and adults suffering from infantile paralysis.

It would be proper to mention the S.O.S. Rescue Squad, which at present glories in the service of young men who provide first aid services in times of disasters or catastrophes. This group received national and international recognition for its services rendered during the recent catastrophe brought about by the earthquake of September, 1985.

The infrastructure at the level of volunteer groups among the students of ULSA, organized by MAS, has given assistance since last September and continues to give assistance to more than 35,000 earthquake victims in Mexico City.

In the rural area, the Social Action Programs for the country people have gone on developing in a gradual manner for more than the past eleven years, in the Sierra De Xochicoastlán, in the State of Hidalgo, as well as in the Sierra de Ayahualulco, Veracruz, where Brother Enrique Pizarro and his community have succeeded in uplifting the lives of the country folk at all levels.

At present, MAS is cooperating in setting up a project for creating a "Town" for extremely poor children and youths in the Guadalupano Children's Boarding Department, under the direction of Brother Enrique Pizarro. This work gives our students a chance to become aware of the fact of hundreds of barely subsisting children and youths with whom some volunteer groups of young people periodically work.

By means of social action in which the students implement activities proposed by MAS, we try to fulfill our most necessary Christian commitment, in such a way that integral education will produce the agents for the most permanent and organized change so needed by our society, through civic and political formation inspired by the social teachings of the Church. (Puebla, No. 1033).

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10-B-55

THE DON GNOCCHI CENTER OF PARMA, ITALY

This year the "Don Gnocchi Centre of Parma" has celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the death of its founder. This event was particularly marked by the celebration of a solemn Mass in the Cathedral of Milan, during which His Eminence Cardinal Martini officially announced the introduction of the Cause for the Beatification of the Servant of God.

The "Don Gnocchi Centres", which were founded right after World War II, were intended by their founder to answer the urgent need of that period: that of accepting young people who had been mutilated by the war, and attending to their instruction and education.

Don Gnocchi, who had been the Chaplain of our Gonzaga Institute in Milan, confided this work, to a great extent, to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. As the number of disabled people began to diminish these were replaced by young people afflicted with polio. Eventually, thanks to the spirit of adaptability of those directing the operation, these institutions were transformed into Medico-Social Centres, accessible to all the citizens of the land. The Brothers, given the lack of vocations, were constrained to gradually withdraw from these establishments.

The Centre at Parma, where the Brothers have worked since 1949, is the only one we still have under our direction. This centre has also undergone changes dictated by the times, and its facilities once occupied by more than 400 youths, have been completely modified to respond to the present day needs of the Medico-Social Centre. This apostolic engagement represents a very particularized type of work. Without any doubt, it is an authentic service to the poor and is in perfect harmony with the indications of the General Chapter, which asked that we be sensitive to the appeals of those less favoured to such an extent that such service would become a fundamental element of renewal for each district. Our community accepts three distinct groups:

HANDICAPPED YOUTHS

This group is made up of boys and girls — some forty of them — the majority of whom are paraplegics who look to us to help them in the promotion of their health, but above all to help them ameliorate their human and social conditions in the fields of education and work and to extricate them from the isolation to which they are often condemned by their family and by society. The young people confided to our care, beyond the indications of their physical pain, bear themselves the pains of moral trials: some of them are without family, others have been simply rejected because of their handicaps; and one can merely guess at their economic situation. In us, they seek to find what they are deprived of: family, guidance, instruction, and a window to the future. To prepare them for the life of tomorrow and to render them autonomous, home-like experiences are used: small groups — always helped by the Centre — living together with former students who are already established and financially independent. This is the group of youths which receives most of our time and attention and which best justifies our presence in the Centre. Despite the notable diminution of these youths and considering the gravity of their handicaps — we also accept deaf-mutes — the presence of the three Brothers who are dedicated to this work is amply justified.

— To those in need and to those who suffer, our Centre offes AN ENTIRE GAMBIT OF MEDICO-SOCIAL SERVICES: Visits by medicals specialists, therapy to counter pain, rehabilitation of the spinal column, respiratory rehabilitation, therapeutic sports, radiology, psychometric and orthophonic therapy. An impressive number of persons — above all the young — profit from these services, especially in the form of clinic care.

— For the past four years, our Centre has been offering "Hospitalization Service" to those persons who, afflicted by grave handicaps, need rehabilitation. There are some fifty of them who have spent time in our hospital even for as long as two months. The Brother's presence is a witness to the Gospel, and it is very much appreciated and sought after. One particularly significant moment is that of the Saturday evening celebration of the Holy Eucharist, in the corridor of the Hospitalization Section: it is quite moving to see these patients, both young and old, seated around the altar (they are unable to stand) to offer their sufferings in union with Christ who renews His own sacrifice!

This service of rehabilitation, both physical

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and moral, is very much appreciated by the local Church, by the Civil Authorities, and by the public at large.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE

— Following the explicit wishes of Mons. Benito Cocchi, Bishop of Parma, the know-how and devotion of a group called "The Friends of Don Gnocchi" gave birth to the "Brotherly Meal". The parishes in turn each evening send from ten to fifteen volunteers to serve a complete meal (entirely free) to some thirty poor people. The first anniversary of this was celebrated last Christmas. His Excellency, the Bishop, was with us. Many people participated at the Holy Mass: The Friends of Don Gnocchi, volunteers, guests in the house, etc. Up until now, this new activity has been able to distribute more than 10,000 meals.

THE DON GNOCCHI SPORTS COMPLEX

This was started in Parma on January 2, 1983.

Sports Offered: Swimming, ping-pong, athletic games, volleyball, basket-ball, and water polo. The courses and competitions are carried out in wheelchairs. These are specially-designed wheel chairs and are operated by pressing the arms. Training in swimming takes place in the swimming pool and the young people, using only the strength of their arms, are able to do some extraordinary things. "The Sports Complex" is run by a team of friends of the Centre —:

— it is intended to be open to all. It even entertains those who do not belong to the Centre;

— activities are organized for the purpose of guaranteeing the handicapped psychophysical and social rehabilitation;

— it is allied with other sporting federations for meetings, cooperation and competition.

Since its foundation, the "Sports Complex" has been always moving ahead. Training and competition continue on. Victories multiply and this is attested to by the cups and trophies.

A friend writes: "Living along side them, I have learned many things. They have enriched my values, sentiments, and moral strength. Sports should not be an end in themselves, but they ought to make us discover the values which unite us in fraternal friendship".

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

In this beautiful assemblage of people, our walking along the long corridors and being passed by several wheelchairs as we go to the sick-beds, are the occasion of explaining what duty is all about; the Brothers, with their lay fellow workers-by their ATTITUDE, their KIND WORD and their SMILE help their guests to live with serenity these words of our Holy Founder:

"I adore in all things the will of God in my regard".

Fondazione Pro Juventude
Don Carlo GNOCCHI
Centro Medico Sociale
Parma, ITALY

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10-B-56

A LASALLIAN APOSTOLATE AMONG THE HANSENITE PATIENTS IN TALA

1. TALA: An Evolving Community for Hansenites

The history of Tala began in 1940 when the government bought the property and a hospital was built for Hansenites. After World War II, 500 Hansenites from San Lazaro Hospital in Manila were transferred to Tala.

For many years, Tala was a closed community where patients were not allowed to leave the hospital compound and their immediate families could not live with them. But in the mid-60s, when it was discovered that leprosy was not hereditary and could not be easily transmitted, the Director of the hospital started the practice of allowing non-patients, normally immediate family members and relatives of patients, to live in the leprosarium compound.

At present, the leprosarium covers a land area of 130 hectares with a population of about 10,000 to 12,000 people. About 2,500 of them are Hansenites and the rest are family members who are non-patients.

A pressing problem is the economic difficulty of the people in Tala. Only about 20% of the population are employed. The rest of the 80% are unemployed and this often leads to boredom and idleness. Some are self-employed as jeepney or pedicab drivers, vendors, pig raisers, etc. Hansenite patients are entitled to free daily food rations from the government hospital. But this is sufficient for the patient only and not enough for the members of his family. There are a few cases in which a parent would be happy to discover that her child has signs of leprosy because this would entitle the child to free daily rations. Aside from the food rations, the government also provides the following privileges to the lepers: free medicine, the rights to a small piece of land to build a house in the hospital compound, rationed water supply and electricity for the homes. But due to the irregularities in the management of the hospital, the medical and social assistance from the government is inadequate. The Church tries to supply the needs of the indigent patients through projects like a feeding program for malnourished children, housing assistance for patients, piggery projects, and food supplements for poor families.

Another problem among the patients is the result of the government's practice of providing what the patients need for survival (food, medicine, shelter). This is the attitude of dependence and lack of initiative. The government's practice of providing the basic needs of the patients may be due to the physical handicap that the patients suffer. Their deformities and the social stigma that is attached to the disease have prevented them from finding employment and a source of income. There is also the attitude among leper patients that the disease has made their lives meaningless and their future as hopeless. Since these people were "separated" from the rest of society, the government had to take care of them and provide for their material needs. This led to their tendency to be very dependent and develop the "give me this, give me that" attitude.

In 1950, a Dominican priest opened the Holy Rosary Vocational School, which was later changed to Holy Rosary College. Initially, admission to the school was open to leper patients only and they had to be given a daily allowance by the priest to encourage them to go to school. At present, it is a purely charitable institution for Hansenite patients, their spouses and children. The school offers a high school and a complete collegiate course leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education. Through the years, many patients have benefitted from the school and are now employed as teachers in the various schools around Tala.

In 1984, the Brothers opened a new community in Tala to assist the hospital Chaplain in the administration and teaching work in Holy Rosary College.

2. The De La Salle Brothers Community in Tala: Who are we as a community group? Why are we here in Tala?

We are a group of Filipino La Salle Brothers, called to a life of religious consecration and service in the education of youth, especially the poor.

Fully conscious of the thrust of the Church which calls for a preferential option for the poor; of the Institute's re-orientation towards direct service of the poor; the special charism of St. John Baptist de la Salle; and in response to our District Corporate Plan that called for the establishment of a community among the poor.

We have volunteered to live and work among the community of Hansenite patients at the Tala Leprosarium... a community that is poor because of the truly adverse economic conditions of its population... a community that is poor because the disease

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that afflicts many of its members is one that causes the dread and rejection by society.

We are here in response to Christ's call to serve his poor, with Him as our example and guide.

What do we expect to do with our life and activity?

— Through faithfully living our religious consecration individually and as a community, to give existential witness to Gospel values.

— Through our dedication to our tasks as teachers in school, to contribute to the quality of education in Holy Rosary College.

— Through our availability, to share our resources to the community through involvement in pastoral activities to the community of Tala.

— Through our solidarity with the local Church and with the people, to support the initiatives, efforts, and programs set up and carried out by other groups (religious and lay) working in Tala.

— Through our sharing and communication with other communities in the District, to enrich the lives of the Brothers and of the Institute with our experiences and graces of working with the poor.

— Through prayer and by being available for visits, live-ins, and talks to students and youth, to promote vocations to the priestly and the religious life.

3. The Brothers' Involvement In School And Community Activities

a) *Holy Rosary College*

The Brothers volunteered to work in Tala primarily to teach full time in the school. All the teachers are lepers and are graduates of the college. Due to their physical condition, they could not possibly find employment in schools outside Tala. Hence, they preferred to teach in Holy Rosary. The Brothers handle almost all the religion classes in the high school and college. Efforts are being done to strengthen the campus ministry program to deepen the spiritual formation of the faculty and students.

The students are composed of leper patients and children of patients. Not all the students who graduated from high school go on to college. They either do not want to become teachers or they did not pass the requirements for the teacher training program. In order that these youths do not become idle, a vocational training program in electrical technology and electronics was established. Hence, even if these students do not go on to college, they can receive some training and find employment as skilled workers.

b) *Youth Ministry*

A potential problem in Tala is the out-of-school youth. Due to the lack of training and qualifications, they cannot find employment. Some manage to find temporary work like repairing roads or digging canals. But when the projet is finished, they are again jobless and idle. There were efforts in the past to organize these youths and involve them in worthwhile projects, but these were not too successful. A Brother has taken over as Coordinator of the youth ministry. At this stage, plans are being made to come up with activities that will be meaningful and meets the needs of the youth.

c) *Organizing Exposure Programs for Students of other La Salle Schools*

Tala is an ideal place to bring students who come from affluent backgrounds to expose them to the living conditions of the poor. They visit the patients in the hospital wards and cottages, go to the homes of patients, and have dialogues with the students of Holy Rosary and other youth leaders. The results of these exposures have been very positive.

Brother Rafael A. REYES, FSC
Holy Rosary College
TALA

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10-C-38

AN EXPERIENCE OF EVANGELIZATION

I) CHRONOLOGY

For four years now in Togo and more recently in Equatorial Guinea, missionary experiences in evangelization have been taking place. They are similar in their general objectives but distinct in the specifics as we'll try to show further on in this article.

II) PROJECT SITES

As has already been stated, these projects were undertaken in Africa, concretely in Togo, Upper Volta and Equatorial Guinea.

III) PROJECT RESOURCES

Human Resources: The majority of the participants have been De La Salle Brothers who have wished to evangelize and be evangelized by the Third World. Normally, different persons comprised each year's teams so that the number of those sent has already reached some three-hundred.

Together with the religious men and women, young people of both sexes have been chosen and have worked under the supervision of the religious.

Material Resources: The biggest budgetary items had to do with construction as well as travel expenses. School supplies and medicines were generally brought along.

IV) OBJECTIVES

General Objectives:

— To place oneself at the service of others.

— To create a sense of community among peoples that have been forgotten, outside the "mainstream", "marginated". To point up interests that will move them to unite their efforts in solidarity for their own promotion.

— To cooperate with the local Church in the establishment and consolidation of the Kingdom of Christ.

— To sensitize and awaken the ones sent to the problems of the Third World and the Missions.

Specific Objectives:

— The updating of teachers and catechists.

— The tutoring of suspended students enabling them to make up their grade.

— The tutoring of students who are behind in their school work.

— Catechetics in the villages.

— Liturgical animation in the villages.

— First Aid in hygiene and sanitation.

— The experience of living with the native people.

— Social promotion.

— The construction of chapels, schools and social centers.

V) CRITERIA FOR BRINGING THE PROJECTS ABOUT

1. Criterion of "fulfillment". Cf. "Ad gentes Divinitus".
2. Criterion of CHURCH. "In communion with the local Church".
3. Criterion of "Inculturation".
4. Criterion of "Group", Team, Christian Community.
5. Criterion of "Viability". Work that can really be done.
6. Criterion of "Being" as opposed to "Doing".
7. Criterion of "Evaluation".

VI) DIFFICULTIES IN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROJECTS

1. The geographical location and the climate.
2. The precarious situation of housing for the groups.
3. The lack, at times, of the most elementary human necessities.
4. The different mentality of the Western world and that of the African.
5. The insufficient knowledge of the psychology and customs of the peoples to whom we were sent.
6. Frequently, the ignorance of the languages, on both sides.

Most of these problems were resolved:

a) through the generosity and commitement of the ones sent;

b) through the welcome and the receptivity of the natives.

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VII) **TESTIMONIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

- We have reached a greater personal sensitivity in dealing with people who are poor, but who are, at the same time, extremely hospitable and affectionate.
- The contact and the contrast with the culture of poverty has enriched us when we came to place a value on the things that we possess and our wealth.
- The Eucharists that we lived in the villages revealed to us the piety and the religiosity of the African people.
- The satisfaction of having set up a social center for the human promotion of the "Gourmanché" women.
- The experience of our own teamwork has been very positive for us and for the native people.
- The experience with native teachers has been highly positive, both on the human and the educational planes.
- The work has been one of mutual conversion, both for the Brothers and the Natives. Here the spirit of union reached very sincere, simple and cordial relations.
- The openness of the natives and their proverbial welcome to us will not be forgotten.

VIII) **PRACTICAL RESULTS**

With regard to the human, social and evangelical good that came about with the native; and with regard to the constructions that remained behind us, we will mention:

1. The TESTIMONY which the "Ones Sent" have given to the natives. In Togo, they have noted the increased numbers of pagans that have been attending the Christian chapels, built during the summer. The fact that "white men" did this sort of work has been a source of admiration. There must be something great behind all of this!

2. The youth, the lay teachers, upon returning from the experience, have become apostles of the missions in their milieux and in their classrooms.

3. As a De La Salle Brother, I can attest to the fact that in my Institute, because of these mission experiences there has been a real flowering of a movement in favor of the Missions — and this on every level — Superiors, Brothers and students. What is being offered for the Third World is noteworthy and of optimum quality.

Brother Manuel F. MAGAZ
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10-C-39

EDUCATION FOR THE POOR (1)

De La Salle and Education for the Poor

Let us be conscious of the fact that, in such fields as human promotion, development, justice, and the rights of the individual, the Church wishes to always be at the service of man, and of man in the light of the Christian anthropology that she has made her own. She need not have recourse to systems and ideologies in order to love, defend and assist in the liberation of man. In the very heart of the message which has been entrusted to her and which she proclaims is found the inspiration to act in favor of Brotherhood, justice and peace, against all dominations, slavery, discriminjation, violence, attacks on religious liberty, aggression against man and all that is injurious to life itself. (His Holiness John Paul II, *Opening Discourse*, Third CELAM Conference Puebla, Mexico. 28 January, 1979).

I) THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF THE FOUNDER

Can the evangelical journey of St. John Baptist De La Salle cast some light on the choices that the Brothers of Latin America must make about their educational activity both now and for the future?

This basic question finds some answers in the document called "The Charism of De La Salle: A Reading from a Latin American Viewpoint" drawn up by a team of Latin American Brothers.

As they do, we point out that the first biographers of the Saint felt that the beginnings of the teaching vocation of our Founder are to be found in the scholastic and catechetical currents that characterized the life of society and of the Church in the 17th Century.

Our Founder was thus marked by — and incarnated in — an historical movement that gives rise to the *popular Christian school*, and the best preparation of its teachers.

All of these efforts are unmistakeable signs of an awareness that was had of an urgent need, as well as a firm will to remedy the situation. The teaching communities that they tried to form are each born in very different circumstances but are never conceived as fleshless projects. Rather they are rooted in the needs of children and young people that were economically and spiritually deprived.

"In speaking of this process it's best to thinks of it as reciprocal multiple influences. Each of these founders could see what the others were trying to do; they could mull over their successes and their failures; they communicated their own ideas; they asked questions and visited around. Finjally they adapted, putting the stamp of their own genius on the projects that local imperatives called for". (Brother Yves Poutet).

Persons, events and concrete institutions then, little by little catch De La Salle up into this movement of catechetical and school renewal. It is enough to remember Canon Roland in Rheims, Father Barré in Rouen, the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Adrien Nyel himself.

"Two different circumstances (says the Saint in the 'Memorial') caused me to become interested in schools for children: they were a chance encounter with M. Nyel and a request made by this lady (Mme. de Maillfer). Previous to these, I hadn't the slightest notion of schools even though several of Canon Roland's friends tried to suggest the idea to me, but it never really entered my head, nor did I have the intention to take up such a work". (Paragraph cited by the three biographers of the Saint: Bro. Bernard, Maillefer and Blain).

To perceive an "historic trend" and to become involved in it little by little under the guidance of the Spirit seem to be "God's pedagogy" in the case of our Founder. (Cf. Circular No. 412, page 67 and foll.). Might not this also be the experience of the De La Salle Brother in the Latin America of today?

II) POPULAR EDUCATION AND CURRENT EDUCATIONAL TRENDS IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH

A. Popular Education

The concept and the experience related to the expression POPULAR EDUCATION have been much more thoroughly worked on outside the realm of Catholic education. For that reason it's important to fix our parameters for the term. This isn't an easy task. It is a term in constant evolution and it is loaded with ambiguities, according to whatever angle it is studied.

In general the expression "popular education" includes a consciousness raising for the people involved and their organization as a human community. In other words, we strive to form up a critical conscience of the reality in which we live, which leads further into the planning in community of an "historical project" for a just and free society-and to furnish the efficacious means to bring this all about.

Circular No. 412 points out a certain resistance among the Brothers to an analysis in depth of what we've stated, and even to the use of some of the terms, as if they had become hopelessly "contaminated".

"... Some even seem to deny the very existence of such a world, believing it is merely an extreme fringe of society... The formation received, in effect, caused us to grow up in the protected world of the religious life. Now we must become more aware of current ideas that will help us appreciate the situation of the men of our times. (Circular No. 412, page 26).

Nevertheless, to be on the side of the interests of the poor supposes that we'll be with them in their "historic project" which is precisely where their interests have crystalized. If this isn't the case all that we will be doing is applying band-aids to mortal wounds.

The defense of the poor is not an itself popular education. Popular activity, popular promotion and popular education are a much broader working reality, which includes educational processes but which is not hemmed in by that term.

True popular education has a strong political load, and we must understand that term in its original and

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broad sense. It is a societal project. Popular education can never be assistentialism nor any direct or veiled form of paternalism or protection of the poor.

The basis of popular education is "awareness". From this springs the perception of self, of the world, of what I am expected to do in the world (subjectivity, objectivity, inter-subjectivity). From here rises the historic response: the social praxis in the form of a societal project.

So, then, the term "popular education" can include cooperatives, basic literacy programs for adults, popular medicine, popular press, technology, etc. Its validity as popular education is in direct proportion to its relation and coherence with the project of society towards which the group tends.

There are two tendencies in popular education:

a) the cultural or pedagogical tendency: This is abstracted from the concrete conditions of injustice; it is the end product of an historical project;

b) the radical tendency (going back to the roots): this starts out from the concrete conditions of injustice in order to begin and deepen the historic project and, from within that, the educational process. It supposes a critical knowledge of society, a correct and concrete theory of change, and a continuous relationship between theory and practice.

It is from within this second perspective that educational techniques must be applied so that the poor are made to feel that indeed they can, that they are able, that they are capable of organizing and directing their own destiny.

Authentic popular education comes to fruition in planned activity. It is for this reason then that so many co-called "thinkers" cannot enter into real, live contact with the popular sectors.

Once the initial insecurity has been overcome, the poor person can discover in himself his enormous capacity of thought and action. The learning process comes about through a confrontation with the world that surrounds him: persons, happenings, social phenomena. So he goes on discovering and interpeting his reality. There is no "Knowing" which is true and complete if it not be accompanied by "Doing". To learn is not a matter of memory but of creativity. In popular education any technique is valid which promotes the full exercise of the personal faculties, the free expression of feelings, ideas and projects.

Popular education carries with it a theory of education, strategies and methodologies which are consistent with the historic project that has been adopted. If this be not the case we would be left with mere activism or theory. Action alone does not have in itself the necessary elements to formulate theory and methodology. The clarity of the objectives depends on the initial vision of the project, and its position with regard to the poor and their world. If this doesn't take place one never gets beyond good intentions and there can be no popular education there.

Concrete steps

1. A real command of the situation in which the sectors where we are working happen to be developing.

2. Priority for those sectors where injustice is the most evident.

3. The adoption, from the very beginning, of a pedagogy of participation in which the target group has a real rôle in their own process of education and struggle. Thus a bureaucracy is avoided in the planning, and all the while a greater autonomy is achieved between the groups and the exterior support persons: they learn to define and confront their own problems and acquire skill in the use of methodology and the necessary techniques.

4. Training on different levels:
   a) at the ground level, for joint action;
   b) at the level of leaders that form from the base groups;
   c) at the level of popular educators.

Popular education needs to study and systematize experiences. It isn't enough to get wrapped up in populist activism.

Techniques

a) For the illiterate = popular art, audio-visuals, graphics, socio-dramas, popular theater.

b) For the literate = popular reading materials, popular press...

The dynamic process of an authentic popular education implies then: consciousness-raising, organization and the struggle for a societal project.

It is truly curious to note that these three elements are present in the following paragraph of the "DECLARATION OF MEXICO" (December of 1979) drawn up at the end of the Regional Conference of Ministers of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean and sponsored by UNESCO:

"What is of the greatest urgency is to intensify educational action as a necessary condition to acheive an authentic development and to steer educational systems along the imperatives of social justice, in such a way that they contribute to form *consciousness, participation, solidarity* and *organizational capacity*, especially among the *less favored groups*".

Doesn't it look like they were defining the concept of POPULAR EDUCATION without using the term as such?

Bro. Alfredo A. MORALES

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EDUCATION FOR THE POOR (2)

Characteristics of the POPULAR EDUCATOR

1. He has above all made a clear choice in favor of the oppressed, and has made a life commitment to be with them, a commitment that may be motivated by religious, political or simply human considerations.

2. He possesses a high degree of interior openness, which implies a great respect for the process of search and understanding of the others.

3. He is an "instigator": He generates (provokes) a process of reflexion among the people given the challenges that dynamism itself imposes.

4. He gives the example by his own life, being of a spirit in constant search. He educates more by his personal witness and his coherency than by his words.

5. His methodological principle is a process which serves to systematize jointly with the people his experiences and reflexions, causing the people to become critical, creative, active and organized. A prefabricated methodology that works in all cases of popular education does not exist. Operative models must be set up for each concrete reality, and based on different experiences. These models must be constantly re-evaluated to conform most efficaciously to the very dynamic of reality.

6. His pedagogical resources will be those which:
   a) in the first stage permit that the people achieve a better grasp of their own problems. Example-theater, audio-visual;
   b) in a second stage, permit greater depth and systematization: short courses, popular press, workshops.

With these conceptual elements in mind we may now better undertake a comparative study between the "mainstream" of popular education and the educational currents promoted by the Latin American Church, in order to see the likenesses and differences and to decide if they are of substance or simply of form.

B) **Current Trends in Latin American Education sponsored by the Church**

1. *Point of Departure: Diagnosis of the problem.*

MEDELLIN

— The vast sector of "marginated" persons, isolated from the mainstream of culture.

— Grave defects in the educational systems.

— Abstract and formalistic program contents.

— Educational systems geared to the maintenance of existing social and economic structures rather than to their transformation. (*Source*: Official Document of II Conference of CELAM, No. 3 Education, Bogotá, 1968).

PUEBLA

— Education in a situation of social and economic change. (No. 1014).

— The situation of poverty correlated with educational processes.

— The inadequacy of existing educational systems: impractical, they tend to act as a mechanism that uproots from, and evades, the community (1015).

— The accelerated demand for education owing to demographic growth (1016).

— The need for unconventional new forms of education (1018).

— The pressure applied to education by ideological influences (1021).

— Tendency towards the educative community or city (1023). (*Souce*: Official Document of III CELAM. Puebla, Mexico, January of 1979).

2. *Educational responses.*

1. Liberating Education (Medellín).
2. Evangelizing Education (Puebla).
3. Popular Education, Interamerican Congress of Catholic Education (CIEC).

Liberating Education (Texts cited from the official document, No. 3):

— To train (the culturally marginated) so that they themselves, as authors of their own progress, in a creative and original way, develop a cultural world in accordance with their own qualities and which is the product of their own efforts.

— Education geared towards "Being More" in the joy of self-development through service to others.

— Education which is based on dialogue, creativity, foretaste of the new style of society sought by Latin America, enriching in the sense of human dignity, favoring self-determination and a sense of community.

— An asystematic education in all that contributes to the creation of a certain popular culture and the increased will to change.

— Education that liberates from the social, economic and political servitudes which are opposed to the development of the Latin American man.

— Education which favors dialogue across the generation gap, which attests to the wealth of local and national culture and which promotes the integration in the pluralistic unity of the continent and the world.

— Education capable of producing leaders who will bring about the organic and permanent change needed in Latin America.

Evangelizing Education (Texts cited from the official document):

— Humanizing and personalizing.

— Integrating itself in the Latin American process.

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— Exercising the critical function proper to true education, striving to regenerate, from the perspective of education, the cultural mores and the norms of inter-action which will make the creation of a new society, truly sharing and fraternal, possible, that is, an education in justice.

— Converting the student into the subject, not only of his own development, but also of community development: Education for Service.

— Producing the agents for the permanent, organic, change needed in Latin American society, through a civic and political formation inspired in the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Popular Education

"Human promotion implies activities which serve to make the consciousness of man in all possible dimensions and, using his own potential, to become the principal subject of his Christian and human development. It is education geared towards a living together in community; it enhances the Christian sharing of goods; it helps towards communion and participation in an effective way. (Puebla No. 477).

In this extraordinary paragraph which has gone all but unnoticed are to be found the fundamental elements which define POPULAR EDUCATION from a Christian point of view.

These guidelines are then completed by another paragraph which is no less extraordinary.

"To give priority in the field of education to the innumerable poor sectors of our society, people who are deprived both materially and culturally, directing to them the educational services and resources of the Church in accord with the local Ordinary". (Puebla, No. 1043).

"The education of leaders and agents of change is equally important" (Puebla, No. 1044).

"To accompany marginal groups in their literacy education with skills that help them to communicate efficaciously; to become aware of their duties and their rights; to comprehend the situation in which they are living and discern its causes; to train themselves to organize in civic, trade union and political fields, and to thus be able to fully participate in the decision-making processes that pertain to them". (Puebla, 1045).

What may be called the elements of a POPULAR EDUCATION from a Christian perspective may be drawn from these guidelines:

— To broaden the popular base.

— To raise consciousness.

— To take part in decision making processes (societal project based on Gospel values = Builders of their own history).

— Organization, planning for action.

— The living of Christian values: living together as one, sharing of goods.

— Training of leaders and agents of change: Formation in trade unions, politics and Christianity.

What else does the Latin American Church tell us that might have some bearing on POPULAR EDUCATION?

"Without neglecting the present school commitments it is most urgent to respond with generosity and imagination to the challenges that today and in the future confront the Church of Latin America. These new forms of educational action can't be the product of superficiality or improvisation but must include sufficient preparation for their agents and be based on diagnosis of the needs as well as an inventory and evaluation of present resources". (Puebla, 1046).

We conclude this paragraph with a quotation from the final document on POPULAR EDUCATION taken from XIII Interamerican Congress of Catholic Education (CIEC) held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic in January of 1980. The Theme of the conference was METHODOLOGY FOR EDUCATION IN AND FOR JUSTICE.

"The option and commitment of Catholic educators to an education in justice demand that they set a top level priority on a dedication to popular education". (no. 24). These promotional-type projects must be based on a concept of the transformation of society, and tend toward the formation and development of teams of popular organization. They will develop along the lines of a horizontal concept of learning, with regard to the local cultures, and with a methodology which is congruent with the whole liberation of man and of society. (No. 25).

"These projects, which have been drawn up and carried out by grass-roots organizations, are geared towards raising the scientific, cultural and organizational levels of the popular sectors". (No. 26).

"Catholic educators and their organization (school center, federations, CIEC) recognize and commit themselves to promote popular education as one change which is valid to educate in and for justice and place their resources and means at the service of this educational and evangelical option". (No. 27).

"So that this commitment may truly be translated into a reality, it is recommended encounters be held on the national level to share the experiences of those that are engaged in popular education, and to study the most effective ways to give priority to this urgent action". (No. 28).

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EDUCATION FOR THE POOR (3)

III) WHAT CAN LA SALLE BRING TO POPULAR EDUCATION?

1. Based on Christian faith, a dynamic vision of the work of the Spirit in history

"Fidelity to the specific intentions of the Founder and to the tradition of the Institute is confided to us as living men. It is we who carry on the task of discovering how fidelity to his charism can be lived in the present time". (*Declaration: The Brother of the Chrisian Schools in the World Today*, 7.1).

"... the signs of the times stress the urgency of their mission in the world today, the necessity to renew their religious life, their apostolic ministry, their presence among men". (8.1).

"Since they have chosen to work for the salvation that comes from Christ, they should let themselves be guided by the Spirit of God. It is he who stirs up in the Brothers the desire for renewal; it is he who speaks in a mysterious fashion through the events that transpire in the world and through the hopes and aspirations of its people". (8.2).

"These notes have helped the thirty-ninth General Chapter to recognize in the Institute a strong desire to play a much more active part in the life of the Church, a desire for a more determined adaptation of our life and work to the geographical, social, cultural, political and religious circumstances in which the Institute finds itself". (9.2).

"Another element that can be drawn from the notes is the expressed will for greater flexibility in the commitment of personnel to institutions so that when more urgent educational needs present themselves the Brothers will be readily available". (9.3).

"This world has more need than ever, even at the very center of man's temporal pursuits, for a witness given by people who are consecrated and who know and love God as a living being. It is more necessary than ever that an international Institute should exist for the educational service of the people throughout the world". (11.4).

2. A spirituality for Christian educators of the people

We refer to the numerous recent documents that crystalize the thought of Saint John Baptist De La Salle on the Christian Educator'. It will be sufficient to remember these basic themes:

— God's plan for the salvation of all men.

— Christian educators are God's "ministers and ambassadors" so that that plan may become a reality for children and youth, especially among the most abandoned.

— The Christian educator ought to let himself be guided by the Spirit of God, nourish himself with prayer and meditation on the Word of the Lord, and find his support in a community of educators that share his faith, his life and his educational activity. (Faith, Brotherhood, Service).

3. A style of education best adapted for the service of the people and enriched by three hundred years of experience

— Pedagogical realism: starting from life, it adapts itself creatively to reality.

— Child-centered. The subject is the center of the process.

— Personalization of the educative act: follow-through in the case of each student.

— Professional and spiritual training of the educator.

— Relations between teacher and students based on friendship.

— A physical atmosphere of serenity and order; maximum use of time of instruction.

— A will to make the school truly efficacious; a real preparation for life.

4. Concrete experiences

"Concern for the poor ought to lead to the modification of some of the programs we are now conducting and to the complete transformation of some of the others". (*Declaration*: 31.1).

"There is also need for both individual and community effort, based on creative sudy, to discover new and adapted forms of education to meet the needs of those among the poor who are most neglected". (33.1).

"The General Chapter, then, invites all the Brothers to be responsive to this need in the world today. It expresses a strong desire that in every region there will be many among us who will be qualified and anxious to serve the people of the developing countries". (33.4).

The audio-visual services of SECOLI (SEAV) has put out a whole series of concrete and imaginate slide presentations as to how these guidelines are being put into practice by Brothers in different part of the globe. For a yet deeper treatment of the topic

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we refer the reader to Circular No. 412, page 1;7 and following pages.

5. Favorable conditions for a proper experimentation

"Programs for the training of the Brothers, however excellent they may be, can never dispense with the responsibility which each Brother has for his own formation. The achievement of a personal vocation is the life-long task of every individual through fidelity to the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit". (*Declaration.* 15.2).

"In these conditions, you can understand that the General Council wants to use the opportunity provided by the reports to stress the URGENCY OF PURSUING THIS CHANGE, decreed by the Chapters, and to try to do this with a new enthusiasm: THE PROMOTION OF JUSTICE IS AN OBJECTIVE THAT MUST BE ACCEPTED IN PRACTICE IN THE ENTIRE INSTITUTE SO AS BETTER TO ACHIEVE THE SERVICE OF THE POOR. In the field of education, SERVICE TO THE POOR is an integral part of the PROMOTION OF JUSTICE, but this latter goes beyond that. It is not content simply to help the poor, it seeks to fight against the things which unceasingly cause poverty and injustice, even in the richest nations". Circular No. 412, pages 65-66. Upper-case emphasis comes from the document itself.

IV) SUGGESTIONS

1. A whole plan of basic information for all the Brothers and especially for those that are in their time of initial formation, on the doctrine of the Church on such themes as: Faith and Politics, Faith and Ideologies, Human Promotion, Popular Culture, Christian Liberation, Effective commitment for Justice, etc., in order to avoid simplistic arguments and to clear up ambiguities that seem to be the most paralyzing factors (doubts, fears) for an option for the poor among so many Brothers.

2. A greater sharing of Lasallian experiences in popular education, under whatever heading, and the possibility of evaluative interchanges.

3. The creation of nuclei of teachers and students, as well as parents, who take on a commitment to the promotion of Justice.

"That is why the creation of a core group of animators seems necessary and realistic if the school is to accomplish its objectives concerning service of the poor...". (Circular No. 412, page 33).

V) WORKS CONSULTED

— *Documents of CELAM II. Medellín, 1968.*

— *Documents of CELAM III*, Puebla, 1979.

— *The Charism of De La Salle in Latin America*, Perú, April of 1981.

— *The Evangelical Journey of St. John Baptist De La Salle*, Bruño, Madrid, 1980.

— *Circular No. 412*, Rome, 15 September, 1980.

— *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World of Today*, General Chapter, '67.

Brother Alfredo A. MORALES
30 May, 1984. Antilles.

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10-C-42

PEDAGOGY FOR LIFE

Everyday experience shows us that the school of today shapes the society of tomorrow; revolutionary movements, of whatever stamp, set the conquest of young students as their primary objective.

The primordial task of the school is to form man as a person and as a social being. In the school, as a general rule, students discover their professional vocation when they are properly guided. It also is the job of the school to train them for the competent and responsible exercise of that profession.

From its beginnings, Lasallian pedagogy was careful to form the students for life, not just for school. So that what has just been said will not be a gratuitous assumption, we must go to the *Conduct of Schools*, De La Salle's pedagogical treatise, to listen to what it testifies.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE?

If the student that came to the door of De La Salle's school is already a "young man", the Director is to ask his parents: "*What trade* do they want him to learn and in *how much time*?" (Cf. 3rd part, Chap. II, art. 2, page 242, French edition).

The consequences that this question imposed on the school are clear: it is obliged to program *contents* and *learning time* for this new student. When the *Conduct* specifies how the teacher "should classify the students that are learning to write in italicized letters and the different grades of arithmetic (Cf. 3rd part, Chap. III, art. 4, page 257), it then goes into detail with regard to *programs* and *learning time* for these pupils. (Ibid. page 257 and 11).

And in another place, it states: "The students will write in rounded letters and in italicized letters according to their aptitudes, age and *the profession which they want to enter* and the time during which they will attend class" (Ibid., 3rd part, Chap. I, art. 2, page 234).

ACCELERATED LEARNING

The schooling of small children was very deficient in the time of St. La Salle. His classrooms took in students whose chronological and intellectual ages were not in accord — children of six or seven mixed in with others of twelve or more years. What then to do? The answer was to fit or adapt the teaching to the present and future need of the students. "If a student is twelve years old or older, and has not yet begun to write, he may begin before he has learned to read in Latin — always under condition that he does read correctly in French, and, according to the judgement of the teacher, that he not be obliged to attend (other) classes so that he may learn to write well. (Cf. 1st part, Chap. IV, art. 1, page 47).

In exceptional cases, for reasons of age or in consideration of the future of the student, the schedule may be altered. "If some students may only attend classes for a limited time, and need to write more than the others, they can be authorized to write during the entire time of class, except when texts are being read aloud, during prayers and during the catechism lesson". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. IV, art. 2, page 52).

It will not be out of place to include something about the Sunday School in this section. It was begun by De La Salle for the human and spiritual promotion of young workers of twenty years and more. Maillefer writes in this regard that: progress was so fast that in a short time the (Sunday Schools) reached some 200 students who studied, according to their aptitudes and capacity, drawing, or arithmetic, or, for the least advanced, reading and writing". (Maillefer, page 193). There was a realistic view of the amount of *time* during which these schools could function, adapting to the schedules of the students and arranging the *contents* according to their *professional needs*.

Would it be rash to apply to this procedure of the Lasallian School the present-day term "*Accelerated Learning*"? And, why not, "*Personalized Education*"?

WITH A VIEW TO TOMORROW

The mystery of tomorrow is the engine that thrusts mankind forward. The stutoo, who is mańbecoming, consciously or not strives to build a better world of tomorrow. The school, if it is going to respond to this fundamental human desire, must structure its content and methodology for that end.

The teaching that the Lasallian school imparts attempts to be practical and useful for the ones

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for whom it is destined, not only during the learning period but, principally, for the morrow. Reading and writing took up the major part of the students' time and effort. For both of these activities the *Conduct* prescribes exercises that will redound to the advantage of the students when they leave the school.

For the spelling class, "they will be assigned to copy texts each day which contain information that will be *useful for them to know for the future*". (Cf. 1st part, Chap. IV, art. 3, page 55). A little further on it invites the students themselves to compose "letters, contracts... and other documents *which will be useful at some future date*". (Ibid.).

La Salle, the consummate psychologist, complains about parents for their negligence in demanding attendance at class. He particularly singles out the poor. To that effect he goes on to exhort his teachers with these lines that are worth a whole treatise in themselves: "The teacher must persuade parents of the obligation they have to see that their children receive instruction and of the serious harm they will cause the children if these do not learn to read and write, because they will never be of any use for future employment if they do not know how to read and write. (Cf. 3rd part, Chap. VI, art. 1, section 2, page 188).

There were at that time parents who would withdraw their children from school so that they could begin to earn something even though they were still too young and with little formal instruction. For these cases De La Salle recommended that the teachers urge the parents in these terms: "Consider how much you are going to harm the child and how important it is for a worker to know how to read and write, for, however slow the child may have been for his studies, if he knows how to read and write, *he will be able* to do anything". (Cf. 3rd part, Chap. VI, art. 1, section 2, page 189). That is to say, he'll be able to make his mark in life.

What is more, the Lasallian school, in its desire for human and Christian *promotion*, went beyond the limited programs of the "*Petites Ecoles*"and of the "*popular schools*", because they imparted "all that had to do with commerce, finances, architecture, and mathematics; in a word, all that a young person ought to study, except Latin". (Tableau de Rouen, 18th century).

Maillefer, with the authority of an eyewitness, will conclude this exposition with a testimony that once again shows the solicitude of De La Salle and of his sons for the human and Christian destiny of their students. Referring to the Irish boys that were taken in and educated by the Brothers, he writes: "De La Salle put them in the hands of Brothers who would instruct them and impart the necessary knowledge to each one, according to his condition; so that, in a short while, all were able to competently handle *the different employments for which they were destined*". (Maillefer, page 135. *Cahiers Lasalliens*, No. 6).

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10-D-17

EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE INSTRUMENTAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM OF REUVEN FEUERSTEIN

The "Work of the Guénange-Richemont Association" consists of two establishments situated in France, on both banks of the Moselle River between Metz and Thionville:

— the Educational Centre of Richemont for students between ten and fifteen years of age;

— the Professional Training Centre of Guénange for adolescents between fifteen and eighteen years of age.

Founded on May 28, 1891 at Guénange by the Abbé Thilmont, the establishment was confided to the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1902. In 1968, the academic section was established at Richemont. Following a period of adjustment, the establishment became The House of Specialized Education for the Protection of Children and Troubled Youth.

The centre accepts boys who are social cases having trouble with their deportment and having difficulties adapting themselves to the family circle or in school or vocational circles.

The Establishment consists of a Boarding Department as well as a Vocational High School which, in a three or four year course, offers general education and vocational training which qualify students for the following trades:

— Printing;

— Mechanics-electrical, metalwork, and lathe work;

— Construction: Carpentry, painting, masonry.

For this purpose and for the training of the young men accepted, the school uses adapted pedagogical methods.

For the past two years, we have been experimenting with the Instrumental Enrichment programme of Professor Reuven Fuerstein, which is nothing other than the application of what the author calls "The experience of mediative apprenticeship". This mediation of the apprenticeship experience is a type of human experience. It is provided by the parents and by the teachers in giving the students the necessary structures for adapting themselves to their environment. In fact, in the opinion of Professor Feuerstein, it is the lack of this mediative apprenticeship which impedes the transmission of cultural values to the child, as well as the habits and modes of conduct, thus leading to a cultural deficiency and making the child a "culturally deprived person". Thus with the Enrichment Method, thanks to the personal mediation given by the teacher, the child "who functions on a low level" is changed by a direct exposure to a substitute of the mediation of the apprenticeship experience, which is an intensive and systematic substitute.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAMME

General Objective

To modify the cognitive structure of the subject "operating at a low level" in such a fashion as to render him sensitive to, and subject to, modification by direct exposure to the stimuli met with in the circumstances of daily life and in the formal situations of apprenticeship.

Through Specific Objects

The correction of cognitive function deficiencies. The acquisition of vocabulary, terms, concepts of operation and the relations concerning the programme. The formation of habits. The production of intrinsic motivation. The capacity to judge and reflect. To change his role from that of a passive reproducer of information to that of a creator of new information.

Population Envisioned

Age:

From ten years of age until adulthood for those culturally handicapped.

From eight years of age until adulthood for ordinary people with specific problems.

Nature of Material

An exercise note book and pencil. Each instrument is designed for a particular cognitive function but it may also be interchanged with others.

Nature of the Exercises

The absence of content in the sense that the content is not an end in itself, but only a vehicle

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to directing attention towards the cognitive functions which ought to be corrected, developed, and enriched.

Nature of the Activity

Discovery, apprenticeship, and reproduced application in the diverse situations of relations, or regulations, of principles of operations of strategies and other foreseeable exigencies in a becoming cognitive functioning.

Scholastic Results

These do not enter into the process. Certain instruments are accessible to individuals who are entirely illiterate.

Scholastic Framework

This process complements the regular school programme. It complements the apprenticeship discipline of the basic school instruction and the mastery of such skills as those of reading and mathematics for those who are incapable of apprenticeship. There are materials for extra school activities to be administered outside of regular class time.

Nature of the Inter-action Among the Pupils

The definition of the shared problem. Participation in the divergent proposals for a solution. Group discussion for a subtle interpretation of the PEI activities and of general tasks and specific mutual help and interaction.

Interaction with the Teacher

Presentation of the task: an explanation of terms, presentation of an individual research project of processes and strategies. Production orientation of a capacity for judgement and reflection, teaching of a specific content whose elements are necessary for PEI: Production of motivation in re-enforcing initiatives of inter-activities among students and the creation of a footbridge in the various areas and in life in general.

EFFECTS OF THE PROGRAMME

On the Teacher

The training and experience of PEI brings about changes in the teacher in the perception he has of the child, in his evaluation and in his attempts for making modifications: in his attitudes regarding the capabilities of the retarded subject, in his diminution of the use of the concrete for the benefit of the abstract, in the search for processes instead of results. Understanding the cognitive structure can make the teacher more aware of the aspects of indispensable education for the changing of structures or dimensions in understanding as well as in personality.

On the Child

The increased will to master school work. Increased motivation and assiduity in school work. An improvement in his self-image.

On Parents

In view of the children's success, the parents can modify the level of their initiatives in behalf of the child and can modify their image of the child.

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FEUERSTEIN R., RAND Y., HOFFMAN M., and MILLER R., *Instrumental Enrichment.* University Park Press, Baltimore, 1980.

Camille LIROT
Training Psychologist of the Instrumental Enrichment Program, P.E.I.

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10-D-18

MANAGEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS: A LAYPERSON'S VIEW

This article has been written for lay administrators in the hope of sharing a layman's view of management and administration of school organizations and a leadership style in consonance with the La Sallian concept of education. The model is heavily influenced by the culture of the community established by the founder and organized into sequential processes using management adaptations and insights into the reality of today's conditions.

A strong leader, St. John Baptist de La Salle possessed an ardent zeal, a tender and compassionate charity, agreeable manners and a boundless love for penance. All qualities he had which were necessary for his mission of establishing his Christian community.

Following the founder's style of organizing the community, some highlights in his life as a leader were selected which reflected the kind of organization in dire need today with the increasing number of lay teachers and administrators in our La Salle schools.

Consider the following elements which lend themselves easily to effective leadership and followership in any structural organization.

— St. John Baptist de la Salle organized the first group of teachers bringing them all together and teaching them the operation of a well-managed community.

— He educated the Brothers to have one mind and one heart to enable them to live in great harmony and assist each other with a tender and compassionate charity. All they possessed they had in common: even their interests were shared so that their attention was undivided.

— This kind of organization proved effective for sometime, but he noticed one serious drawback: the Brothers' great solicitude for the future. They worried occasionally about their prospects, thinking that they had embraced a lowly profession.

— He revived the Brothers' failing courage by talking to each one of them about faith in the Divine Providence. He reminded the Brothers that God knows their needs and will not fail anyone provided they remain faithful in their service to Him. His concept of organization hinged largely on submission, dependence and humility which at that time proved to be, effective.

Going through the patron's experiences some important implications have surfaced which are related to the high and low points in managing his community. The analysis below shows some important dimensions using the high points as best features which should be adopted, and where appropriate intervention strategies are prescribed to effect the low points:

— Leadership style as part of the school culture is largely influenced in successful institutions by the caracter and reputation of the founder.

— An organized community is like a well-knit family. The "give and take" process or mutual support of the members of the family can be learned by the members of the administrative team who act as models to all faculty members.

— The best results are obtained when teachers work together with a sense of commitment to one another as well as to the organization.

— Organization by formal or informal groups with unity of purpose is the main distinguishing feature of an outstanding organization.

— To be effective, each group, unit or department should have the same characteristics as the administrative team. Among these are:

1. A group, unit, or department is regarded as a whole component. It is made up of students, teachers and administrators as well as their support staff forming a cohesive team.

2. It is educated. Though teachers may have personality clashes and differences of opinion, the teachers have to learn to interact and to share with one another. They have to forego or relinquish their individual objectives to achieve a common goal.

3. It is supportive. Each teacher supports the others. If there is a group project everybody works to make the activity successful. If it fails, failure is assumed by all.

4. It is inspiring. The actions, values, and attitudes of the teachers inspire other members to greater efforts and achievements.

5. It is enjoyable. Teachers enjoy being one. They like the sense of unity, the sense of belonging and fun of being in a group.

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— This kind of organization demands a greater coordination rather than mere compliance or sheer conformity. A member must coordinate his function with the team plan and the rules of the organization.

— The building of a strong team calls for teacher participation in the decision making process, working arrangements, setting targets, and quality control. Emphasis rests on task specialization to make the most of the potentials and skills of each member of the team.

— One of the biggest hindrances to this kind of organization is identity problem since recognition is normally given to the whole unit and not to individual achievements. This could be overcome if the administrator pays close attention to individual growth in the form of a well-organized faculty development program and reward system.

Generally, lay administrators must be aware that it is not the individual but the team that is the instrument of sustained and enduring success in this type of management. A team can renew and regenerate itself by new recruitment as individual team members leave or retire. This is parallel to St. John Baptist de la Salle's experience of letting some Brothers leave the community when their enthusiasm in their work has slackened. His patience in training new recruits together with the others who have remained faithful paved the way for the formation of a new community filled with good will, fortitude, fervor, and piety. Lastly, the effect of this leadership style is the building up of a store of shared and collectively owned experiences, information, learnings, and decisions that can be analyzed, improved, and passed on to fellow administrators who may wish to follow the founder's footsteps in managing a La Sallian school community.

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10-E-24

NEW CREATION COMMUNITY (1)

The tragic incident at Brussels caused by crowd violence before the football match between Liverpool and Juventus in May 1985 ensured that the serious social problems which have disturbed the life of Liverpool, North West England, received a lot of international publicity. At around this same time, Brother Damian Lundy received an article for the Youth Column in the magazine of which he is the co-editor, *The Sower*, which he thought would be of interest to readers of *Lasalliana*. The article is written by Brother Ray Raine, C.B.C. (formerly known as the Irish Christian-Brothers) and it describes the NEW CREATION COMMUNITY, founded by Ray in recent years. With it is an account by Gavin Evans, aged nineteen, who is a member of the community, and texts of the Community's Prayers. We are glad to share some Good News from Liverpool, shared by a Brother who does not belong to the De La Salle Brothers but who shares the Lasallian gospel with young people in different parts of England, and is glad to share it with our readers.

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NEW CREATION IN LIVERPOOL

Ray Raine writes: In 1978 several Brothers, experiencinjg conversion in their own lives, decided to start prayer groups for young people in the senior section of their schools. These took place once a week and consisted basically of hymns, Scripture reading, a sharing of their prayer and experiences, and intercessory prayer. The Brothers weren't too sure about the methods of running these meetings but were convinced that the desire for prayer was very strong among the young people. Once a month or so these groups were brought together to share a celebration of their faith. About three hundred young people took part in these days. Over the course of these three years the leaders of the prayer groups used to meet for prayer together every two weeks to seek guidance from the Lord as to which direction the prayer groups should take. Let me show briefly how three things (among several others) came out of this.

SIGNS OF LIFE

1. During 1981 riots broke out among the predominantly black area of the inner city of Liverpool, where the Brothers had moved in 1977. So the youth days were moved to this area. Out of this move emerged meetings between the black youths and the more "privileged" young people of our suburban schools.

2. Over the course of four years we brought four hundred young people to Taizé, home of the ecumenical Brotherhood in France and international meeting-point for many thousands of young people who want to share their lives and their faith. Our visits prompted us to ask the basic question: "Why is it that we Christian Brothers cannot be the centre of the prayer-life and activity of the young?" (Little did we know what was going to happen!)

3. The Brothers started to organise frequent retreat weekends for young people. The outcome of these retreats was that many youngsters had experiences of Jesus which led to new beginnings for them — a life of frequent prayer, Scripture-reading, reflection and, most important of all, a witnessing to others of what the Lord had done in their lives.

A NEW TYPE OF COMMUNITY

In 1981 I, who had been involved in all this and was convinced that the old methods of seeking vocations to our religious Institute were now past, decided to base the formation programme for our contacts (which I had been asked to direct) on two basic ideas:

1. the renewal of the Christian life of young people in our Brothers' schools: in other words, the calling of young people to become CHRISTIAN before inviting any of them to consider becoming "religious";

2. the evangelisation of youth by youth.

With this in mind I invited two young men who had just completed their high school studies to take a year off before they pursued their tertiary studies. At this stage neither had any idea of joining the Brothers, but they were committed Christians who were praying regularly and were fully involved in all that had been happening in the prayer groups of which I have written. They were to be asked to help me with my work in forming prayer groups, running retreats, leading days of Awareness in our schools and any other activities which my job entailed.

The two young men were invited to live with the Brothers in the inner city community, sharing our life of prayer, our meals and our recreation. This was very innovative and, therefore, somewhat confusing for the Brothers at large, since they were never too sure (despite my attempts to provide a full explanation of the situation in our provincial Newsletter) whether these lads were postulants, aspirants or heaven-knows-what. The problem only deepened into greater mystery when it became clear that one of them had a girlfriend and when, at the end of the year, both left for university.

The following year two more young men came along, and in the third year four young men offered their services and together with three Brothers they moved into the Brothers' house in Birkenhead, near Liverpool. And so the NEW CREATION COMMUNITY BEGAN.

WHAT WAS THE BASIS OF THIS COMMUNITY? I POINT TO FOUR ASPECTS:

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1. an experience of community-living;
2. a deepening of one's prayer-life;
3. a deeper knowledge of one's faith through teaching;
4. the apostolate of evangelising young people in our schools.

In 1984 eight young men offered themselves. During the course of these four years (1981-85) the prayer groups had continued to grow and most of the young people who had been involved with the original scene had passed on to university and maintained their deep searching for God.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

During 1983-84, when the NEW CREATION COMMUNITY began, it was decided to hold a day per term for all those who were away at College in various parts of the country. The day was to offer a support for them who were trying to lead their Christian lives under trying and, at times, really difficult circumstances. These days were so well attended that in September 1984 it was felt that these "associates" should have some form of identity, so they were invited to commit themselves to the Lord for a year, through a commitment which involved prayer and service and some form of association with the New Creation Community. They were called *disciples*, since they had been commissioned by the Community in twos and threes around the country. At the moment (May 1985) there are over sixty NEW CREATION disciples who meet to pray in different parts of the country. I keep in touch with them by visits and by newsletters frequently. These young people (boys and girls) are perhaps at a half-way stage towards a formal association with the Brothers.

In September 1985 the New Creation Youth Community will move to the inner city of Liverpool to be associated with the Brothers' work there and to form a new cente for youth along the lines of the San Egidio community in Rome. There is also the possibility of setting up a girls' community in the same part of Liverpool. We see what is happening in Liverpool as part of the movement in our Church towards a new lay form of Gospel Community.

NEW CREATION DISCIPLES

Prayer of Commitment

(to be recited as frequently as possible)

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.

Before the world was made he chose us, chose us in Christ to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence. (Eph 1:3-4).

Jesus, I praise you for living within me forever.

I thank you for having chosen me to carry out your will today.

I thank you for the gifts that you have given me to do your work today.

I thank you Jesus for the people and the situations that you place before me today.

Increase within me, Jesus, the gifts you have already given me so that I may become the person that I was called to be.

I place myself now into your hands this day so that whatever I do, whether I eat or drink, whatever I do at all, I do for your glory. (1 Cor 10.31) Give me an increase in faith so that I may have the courage and strength to carry out your will today even in the most difficult and trying circumstances.

Help me now, dear Jesus, to make a commitment to be a faithful disciple of the New Creation Community. Help me in my daily prayer, in the reading of your Word and in serving those in need around me.

Watch over and protect all disciples of the community today (mention here any in particular) throughout this country. Make us one with you in mind and heart so that we can experience always the love and peace which only you can give.

Help me to be faithful to my promises so that I may grow and 'increase in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and men'. (Luke 2:52).

So I ask you, Jesus, to accept my life today as a disciple of the New Creation Community until ...

Glory be to him whose power, working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-1).

Mary, mother of Jesus, pray for me.
Edmund Rice help me.
Live Jesus in our hearts forever.

Signed .....

Date .....

(please retum one of the copies to me)

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10-E-25

NEW CREATION COMMUNITY (2)

GAVIN Evans, a member of the 1984-85 NEW CREATION COMMUNITY in Birkenhead, tells us what the experience means to him.

There are eleven of us living here in one of the Christian Brothers' houses in Birkenhead. We are a community which includes three Christian Brothers and eight young men. Having finished school, we are taking a year off before going on to employment or further education this October. I myself, Dave, Matt and Andy are from Plymouth, John and Andy Mac from Crosby, Damian from Manchester and Rob from Stoke. Quite an assortment.

But we all have one thing in common. We all consider our faith to be important enough to us that we can spend one year of our lives living in community — even though we have no intention of entering the Religious Life ourselves.

So how exactly are we spending this year out? Well, first of all, we consider the experience of living in community to be of primary importance. It is a chance to discover not only one's faults and failings, but more our strengths — in fact to realize one's true gifts in life; to discern one's mission in life as a Christian. By sharing our lives together, our meals, our prayer and of course our work, we have come to know one another and ourselves more fully, growing individually and as a group.

And indeed we see our work as essential to this community vision, as well as an expression of our faith. Our main work is our mission to schools, running Awareness days and weekend retreats. Ths is an opportunity to share our faith with other young people, in the hope that they too may grow in their faith. Our main work is in Christian Brothers' schools around the North West of England, although we do undertake a fair amount of travel around the country. Venues so far have included Plymouth, Stoke, Bath, Twickenham, Salford, Atrincham, Sunderland and even Dublin.

However, not all our time is spent praying and running retreats. Much of our time is free which gives us the opportunity to exercise our own initiative by becoming involved in community service, in whatever capacity and to whatever extent we choose. Dave and I help out in a youth club in inner-city Liverpool, for instance, and we all get the regular chance to give the Mother Teresa Sisters a hand with their work for the homeless. Four of us help with the local prayer groups; four visit the local primary school and help at the nearby youth club. And all of us are encouraged to help out in the local parishes, visiting old and lonely people or giving a hand to the parish priest.

TIME TO REFLECT

Apart from all these activities, we do have time for our own personal study and reflection. Two mornings a week are set aside a few lessons on topics ranging from the Prophets to St. John's Gospel to Vatican II. Here is an invaluable opportunity to reflect upon and consider the full implications of our religion as applicable to our future lives. And time is provided for us to read up on those which particularly interest us, not forgetting the subjects we are due to be reading as from October.

For me, my year off is providing me with a golden opportunity to step back from the "rat race" before rushing headlong into life. Furthermore, that I have chosen to spend a year in a Christian community is of particular significance. It is a chance to be of service to others through the work the community undertakes, and also a chance to reflect upon and consider my own mission in life — how best I can live my faith in my future life. Indeed I consider this year to be part of my education — an education for life. To young people of my age, I say, "I believe the New Creation Community is worth considering. It could be for you".

Next year's community will be in a new venue, in the inner-city of Liverpool. It is also hoped that next year there will be four such communities in other parts of Liverpool, one in Manchester and one in Cambridge, some in the eighteen age group, some postgraduate communities and some university student communities.

So there's a good deal coming up in the near future for the New Creation Community...

(Gavin's account was originally written for publication in St. Edward's school magazine, Liverpool. We are grateful for the chance to give it wider publicity).

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DAILY PRAYER FOR NEW DISCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

The time recommended for this prayer is late afternoon or after the evening meal if said in pairs or a group; or during any time in the evening or night if said singly, when you have the quiet to pray.

The following 3 steps are suggested

1. *THE PRESENCE OF JESUS*

To help you to open yourself to the presence of Jesus, say the following short prayer peacefully and slowly, three times.

'Jesus, I praise you within me – forever'

Spend about ½ minute in silence and peace thinking only one thing — that He is present.

It may help to open you to His presence if you repeat one word

'Jesus ... Jesus ...'

or repeat one phrase

'You within me ... You within me'

2. *THE WORD OF THE LORD*

Read a few verses of Scripture.

Spend a couple of minutes looking over what you have read.

Stay with any words or phrases in the scripture passage that touch you deeply — because this is where Jesus is speaking to you.

This is listening to His Word. Don't hurry this step.

Allow yourself to respond to Jesus with feelings of love, praise, and thankfulness.

Speak to Jesus about the content of the reading especially any part that touched you deeply.

(If you are in a group of two or more, you can share the parts that touched you deeply and share your prayers of response).

3. *INTENTIONS*

Picture some person in your mind, name that person and call a blessing on him/her using this prayer:

... NAME ... May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He show His face to you and have mercy on you.

May He tum His face to you and give you peace.

May the Lord bless you. Amen.

My Commitment to Prayer .....

My Commitment to Service .....

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N° 11

1 February 1987

FOREWORD

This issue number 11 of Lasalliana is a bit special because one half of it is devoted to the recent General Chapter. That event, it seemed to us, merited such a choice. Of course, we have no intention here of recounting all that went on during the Chapter, nor of reproducing texts which have been already published elsewhere, but rather to point out the invitation which the Chapter has extended to us.

The texts of Brothers John Johnston, Superior General, and of Brothers Patrice Marey and Michel Sauvage open very rich perspectives to us and invite us to the reflection, progress, and deepening of our spirituality, our activities, and of our religious and communitarian comportment.

We shall become ever more authentic "Lasallians", whether Brothers or lay persons, if we become:

★ more conscious of our spiritual heritage,
★ guided by the inspirations of the Rule,
★ resolved to follow the paths of education in fully exercising our Christian educational ministry, together and by association.

We could see in these three pivotal points perspectives for Lasalliana in the course of the next three years.

However, we do not intend that the privileged attention given to these first three contributions should overshadow interest in any of the other articles in issue number 11, for they are, in a certain way, the illustration and the concretization on the points and about the precise places of the real life of the Lasallian Family.

Brother Leon Lauraire

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11-A-51

1687: THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST BROTHER SUPERIOR

Truthfully speaking, a slight doubt is possible with regard to the date. The first biographer, Brother Bernard, at first hesitated, then he retracts once, before finally adopting the year 1687. After him, Maillefer also accepts the year 1687. But Blain is less precise: He sets the happening after a spiritual retreat which the Founder conducted in a hermitage of the Carmelite Fathers in the year 1686. The three biographers are well agreed, however, on one important point: the event was subsequent, more or less, to Trinity Sunday of 1686 in which the Founder and some Brothers bound themselves by the vow of obedience for three years.

1. The persons in question.

Many of the Brothers who had pronounced the vow of 1686, perhaps others also, met at Rhiems, Rue Neuve, together with De La Salle. They made the spiritual exercises of a retreat. Several of those who had made the vow of obedience were disposed to renew it. Just as in the previous year, this retreat seems to have taken place between the Pentecostal feasts and the days following.

It seems that they were taken by surprise when De La Salle proposed that they should take advantage of this reunion to choose by way of an election one among themselves who would become their superior and would be in charge of the internal government of the community. From reading the biographers, it can be noted that the Founder had a difficult time convincing the Brothers of this, which is easily understandable. However, more out of respect than conviction, they agreed to the election and their votes went to Brother Henri Lheureux.

This was a choice tjhat surprised nobody except the one elected. It was a choice which De La Salle had foreseen, and perhaps had himself suggested.

The biographers tell us about Brother Henri Lheureux's qualities and virtues. That is almost all we know about him. Was he a native of Rheims, or at least of Champagne? Probably. He was one of the first, if not the very first to enter the community at the Rue Neuve, maybe even the house of De La Salle. A perhaps not too clear passage from Canon Blain leads us to believe that in 1686 Brother Henri was 24 years of age.

From this distant period in history, the registers containing the names of those who entered the community are no longer extant. The oldest ones we have been able to compile are from 1714 or perhaps a bit later, and these deliberatedly omit the names of those who previously had died or had left the community. No trace, therefore, of Brother Henri Lheureux exists in this register. This Brother certainly died in Paris, in the parish of Saint-Sulpice, almost certainly in 1690: the parish records of this period were just as poorly kept as were those of the Brothers' communities. At any rate, the signature of Brother Henri Lheureux can be read at the bottom of the death notice of a certain Jean Morice, "died the first day of May (1687) at about 17 years of age".

This death notice is found in the parish register of Saint-Etienne in Rheims, for the years 1686-1700. This Jean Morice has been identified with the Brother Maurice to whom Canon Blain makes many references and who died either at the end of April or at the beginning of May, 1687, "at the age of twenty-two". Going especially by the date and the signature in the parish register, May 1, 1687, we can conclude that Brother Henri Lheureux was at Rheims and that he presented himself to the parish priest, Simon Lhermite, in the parish of Saint-Etienne, as the Brother most qualified to attest to the death of one who seems to have been his young confrere.

2. De La Salle's motives in deciding that the Brothers should proceed to elect one among themselves as Superior of the community.

The first biographers do not hesitate to tell us that De La Salle himself justified his reasons before the assembled Brothers. Being the only priest in a community, created by himself, and constituted exclusively of lay people, the Founder considered it most suitable if not necessary, that the superior of this community should himself be non-clerical.

> "In an exhortation which he gave the Brothers, he presented very valid reasons for the necessity of having a Brother as the Superior of the community. (Bernard, p. 74).
>
> He argued that, once their numbers had increased, then several among their number could be found very capable of governing the body, and that it was very important and even necessary that they choose one among themselves into whose hands he could hand over the government. (Maillefer, ms. Carbon, p. 42; ms. Rheims, p. 64).

These two themes presented by the first biographers would be amply developed much later by Canon Blain. It is regrettable that, in doing so, the third biographer insisted so much on another reason attributed to De La Salle, namely, that his wish to live out his vow of obedience in a state of subjection was incompatible with his exercise of the role of superior. Without doubt, once Brother Henri Lheureux was elected, the Founder multiplied signs of deference towards him. Equally without doubt, he demonstrated that he was particularly pleased with being able to live in that state of obedience and humility which he had deliberatedly chosen. Still, the wish to "lower himself" cannot be given as the only or even principal reason which had led the priest, John Baptist De La Salle, to have one of the Brothers elected as Superior of the Community.

3. The election of Brother Lheureux is nullified by the diocesan authorities.

Brother Bernard was the first one, albeit only after the death of the Founder, that means thirty years after the events at the Rue Neuve, to gather some testimonies from one or other of the Brothers who had lived under the superiorship of Brother Henri Lheureux. It is beyond doubt that the Abbé De La Salle, the former Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims, pushed his duty of obedience to the new Superior to its ultimate consequences. This had those out

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side of the community talking. Among the ecclesiastics, and especially among those who had the easiest access to the ear of the Grand Vicar, this was talked about quite bluntly and even severely condemned. It was inconceivable for these gentlemen of the higher clergy that a priest, and what was more, a former Canon, could so lower himself as to obey a simple Brother, a lay person without the slightest clerical dignity.

By the order of the office of the Archbishop, the election of Brother Henri was declared unacceptable, which re-instated De La Salle in his role as Superior. It is impossible to be specific about the level of those intervening. The election of Brother Henri Lheureux evidently had never been ratified by the ecclesiastical authorities. It was valid strictly within the community, and the intervention of the Ordinary was perfectly in order since it was a question of re-establishing the presence of a cleric within the heart of an association of the faithful which did not possess any other canonical status.

Such an intervention did not require any official act by the chancellory. So, this does not exclude the possibility that it was simply an oral notification to the persons concerned, hence, principally to De La Salle himself. This is the impression gathered from a reading of the biographers.

> Many people complained to the ecclessiastical superiors about De La Salle's conduct, wrote Brother Bernard, believing that De La Salle had done injury to his character and had in some way debased himself. That is why, to his great disappointment, he had to once again assume the superiorship which he had given up so joyfully. (Bernard, p. 78).
>
> They (the ecclestiastical superiors) found it wrong that a priest, a doctor and former Canon of the cathedral should unreservedly submit himself to a simple Brother not invested in any kind of distinction. The many drawbacks of such a situation were presented to him and he was obliged to re-assume the superiorship which he had given up. (Maillefer, ms. Carbon, p. 44; ms. Rheims, p. 66).
>
> They (the ecclesiastical superiors) came to the new house to re-install De La Salle, to his great regret, in the place of Superior, and to make Brother Lheureux step down, according to their wishes. (Blain, I, p. 267).
>
> And two pages later the same biographer writes: De La Salle was obliged by the Grand Vicars to reassume the first place, which he previously had held, much to his own disappointment. (Id. p. 270).

This last affirmation allows us perhaps to be precisely sure that the term "they" refers to "the ecclesiastical superiors", Still, all the same, we would hesitate to claim that the Grand Vicars themselves came to the Brothers' community.

4. The consequences of the diocesan intervention.

Without delay, there was a pure and simple return to the previous condition: the Brothers were governed by De La Salle, who had been confirmed in his position as Superior by the ecclesiastical authorities.

Still, when dreaming of the future, the Founder stuck to his idea that the Superior ought to be one of the members of the community as a whole. He did not want any Superior other than a Brother. He was apprehensive lest his own nomination should set a precedent, and that after him, another intervention by the Ordinary should bring in some ecclesiastic from the outside to become superior, a total stranger, who could in no way continue the spirit and traditions of the community.

His reflection and prayer convinced him finally, albeit reluctantly, to resort to a compromise solution. Brother Henri Lheureux had shown himself to be a good superior. Being one of the most senior members of the community, he could easily lead, if the agreement of the ecclesiastical superiors were not wanting. Such an agreement, without doubt, could be obtained if he were vested with priestly authority. De La Salle hence asked the Brother to prepare himself for Holy Orders. He himself taught Brother Henri Latin, and the Brother then followed courses in Philosophy and Theology, first in Rheims and then in Paris. De La Salle would then present him for ordination.

This initiative of the Founder could rightly surprise us. Everything that we know about him shows him to be a person of great discretion and prudence. His letters show that he was an extremely reserved man and that he highly respected the freedom of those whom he directed each time that they had recourse to him with a decision involving their conscience. Yet, here we have a case where apparently it is he who is deciding the priestly vocation of Brother Lheureux. Certainly, he must have followed proper procedures. Still, he seems to have substituted himself in the place of the interested party in a decision which directed Brother Henri towards a way of life different from that which he had chosen when he joined the Brothers' community.

It would be only natural that the Founder would have had some reservations concerning the sound basis of his decision from the very moment he thus made use of the docility of Brother Lheureux. We are less surprised at the suddenness with which he understood the sign given him shortly afterwards at the almost sudden death of the Brother right at the time when he was about to complete his preparations for the Priesthood.

> He (De La Salle) was so touched by this loss that he could not hold back his tears and he felt constrained to give some time to the sorrow it caused him. After that, reproaching his weakness, he told the Brothers around him that, by this precipitous death, God had made known that He did not want any priests in his Institute. (Maillefer, ms, Carbon, p. 59; ms. Rheims, p. 88).

The event resulted in dispelling the doubt which had been harboured in the soul of the Founder. He thus reverted — definitely this time — to be led by his original idea, that which had led him in 1687 to propose the election of a Brother as Superior from among the Brothers' Community.

Rome, 24 June 1986.

Brother Maurice HERMANS
Rome

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11-B-57

IN STEP WITH THE POOR OF THE LAND
An Original Work: TAMI

The Situation

Tami is a little village of Togo. It is situated in the Northwest of the country, some 650 kilometres from Lomé, the capital, and some 6 kilometres from Ghana, and some 20 kilometres, as the crow flies, from Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta). The village consists of 20 Zonkalas, which are a species of settlements made of adobe and straw, where 20 to 30 families are squeezed closely together. The town appears on the map with markings which give the place some relevance. Its importance is due to the fact that Tami can boast of being the "Cheferie" or seat of government for 22 towns or villages spread over some 70 square kilometres.

If you had the good fortune of getting an aerial view of the region, what would catch your attention would be the sight of how spread out the village is. There does not exist any nucleus, and no matter how well trod the place has been, it would be difficult for you to poinpoint Nawang, Pogmang, Kukdagon, or Bongpag. This demographic situation has its advantage: the people live on their own land. The inconvenience, however, is that of communication. This is the case especially when you try to evacuate a gravely sick person through paths which are hardly accessible to bicycles, or when children must walk 6 to 7 kilometres to and from school each day.

The climate is characterized by the existence of two seasons. The rainy season runs from May to October. The rest of the years is dry. Then the desert wind, the Harmatán, coming from the Northeast, pre-dominates. For two or three months this wind leaves a cloud of dust suspended in the air. It limits visibility to 200 or 300 meters and the thermometre oscillates between 12 and 30 degrees Celsius. This is the most difficult time of the year. At this time your lips and your feet dry out and begin to chap. This is the coolest and hardest time of the year.

The rural training center of Tami (RTCT)

It was to this unhospitable climate that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were invited by the Bishop of Dapaong, Msgr. Hanrion, and here they have established a little outpost in order to save people from their misery and to restore their dignity.

The PURPOSE of the RTCT. The school at Tami endeavours to train a generation of young farmers to become competent and capable of being the leaven of development for their respective peoples.

TRAINING. First and foremost we work right on the land. The first activity of our students as soon as they arrive at the Centre at the beginning of April is to learn how to handle the oxen. This is a rather difficult and dangerous task which usually does not result in more than a few bumps and minor bruises.

On the land, farming is learned: the use of chemical fertilizers, the types and mixtures of fertilizer according to the various crops (sorghum, peanuts, cotton, rice, soybeans) the use and multiplication of organic fertilizers, seed selection. The density of sowing, for example, is of great importance because if one does not have the slightest idea of the calendar, it just takes one good early rain to see all your work come to naught. Besides, the greater part of this sowing is on land which has not been previously prepared.

The women as well as the men work in the fields. The men have to devote most of their time there. To the men, of course, falls the hardest and dirtiest jobs. The women, although they spend less time in farming, must carry out the important role of handling the domestic chores, looking for firewood for the cooking, preparing meals, cleaning and otherwise looking after the children.

All that is harvested belongs to the students and they themselves are in charge of the marketing. All the work done at the Center is done in common.

The crop yields in the Center are two to three times greater than that obtained by the adjacent farms. To avoid having the goods obtained in the Center by our students wasted within the large family, we have agreed that at the end of the first year, all the families will pay for the ploughing on an installment basis. Likewise, at the end of the second year, all the families have to deposit a sizable sum of money which is destined for the purchase of a yoke of oxen. This amount allows them to pay more than half of the value of the team if the year has been good. The Center makes up what is lacking by giving out interest free loans, repayable over a five-year period. This system does not work too well, so another one will have to be established. Already, borrowing money from the bank has started, with the drawback that the students must pay the interest and it is we who have to act as guarantors.

What is clear is that the students must leave the Center equipped with those materials with which they have become familiar during their two years of training. Every project has its problems, and this is the big problem here in Tami.

FOLLOW-UP. Without a follow-up, the training given to the students will be of little use. In order for the training to be effective it is absolutely necessary that those who have been trained work in their own places in the same way that they have worked during their training period. Well then, once they are back on the local scene, our students run into certain difficulties. The influence of the family, that of the father and the older people in particular is in strong reaction again any innovations; the fear of what will be said and jealousy are things which hamper our former students when it comes time to actually do the job they were taught to do. It is ab-

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solutely necessary to encourage and buoy up the spirits of our students in such an atmosphere. We must hush up the older people who think they know everything and who have already reached the possible limits of doing something better than that done by their ancestors, and which they now pass on to their children.

Personal formation imparted at the center:

Apart from the agricultural training given to the students, the Center has organized activities designed to develop the human personality. Two hours a day are spent teaching men how to read and write. Because of the fact that nothing has been published in the local dialect, with the exception of the Gospel and the prayers said at Mass, we have had to teach literacy in French. This is a language unknown to these people, so one can image the difficulties this presents. After two years, very few of these emerge literate, but at least they pick up a minimum notion necessary to be able to spout out a little bit of French so that they will not be cheated at the market, because the teaching of literacy also includes learning some addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication.

The women were not interested in such lessons, so we had to come up with something more in keeping with their wishes. For them we have organized activities for the improvement of women: personal hygiene, the care and health of children, mother and child protection, courses in cooking, starting off with things they have in their own homes, sewing, and knitting.

Knitting seems to have really caught on with the local women. Every spare moment they have, they are found working away with their knitting or crocheting needles. The problem is that wool is so expensive. For the past couple of years, I have tried my hand at something.

I recall that as a child I saw in our town how the spinning wheel was used for spinning wool. In Togo there is no wool. Sheep are rarely seen here and these are used for their hides, but there is cotton here. I could come up with a spinning wheel, I could learn how to run it, fabricate it, and spread it around the country. In the towns these have completely disappeared. During the dry season, the women have very little to do, so spinning would be a good occupation and source of income.

In our Center, the ploughing is done by oxen. The Sabana region, where our center is located, is a region where animal husbandry abounds. However, in reality it is not well exploited.

Faced with this static energy, we could not resist getting involved. We were the first ones to make use of the oxen. During the 1970's, a little before we got ourselves set up in this region, there were not more than 30 pairs of oxen. Today, there are more than 2,500, thanks to our initiative and above all to the work done by the E.D.F. Project, European Development Fund, which has come here with their economic means and has been impressed by our methodology.

Other accomplishments

1. *Wells.* This is a work of prime urgency. During the dry season, which goes on for six long months, the women have to look for water in contaminated ponds, which are the source of innumerable sicknesses. More often, these women must trod three, six, even up to eight kilometres in order to find water fit for men and animals. Since the very beginning of our work here, we really went after this whole-heartedly. Thanks to the "Campaign Against Hunger", the "French Cooperation Mission", some La Salle schools, "Cebemo" of Holland, "Development and Peace" from Canada, etc., we have been able to equip and set up 50 wells. At present, we should be able to do about ten per year.

2. *Summer projects.* In Issue Zero of "Educating Today" you have a direct account of this (See Page 21); in this account, we are not informed of many works which were done previously: two churches, two chapels, two literacy class rooms, two schools of three rooms each (not counting the two schools put up this year), a house for training women, with two large halls and two adjacent rooms.

3. *Help to schools and dispensaries.* In our little "slush fund" we always have a few pennies to help out social works such as schools and dispensaries. It helps buy notebooks, pencils, school furniture, and medicine. Day and night we are available should it be necessary to transport some of the sick to the hospital.

Sources of funds

An Association called "Adesdida" is composed principally of students of a school in Paris and an Association of parents. They cover the costs of vehicles, generator units, the salaries of monitors and two employees, and the renovation of materials.

The Brothers of Spain take care of the travel expenses of the three Brothers present here.

Diverse groups such as CEBEMO, the Campaign Against Hunger, schools, and individual benefactors help us to finance the wells.

Some schools and other charitable souls help us to carry out the work in the schools and dispensaries.

Conclusion

Our presence in Tami is, first and foremost, the presence of the Church, a witness.

Speaking of the churches which we have constructed around Tami, I should like to cite a letter which I received just today: the Churches constructed, function as summits. They are the true focal points of encounter and the sign of a Christian presence. Around these churches the number of Christians and the work of evangelization goes on increasing.

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11-B-58

A COMMUNITY AT THE SERVICE OF THE COUNTRY FOLK

Brief Introduction: Brother Juan Bosco Morales sends us these interesting documents from Puebla about the work the Brothers are carrying on in the mountains of Serrania de Ayahualulco. Five of them work in two different places (separated from one another by a five-hour journey) for the human and religious upliftment of the country folk.

Their words sometimes truly tap at the door of our conscience with the deep echo of an authentic "liberation theology".

"Our mission to teach the poor gratuitously impels us to seek to encounter our people who, in various ways fight against injustice and death and who re-affirm their inviolable love for life and for their inalienable right to a better life, through an evangelizing education which assures a dignified and decent future, far from all exploitation and impoverishment caused by human selfishness".

(Document: "The De La Salle Charism" 1981)

I am convinced that "the fight for justice and the participation in the transformation of the world are the dimensions which constitute the preaching of the Gospel" (Synod of Bishops, 1971).

Community project

The mountain community
Self-perception:

We are a community of La Salle Brothers who wish to fulfill a *personal* and *community* mission in favor of the poor and deprived, through a witness of faith, Christian education, counsel, and support for their integral development.

"An apostolic adventure, lived in faith, hope and love".

"An adventure incarnated in human contingencies".

"A prophetic sign of proclamation and denunciation to make Christ present in the midst of our poor and deprived brothers and sisters".

1. Principles

1.1 As Christians conscious of our potentialities and responsibilities conferred on us by baptism, we wish to commit our lives to God's cause (Service to God's Kingdom).

1.2 The possibility inaugurated by Christ of living as celibates for the Kingdom permits us to form a community. *This community of faith, fraternity and service* assumes a concrete responsibility in favor of those most in need.

1.3 Previous commitments, personal choices, and the needs proper to our work oblige us to organize our space and time in such a way as to be able to reconcile our vocation and our service.

1.4 Concrete circumstances (personal commitment, the dispersion of work and necessary materials) oblige us to form a community in which the work situates us in different places. This requires us to set up definite meetings in order to reflect, pray, and plan. The strength of our relation is based on faith, on the reasonable decision of communication, and mutual support.

2. Needs

2.1 *Individual Needs*

1. As believers:

— Continued effort to achieve a greater understanding of the mystery of Christ.

— The effort to live the needs of the faith.

— The need of counting on others for sharing the faith.

— To be up to date on the writings of the Church.

2. As religious:

— A continued effort to achieve a greater understanding of the religious life.

— An effort to live the demands of our consecrated life.

— An effort to share the faith, fraternity, and service.

— An effort to achieve a consensus in our decisions for personal and communitarian work.

3. As persons:

— An effort to be honest in our dealings with others.

— An effort to be open to others in order to understand their problems, needs, desires, and wants.

— An effort to maintain the equilibrium between work, rest, personal development, and prayer.

2.2 Community life

1. Communication among ourselves:

— To plan and be faithful to scheduled meetings.

— To establish a schedule, to respect it and evaluate it.

2. With the District:

— Participation in District and Regional events: retreats, meetings, study sessions.

— Carrying out District proposals.

— Proposals for service to the youth in our schools and to those in our Houses of Formation.

— To read, analyze, and discuss District and Institute publications.

3. Concerning association and solidarity

— Being solicitous of the needs of others, offering personal resources.

— Making use of our ability to meet the needs of others.

— Sharing our moral, Intellectual, and material resources.

4. Of work:

— To establish local projects and programs and to extend to them the support expected by others.

— To give necessary information on the advances and problems of the work.

— To report properly all the items of information which should be given to the Community and District.

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3. Our community arrangement

3.1 *Our life:*

Given the dispersion of the projects attended to, Juan Bosco and Julian Espejel live in Ayahualulco, Ver., Gabriel Salom in San Andres Yahuitlalpan, Pue., and Valerio Lopez in Puebla.

In this situation, Juan Bosco and Julian Espejel, together with their co-workers, organize their community life: prayer, meals, study, rest, etc..

Gabriel Salom, faced with the present difficulty, organizes his personal prayer, study and rest, and with his companions the meals, work, reflection, etc..

Valerio Lopez does the same thing.

At least once a month we have a meeting which consists of the following: prayer, reflection, evaluation of the program and setting up the program for the month. Brother Visitor and Enrique Pizarro take advantage of this meeting to participate in the community discussion. Also, some time during the day, we try to have a meeting with our collaborators who reside closest to Puebla.

3.2 *Prayer:*

Personal prayer is something which each one programs and evaluates for himself. Community prayer is practiced: in Ayahualulco, when at least two Brothers are present, and each month during our encounters.

Our sacramental life is a personal responsibility and is integrated into the life of the parish.

Every year we dedicate two sessions for a retreat.

3.3 *Work:*

(This is included in the semestral personal project).

A letter which I am addressing to all those on whose shoulders rests the responsibility and progress of the community.

My dear Ayahualulco:

I am writing to you, my fellow country folk, because in your own community and in one way or another, you are leaders.

A leader is one who is an example for others, who is the leaven in the mass, who is a teacher of day to day life.

A leader is one who inspires by word and convinces by action. That is you, people who fight for you fellow farmers, who, for ages, have been mistreated, deceived, and deprived.

The other day I told you and all the people who met together with the municipal authorities: The Revolution has not finished, the cry of independence will continue to be heard in every corner of our land wherever misery, hunger, ignorance, illiteracy, malnutrition, alcoholism, violence, threats, maltreatment and death continue on; while injustice continues to be the law which really prevails. The day when the "common good" will be the prime consideration of both those who govern and those who are governed, on that day the dawn will break on a New Mexico, a prosperous and free nation.

My fellow countrymen, each one of you, in a certain way, are Hidalgos, Zapatas, Morelos, capable of quietly and slowly transforming your piece of the fatherland where you live, hemmed in by the steepest barriers of our country: the mountains.

The rural areas need securities, investments, technology, but above all, they need farmers and workers determined to make themselves heard, to better their lot, to organize themselves into productive cooperatives and groups, to join together for the development and marketing of their products.

You are the leaders who lead these truly revolutionary and liberating associations, not with the weapons of a demagogue or with the violence bred of hatred for one's brothers, but rather with inspiring words, agile hands, and with the level headedness which characterizes the country people.

You know your rights and demand them in a more organized way.

You know your duties and you fulfill them more conscientiously.

Beware especially of those enemies within the home: divisions, jealously, apathy, alcoholism. Do not allow people who are selfish and greedy for money to harm the community: storekeepers, middlemen, money changers, people who abuse their qualifications or their authority.

Pay special attention to the young people. Organize them, lead them, attract them, since the future of your community and of Mexico depends upon them. I notice that many youths do not participate in the life of the people: work, meetings, problems. Rather, they go after alcohol and are not interested in the diffiicult but noble tasks in the field.

Set out to form a group of Alcoholics Anonymous and seek the help of nearby groups.

Convince your women folk to get involved in the civic and political life of the community: let them listen to those women who demonstrate wisdom and prudence.

Throughout history, women have demonstrated that they are just as valiant, intelligent, and fearless as men. They have been queens, saints, sages, writers, governors, teachers, and doctors. Without them, men become weak in body, heart, and soul.

Without them, no home or community is possible. Listen to them! Respect them!

Let us go to the fertile fields and cultivate them. Let us lead, care for, and protect our children and the elderly.

Let us discipline our children; let us listen to the elders, who, though weak in body are strong in spirit.

Congregate together to celebrate your faith, love the Catholic Church, be faithful to your baptism and to the sound doctrine which has nourished you from your childhood.

Know the Bible and live according to the law of God. Take Mary of Guadalupe as your mother, Queen, and protector. Help and cooperate with your priest. Respect one another as images of the Father, Brothers and Sisters of Jesus Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit.

Settle matters among yourselves serenely and wisely, following the advice of prudent and honorable people not with violence, hatred, and murder.

Avoid spirituous liquor as you would a rabid and treacherous dog.

Exert your rights and fulfill your duties; love one another, help one another, and organize yourselves together in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.

May you always be protected along the way in the battle by the maternal care of the ever Virgin Mary.

Be courageous and prudent.

Peace and Well Being to all of you.

Fraternally, Your Friend,

Brother Juan Bosco MORALES
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11-C-43

A CATECHUMENATE FOR ADULTS

Starting out from experience.

Everything that I say in this article is based on the experience of a group of "catechumens" that have been together for twelve years. This catechumenal group began in October of 1974 as a result of a parent-teacher meeting in the school where I work. At that meeting we had tried to help them see that the religious formation that their children were receiving was quite different from the one that we had received when we were children and young people.

They themselves then asked to be given a catechesis that would update them in their formation in the faith, and in that way have the religious instruction that they were trying to give at home in accord with what was being imparted in school.

We had very intense catechetical sessions for the first eight years — weekly sessions of two hours each. Since that time, we put in an hour and a half at bi-weekly meetings.

The work that we are presently doing is rather a dialogue on some specific theme which the members of the group have prepared beforehand.

The evolution of the group has been a very positive experience. All claim to have a much better grasp of the content of their Faith and a greater awareness of the message of the Gospel. They unanimously feel that their own Christian life is stronger and more authentic than before.

Two of the participants have organized their own catechumenal groups in other school centers. Three of the group have taken courses in theology or ecclesiology or moral theology, or all three in the diocesan seminary. Most of the members of the group have undertaken catechetical activity in parish centers. Also several of them have helped out in our school with special catechism classes organized to prepare our students for the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion.

The times, they are a-changing.

We are all aware of the speed with which times have changed for society. We might even say that these come with dizzying speed. And change is affecting every facet of human life, including the religious.

Precisely in this facet, society, our society, is asking for Christians that "know how to give the reason of their faith"; that will testify that Christ is living; that it is worth the trouble to follow in His steps; that they may be the builders of a new world.

Given the demand for "authentic Christians", one may ask with St. Paul: "But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe unless they have heard of him? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach?" (Romans 10,14).

This is the question, how are there going to be committed Christians if they practically have not heard of Jesus Christ and of the Faith?

With good reason St. John Baptist De La Salle insists that among the chief duties that fathers and mothers have one of the most serious is the Christian education of their children and their instruction in their religion.

But for the most part they themselves do not properly know the Faith. Many are occupied with temporal concerns all day long besides the care of their family; others are all taken up with the need to earn a livelihood and put bread on the table for themselves and their children, so that they cannot have the time to instruct their children in their duties as Christians. (Med. 194).

One solution: The Catechumenate for Adults. When we speak of an "adult catechumenate" what is normally understood is the catechetical process through which Christians-in-name become truly Christian trying to discover a Faith which is presumed to be "adult" but which, in fact, is not for not having developed in favorable circumstances.

What is needed with great urgency today is a means to strengthen and revitalize a goodly number of those that call themselves Christians but who in fact are not because they have not received sufficient formation to be so. As we all know, the Church baptizes infants as a general practice. Logically, there can be no question of a previous preparation for these.

On the other hand, among baptized persons there are many who have not received any reliigious instruction, or very little, after their baptism. As a consequence, it can be stated that there are many who in their childhood, youth or even as adults really have not had a "proper Christian education".

For these reasons, it is clear, these baptized persons require a catechetical attention through which they may discover the faith which they have received in Baptism and which will permit them to live according to the exigencies of the other Sacraments.

The "adult catechumenate" comes to us in a specific context since it does not deal with a preparation to receive the Sacraments of "Christian initiation"; rather, it addresses itself to the development of the faith already received in Baptism, so that, as adults, these people may responsibly assume the duties that the Faith places on the Christian.

Objectives of the adult catechumenate

We will point out a few. The first objective is the passage from an unconscious and irresponsible infantile Faith to one which is developed and with the full acceptance of responsibility, which implies a true option for Christ. This is what is meant by an adult faith.

Another objective which the catechesis of adults strives to achieve is the incorporation of the catechumens in a Christian community where their faith may grow and be celebrated. If such a community does not exist it should be created. In fact, community is the key to the living of the catechumenal process.

The catechumens must live and celebrate their faith in community. Therefore, it will be an objective of the catechumenate to create Christian community or to join one that already exists.

A third objective is that of forming committed Christians, who are capable of assuming a real commitment as a consequence of their faith.

We have said the group is the key to the development of catechetical activity. A catechesis in community and in the catechumenal process seems to require as a medium in which it may come about most properly, its actualization in a group.

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Dealing with adults, it seems to be in the group where the sense of Christian responsibility is best developed today.

The reason for the choice of a group catechesis is that it serves as a base on which such a group can and ought to build a magnificent experience of Christian ecclesial life.

Essential dimensions of the faith are developed in a special way by group catechetics. These are:

— the communitarian dimension and the sense of belonging to the Church, since, thanks to the group, the faith is shared in common; the common experience of the faith of the Church is created, is expressed; it becomes possible to announce one's faith to others, to return the faith that has been received as one's own word.

One feels that he is welcome in the heart of the group, he is accepted and recognized in his own personhood; he feels personally called and recognized... Fraternal love becomes possible.

— The experience of the unfathomable richness of the plan of God who acts in so many ways in different persons and who conducts the lives of men on different paths. This too can be lived in the catechesis of a group.

The education in the faith of the believer, with a view to initiate him in the Christian community, is the summing up and finality of catechesis. To accomplish that, together with the profession of faith, the celebration of the mysteries of Christianity, and the living of Gospel values, the community is the goal of catechesis.

Some characteristic traits

Which have shaped the cathechesis of adults. In the degree to which the catechumenate is a process through which the baptized person discovers and matures in the faith, in relationship with other catechumens, it has a structure and, consequently, some traits that define it.

I will point out some of these traits which we use in our catechumenate:

— The catechesis must be Christ-centered. There can be no Christianity without Christ who is the center — the way, the truth and the life — of the disciple so that each catechumen progressively acquires the clear awareness of his personal union with Christ.

The catechumenal group is brought together by the WORD OF GOD which supposes that the WORD is listened to, that it is made use of, that it is reflected upon, that in it is seen God's design and His plan of salvation for all men. An authentically ecclesial group is so designed that it will be in a permanent disposition to review, to change, to respond faithfully to the Will of God as manifested in His WORD.

— Community character. The catechumenal group is something more than the sum of the individuals that make it up. It must be characterized by dialogue and by interpersonal communication which are its working traits. It is also recognized by its spirit of solidarity, and by communion with regard to the goals it tries to achieve through the living-out of the catechumenal process.

— It tends to responsibility and co-responsibility, joined with and diversified from service for the neighbor. Each of the catechumens, from his own station and situation in life, ought to contribute to the building up and growth of the "Kingdom". The level of commitment, it can be said, is the level that a Christian must attain.

— Another trait of a catechumenal group must be its human face. The firming up of the community sense of Church comes about most effectively in groups or communities in which the number of the members make the interpersonal relationship possible.

★ Believers feel they are integrated into the Church when they are known by name, in a personal way.

★ They learn to share their own faith with that of their brothers, overcoming differences and varying points of view, in communion.

★ The personal attitude of each can be more active and creative.

★ The hearing of the Word of God, the Christian commitment of the members and the celebration of the Eucharist make up the places for the experience of the life of the Church. And these are what the Christian group does.

The family

A catechumen who perseveringly continues his catechesis will be prepared to live his faith in a committed way and will also be able to form others in this beautiful task.

One of the objectives of our catechumenate was precisely that — to prepare fathers and mothers so that they could in turn educate their children in the faith.

The family must be considered as the catechetical channel of primordial importance and, in a certain way, irreplaceable (*Catechesi tradendae).*

This is the way in which it has been considered and emphatically promoted in the tradition of the Church, especially since Vatican II.

The family is the first community in which men open themselves to a knowledge of the truth, to love, and to relationships with others.

The Christian family ought to be a space where the Gospel is transmitted from one generation to another and from which it radiates out. (*Evangelii Nuntiandi).*.

The Christian family has its own mission with regard to the education of its members, especially of the children. The family is "catechist" by vocation and nature.

Parents and the family as a whole are the first catechists and make up the very first catechesis of the children.

The family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches every other form of catechesis. (*Catechesi Tradendae).*

The faith is transmitted within the context of family, by word and example, by prayers which are said together and principally, by creating a Christian atmosphere. (Synod of 1977).

In fact, this education in the faith ought to begin at the very earliest age of the children. It takes place when the family members help one another to grow in the faith by means of the witness of a Christian life, often silent, but persevering throughout a daily existence lived according to the Gospel. It will be most outstanding when, in the regular rhythm of family happenings, the Christian and religious significance of those happenings is made clear. (*Catechesi Tradendae).*

All of this is going to require a real change of mentality in many families, and especially with regard to the education in the faith in the midst of the family.

The catechumenate of adults can be one of the formulas that give a solution to these needs.

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ANIMATION OF GROUPS OF MOTHER CATECHISTS

In the two Districts of Mexico, the parents of the students have been invited to participate in the teaching of religion in the schools. According to the schools, this invitation has received a greater or lesser response. The reasons are varied and the present situation is susceptible to evolution. In general, however, it is above all the mothers of the family who agree to participate in the catechism effort.

In the District of South Mexico, three Brothers work full-time in the Pastoral Commission which takes charge of guiding and supervising the catechetical programs and at the same time looking after the vocational program, both for youth and for adults. In order to learn more about the animation of the groups of "Mother Catechists", we asked some questions of Brother Carlos Alveano, who is in charge of this Commission.

1) What concretely does this responsibility entail?

For the schools in the urbanised centres of Mexico City, there is generally a group of 6 or 7 persons who accept the responsibility of education in the faith in the primary schools. These are the groups I work with directly.

In the schools outside of the Federal District, groups of Mother Catechists. The importance of these groups may vary from a few individuals up to some forty persons.

It is always a question of volunteers, which explains, no doubt, the variations of numbers. Usually, it is the Brothers who, in each school, seek out the volunteers. Further, it frequently happens that the Mother Catechists themselves invite other parents of students to join them.

2) But does not such participation in catechesis require previous training?

Definitely. Among those who accept the responsibility in Mexico City, for example, many have followed courses in catechesis and in theology at La Salle University, which they had chosen as their electives.

For the others, we give them on-the-spot training. These sessions or series of courses are given to them especially at the beginning of the school year but they also continue on throughout the school year, in the form of bi-weekly courses.

3) What is your role in this training?

For the urbanised centres of Mexico, in which half of our schools are concentrated, I have established an annual calendar of meetings: once a month I meet with those who are in charge of each group. Beginning with a proposed working plan, these meetings are the occasion of training. Questions are answered, practical advice is exchanged, and these belong to the psychological, pedagogical, or doctrinal order: on the manner of proceeding with the children. Further, I regularly visit those in charge of catechism, in their own schools during their actual work.

For the groups in the provincial schools, I also have an annual calendar of visits and meetings.

4) How do you organise the catechetical work in these schools?

In each school there is at least one Brother in charge of working together with the group of catechists.

Each week, a meeting is called for the concrete purpose of preparing lessons. These meetings sometimes also entail courses in Bible training, as part of the overall program.

During the catechism sessions, the groups are broken down into small teams of two or three persons. It is those who are the most experienced who take charge of the pupils and assume the essential part of the work. The others are trained by this contact and little by little acquire experience and confidence in themselves.

Each catechist works in only one class and chooses, whenever possible, the level and age which suits her best.

5) There is, then, a definite programme?

Yes, five years ago, one Brother of the District drew up a program divided into the six years of the primary school. This program has been perfected with the collaboration of the catechists themselves. It has even given birth to six text books used in the schools of the District. In fact, for each level there are two texts;

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the teacher's manual and the exercise book of the pupils.

Recently, four of these books were revised. These programmes revolve around Christology and the Sacraments, starting off with the Bible and according to a division of Liturgical themes. Added to this is the Marian dimension, so dear to Mexicans.

We must remark, however, that preparation for First Holy Communion and for Confirmation are treated separately, in a more intensive way, during the two month period directly preceding the reception of these two sacraments. Involved here are also the parents and godparents concerned. This preparation is done mostly after school hours, in the early evening, and is culminated by a retreat.

6) Could we have a more precise picture of this program?

In the first year, we offer 35 themes broken down into three parts: God is my Father; Jesus leads me to the Father; We are saved together with Jesus.

The second year is centered on the following perspective: God is among us, we celebrate this and meet Him in the Eucharist.

The third year stresses the life of Jesus so as to derive from it lessons for our own lives.

In general, we try to show that Jesus of the Gospels is present to us today, that his appeals concern us and that they invite us to reflect on our own personal conduct. This format is presented and lived according to the liturgical seasons.

7) Do you have a different program beyond the primary school?

Yes. In the secondary classes, the catechesis is organized differently. There are Brothers and certain lay teachers who take charge of religious instruction. The mothers no longer participate here. However, some of them would like to continue on into the secondary school and this, no doubt, will be implemented in the future, as is the case in some schools of the North Mexico District.

We also see that certain mothers continue to participate in the catechetical program even after their children have finished the primary school. They have discovered a certain vocation as catechists.

8) Has there been any evaluation of this work?

Yes, each year, those responsible for the catechetical program meet together for one day to evaluate their work. This is a time of weighing matters, exchanging idesas, thinking things over together, and it is a time of celebration. We generally are convinced that this exchange of experiences is very enriching. The closing Eucharistic Celebration is an expression of the quality of the work done and reveals the depth of consciousness in our work with the ministry of the word.

9) What positive aspects do you find in your work of animation?

I should like to briefly list, without any order of priority, some of the aspects which I have observed.

— The unification of the program and methods have had positive effects;

— the catechists become certain that they are helping the children learn "something".

— the mothers attest to a new personal commitment of a more apostolic dynamism;

— in the schools, their Christian witness is sometimes stronger than that of the teachers;

— the catechesis in the schools has been improved;

— there now exists a small group of faith ful catechists who assure the continuity of this programme, and the less permanent members assure an enriching newness;

— the educational communities have become more dynamic by the creation of a Pastoral Council in the schools. This Council is representative of the different components of the educational community;

— the catechists recognize that their work inspires them to a more Christian and evangelical life;

— in the school, for example, the Mother Catechists organise an hour of community prayer, fortnightly;

— some other mothers have also organised retreats for the teachers and parents in order to contribute to the Christian animation of the educational community.

This enumeration does not pretend to be complete. It is sufficient to underscore the importance and the interest of the task. It is a good way of sharing our ministry of Christian education with lay people.

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11-C-45

TEACHING AS MINISTRY: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

"Let it be clear, then, in all your relations with the children who are entrusted to you that you look upon yourself as a minister of God, acting with a sincere and true zeal, accepting with much patience the difficulties you have to suffer..." (*Meditations for the Time of Retreat, 9,1).*

Some consider teaching a profession which demands skills, training, and knowledge of subject matter; others consider teaching an art, a skill developed through experience, observation, careful attention, and practice. It is both of these, but more as well. Teaching, within our Christian tradition, is a ministry, a gift given for the service of others. Henri Nouwen describes ministry as "the ongoing attempt to put one's own search for God, with all the moments of pain and joy, despair and hope, at the disposal of those who want to join this search but do not know how". Teaching as ministry is a way of caring and helping.

As ministry, teaching shares in each of the traditional ministries of the Church: *didache, leiturgia, koinonia, kerygma,* and *diakonia.*

Didache is the ministry of teaching the Word, revealing the "good news" to all who will listen. The teacher is called to speak the message of Jesus, a message that proclaims that each person is made in God's image and therefore has worth, has dignity, has freedom, is worthy of love, can grow, can love. The teacher touches the heart of his student when he reveals to the student that the "good news" is about him personally. The teacher accomplishes this when learning occurs and the student realizes that he has the potential to know something new; the student can sense growth at those moments of special insight. So too the teacher accomplishes this when he leads the student to recognize that his life can make a difference through some act of service. When the teacher acknowledges the uniqueness of the student, affirms his insight, recognizes him as worthy of his time and attention, that teacher is touching the heart; it is in the heart that the "good news" is experienced. That teacher who serves as God's human instrument to reveal God's message of abiding and personal love is indeed a minister of grace.

Leiturgia is the ministry of praying for and with others. The teacher is called to pray for and with his students. By bringing his students in prayer before God, the teacher makes a profession of faith that it is God who accomplishes good for and in the young people entrusted to his care; ultimately, God will bring those students to fullness of life. Likewise, the teacher prays with his students. More than ever, young people need the witness of someone who lives in the presence of God and calls that to mind frequently. When the teacher can share faith, can share praise, thankgiving, worship, can stand in awe and wonder with his students before a God who transcends all yet who is so intimately present, that teacher ministers to those entrusted to his care.

koinonia is the ministry of community-building. The teacher is called to "be with" his students, to be a focus for unity, to be in communion. One aspect of this ministry is to welcome the student; the teacher is called to be a host, to create a hospitable space so that the student can feel at home in his presence, feel safe enough to approach him in time of difficulty and need. A second aspect of this is to listen. The teacher is called to hear what the student has to say, both in word and in silence. Each student has a unique story which aches to be heard; sometimes students speak their stories in silence, in actions and behaviors that are not attended to. The teacher who is a keen listener to the hutrts and cries of the young that cannot find words is a true minister. A third aspect is to wait; the teacher is called to spend long hours with students as they seek out for themselves the meaning of life in general and their lives in particular. The teacher patiently accompanies the student as he grows and discovers and learns at his own pace; to force one's own way upon another is to violate the sacredness of anoth-

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er's journey. The teacher spends much time waiting. A final aspect of this ministry is partnership; the teacher is called to be a mutual learner. Students also have insights and a certain wisdom that confounds the "wise" of this world. Real teaching and learning is the mutual discovery of ideas, a sharing of knowledge so that both can see with new eyes.

Kerygma is the ministry of proclamation. This is a prophetic ministry; it calls the teacher to "speak up". The teacher must speak up to institutions and people on behalf of the young. Having engaged his students in conversation, he is aware of their need and advocates for them before the power brokers of the world. As such, he is called to challenge those things which might inhibit a student's growth or deprive a student of his God-given rights. Furthermore, the teacher is called to offer opportunities for the young to speak on their own behalf to each other and to institutions. The teacher who creates a climate in which students can engage in open, honest, and respectful discussions, who develops within his students a literacy in both word and symbol, who helps students to frame questions, who empowers students with the ability to be critical thinkers, who teaches students how to read the signs of the times, that teacher is engaged in a dangerous but needed ministry.

Diakonia is the ministry of service. The teacher is called to reach out to and serve those entrusted to his care. Following the example of the Master Teacher, Jesus, the teacher must bow before his disciples and wash their feet. This foot washing demands a humility that recognizes the great worth of those served; it calls forth the willingness to be vulnerable, to acknowledge mistakes, to forgive and allow oneself to be forgiven, to love both the attractive and the unattractive, the hopefilled and the despairing, the bright and the slow. Kneeling at the feet of another is the ultimate call to generosity, zeal, and giving without limit. However, the teacher must likewise challenge his students to follow his example and to wash one another's feet. The teacher must help his students to see that each person's gifts are for the service of others; students must be attentive to the needs of a world which so desperately looks for people of ideals, vision, and the willingness and ability to bring these to some reality.

Teaching, therefore, is a ministry. It is a ministry to the gifts of the young, a life-giving ministry which attends to the emerging creative edge of a young person's life. It calls the teacher to affirm the gifts of the young, to recognize and acknowledge the beauty of God so uniquely revealed in each student. Furthermore, it is a ministry of transformation. The teacher is called to help students turn their attention from their own, self-centered needs to the needs of the world, to challenge students to transform their apathy and powerlessness in the face of the world's suffering to compassion and solidarity. Teaching is a holy and sacred calling; surely, it is a ministry of grace, for the teacher is called to be God's special ambassador and co-worker in the building of the Kingdom.

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11-D-19

THE COMPUTER IN A TECHNICAL SCHOOL

In a school of technical instruction like ours, for the past ten years the computer has been an integral part of the environment of both the teachers and the students. Today it is considered as a familiar and indispensable working tool. Certainly, the continual development of the performance of the computer (memory capacity, interfaces, and peripheries, software) still largely leaves open the research into the utilization and exploitation of this powerful instrument.

It is therefore, not possible to give all its multiple uses within a technical school in detail. We must therefore limit ourselves to a few particular areas:

★ Teaching with the l'C.A.E.;
★ administrative management;
★ research in the field of industrial production.

Computer assisted education (C.A.E.)

The principles of C.A.E. were defined a few decades ago by the innovators who had already perceived the various uses which could be made of a computer for programmed and individualized instruction. The appreciation given it today depends on the various results, notably in the function of the spheres of application for which it is considered. In certain apprenticeship programmes in high technology (piloting of planes, trains, or other complex machines, etc.), in the updating of already highly-qualified adults, completely conclusive results are obtained because the enterprises concerned make use of the available materials and software which allow them to derive the best results from the computer apparatus.

In the school, it is often entirely different for, in spite of pin-pointed results and isolated enthusiasm, the complete conversion of the teaching staff cannot yet be seen, at least in the second scholastic cycle. Many reasons can be found for this: Insufficient knowledge of computer concepts, insufficient apparatus available, the too rapid evolution of materials, the absence of standards; all that has impeded the creation of a convincing computerization. More serious, because here it is a question of a more durable structural reason, we are forced to conclude that the school organization is too rigid and poorly adapted towards an instrument which is designed to introduce individualization, freedom and thus flexibility.

What has happened at Baronnerie, in the C.A.E. since 1977, well enough illustrates these tendencies and these limitations. The first teaching programmes created according to the IMAGO system of the University of Louvain, functioned on a computer of moderate strength which relied upon teletype terminals. The arrival of micro-computers with cathode screen, which were more flexible, more attractive, have progressively led to the abandonment of the big system and the programmes have been translated into BASIC language. The equipment in a network room has allowed a more rational utilization and many classes have been able, in the course of the past few years, to benefit by the C.A.E.. The interest of the students has not stopped over the course of the years: pedagogical effectivity has proven difficult to measure; still, the conviction is strengthened that for students who are falling behind in the ordinary courses, the computers help them to catch up with the others.

However, the problems mentioned above are quickly met with: the modernization of material, acquisition or creation of software of high pedagogical quality, the adaptation of locations and structures for an optimal utilization of the C.A.E..

Still, the biggest disquietude is not in that area: if in technical teaching the micro-computer has found a place as a useful working tool in industrial trades, in other areas, teachers and students often look upon it as a simple gadget, it they do not relegate it to the rank of a foolish toy. There we have an annoying psychological wrinkle which will not very easily be smoothed out. And, perhaps the most sophisticated equipment will become so inexpensive that it will finally allow C.A.E. to leave its small-scale groping to attain the industrial quality which alone will allow it to arrive at a medium of instruction to rival school manuals and professional software. The micro-computer has been the victim of a galloping and anarchial evolution. What would have happened to the movie-making industry if it had known in a space of five years the technological upheavals which it has weathered in a half-century? What would have happened with phonograph records if no standards had been adopted? It would be truly regrettable if a pedagogical aid which is performing so well as is the computer should be neglected or reduced to minimum use, but I think that such a thing is highly improbable.

2) School administrative management

Our society is becoming more and more complex and the administrative support is becoming more and more important. Consequently, beginning with the initial step of counting the number of students, the computer has proven to be indispensible in order to avoid the fastidious tasks of classifying, printing circulars, addressing envelopes, keeping track of grades, not to mention invoices.

By the establishment of a bank of school information including:

★ an index of students;
★ an index of former students;
★ an index of schools of origin;
★ an index of enterprises accepting our graduates;

those in charge of the establishment have rapid

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access making correspondence with parents and external organizations easy.

Not having the proper equipment adapted to our needs, it was necessary to conceive of software implanted in micro-computers and small autonymous system, all of which were compatible with one another, so that they could use the same tiny discs as informational support.

From now on, each service (accounting, secretariat, direction of studies) will make use of micro-computers with a system adapted to its needs. It is incontestable that, despite the inconveniences inherent in technical limitations, the computer in the field of management has contributed to the pronounced betterment of the operations of the establishment.

Beginning with this year, a telecommunication system is functioning from 2000 hours in the evening until 0600 hours in the morning and is connected with a central station in Paris, thus permitting us to rapidly exchange information among the technical schools of France. Certainly, the telex is not something new, but the special thing in this case consists in the interconnection among the various schools in such a way that banks could be set up and adapted to the needs of technical schools, with the various items either in the field of pedagogy, applied research, or administration.

3) Research applied to production

In our school we provide the initial training of higher technicians (two years after the baccalaureate) and the continued training of more advanced students (three years after the baccalaureate) in the fields of Electronics, Electrotechnology, Production, and Mechanical Manufacturing. More than the others, the teachers of various technological specialities were very quick to realize the possible applications of the mini-computer in the fields of Process Management and Production Management, thanks to the terminals connected with the micro-computers.

The parallel development of production machines operated by remote control and by micro computers has allowed for the orientation of applied research towards the flexibility of production through the realization of a flexible unity.

The flexibility in production corresponds to:

— a capacity to treat a great number of different items;

— the power to absorb variations of the rhythm of production and ought to lead to a minimization of delays in production and to an optimization of the rate of use of machines at the central plant.

To bring into focus this flexible unity of production generated by the computer, a multi-disciplinary team of research teachers has worked hard for two years, the research being oriented towards the following fields:

1. Computerization

★ interface between machines remotely controlled and the computer,

★ automatic modification by programmes by the Mini 6, example: management of tools used.

★ elaboration of programmes and software at the command of these machines.

★ focusing on the software of running all the machines and robots by computer.

2. Assisted Production and Assisted Design

★ Bringing into focus the production design programmes starting from software;

★ setting up indexes of scales and tools;

★ management of stocks on hand, management of production helped by the computer.

3. Automatism and the Use of Robots

★ management and bringing the system for conveying goods up to date;

★ automatic cleaning of parts before control;

★ automatization of controls;

★ automatic loading and unloading on machines by an electrical command coming from the factory center;

★ dimensional control of parts without contact.

Such a realization allowed the developing of ties with the enterprises of the S.M.I. (Small and Medium Industries) confronted with these problems of computerization of production and of not disposing of tools and men too often.

Such a research allowed for the mobilization of the teachers and the students of the school and allowed the enterprises to discover the technical realities hidden behind the myth of the computer.

Conclusion

Is not certain whether or not the introduction of the computer into teaching was not too rapid and, at the same time, too precocious (in the elementary school and above all in the nursey school in France at present) for, beyond the laudable concern about adapting to the modern technical world, would it not be necessary to launch a research into a substitution which is less dramatic to overcome all the evident educational deficiences.

Certainly, in a vocational school like ours, technical culture tends to become dominant but it is situated too much on the periphery to answer the fundamental needs of man. Despite their attraction, the calls to progress are not sufficient to motivate the younger generations however well anchored they may be in an ever more technical civilization. We must prove our realism and humility in our research into computer use in our instruction. We must, in effect, rediscover or maintain our educational qualities which for more than two centuries, thanks to the principles of Lasallian education, have been a guideline for those youths who are seeking points of reference.

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11-D-20

A LAY DIRECTOR OF A LASALLIAN SCHOOL

Engagement

In September 1973 we learned that the Brother Visitor would name a Brother as Directory of De La Salle, Avignon for the last time, unless...

That same year, without being able to see any justification for the choice, I replied YES to the appeal to come to serve the youth, while continuing to teach, as the leader of around 400 students from 14 to 16 years of age. Being fond of a certain material, moral, and intellectual comfort, I did not know quite clearly what I had gotten myself into.

Sharing

However, I owed a great debt towards the Brothers' Institute, for, quite young, I had known and appreciated the dynamism of a Brothers' community, absorbed in this spirit, educated and impressed by the profundity of all that was Lasallian.

Little by little, over a period of four years, I benefited by a "direct" formation; during this time the changes were prepared regarding the Management Organization of the establishment, dealing with parents, teachers, pupils, and on various occasions, meeting with the Brothers' community. I had the chance of choosing my own assistant, who was already a member of the teaching staff, and very soon we had a real team of leaders who went into operation in July, 1977, when the Brothers gave up the Direction of the establishment.

Thanks to Brother Provincial who assured me of meaningful sharing and cooperation, I learned that the lay directors in France were seeking closer bonds, to work along with the Brothers and in elaborating upon the conditions of a real Brothers-Laymen Association. It was a question of seeing how, together, Lasallian Institutions, always so competent and up to date, could live. It was this approach which interested me so much.

At the same time, new Diocesan Committees for Catholic Education were being organized in the dioceses of France which would have for their particular mission to exercise a "Trusteeship" over scholastic establishments of Catholic Education. The Brothers' Institute and the lay directors were seeking ways of setting up a Lasallian trusteeship. This move also aroused in me a great interest. I thought that for myself personally and for the institution this idea should be spurred on. The word was spread around and then to the councillors of the school I announced my intention of starting off the process with Brother Visitor for membership in the Lasallian Association. This was an engagement desired and sought by the school who had worked along with the Brothers for some 40 years.

We wished to continue to call ourselves, The Saint John Baptist De La Salle School and College or just simply the Brothers' School. In fidelity to Lasallian values, we ought to try above all to live day by day, listening to, and caring for those who are most deprived, to try to lead all educators to diminish the distance between words and deeds. Fidelity to a patrimony, to a history, to values, all the while accepting necessary evolutions, this was the expression of our will.

Lasallian Association

I wrote to Brother Visitor asking him to present my application to the Lasallian Association which comprised other lay directors of Lasallian schools in the country. After an affirmative response, the ground was ready and a visit by the delegates of the Council of the association was scheduled in view of establishing a definite membership. As a result of this visit, an agreement was signed with the Diocesan Committee for Catholic Education. From then on, the school, with myself as intermediary, would belong to the Lasallian Association.

Concretely, how is this trusteeship of the Institute through the Lasallian Association to be lived? What can such a trusteeship do for the school? Will the teachers as a whole follow it? Such were the questioned presented by our management team.

The school management body agreed to modify its statutes in order to introduce the fact of the trusteeship by the Lasallian Association. I had the chance to work with this team which is united, dynamic, effective, and very Lasallian.

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Very quickly, the school asked for a second visit which would be developed within the framework of a day of pedagogical reflection. A Brother led us to rediscover the sense of giving and of how to receive the youth and their parents and how to integrate the "Morning Reflection" with daily life, which was not evident for the young teachers. Another question dealt with was Why maintain a boarding department for 350 students?

Despite the deliberate preparation and maturation, the Brothers' Community at the school still had a difficult time adjusting to the situation: frustration, the loss of authority, sometimes personal affairs. These perhaps were for me the saddest things I had to bear alone. Still, the regular contacts with the Brother Visitor allowed for an evolution of minds and hearts. I quickly discovered new horizons, new expanses of liberty, of action, and of fraternity on several levels.

New forms of the Association

Afterwards, I happened to be elected to the Administrative Council of the Lasallian Association. It is a group at whose centre adaptations and innovations are worked out. Thus, the ASSOCIATION which De La Salle wished for his first Brothers has taken on a new dimension more than three hundred years later. Concretely, the Lasallian Association has made itself felt by timely actions of formation under the form of weekend meetings on the national plan, then by regional meetings, each time with a precise theme which facilitated an exchange of ideas and mutual sharing.

In the Central Mediterranean District a regular series of meetings have been set up, for one or two days each year, in which the Brother Visitor brings the Brothers Directors and the Lay Directors together for meetings. In the seven years that this has been practiced, I can gauge the progress that has been made: from the courtesy of sharing a spiritual, pedagogical, and educational richness, strong ties have been established, and a type of brotherhood has come about in which each one is respected according to his personal status in life.

Paths for the future

Another appeal is now being addressed to us, Brothers and Laymen: what dimension are we going to dare give to the Boards of Trustees which are installed in each District? There is much to be done, but we are not hemmed in by customs, routines, nor anything *a priori.* How can we together write a new page in Lasallian history?

It is urgent that as soon as possible and in a realistic and effective way, we set up a Formation Center specifically for the values, institutions, and projects of Saint John Baptist De La Salle. Those who will be in charge of the schools in the future ought to have access to such formation. This, I believe is one of the priorities of the Institute in France, not for following, but for understanding a true dynamism. So there is much yet to be done. The task which awaits us is urgent and necessary. Shall we know how to raise up from among our teaching staff persons who will be capable of carrying on the work and the responsibilities?

Looking back a bit, I can say that I am happy to belong to the Lasallian Association and to have experienced the joy of the all too little number of teachers who set it on its way.

Conclusion

As the head of a school, I am envied by others who do not find within the Diocesan Committee the same closeness, the same pedagogical sharing, and the same means of animation.

I should like to finish with the hope that the Brother Visitor, even though it is natural that he should dedicate himself to the Brothers' Community, would be able to devote some time also to look after the Lay Directors, to meet the teachers, the catechists, the administrators, the parents, the management organizations, and even the students in their classes. Conscious of my own limitations, and taken up by family cares, I should willingly accept all the help which the Brothers could afford me as well as to all who live this mission of service to youth.

The orientations and decisions of the Brothers' 41st General Chapter will, no doubt, promote this channel of effective collaboration for the exercise of the ministry of education.

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11-E-26

THE RELIGIOUS APOSTOLATE OF A BROTHER IN THE THIRD AGE

For the past four years I have been in contact with a group of children from the nursery school up to, and including, the sixth year. I do not teach catechism to these children unless a teacher needs me to offer this service. I exercise my religious apostolate by further developing the catechesis on every level

I accomplish this work in the following way: at the beginning of my religious activity of 30 to 35 minutes, I review the theme that has been taught in class. Next, I go to the practical part of making these experiences come to life. It goes without saying that this requires a lot of creativity. This religious experience is a workshop of evangelical practices. These activities follow the catechism time fixed by the schedule. To involve all the pupils or almost all of them affords a capital importance to these experiential activities.

One example. During Lent, I prepared the fifth year pupils for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. These came to the place prepared for this religious service where I had taken great care in creating an atmosphere conducive to such a preparation: soft lighting, music to set the right tone, posters, usually done by myself, using Gospel texts, the Bible, paschal candle, etc.. We start off with some brief questions in order to review and this is followed by a hymn and a moment of relaxation. I can either read, or have read, a parable, where I ask the pupils to expand upon what is illustrated in front of them. I refer to the most important points of the parable: ingratitude, dissoluteness, jealousy, vengence, mercy, shame, pardon, according to the identity of the personages. You have recognized the parable of the Prodigal Son. I succeed in making them discover the Lord's mercy in the face of the weakness revealed in the conduct of the two sons. It is an examination of conscience where one asks himself where he has been faithful and where unfaithful to the call of God or simply to His word. At other times, I would draw up a list of Gospel texts on the points most often broken. Each one has a list of passages. The pupils express themselves spontaneously about these. When it comes to the accusation, they say to the priest: "I am a sinner. I have been particularly deficient in keep such a word of God". In other words, the Word of God is used for confessing. To illustrate further, I would give each pupil a sheet of paper on which a caterpillar devouring a leaf is drawn. They can freely write their lack of love. They give it to the priest on entering the confessional room. There follows a litany prayer to ask pardon. The pupils make up their own or use another. After confession, to the sound of soft music, there is a prayer of thanksgiving in the form of hymns, prayers of praise or by the recitation of Biblical passages.

There are other kinds of religious activities. There are those which deal with the liturgical celebrations in the parishes, especially the Eucharist; those which are done each week during the main times of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter.

For this purpose, one hour of pastoral activities which can be devoted to each group each month is written into the schedule.

It is on the occasion of ceremonies for the Christian community that we most frequently use the biblical recitations, choreography or sacred dances. The congregation very much appreciates this kind of participation. The young could ask for nothing better. Sometimes the entire class learns the choreography. At other times, it is only the youth chorale I practice with outside of class time. Of the 240 pupils, I get about one-eighth of them to participate in it.

With regard to the recitation of Biblical texts done in the usual oral way, significant gestures add much to the Word. Most often, the Gospel and Psalms are chosen.

For example, at the profession of faith in the sixth year, the pupils, after having formulated their credo individually or by groups, recite the Profession of Peter: "Upon arriving in the region of Caesaria Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples...".

What are the reactions of the young to these religious activities? We can state them as being positive. I can assure you that they like these religious activities and they tell me so. Still, what is even more convincing is the testimonies of the parents and the teachers. It is a pleasure to hear the various accounts.

What are the objectives? They are very numerous. Ordinarily, they are pointed out following the catechetical theme. For the new program set up in 1986 for the primary course, here is a resume of a list of objectives in the religious apostolate in Quebec:

Table I - *New interiorization followed in the Primary.*

Reception: Consciousness - Willingness to receive - Attention directed or preferred.

Response: Assent - Willingness to respond - Satisfaction in responding.

Valorization: Acceptance of a value - Preference for a value - Commitment.

Table II - *Finality of Education.*

Child: Needs and interests of the children.

The Leader: Content of the animation apostolate.

Society: Expectations of society.

Conception of the animation apostolate.

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Conception of the experience.
Educational Intentions.

Table III - The general content of the animation apostolate in the primary

Experience:	According to the axis:
1 - Of a sense of life	1-A Confidence 1-B Openess to life 1-C Autonomy
2 - Of the common life	2-A Respect 2-B Mutual help 2-C Solidarity
3 - Of contact with God	3-A Interiority 3-B Entry into tradition 3-C Celebration
4 - Of moral conduct	4-A Sharing 4-B Rectitude 4-C Conversion
5 - Of creative links	5-A With the past 5-B With the present 5-C With the future

I shall choose an example where the experience will be *contact with God* and the axis, *celebration.*

The general objectives will be:

Reception

1.1 The pupil ascertains the important place of celebration in prayer of the Church.
1.2 The pupil takes into consideration the need of celebration in the life of a Christian.
1.3 The pupil brings attention to the "celebration" dimension of prayer.

Response

2.1 The pupil responds to the invitation to celebrate in order to enter into contact with God.
2.2 The pupil spontaneously makes place for celebration in his prayer.
2.3 The pupil pursues with satisfaction celebration activities or those oriented towards celebration.

Valorization

3.1 The pupil finds the activity of Church celebration important.

It is upon the objectives that the evaluation of religious activities are based. It is not always easy to evaluate.

The objectives of the apostolate of religious activities, as elsewhere in catechesis, are of three kinds:

1. General objectives
2. Terminal objectives
3. Intermediate objectives, which determine the activities to be done with the pupils. Most often these general and intermediate objectives are held to.

We include here an example of what might be a religious activity.

We have spoken about our role with regard to the pupils. We must say a word on our involvement with parents.

For about the past two years, the catechesis has been divided into two parts:

a) antecedent catechesis (basic catechesis which is given in the school throughout the year);

b) initive catechesis (preparation for the sacraments which is given outside of class time, where the teacher refuses to give it). In both cases the Religious Animator is obliged to have dealings with the parents to re-teach them about the sacràment in question (Confirmation, the Eucharist, Reconciliation). To this effect, he forms an initiating committee with some parents. This committee, having received the requisite instruction, will inform the other parents concerned. Let me assure you that this is much more complicated than if I did the teaching myself. Still, we know that the objective of this method merits its continuance. It goes without saying that the meetings multiply: 4 meetings for the committee and 3 to 6 meetings for the parents. Multiply these numbers by the number of sacraments.

In addition to the committees formed for each sacrament, the school has a school religious activity committee. This committee concerns itself with the proper running of religious activities within the school. It intervenes particularly at the time when school reopens — important times of year — with difficulties to be overcome — pastoral relations and the school committee made up of parents. It can, with the consent of the principal (in order to have the necessary funds) carry out extrascholastic activities with the pupils. For example, a Saturday pilgrimage by bus.

Each year in-service training is offered for the different committees. All the expenses are defrayed by the Ministry of Eucation.

I should like to call your attention to a point concerning the sacraments. It is not that of receiving a sacrament, a follow-up must be assured.

This is how I proceed. After the reception of a sacrament, I call the pupils back to talk to them. I give examples of follow-up.

A little later, I invite them to show this follow-up before the Christian community, which is responsible for the actions of children in the Christian point of view. This is poignant and moving, but profitable for all.

In conclusion, I should like to say a word about the chorale of chilren whose activities are carried on outside of class time. This chorale is very valuable when a liturgical celebration comes up in the school of parish community. I also see to the active participation of the parents. With the parents or sometimes without them, the chorale takes care of the entire liturgical service: announcements, hymns, processions, movements, readings, the psalms, always sung, etc..

All the celebrations or nearly all take place in the parish church.

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11-E-27

PRAYERS IN THE SPIRIT OF JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

The prayers which follow are written with particular reference to the Founder's MEDITATIONS, MEDITATIONS FOR THE TIME OF RETREAT, and LETTERS. Letter III-25, for example., refers to Letter 25 in part 3 of Battersby's "Letters and Documents". The symbol "/" indicates that the same theme is found in more than one passage.

Bro. Nicholas Hutchinson

1. Lord,
I pray that your Spirit
may come alive in me
since you have chosen me
to do your work. *MTR 4*
May I be completely transformed
by your Spirit dwelling within. *Med. 152*

2. Lord,
in your providential care
you have called me to this ministry.
Help me to put to good use
the gifts
and talents you have given me. *MTR 1/Med. 170*

3. Holy Spirit,
I thank you for your many gifts to me. *MTR 7*
Make known to me
all the gifts with which I have been favoured.
Inspire me
to communicate these gifts to others. *Med. 189*
I ask you to supply what I lack,
and to give me abundantly what I need. *Med. 37*
Give me the graces I need
both for myself
and for those entrusted to my care. *Med. 62*

4. Jesus, Son of God,
you wish to come into my heart
to make me share in your nature.
For a long time
you have been knocking
at the door of my heart
and have been waiting to enter,
and I have not wished to receive you,
because I love other things
so much more than I love you. *Med. 85*
May I come to know myself
just as I am. *MTR 13*
I believe that you have a greater wish
to bestow your favours upon me
than I have to receive them.
Your compassion for me
is greater than my anxiety. *Med. 38*
I place myself totally in your hands; *Med. 139*
do with me whatever you please. *Letter II-1*
Touch my heart
and make me aware
of what you want of me. *Letter III-2*

5. Spirit of God, guide me.
May I act only under your influence
and not through any self-seeking. *MTR 3*
May I see through the eyes of faith, *Med. 32*
and in all things
may I adore the will of God
in my regard. *Final words*

6. Lord,
may I grow in the spirit
and love of prayer, *MTR 4/Med. 36/80*
often recalling your presence. *Letter I-36*
May I always join prayer to my efforts
for, failing this,
my action will have little effect. *Med. 160/159*

7. Lord,
if it is not you who makes me speak.
then I am no better
than echoing bronze
or the clash of cymbals,
because all that I say
will have no effect
and will be incapable of bearing fruit. *Med. 3*
I acknowledge that this work is not mine, *MTR 4*
for it is in your name that I teach. *MTR 3*
I may plant and water the seed,
but it is you who make it grow.
You are the one who brings this work
to fulfilment. *MTR 4*
May I grow in awareness
of my dependence on you
because all my care
for the children entrusted to me
would be useless
if you did not give me
the power, the quality, and the energy that is need
to render my care useful.
May all my work with young people
be energised by the Spirit
and draw all its power from him. *MTR 3*

8. Father,
your Son came that all might have life
and have it to the full. *MTR 9*
You have called me
to announce your Word to young people *MTR 1*
an to make Jesus live anew
in their hearts. *Med. 157*
May they receive your Word
not as the word of men
but as the Word of God,
powerfully at work within them. *MTR 15*
I pray that those in my care
may come to feel
their need of salvation. *Med. 56*

9. Lord,
may I bring your love

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into the hearts of those
confided to my care. *Med. 102/139*
May I supply their spiritual needs
to the best of my ability,
looking upon them
as your loved ones. *Med. 180*
Help me to teach them to pray. *MTR 10*

10. God, my Father,
you are the same Lord
who commanded light to shine out of darkness
who now kindles a light in my heart. *MTR 1*
I ask for the graces I need
to accomplish all things well,
and to draw down the light I need
to form Jesus
in the hearts of those confided to my care,
and to inspire them with the Spirit of God. *Med. 80*

11. Lord,
may I look upon those
whom you have entrusted to me
as your children.
May I take much more care over their education
than if they were the sons of a king. *Med. 133*
May it appear,
by the care I take of them,
that I have a real love for them,
a great tenderness towards them. *Med. 180/133*
May I show them much kindness *Med. 134*
and may love guide me
in all my actions. *MTR 12/MTR 9*
May I avail myself
of the affection the children have for me
to attract them to you. *Med. 101*

12. Lord,
it is you who have called me.
It is you who have chosen me for this ministry.
It is you who have sent me
to work in your vineyard,
entrusting me to bring the gospel
to young people.
May I fulfil my ministry
with all the affection of my heart,
working entirely for you. *MTR 9*
May your love be the driving force
of my life. *MTR 9/Med. 171*

13. Jesus, Good Shepherd,
enable me to touch the hearts
of those in my care. *Med. 139/MTR 4*
You call me
to bring your love into their hearts. *Med. 39/102*
I raise each of them before you
and ask you to answer their needs.
You are the One who can do everything
and I am an instrument in your hands;
I turn to you with confidence. *MTR 4*

14. Lord Jesus,
you have entrusted me
to bring the gospel to young people. *MTR 9*
I am told that my role as your minister
is to write your letter of Good News
not with ink,
but with the Spirit of the living God;
not on tablets of stone, like Moses,
but on tablets of flesh:
in the hearts of those in my care. *MTR 9*
By gentleness and patience
may I lead those under my guidance
into the liberty of the children of God. *MTR 11*

15. Lord,
I ask that I may accept with much patience
the difficulties I have to suffer,
even to being ready to give my very life,
so dear to me
are the children entrusted to me. *MTR 9/MTR 6*

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11-O-10

BROTHER JOHN JOHNSTON, SUPERIOR GENERAL, REPLIES TO OUR QUESTIONS (1)

The 41st General Chapter elected Brother John Johnston Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the period of the next seven years. During the previous ten years Brother John was Vicar General of the Institute. For the benefit of readers of LASALLIANA we have been able to put some questions to Brother Superior concerning the work of the General Chapter and the prospects for the seven-year period leading to the next General Chapter. Our questions and his replies follow.

1) Brother Superior, how do you view the 1986 General Chapter in retrospect?

Several features seem to me to have characterized the 41st General Chapter and of these I would like to mention particularly the following:

★ The Chapter was a special grace for our Institute, conducted as it was in a climate of intense prayer. The Capitulants were concerned to respond to the action and orientations of the Holy Spirit and they repeatedly sought His enlightenment for a clearer discernment of the signs of the times for our Institute today.It was undoubtedly the action of the Holy Spirit which made it possible for the successive meetings to take place in the right atmosphere, with the participants ready to listen to one another, to reflect deeply on what was said, and to seek to discern the nature of our present-day situation and of the decisions that need to be made.

★ As a result the Capitulants became very conscious of the inestimable good the Lord is accomplishing all over the world through the instrumentality of the Brothers. They made it their concern to pay close attention to what they learned in this matter, a reciprocal concern which resulted in a deep sense of the solidarity which links all the regions of the Institute.

★ This sense of brotherhood, profoundly experienced over a period of two months, evoked a consciousness of the unity of the Institute which transcends the diversity of languages, cultures, ways of expression and modes of living.

★ At such times it is easy to perceive that the profound unity of the Institute derives from the fact that we are all sons of the same Father, Saint John Baptist de La Salle. We are Brothers because we share his life and because his spirit permeates our lives. It is in this sense that the Rule aptly affirms that "constituted as the image of the whole Institute, the General Chapter is, since the days of the Founder, the ultimate expression of the communion that exists among all the Brothers. It perpetuates among them the living fidelity to the special charism of the Institute" (Art. 84).

★ It is in the nature of things that this sense of fraternal union engenders joy, for a Chapter is a family celebration, an occasion of thanksgiving for the gift of vocation and for all that the Lord has accomplished in each and every Brother; it is a time for praise and gratitude.

★ Hence the circular convoking the 41st General Chapter spoke of it as a celebration, and such it has proved to be, as all would agree who had the privilege of taking part in it as representatives of their confrères.

2) What then, in the excellent conditions and spirit prevailing throughout the Chapter, were the principal themes considered by the Capitulants?

Naturally, a first mention must be made of the work that was accomplished in establishing the new text of the Rule. This task occupied the greater part of the Capitulants' time, though the work was greatly facilitated by the "Draft" produced by the International Commission for the Rule and by the many notes received from the Brothers in view of the Chapter. With the advantage of these data the Capitulants were able to undertake a lengthy process of discernment which I would summarize in the form of three questions:

— what does God wants us to be?
— what does He wish us to do?
— how does He wish us to do it?

This process of discernment resulted in a consensus on all fundamental problems and a strong majority vote on the way of dealing with each of them.

But, parallel to this important work on the Rule, certain other specific themes contributed likewise to a deepening of our understanding of our particular vocation. The *Messages, Propositions* and *Recommendations* that emanated from the Chapter have given partial expression to the richness of so much reflection. Circular 422 has provided a substantial report of the Chapter's proceedings. The themes enumerated there will

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largely determine our aims and priorities, our objectives and our programs of action, for the next seven years. Among these specific themes I would draw attention especially to the following four:

★ *Association and Interdependence:*

The idea of unity in the Institute was constantly present in the discussions. The Chapter underlined it with its references to *association* and *interdependence.* The spirit of unity in the Institute will be a sure guarantee of apostolic efficacy. In specific terms it presupposes our willingness:

— to grow in knowledge of one another;
— to share our personnel and resources;
— to make ourselves available for the tasks that face the Institute.

★ *Our role as evangelizers, catechists and ministers:*

On this theme we need only refer to the Founder and re-read his insistent exhortations regarding it. We are ministers to the young, not exclusively so, but the young remain our principal focus. We are called to be, so to speak, experts on youth, to know how to respond to their search for a meaning in their lives, for a faith. For that we must know: how to live with them as their brothers; how to help them to develop their human potential; how to bring them to an awareness of God's presence in their lives and to a readiness to commit themselves to Him and to His service; how to become more effective in telling them the good news of the Gospel.

★ *Solidarity with the Poor:*

In calling the Institute to greater solidarity with the poor, the 41st General Chapter has repeated a theme of its two predecessors. But instead of producing a new document specifically to that subject it invites each Brother to manifest that solidarity in acts, to choose ways and means of experiencing what it is to be poor. Certain passages of the Chapter's "Message to the Brothers" underline this theme.

★ *The Lasallian Family Movement:*

The Capitulants were able to recognize the importance and vitality of various Lasallian movements which have developed in various parts of the world, and they perceived these as a call of the Spirit to us to re-think our ways of relating to non-members of the Institute and re-consider the nature of their role in relation to ours. This awareness has already found expression in a "Message" and in certain capitular propositions. But these are only a beginning to what needs to be accomplished regarding the various groups that make up the Lasallian Family.

Such are the four key themes that resulted from the reflections of the Capitulants about the purpose of the Institute and about our reading of the signs of the times. And each one of the four represents a specific, important and inspiring challenge for each and every one of us.

3) Are these themes totally new in the recent history of the Institute?

No. They represent rather a continuation of what was undertaken during the preceding generalate, that of Brother José Pablo. It is a matter now of ensuring development and growth to what has already been sown. As examples of what I mean, let me enumerate briefly a few of the points insisted upon by Brother José Pablo during the last decade:

— the need for the service of the poor and the promotion of justice to become dominant characteristics ot the identity of the Brothers;

— a high priority to be given to the missionary role of the Institute;

— schools seen as the privileged, but not exclusive, instrument of the Brothers' apostolate, but schools that are more than good academic institutions, schools that are Christian communities of faith and love, creatively adapted to the needs of the students and effectively accessible to the poor;

— the wholehearted acceptance by the Brothers of their role as animators, giving the highest priority to religious education and the pastoral care of young people;

— the fostering of the growth of the Lasallian Family in all its dimensions;

— the question of our identity and mission in this rapidly evolving world;

— the challenge to the Brothers to be men of zeal, and to live this spirit "together and by association".

Such are some of the characteristic emphases of the last generalate which found reiterated expression in the discussions and decisions of the recent General Chapter.

Bro. John JOHNSTON

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11-O-11

BROTHER JOHN JOHNSTON, SUPERIOR GENERAL, REPLIES TO OUR QUESTIONS (2)

Looking ahead, then, from what has been undertaken and achieved by the Chapter, what do you see as the principal lines of action for you and your Council during the next seven years?

Obviously it would be difficult and even presumptuous to wish to be specific about what is going to happen during the period mentioned. But, with due regard to the uncertainties of the future, I would hope that our efforts will bear particularly on three concerns:

— the Lasallian Family;

— the Christian dimension of our Lasallian schools;

— the educational service of the poor and the promotion of justice and peace through education.

★ *The Lasallian Family.*

For some three hundred years the Brothers themselves received, lived, and passed on the Lasallian ideal, aided for a number of those years by men and women collaborators in an important but secondary role.

This traditional model of FSC-lay collaboration has virtually collapsed everywhere. It neither can nor should continue to exist. It is not a question only of a diminished number of Brothers. It is more the call to full apostolic participation of all Christians, and the willingness of so many well-formed, highly motivated men and women to respond positively to the challenge.

As the percentage of lay teachers increased in recent decades, the Brothers began to share positions of responsibility, but not without deep feelings of frustration, and even discouragement, that the schools of the Brothers, as they had known them, were things of the past.

But a number of our dedicated lay teachers were also less than satisfied, because they believed, correctly, that they had responsibilities for Lasallian schools but lacked a profound knowledge of the traditions of the Brothers. For this reason, many of these dedicated teachers in a number of countries began to express the desire to participate, not only in positions of authority, but also in the Lasallian spirit and FSC tradition. This desire was manifested also by a certain number of parents, former students, students themselves, and others associated with us.

The General Chapter of 1976 studied this development, calling it the Lasallian Family movement, and strongly encouraged it. Promoting the movement was a major priority for Brother José Pablo, Superior General, and his General Council, throughout the past ten years. What has happened in recent years is nothing short of remarkable. Numerous districts of the Institute have organized frequent and effective workshops and retreats for lay collaborators in Lasallian spirituality and ministry. The response has surpassed all expectations. There is a high degree of desire and readiness for identification with the Lasallian tradition.

The older model of FSC-lay collaboration — a triangular model, if you will — is yielding to a circular model. On points of the circumference of this circle are the Brothers, the administrators, the teachers, staff members, parents, former students, board members, friends, benefactors, students themselves.

In this circular model of Lasallian educational ministry, the FSC have a crucial role to play, but a different role from the past. This role is to animate, that is, to give spirit, support, vigor and zest, to move to action, to encourage. The Brothers exercise this role not only as individuals, but as Communities. The communities of the Brothers are called to share the richness of their Lasallian heritage.

I haven't the slightest doubt that this movement is going to grow significantly in the next seven years, because I am convinced that the movement is a fruit of the Spirit in our day. It is the Lord, in His Providence, that is to say, in His love and concern for young people today, who is calling our dedicated lay colleagues to respond to the needs of youth in the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

★ *The Christian Dimension of our Schools:*

The second area in which I expect to see considerable development in the next seven years is the Christian dimension of our schools. I expect our schools to become more Christian and more Lasallian. Obviously, we are Brothers of the Christian Schools, not Brothers of the Lasallian Schools. Nevertheless, we can speak of Christian schools that manifest clearly discernible elements, enabling us to speak very legitimately of "Lasallian schools".

Some of these elements are attention to persons, special concern for the economically poor

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and for all those who are disadvantaged in any way; the promotion of justice and peace through education; quality education, whatever the educational program and age level of the students; creative and adapted education; dynamic religious instruction and pastoral service; and, perhaps the most important element, competent teachers who are filles with faith and zeal and work "together and by association". The Christian school that is Lasallian in character is the school in which the composite of these elements is clearly evident.

Obviously I am describing the ideal and the goals towards which we have been striving and will be striving during the next seven years. I am not at all forgetting that we live and exercise our ministry today in a multiplicity of religions, cultures, and political systems, and that circumstances often require realistic adjustments. But the ideal is clear. In the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we do what we can, as well as we can.

While it is essential to say that the Brother exercises an apostolate whenever he truly educates, we give the central place to religious instruction and to the pastoral service of our young people. We are called to be experts on this, but whether we are specifically engaged in teaching religion or not, we can be actively involved, part-time or in out-of-school time, in leading youth groups of prayer and Christian service, in helping with youth retreats and gatherings, in counselling and the spiritual direction of young people. I think that in the immediate future we are going to see a marked increase in the number of Brothers directly involved in pastoral service of the young, and a marked improvement in our effectiveness.

★ *Service of the Poor and the Promotion of Justice:*

Finally, I think that during the next seven years our service of the poor and our commitment to promote justice and peace through education is going to become more significant. Past Chapters have called all of us to solidarity with the poor, whatever our particular function or service. I think our religious family has made very significant strides in this solidarity with the poor during the past decade, and I expect this awareness to continue to deepen, and our activities on behalf of the Christian education of the poor to increase in number and effectiveness. This call to solidarity with the poor obliges us, as well as all other members of the Lasallian Family, to become more aware of the poverty and injustice that exists, to "feel" this poverty and injustice and be shaped by it, to know the social teachings of the Church today, to be sensitive to our own attitudes, feelings, prejudices, and be disposed to confront them and, when necessary, to change.

This solidarity with the poor obliges us to develop in our schools, at all levels, programs that effectively help to inform our young people of the realities of this world, that train them in the teaching of the Church, and that give them the opportunity to serve the poor directly. In some parts of the Institute such programs already exist. But much remains to be done in the years ahead.

This commitment to solidarity with the poor is a challenge to every region, district and individual Brother to make more significant our direct service to the poor. Our new Rule obliges us to plan in such a way that direct service of the poor will become, in fact, our evident priority. During the past decade a significant number of Brothers — including Brothers legally retired from teaching — have made themselves available for such service, in their own countries as well as in other countries. I expect this list of Brothers serving the poor at home and abroad to grow during the years ahead. For my expectation to become a reality, regions, districts and individual Brothers will have to respond to the challenge of the 41st General Chapter and make the sacrifices required. I believe my expectations will be realized, because I have great confidence in the Brothers.

Bro. John JOHNSTON
Superior General (Rome)

Thank you, Brother Superior, for your replies to our questions. LASALLIANA hopes, in its particular domain, to be able to make some contribution to the fulfillment of the far-reaching hopes and expectations you have expressed for the Lasallian family as a whole.

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11-O-12

LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY: OUR HERITAGE (1)

Brother Superior, Brother Delegates:

Invited by the Preparatory Commission to speak to you on this morning, my first reaction was to refuse. A pessimistic humourist once stated: "Beware of the first impulse, it's the best". While I was trying to prepare this talk, I had a feeling of dizziness and panic. I was tempted to agree with the humourist and give up.

Lasallian spirituality? How would it be possible, in a few quarters of an hour even to simply define what the term means, let alone attempt to outline its content? Our heritage: how could I even pretend to take stock of it by myself during such a short period of preparation, in view of the General Chapter, which is itself the Institute in its most exalted expression? If there is a Lasallian heritage, it only exists in the living body that we form as a community, and this community utters no more authentic declaration concerning its identity and its mission than that which flows forth from the exchange, the confrontations and the prayer of the members of the Chapter (*Declaration* 7, 1-3). Finally, how could I add anything this Saturday morning, after such an intense week enriched by the contribution of exceptional men?

In order to prepare for this morning, I reread the Lasallian texts: the "Method of Mental Prayer", the "Collection", the "Meditations" and even the "Letters". As I advanced along these paths which I'd so often followed, I had the feeling of walking in an unknown land, of discovering a familiar and yet strange universe, where a different language is spoken, not that to which we are accustomed. The question that arose was not so much "How to speak of John Baptist De La Salle today?", but "Why?".

We have come here, bringing with us all the questions and the uncertainty of the worlds we left behind. In different ways, these worlds are all marked by the economic crisis and the surge of technical changes which produce unrestrained competition and present tremendous ethical problems in the field of genetics, of respect for life, of nuclear arms.

Socio-economic mechanisms make it possible for the "rich to become richer at the expense of the poor who get poorer". To be aware of this fact takes nothing away from the dramatic reality it denounces. Violence, terrorism, fanaticism and intolerance continue to create havoc. Almost everywhere, the Church finds itself is a situation of Diaspora. Indifference and secularism progress, while at the same time erratic, and more or less irrational, forms of religiosity make their appearance. (see J. Rigal: "Le Courage de la Mission", p. 28). The hopes, the searching, the aspirations, the anguish of the youth of the close of this century, live with us; they worry and stimulate us. At the same time we are preoccupied by the disillusioned relativism of some young people, by their fatalism caused by a feeling of helplessness and by their allergy to long-term commitments.

John Baptist de La Salle gives us no answers to these questions, nor to many others that one could enumerate. Why then should we make a detour by way a spiritual authour who is three hundred years old? Isn't that wasting our time, or worse still hiding behind an alibi?

As a matter of fact, there is a lot of talk nowadays, more and more explicit, about "refounding" religious orders. It would be easy to demonstrate how the last two General Chapters engaged the Institute in such a process of refoundation. They did so in conformity with the orientations of the Council on the renovation of religious congregations. The paradox is that the Institute, like the Council, only considered a "refoundation" in the light of a greater fidelity to the charism of the Founder.

A paradox? Only in appearance. What would become of the tree which is the Institute if it uprooted itself from the soil of its first planting? What would happen to the river if it cut itself off from its primary source? What could be the viability of a composite organism whose members are more and more diversified, decentralised, and autonomous, if there were no common point of reference to the original inspirational force to keep it united?

That is why, confronted with a deeper and deeper mutation, and a greater and greater diversification, this Chapter will often unite in a common effort to scrutinise the spirit and the

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specific intentions of the Founder, according to the terms by which Perfectae Caritatis characterised fidelity to our origins. Thus, my intervention at the end of this week of beginning the Chapter, is worthwhile, and has a symbolical significance. It constitutes the sign of your common desire to make Lasallian inspiration one of the essential principles of the dynamics of renewal which will inhabit the 41st General Chapter and which will animate its work. For my part, I can measure the frailty and the precariousness of this fleeting, momentary sign: the principal object of this intervention should be to permit a sharing among yourselves, the Capitulants.

Foundation - Refoundation: like the Church, the Institute must be constantly re-born in the world, and even of the world. However, it is by being faithful to its own deep identity that it must be re-born. The simple idea that I would like to leave with you this morning is that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools arose in history like a spiritual uprising which became a living body. In this sense, indeed, it is first of all to the force of spirituality that we can attribute our existence today, and it is certainly, and primarily, from spiritual dynamics that we must hope for renewal and re-foundation.

Among these spiritual dynamics, I think it is possible to retain four:

1. Setting out, as a Founder, to start a movement which is both powerful and fragile, de La Salle roots his Institute in the experience of the Spirit. He wants to build it on interior men, that is, men of the Spirit.

2. Led on an unforeseen path, to depart from his familiar universe in order to embrace another world, he perceives this step as an invitation to continue a journey of incarnation in the footsteps of Christ, and an ever-growing conformity to His mystery as Saviour.

3. Associated first, and quite by chance, with a group of teachers, he is led to making them his brothers, and to become their brother himself. He views the society that he wishes to establish, not only as a functioning body, but as a communion of persons in the image of the primitive community of Jerusalem, and he refers to it as to the unity of love in the Trinity.

4. Living this foundation, searching and feeling his way along, being constantly aware of its frailty, facing repeated crises which threatened to ruin everything, being led twenty times to the brink of ruin, living the precarious situation of each day, and the uncertainty of the day that would follow, de La Salle becomes one of the most peaceful and perhaps also one of the most pacifying witnesses of abandonment to God and to hope.

The limited time I have at my disposal and some personal fatigue will oblige me to shorten this programme which was too ambitious. I will only develop the first two points, and in conclusion I'll try if possible to speak of de La Salle's abandonment to God. At any rate, the idea of communion, which I will not speak about, will be taken up I hope in the question period which is to follow later this morning.

While speaking about what I call founding spiritual dynamics, you have understood that, if I read Lasallian texts correctly, I was even more attentive to what history can tell us with regard to progression in the Spirit, about which de La Salle remains very discreet, and which is largely a matter of interpretation. This already rejects an understanding of the word "spirituality" as defining a conceptual system more or less elaborated from the writings alone. We can't ensure fidelity to the Founder by drawing from a collection of texts, or by clinging to certain expressions which are powerful and essential, no doubt, but which, separated from the living context which gave them birth, risk becoming ridiculous or turning into slogans.

I can assure you that I took time and expended the necessary effort to prepare this intervention, according to my present capability. But you don't expect me to give you something really new this morning. It's the same field that I've been ploughing for more than thirty years. Let's hope that new ploughmen come forth, because with the Lasallian heritage, as with the treasure in the fables, each generation must re-invent it, re-discover it, appropriate it as its own, not be discovering it intact, like a cassette, after digging in the ground, but by the same action of the ploughman, untiringly renewed, in communion.

Bro. Michel SAUVAGE

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11-O-13

LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY: OUR HERITAGE (2)

1. The foundation of the Institute, a creation in the experience of the Spirit, by interior men, men of the Spirit.

The first biographers of de La Salle lingered to study the group of schoolmasters at the time when they seemed to be emerging from their initial chaos, and were taking on a certain consistency, before acceding to an identity, or claiming the denomination of "community". A word from the Apocalypse, quite unexpectedly, came out of Blain's pen: "Behold, I shall make all things new. I renew all things through my servant". A formula that sums up the essential in Lasallian history and which the biographers will continue telling. At the end of his life, de La Salle appears to them as a man in whom a creative power was at work. Creative forces, dynamics of renewal, which erupted but not without struggle, in a closed society, a dull, sleeping world, an installed Church.

2. Creative forces present in the founding of the Institute

It is true, and let us repeat it once and for all this morning, because we are more and more aware of it, that there is no question, in any phase of Lasallian activity, of a creation "ex-nihilo". Thanks to numerous and serious works, we now see clearer than ever that the pedagogical, educational, ecclesial and spiritual work of John Baptist de La Salle benefitted from existing sources. It is inscribed in a living context. It develops in a propitious milieu. This play of influences, or reciprocity, of multiple interactions did not prevent the Founder from playing his own role, from pursuing original realisations, from often finding himself alone in his options, from arousing considerable opposition, from instigating change, sometimes in a decisive manner, and after accepting bitter struggles.

At the end of de La Salle's journey, his biographers could take stock of the "novelties" he introduced, thanks to the creative force he knew how to use wisely, with courage and stubbornness.

a) In renewed educational activities:

Creative forces. These can be seen concretely in the history of the youth of the times who were, until then, abandoned. The multiplication of schools and their diversification, the intransigent fight for effective gratuity, the reform of teaching methods, the transformation of the educative relationship all of these changed the situation of the youth in de La Salle's schools. It became possible for these young people to accede to a minimum level of culture, to hope for a professional career, to have a decent human existence, to the beginning of a consciousness of solidarity, to an opening toward the Gospel. Thanks to these creative forces, the means of salvation were put within their reach.

b) In the appearance of new ministries:

Creative forces: they can be seen concretely in the history of the schoolmasters, until that time poorly prepared, poorly motivated and poorly appreciated. The creation of a community, and then of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, made it possible to strengthen the vocation of the masters, to consolidate their professional formation, to implant their aims and their educational attitudes in the Gospel. The personal attention paid to them by him whom they called their father, his prophetic vision of a renewed Church, similar to that which St. Paul describes, introduced them, little by little, to the living realisation of the importance of their work. Still humble schoolmasters, they are not surprised to hear their founder call them ministers of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Church. These new words rejoin, elighten and announce the profound change the masters have experienced in the exercise of their profession and the discovery of their identity.

c) In the birth of John Baptist De La Salle to a new Church.

It is first of all in his own personal history that de La Salle experiences these forces of creation, or re-creation, of founding dynamics. "Behold, I shall make all things new". Blain has recourse to this quotation from one of the last passages of the New Testament to characterise the upheaval brought about by de La Salle's final, decisive option. He had just given up his canonry in order to share his existence with the schoolmasters, irrevocably and unconditionally. It is with them and through them that he will go ahead with this work which he now sees as the work of God for him.

Through this decisive option of separation and of commitment, a creative power can be seen in the person of John Baptist de La Salle, leading him to fulfil a prophetic passage: "Be-

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hold, I shall make all things new". De La Salle leaves an old, immobile Church to accede to a new one; or at least, having freely consented to the creative force acting in and beyond him, he allows himself to be re-born to a new way of living the Church.

c1): *From an established Church to a Missionary Church.* As a Canon, he spent long hours, sitting in his stall, reciting the Divine Office. Once committed to live with the schoolmasters, he literally dis-installs himself, he leaves a "closed" Church and sets out on an adventure, the adventure of a ministry quite unheard of. From then on he will use all his talents on behalf of children and youth whom he often describes as abandoned and far from salvation. It can be said that in urging him to prefer this venture with the schoolmasters to the reassuring tranquility of his canonry, a creative power made de La Salle emerge from an established Church to a missionary Church.

c2): *From a Church for one self to a Church for the World.* As a Canon, he lived familiarly with classic theology. His assiduous study of it led him to a doctorate. He chooses to risk his future with the schoolmasters; day after day he accompanies them in their field of action; he gets involved in creating a form of priestly ministry which he had not counted on in his plan of life. The Gospel he announces is going to become through him a force that will transform the lives of these men, a power of promotion for the abandoned youth they are serving, a leaven of justice and liberation, a source of upheaval in a closed society.

These "novelties" or innovations will not be introduced, thanks to the creative forces which are pushing de La Salle, except by also bringing about a renewal of his own centres of interest. The doctor of theology will use his talent in favour of catechesis for the children, of the poor and the spiritual formation of his brothers. It seems only just to observe that without fuss and as if it were only natural, de La Salle uses his competence in theology to work out a plan for the Brothers' consecration, their ministry, their commitments their educational responsibilities, their community life, and all this based upon their manner of life. In this living experience, he furnished them food for thought, be it Christological, ecclesiological, pneumatological, eschatological or moral. In short, he took ready-made theology out of the books, to experiment with it in a new ecclesial situation.

Besides all this, we see this priest discovering and putting to good use his talent in the field of pedagogy. From the assiduous sharing in the experience of his companions, he will produce the *Conduct of Schools,* the *Duties of a Christian,* the *Rules of Politeness.* The creative forces to which he has actively submitted himself have extracted him from a Church occupied with its internal problems only. The new Church, into which they have introduced him, is to be concretely committed to the evangelical transformation of the world.

c3): *From a powerful Church to a serving Church.* As a Canon, his usual companions belonged to the world of ecclesiastics. He shared their culture, their language, their preoccupations. A good number of them, like himself, were related to influential families of the city. After the death of Roland, and in order to help the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, de La Salle used his powerful influence in that particular milieu. This same milieu was surprised and scandalised when he renounced his position as Canon of the Cathedral Chapter. Henceforth what he will share is the humble condition of the schoolmasters, whom the milieu he has left prefer to ignore or to belittle. He will learn to make their daily worries his own as well as their pedagogical activities, their strivings to announce the Gospel to youngsters who are often difficult to handle. With these masters he will build a new school, little by little, and a new style community will appear in the Church. He will not try to found this new work on the support of the old milieu he has left behind. He will write later on in his *Memoir Concerning the Brothers' Habit,* "The Community is presently established and founded on Providence alone". In leaving the Cathedral he tore himself away from a powerful Church to accede to the evangelical and creative force of a frail and servant Church.

c4): *From a clerical Church to a Church of the people of God.* Finally, he gave up being a Canon because he felt the incompatibility of that state with the requirements involved in the assiduous sharing of the daily life of the schoolmasters. Henceforth his usual companions for lodging, for meals and for conversation, will be laymen. He will help them to measure up to the dignity of their condition in the Church. He will show them that, through them, that Church will see a new form of evangelical ministry come alive. With them, he will maintain and defend the formation of a new kind of community whose members are consecrated to God and commit themselves to remain as laymen and to admit none but laymen in their midst. Should we not recognise, that in this small group animated by de La Salle, a creative power has made them pass from the clerical Church to the Church of the People of God?

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LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY: OUR HERITAGE(3)

12 - In the experience of the Spirit

"Behold, I shall make all things new". John Baptist de La Salle was aware that a creative power was acting in him. He was aware of the changes it was bringing about in his own being as in society and in the Church. It seems to me that the quite exceptional importance he gives to the Holy Spirit in his spiritual teachings is closely linked to this creative experience of which he is both the beneficiary and the instrument. I will limit myself to four different leads to guide your reflection on this subject, and in a very simplified form, because to develop these perspectives would take very much time. In the margin I will indicate some references from Lasallian texts.

1. *First lead: Recognise the gift of the Spirit*

We all remember the famous passage where John Baptist recalls his decisive commitment to the adventure of the schools and the establishment of the Brothers' community. He recognises that it was God who guided him, from one commitment to another, with wisdom and gentleness, without forcing his will. God, by His Spirit, detached him little by little from his familiar universe, from his manner of living the Church, to engage him on a path where he would accompany him to create a new world. The Founder will often say to his disciples that their Institute, their particular vocation, is first the work of the Spirit who spreads his gifts among men for the realisation of God's salvation. (Two key texts: MR 201,1, 193,1).

First of all, it is necessary to recognise the gift of the Spirit, and the term recognise takes on numerous spiritual harmonics. To recognise the gift of the Spirit is, of course, to become aware of it day after day, and this celebration in memory of the Spirit does not and will not cease to renew and to actualise this gift. To recognise the gift of the Spirit is to know how to be moved by it in order to give thanks, and here we are orientated towards a spiritual attitude which is fundamentally positive and which can be dynamic when we are tempted to dejection or self complacency because of our insufficiency or our difficulties.

To recognise the gift of the Spirit, is to situate it in the immense and overwhelming action of the Spirit, in the movement of the Spirit, as the Founder says, which produced the prophets, which presided at the birth of the Church, just as it surveyed the genesis of the universe (two key texts: MD 43,1 - 2,1). There can be no question of turning a nostalgic eye to a marvellous but outdated past. You must recognise the passing of the Spirit in our history today. To recognise the gift of the Spirit is also to put it to work, to use it without fear and with enthusiasm, and here we are committed to spread forth the creativity that the Spirit inspires and sustains in us. (MR 193,2) We should mention here how John Baptist de La Salle knew how to set the Brothers on the road of this creativity. We can feel it in reading the entreaties, not untainted with impatience, which he addresses to Gabriel Drolin. (Letters 14, 8-10 and 16, 6-7).

To recognise the gift of the Spirit is to recognise the Spirit of God Itself as the principle of life and action which is given to us (EMO: 18-19). Here we could add several texts of the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* and from the Meditations. It is most important to be able to show the Founder as a spiritual author who, under the influence of St. Paul and of St. John, repeatedly calls us to welcome and to serve life, to believe obstinately that the powers of life are once and for all victorious over the powers of death. (MD 45,1).

2. *Second lead: to be available for the gratuitous and unforeseeable action of the Spirit.*

While recalling the story of the change of orientation in his life, de La Salle took pleasure in recognising the unexpected, the unforeseeable, the disconcerting character of the manifestation of the creative power of the Spirit. "I thought nothing about it before". Besides, he was impressed by the fact that the Spirit manifested itself and intervened where he least expected it. It was not the Archbishop who encouraged him to give up his canonicate, but rather, humble laymen.

The Gospel reference that Barré pounded into his consciousness and which he himself repeated to his companions to invite them to abandonment, did not become the word of God for him in the flesh until he felt within him the brutal questioning of the schoolmasters who were completely closed to any kind of dialogue without an existential consistency. We would continue: at the time of the crisis of 1690, it is really thanks to the contract of association that he signs with Vuyart and Drolin that de La Salle is projected once more in his vocation of Founder: at the same time as he pronounces his vow of association, he sets out gain for a new creative action. It will be the same at the time of his doubts in 1710: it is through his Brothers that the Spirit will send him back to finish his work. The first effect of the Spirit of faith: to look upon all things with the eyes of faith. In the light of these powerful expe-

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riences, I think that certain spiritual teachings of the Founder take on a very different resonance: the teaching on the spirit of faith first, and the invitation to recognise the presence and the action of the Spirit in people, in situations, in the events of everyday life, and in the history of humanity. Once more, we are invited, not to an attitude of drawing back before what may upset us, but to a spiritual attentiveness to the invitation that the Spirit is addressing to us along the path of renewed fidelity we are living. "Because it is life, personal and collective life, which is the place where God calls, the place of conversion and the place of witness". (J. Rigal: Le Courage de la Mission, p. 50).

In the second place, I would like to call your attention a brief moment to a spiritual teaching to which the Founder attaches considerable importance in the *Collection,* in the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* and in certain meditations: I refer to docility, receptiveness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit (MF. 99,2 180,3 123, 1-2 L. 129,1 89-3 8-9. Collection 118-119 188, III. 186, XI. The expression may seem vague, if not old-fashioned; it may seem risky, subjective or individualistic. Getting a closer look, in the light of the experience of the foundation, shouldn't we see in this Lasallian insistence (which is classical) an essential reminder? The kindliness or consideration of the Spirit outdoes all assured systems and shakes up old-fashioned habits; the life of the Spirit reaches out and calls beyond elaborated programmes and accepted conventions; free action of the Spirit is not subject to fixed structures or majority consensus. To speak of the inspiration of the Spirit is to recall the experience of each individual which must be welcomed and listened to because "in each of the Brothers, the Spirit speaks and acts", and renewing creation often begins with the perception and the commitment of a person.

To complete this point, I must mention the importance of spiritual discernment concerning which the Founder has left us solid and clear criteria. (Compare: MR 100 and 118, 132,1-2 and 174,4 167 and 143, 177 and 97).

3. *Third lead: The trascendent strength of the Spirit. Its powerful and creative activity is unfurled in our weakness.*

There is a third, very strong characteristic of Lasallian experience of the Spirit in the Founder's story and in that of the foundation of the Institute. The strength of the Holy Spirit is displayed in human weakness, and the creative force is seen in shaky, often tentative achievements which are sometimes tainted with ambiguity. To speak of the creative force of the Spirit at the beginnings of the Institute, does not imply, according to the Founder, any confident step or steady progress forward. On the contrary, as we know, the Founder had to acknowledge and rely on the fidelity of the Spirit when in the depths of the many crises which frequently brought the Institute to the edge of collapse.

The Founder's spiritual teaching does not ignore this important dimension of the experience of creation which he himself had lived. When all is said and done, the fact that the strength of the Spirit should be manifest in the weakness of man is, for the Founder, a source, in the first place, of deep assurance, of joy and of interior peace. We can already see this interior joy in Blain's presentation of the decisive option of the Founder. The questioning by the teachers forces him into a choice. Blain then reconstructs the long prayer of discernment to which John Baptist then commits himself. He becomes aware that he can no longer procrastinate; he must now choose between his canonicate and the care of the teachers. He must decide whether to remain on the familiar bank or whether to venture the crossing of the river without really knowing what he will find on the other side, even if he should reach it.

Now whereas he always seems to live in a state of perplexity, here we find him suddenly taken up with an inner but irrepressible joy, the delight of making a surprising discovery: "Since I no longer feel any attraction for the vocation of a Canon, it would seem that the state left me before I left it... This state is no longer for me". While he was pondering over the pros and cons, the Spirit Himself had already carried him on to the other bank, as in the case of the prophet in former times, and for John Baptist it was now merely a matter of walking along that bank.

De La Salle will later explain in the *Collection,* in a text which though at first sight heavy is yet full of finesse: "Yes, God is asking you to be faithful in the present moment; he gives the necessary light for the step he is calling you to make. But His creative power carries you beyond what you thought yourself capable of doing". God's Spirit is greater than our heart: that is de la Salle's experience of the creation of the Institute; it was also the experience of his own spiritual evolution. It is one of the most important themes in his spiritual teaching on fidelity to the Spirit. In his teaching he tirelessly insists on our daring to take on a commitment, since His invincible strength will not fail us, and on our need to retain an interior attitude of poverty since, in ourselves, we are often fearfully weak, lazily shortsighted and frivolously fickle. But the Spirit is our strength, our light and our faithfulness, provided that we know how to pray to him with trust, how to await him with patience, and how to recognise and follow him with docility. As daring, poor and confident men we will be the amazed witnesses to the strength of the Spirit who leads us well beyond ourselves as far as a land, judged from afar to be arid, but in reality thoroughly fertile. That land where the Spirit opens us up to the knowledge and practice of a new wisdom, that of the Beatitudes.

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4. *Fourth lead: Living as interior men, as men of the Spirit.*

One of the interior supports of the Institute is interior recollection. Let us call it interiority. To bring his teachers to live in conformity with the purpose of their Institute it was necessary for the Founder to help them become 'interior' men. He considered it a priority to devote himself to his disciples' education in interiority. His writings, especially the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer,* greatly insist on its importance and its conditions. Mental prayer is an 'interior' occupation and, in order to be well founded, it should be "practised in the very depth of the soul, that is to say, in the most intimate part of man's being. (EMO 3 Cf. 26,30 34, 72).

One might be tempted, if not to set interiority and creativity in opposition to each other, at least not to envisage them as progressing together in a single movement. Some of the texts of the Founder suggest such a dichotomy, particularly a certain number of articles from the *Collection* on the "Means of becoming interior", which can be construed as an encouragement to withdraw into oneself and to passivity.

This is not the place for discussing at length texts from another age, shaped to fit the world for which they were written. It seems to be quite right to observe that, taken in its entirety, Lasallian interiority is not opposed to creativity — quite the contrary. Interiority liberates man from undue ties, from worries and superficial concerns. It therefore enables him to devote his energies to what is essential. Interiority focuses man on the basic objectives to be reached; it enables him to better appreciate the means to be used to that end and to launch out into action without squandering his energies on secondary activities. Interiority leads man to deepen the meaning of his action and to measure its value and importance. It makes him dynamic by intensifying his motivations. Interiority makes man sensitive to the richness of life spread out before him in his human surroundings; it induces him to associate his action with that of other people and to adjust his efforts to those of others.

But it especially seems to me that, for de la Salle, interiority and creativity are joined together most profoundly because they are at one and the same time a searching for, a welcoming of and a manifestation of the Spirit. Lasallian interiority is spiritual interiority. The depth of the soul of which he has just spoken, is the bottom of the heart, converted from selfishness and open to love, because it is inhabited and animated by the Spirit of Christ, a spirit of sonship.

Deep within man the Spirit is awareness of the personal love of the Father. It opens up to the love of others, a kind of love which is manifested in works. Deep within man the Spirit is the astonishing experience of salvation. It empowers man to go out and to try to reveal to others this salvation that has overtaken him.

In the depth of the heart, the Spirit is the recognition that strength is found in weakness and that sanctity purifies from sin; it urges man to commit himself resolutely, certain that in his commitment to others the Spirit is also manifested in his weakness, and that mercy will triumph over the forces of evil. Most of all, at the bottom of the heart, the Spirit becomes prayer, crying to God "Abba, Father" and whispering to the heart of man, "You are loved come to the Father. You are called to bear witness to this love. Go out and meet your brothers". The Meditation for the ninth Sunday after Pentecost clearly expresses this unity of spiritual interiority when it says:

> "The Holy Spirit that resides in you must penetrate the depth of your souls; it is in them that this Spirit must pray in a very special manner. It is within the soul that this Spirit communicates with it, joins himself to it and gives it to understand what God requires of it in order to be entirely His". (MD 62, 3).

* * *

The Spirit is most important

In concluding this point, I would like to remind you that the experience of Lasallian creativity is inscribed between two events whose symbolic importance seems to me to be very strong at the beginning of this General Chapter.

The first event is that of the departure of almost all of the first companions of de La Salle. From the beginning of his contact with them he had striven to establish some order in the rather inefficient chaos of the little group. However, they simply left him. To make a long story short, they discovered, in Blain's phrase, "that their freedom was too constrained".

John Baptist will ponder this bitter failure in the light of the Gospel of spiritual freedom. Once and for all, he understood that structures, though essential, cannot make up for the lack of vocation nor the absence of an interior assent when it is a question of a vocation and an evangelical project. An institute cannot be founded by imposing readymade structures on its members from without. At this point some young men present themselves to the Founder. They are anxious to "know Jesus Christ Crucified and devote themselves to a ministry in favour of the poor". The Founder will hence-forth dedicate himself to changing them into new men, interior men, men of the Spirit. The movement of educational and apostolic creativity and the task of the organisation of the community will be inseparable from his efforts as guide and spiritual teacher.

Inspiration will be the soul of any structures that are set up, while the enthusiasm of the members taking flesh in the structures that issue from their living communion, will find a new strength

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in it. From the reality of their own world, the consciousness of their calling and of their mission, men trained in the interior freedom of the Spirit will be able to invent a new way of living as Church and humbly contributing to the evangelical transformation of society.

The second event is a text, the prologue of Chapter II of the Rule. De La Salle added it only in 1718. The newborn community can now, it seems, mark the end of the period of foundation. Brother Bartelemy is Superior General; the Rule has been definitively set down and accepted by all those who were also its authors. As to structures, the Institute seems to be prepared for the long haul, and the Holy See, a few years later, will reinforce its existence by recognising the originality of its charism rather more than by approving the details of its rules.

And there rings out again, almost for the last time, the prophetic voice of the Founder. It resounds as in the beginning of the Rule in a Prologue which does not appear in the text before 1718. The theme is solemn and we all have it engraved deeply in our memories. Even as young novices, we sensed its unique importance, as if the Founder, on completing his work, cautioned his sons when he passed on to them the (partial) results of this long process of creation.

"Brothers, do not fail to appreciate the creative powers that have been bestowed upon you to exist and to grow. Do not underestimate the forces that will permit you to live as persons consecrated to God, as evangelical servants of the young, and in brotherly communion. Here is the Rule that you will observe since we drew it up together throughout the 40 years of our foundation. And do not forget — it is not this Rule which is the most important thing. What is most important and to which the greatest care should be given in a community, is that all those who are a part of it have the spirit which characterises it; that the novices apply themselves to acquire it; that those who are engaged in it should endeavour above all to preserve and increase it in themselves:. For it is this spirit which must give life to all their actions and animate all their conduct".

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LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY: OUR HERITAGE (4)

The Foundation of the Institute: An Incarnational Dynamism for the "Salvation" of abandoned young people, following Jesus Christ.

21 - The founding shock of the Institute.

Each time I read the first point of the Second Meditation for the Time of Retreat (194), I feel, as it were, the shock wave by which the Institute came into being, the creative shock which engendered John Baptist De La Salle in his own vocation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the creative shock from which he set out on his evangelical journey as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

a) *A cultural shock between two worlds.*

We know this text well. It begins with an invitation to the Brothers gathered together on retreat to "consider" clearly — almost clinically, we might say — the concrete situation of forsaken youth; and the early Brothers who were listening to this reading could call to mind the faces of children that they knew and give them their proper names.

> "Consider that it is only too common for the working class and the poor to allow their children to live on their own, roaming all over as if they had no home... The results of this condition are regrettable for these unfortunate children have great difficulty when the time arrives for them to go to work..." (MR 194,2).

A creative shock. In John Baptist De La Salle's case, of course, it can be taken as a cultural shock, a harsh confrontation between two worlds which existed side by side in the same city with each unaware of the other because everything kept them apart: the normal channels of human relationships, social status, cultural possibilities. Speaking of John Baptist's father, Maillefer tells us that he had endeavoured to give his son "an education suitable to his birth". As a result of his contacts with the masters, De La Salle was suddenly immersed in the reality of an entirely different type of youth in Rheims; he was astonished to find that, for a whole class of children in his city, receiving an education suited to their birth amounted practically to being excluded from even the most modest places of learning, the charity schools. And, from that point, his lucid outlook on the reality of things obliges him to foresee the "distressing consequences" to which this situation will inexorably lead: the children of the working class and the poor are prisoners of the vicious circle in which their family situation and social condition enclose them. This forsaken world is doomed in advance to go on repeating itself indefinitely in the same form.

b) *A shock between the world of faith and the world such as it is.*

The first phrase of the second section of this text reminds us, should we have lost sight of it, that we are in meditation. That is to say, for the Founder, that we are in the contemplation of the mystery of the living God, of the saving God. And this word resounds like a shout of victory — life has vanquished death.

> "God has the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune by the establishment of the Christian Schools, where the teaching is offered free of charge and entirely for the glory of God". (MTR, p. 50).

Thanks to the intervention of the living God, of the God of Life, of the God of the History of Salvation, here and now, those children can be "saved". They will be fit "to put to work when their parents wish to set them to it". And the point of the meditation ends with a double invitation: to give thanks for the foundation of the Institute which has come into being as the response of the Brothers to God's call; to renew their impetus for the evangelical service of education of youth.

> "Thank God that He has had the goodness to call upon you to procure such an important advantage for children. Be faithful and exact to do this without any payment; so you can say with St. Paul: the source of my consolation is to announce the Gospel free of charge, without having it cost anything to those who hear me". (MTR, p. 50).

We do know that, to some Brothers, to the

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Institute itself in the course of its long missionary history, similar shocks like the one of its origins have continually imbued it with a new creative force, a renewal of life, an ability to invent new educational structures. The Institute would have disappeared a long time ago had it not renewed itself unceasingly by the acceptance of that frequently disconcerting encounter with new cultures, with new countries, with unpredictable young people. It was challenged in the diverse forms of distress: material, emotional and cultural distress, lack of goods, difficulties arising from school dropouts and unemployment for young men, criminal manipulation by drug pushers and white slavers, distress coming from doubts about the meaning of life, indifference, incredulity, the choking sensation from within bloated societies blinded to any transcendence, or the distress of helplessness in the face of famine or under oppressive regimes.

But the basic message, which is brought home to us here, from both De La Salle's act of foundation and his spiritual teaching, is that this is a question not only of cultural shock but of a clash between the reality of the world and living faith.

The passage I have quoted reminds us that the Institute was born from "the goodness of God". "God has had the godness to remedy so great a misfortune".

The thrust of the Meditations for the Time of Retreat, and more generally the whole spiritual teaching of the Founder invite us here to place ourselves in the heart of the Mystery of Jesus Christ. De La Salle is fond of the word "mystery", enshrined at the very centre of the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer.* And there it is for us to ponder what he means by it.

c) *Understanding Lasallian Christocentrism in the movement of the founding shock.*

Lasallian spirituality, like that of his days and like any authentic spirituality, is Christocentric. John Baptist ceaselessly invites his Brothers to contemplate Jesus Christ, imitate His virtues, strive to grow in conformity with Him and to dwell in Him, We could quite easily build a kind of synthesis of his spiritual teaching — rich, dense and solid in that respect. However, it seems obvious to me that such a synthesis loses its originality as well as its creative force if it is assembled without taking into account that Lasallian Christocentrism springs from the founding shock of the Institute. In other words, the Christ that John Baptist de La Salle speaks to us about is an evangelical Christ, emphatically the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels, of St. Paul and St. John. But his contemplation of Him is continually pierced through by what he has discovered, and what he still discovers in his present world. For if the salvation of God was accomplished once and for all through the Incarnation and in the Life, Ministry, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, if the salvation is made available by the Spirit today and within the Church, he cannot but note that for young people, those that he meets each day, all this reality of faith, the reality of the other world which animates the Brothers also, appears to be distant, unattainable, unreal.

In their reality, the world, such as it is, mocks and damages their faith. Hence, one can doubtless see that, feeling threatened, faith will shrink into itself, the contemplation of Christ tends to detach itself from a human experience which seems to contradict it, and prayer shuts itself in, even when it stands in wonder before God's mystery. One could also see how, in a more or less conscious way, a faith thought to be obsolete and incapable of transmission might be shunted aside, placed between brackets, while the importance of positive, concrete education for the material progress of youth is clearly seen.

De La Salle's attitude, such as I see it, both in his journey of foundation and in the dynamism of his spiritual teaching on the Mystery of Jesus Christ, accepts neither of these points of view. For the Founder, it is the silent work of the Spirit in their hearts that has made himself and his Brothers sensitive to that spiritual and cultural chasm that separates the young children they know from that which is proclaimed by the faith which is theirs. The first effect of the spirit of faith is an entire change in the way one looks on life — to see everything through the eyes of faith. The clinical sharpness of the analysis of the distressful situation of youth cannot lead to despair because the Spirit causes the Brothers to recognize in those young people the presence of Jesus Christ Himself, an invisible, tenuous but hopeful presence. Their faith is challenged; it is also stirred by the power of the Resurrection. In that respect, one must read once again the many lasallian texts that invite us to "recognize Jesus Christ beneath the tattered clothing of child-

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ren", and calls upon us to respect in those forsaken youngsters the dignity of the children of God.

At the same time, out of this contemplation of a reality both enlightened and challenged by faith, there wells up in the heart of the Brother the certainty of being called by God to those young people, just as they are. What it comes to mean is that the founding shock is that of a clash between two worlds while at the same time it is a shock produced in their inner selves by the bursting into flame, in the heart of the Brother, of a spark from the heart of God. "That is the reason why God kindles a light in those called to announce His word to children to enlighten them by making the glory of God known to them". (MTR, p. 47) 193.I.

d) *The founding shock of the Institute is produced in the heart of the living God.*

It is necessary to go beyond, or rather to return to the very origin of the founding shock. According to De La Salle, it appears as a prolongation or manifestation in the history of mankind, of the "shock" which God felt in His love for men.

Here we should read again the extraordinary text of Med. 201. In fact, it repeats the message of St. John:

> "You must imitate God himself to some extent, for He so loved the souls He created that when He saw them involved in sin and unable to free themselves, His zeal and desire for their salvation led Him to send His own Son to rescue them from their miserable condition. This is what made Jesus Christ say that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him may not die, but may have eternal life". (MTR, p. 76) 201.

It seems to me that it is from this point that everything starts, or rather that it is here that the impulse of the educational service to the young must ceaselessly reinforce its dynamism and renew its self confidence. That which founded the Institute following the lived experience of John Baptist de La Salle, that which still founds it anew each day in its sure and true bursting forth, is the love of God in Jesus Christ, which has its beginnings in Trinitarian Love.

But we are very far from the divine impassivity to which the abstract treaties of theodicy coolly refer; the kind of love of which we speak has nothing in common with the static contentment jealously shared only by the Three (Persons) which some meditations on the Trinity sometimes seem to evoke. For the Trinity has been revealed to us only by the Son who lived amongst men. And this mission of the Son, as well as the sending of the Spirit, is seen by the Founder as caused by the unbearable suffering of God in presence of human distress. When all is said and done, it is the Cross of Christ that manifests not only what is God's love for men, but Love such as it is lived within the Trinity, that is to say, at the very fountain of all love. A lasallian spiritual vision, formulated in the 17th century, but to which many present-day theological studies on the sufferings of God have given a renewed actuality, a modern resonance.

22 - The founding shock of the Institute: the Brother minister of Jesus-Christ.

I would willingly consider this contemplation of love in the heart of a God open to human distress, in Mental Prayer and Lasallian Spirituality, as the equivalent of the "foundation" in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Whatever the case, from this fundamental contemplation of the heart of God, the spiritual and apostolic thrust will spring up or gush forth from the Brother's heart by taking on very realistic form in the exercise of his humble ministry. The text of our meditation goes on as follows:

> See what God and Jesus Christ have done to restore souls to the grace they have lost. What must you not do for them in your ministry if you have a zeal for their salvation". (MTR, p. 76).

Once again, let us note, if the Founder immediately sends his disciples back to the reality of their daily occupations, or rather to the effective accompaniment of the children entrusted to them, it is by opening them up to the inventive creativity that he brings them back to their activities. "What must you not do for them in your ministry". The true, patent, unavoidable realities for the Brother are those of the mystery of God's love and of the reality of the young just as they are.From the tension between the two, and because the Brother already belongs to both worlds, there continually springs forth the "ministry" of the Br-

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other, but seen as a capacity for creativity and inventiveness. "What must you not do?": You must never cease to begin again.

a) *Christocentrism of the ministry of Jesus-Christ*

What is important, I think, is to stress the fact that it is here that the real Christocentrism presented by John Baptist de La Salle to his disciples finds its roots as a deep spiritual dynamism. Such Christocentrism is that of a "minister of Jesus Christ", for "what God and Jesus Christ have done", once for all and for the whole of mankind, you must do it again, you must actualize it here and now, for the portion of humanity that has been entrusted to you.

You are the ministers of Jesus Christ for them. That means you have constantly to reenter into the movement of the Mystery of Jesus Christ such as it unfolded, and such as it is presented, for example, in the Christological hymn of the Epistle to the Philippians. Therefore it is not a matter of imitating the actions of Jesus Christ, or of a union with Jesus Christ seen as something static and individualistic. "As you represent Jesus Christ for the children confiided to your care, you must become one with Him, enter into His views, His intentions and, by the power of the Spirit given to you, reproduce today the very movement of His mystery.

b) *The mystery and ministry of Christ.*

What appears to me as essential and original, difficult to express and still more difficult to live — though it deals with a kind of dynamism to be renewed unceasingly — is the fact that John Baptist de La Salle does not dissociate the interior, mystical dynamism of the mystery from its very concrete, often prosaic, actualization in the exercise of the educational ministry of the Brother. Besides, one must indeed be conscious of the constant interaction between the exercise of ministry and the personal growth of the Brother in the mystery.

"Undoubtedly, we are familiar with the dynamism which goes from the mystery to the ministry: "If you want to be successful in your ministry, often give yourself over to the Spirit of Jesus Christ". But one must not fail to recognize a mutual dynamism: if you want to grow in Jesus Christ become more and more God's sons in the Spirit, dedicate yourselves to your everyday tasks; they will enlighten you, set you free and lead you on.

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11-O-16

LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY: OUR HERITAGE (5)

23 - In the ministry, becoming conformable to Christ in his mystery.

In broad terms, for I can only point out some approaches likely to stimulate a renewed reading of the lasallian spiritual teaching, I would like to follow the stages in which the mystery of Jesus Christ was accomplished such as they are evoked or implied in the Hymn of Philippians, and I will show how for John Baptist de La Salle (who so often quotes from the text of Philippians), those stages become actualized in the several dynamisms through which, in his ministry, the Brother seeks to conform himself with Jesus Christ. I will speak of the dynamism of Exodus and Incarnation; of the dynamism of the liberating and prophetic announcement of the Gospel; of the dynamism of the struggle for justice and the accepting of persecution. And I will conclude by speaking of the need to conform to the interior dispositions and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and finally by opening out onto the spiritual dynamism which is at the end, as it was at the beginning, of both the mystery of Christ and the ministry of the Brother, of which it is the very soul in daily life: a dynamism of impulse towards the Father, of adhesion to His will, of service for His Kingdom, of passion for His Name; in a word, the dynamism of an existence consecrated to the Father, offered up to His glory.

a) Dynamism of Exodus

It is this dynamism which founds the Institute, since de La Salle is wrenched from his world to launch out in the discovery of the other world he has discovered. The dynamism of Christ that the Founder contemplates, for instance, in the event of the Circumcision or of the Transfiguration of the Lord. He left heaven to come down among men. The dynamism of Christ, the Good Shephered, about whom John Baptist de La Salle reminds us that he left the ninety-nine faithful sheep to go in search of the lost. You too, he goes on to say, should "try every means to bring back to God those who are far away from Him", for "such is the will of your Father Who is in heaven that none of these little ones should perish". (MD 56,1).

The dynamism of Incarnation, the foundation of the Institute in John Baptist who, at the cost of arduous struggle, made himself as far as possible like those masters for whom in the beginning he had felt such aversion. The dynamism that the Founder contemplates in the light of the Letter to the Hebrews for example: "He is not ashamed to call us His brothers... He made Himself in everything like His brothers... to the extent of being tempted... which allows Him to come to the help of those who are tempted". The frequent invitation of the Founder to "bend down towards the young, to meet them where and as they are, to put yourself within their reach, to become like them in poverty, for example, and to speak their language. (EMO. 65 MR. 197,1 198,1). Incarnation, proximity of insertion, not mere chance realities, but which surge from the heart of the Brother who is "Good Shepherd", from the one who lives among his sheep, who knows everyone of them by their name, their social milieu and their personal history. Incarnation, proximity, which implies a harmony of heart: to win their hearts, show them tenderness... such expressions which are typically lasallian. (MD. 115; 3 and MD 33).

b) Dynamism of the liberating and prophetic proclamation of the Gospel

Foundational dynamism of the Institute: to put the means of salvation within the reach of abandoned youth. For that end, there is the "liberating" action of the Founder and his Brothers, who stubbornly ensure the gratuity of instruction, who transform their school so that it may be acceptable to youth through education, and so that it may be an experience of human dignity for them, of solidarity and friendship, a school which prepares them for a useful, competent life of service.

The dynamism of Christ, Good Shephered and Servant, who cures man and sets him on his feet again, liberates him from his alienations and fears, reinstates the outcasts, restores the bonds between men. The teaching of the Founder about education in freedom, about tenderness towards the young, about the care for quality in their instruction, about personal attention and desire for the smooth running of the school... It is through this transformation of human realities, in this effort for the advancement of individual persons that the Gospel is already announced. For the Gospel is the power of salvation for every man and for the entire persons. "The Church considers this solicitude for man, for his humanity, for the future of men on earth and therefore for the orientation of development and progress, as an essential element of her mission". (John Paul II, Redemptor Hominis, n. 15).

To place the means of salvation within reach of those young people is to announce to them, as far as possible in their own language, the Good News of the Gospel, the Christian message. Even more precisely, it means working for their christian initiation, in all its dimensions. The Founder's meditations ceaselessly come back to this key dimension of the ministry of the Brother. We must add however that the Founder often directs the Brother's contemplation towards Jesus Christ, in the exercise of His prophetic ministry, in His passion to go from city to city and announce the Gospel; He devoted His daylight hours to this task whereas He dedicated His nights to solitary prayer, thus living out the double yet single movement of adhesion to His Father to Whom he was united in order that He could then manifest Him. (MR 200,1).

Certainly, we must emphasize another key dimension of this participation of the Brother in the Mystery of Christ Prophet, what may be called its dimension of challenge: on the one hand, with regard to these young people, he must not hesitate to announce to them the authentic Gospel, including the paradoxical mystery of the Beatitudes, the announcement of the Folly of the Cross, the insistence on a life which is well lives when it is given as gift. And on the other hand, the prophetic ministry of the Brother also includes an aspect of denunciation when freedom becomes abuse and the young allow themselves to be enslaved again by the forces of death. In a meaningful way, when speaking of correction, the Founder refers to the prophetic character of the Old Testament personified in Nathan. Still more meaningful is the reference here to Christ Prophet, wrathful and fearless supporter of the rights of God and the truth of man. (MR 204, 2-3 and MR 203, 1).

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c) The dynamism of the battle for justice and the acceptance of persecution

The founding dynamism of the Institute was tested by many forms of hostility, which we could call the forces of death, without prejudicing the good faith of de La Salle's enemies. If the Institute has known so many crises, these were often caused, or at least accentuated, by the fact that the Founder and his disciples strove to give witness to the transforming force of a new world, in a Church and society where they were not yet accepted. It is not at all surprising therefore that the evangelical theme of persecution should be so often treated by the Founder. We could show how he invites his Brothers to interpret and live these trials as a participation in the mystery of Christ fighting for justice, persecuted by those who were opposed to it and finally eliminated by their combined forces. This is the Scandal of the Mystery of the Cross, but the Founder takes great care not to separate it from the power of life and Resurrection. "Make it known by your whole conduct towards the children confided to your care that you consider yourselves as the ministers of God... enduring with great patience the pains you have to suffer, glad to be despised by men and persecuted to the point of giving your life for Jesus in the exercise of your ministry". (MR 201, 1 and EMO 111).

Like Jesus, and so that they might have life, to consume your entire life. Thus is expressed, in the context of the daily exercise of the ministry, the communion of the Brother with the Mystery of the Incarnate Christ, Good Shepherd, with the Mystery of Christ, Servant of men and their Liberator, Prophet of a new world, strength of salvation for the present world and Power for the new beginnings in this restricted world. Thus is expressed the communion of the Brother with the mystery of Christ persecuted for justice, suffering and dying on the cross, offering up his life for the salvation of the world. The Founder also invites the Brother to take on the profound dispositions of Christ living out this mystery in humility and gentleness with scarcity of means, in a refusal to resort to worldly power and with immeasurable respect for the dignity of every human being and of his freedom before God.

It remains to welcome the Spirit of Jesus Who progressively leads the Brother to the very heart of the Mystery of Jesus, to the threshold of His special relationship with His Father. Jesus turned towards His Father, from the deepest recesses of His Being, by the welcoming of His Love, the impulse of thanksgiving, the union with His Will, the offering of His Life. Growth in Christ through the exercise of the ministry is firmly linked to contemplation, to the prayer of praise and supplication that continuously flowed from the Heart of Jesus, as Von Baltasar has so well written: "If Jesus had not withdrawn so far in solitude with God, He could never have moved so far in the community of mankind".

It is in this perspective, I believe, that we can re-read the following lines from the *Explanation of Mental Prayer,* biblically so rich and affectively so warm:

> "I unite myself to You, O sweet Jesus, to your interior dispositions when you were meditating; You were then really in Your Father and Your Father in You; You were then thinking what He was Himself thinking; You then loved what He loved... In the same way, do in me what you want me to do; You yourself please present my meditation and make known my needs to the Eternal Father". (EMO 56).

Without any commentary, I place alongside these words that conclude the 201st meditation. They express the main points concerning the founding shock of the Institute and probably the vocation of the Brother:

> "Tell them again what Jesus Christ used to say about the sheep whose shepherd He is and who must be saved by Him: I have come, He said, that they may have life and have it abundantly. For it must have been the ardent zeal you have for the salvation of the souls of those you have to instruct that has inspired you to sacrifice yourselves and commit the whole of your life to give them a christian education and procure for them the life of grace in this world and Life everlasting in the next".

Abandonment to God for a period of renewed founding.

Foundation, refoundation. These words undoubtedly contain something both stimulating and exciting. However, we have learnt that reality is difficult, fragile, often uncertain. And nothing allows us to expect a bright future. I have spoken of creativity in foundation. But we also know that De La Salle experienced successive crises, that he had probably been often tempted to despair and had experienced being abandoned by God in silent darkness.

Like every Assembly of Brothers, this General Chapter constitutes an act of hope. As it begins, I feel that our Founder is inviting all of us to take on the attitude of surrender to God, an attitude which, according to Father Rayez, the Founder so well represents. I simply leave for your meditation and prayer these lasallian texts: they seem to me to apply to your General Chapter, to *our* Chapter, as it is the General Chapter of the Institute.

1. "The Brother Director must be fully united to God and filled with His Spirit, for it must not be by his own spirit that he must behave in his task, but it must be the Spirit of God that acts in him and in the community. To that end, he must... have abandoned himself to the Spirit of God in order to act only through His inspiration and movement or rather, to let His Holy Spirit be really the principle of his action". (Avis I, 2).

2. "Prepare yourself today to receive Him fully (the Spirit of Christ), by giving yourself up completely to His guidance and allowing Him to reign over all your interior movements in so perfect a manner that it is no longer yourselves who live, but Jesus Christ who lives in You". (MD, 22, 2).

3. "... There would seem to be great faith in the spirit of detachment since one gives oneself up to God's Providence, like a man who would take to the wide sea without sails or oars". (MF 134, 1).

Pray to God that He
may grant you TODAY
the same grace
as He gave to the holy Apostles
(in the Upper Room)
and that after having filled you
with His Spirit to sanctify you
that He may communicate it to you also
for the salvation of others. (M.D. 43, 3).
Send your Spirit
to give us a new life
and
You will renew
the face of the earth. (M.D. 42, 3).

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11-O-17

THE RULE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (1)

Speaking about the Rule

Speaking about the Rule in a magazine which is open to the laity as well as to Brothers, raises a certain number of questions.

In fact on one part, Religious have over the centuries maintained a hermetical reserve concerning the internal life of their Institutes. Further, the Rule is the soul of this internal life: it officially designates what Religious are, what they ought to do, how they should govern themselves, how individuals should be accepted into the community how they should be trained, and what duties they should fulfill throughout their existence.

With regard to this, the laity manifest little interest in these texts, written in a language which is largely foreign to them, making allusions to things of a religious nature, with which they have not been familiar.

The situation changes from the moment when both parties concerned evolve. The "Lasallian reality" is seen today throughout the world. The laity are interested in the spirituality coming from John Baptist De La Salle, and many share in the Brothers' apostolic work: now, it is the Rule which makes this spirituality and apostolate "official". It is then, an *act of confidence* in the Lasallian laity in presenting this Rule in their assembly and leaving to the local Communities of the Brothers the task of eventually presenting a more elaborate understanding to the lay people associated with their spiritual life and mission.

The situation evolves also on the part of the Brothers. At the very outset, they are aware that in presenting the Rule, they are inviting a public judgement, at least within the circle of their friends, who are going to note the difference between the ideal prescribed by the Rule and the reality lived in practice. Still, the Brothers in ever greater numbers are willing to accept this *risk: it is that of the Gospel.* The Rule, in fact, derives its meaning and strength from the Gospel. These practical prescriptions have no other purpose except to help the religious to live their daily lives according to the Gospel. And such deeds should not be hidden under a bushel. The consecration of religious calls upon them to "profess" their vows. In the measure that they accept this challenge in His name, they have the right to call others to account: "Where do you stand in your life, with regard to the Gospel?".

The true challenge is that of transfering the Rule from the static legislative text to the strength of service of the Spirit.

Three Rules in three centuries

Since the time of Saint John Baptist De La Salle, the Brothers have known only three basic Rules, even though various editions have been presented with minor retouching. These three Rules are those approved by the successive Chapters of 1718, 1967, and 1986.

The Rule of 1718.

This rule was duly voted upon and approved by the second General Chapter, in the presence of the Founder. This Rule had been previously lived experimentally by the Brothers and was largely based upon their views.

This Rule underwent a number of additions and some retouching. The two most notable ones, were those of 1726, after the approbation of the Institute by the Pope, which added a Chapter on the vows; and 1923 when, at the request of Pope Pius XI, a chapter was modified allowing the Brothers to teach Latin thereafter.

Substantially, this Rule would remain in force until 1967. It underwent 13 editions, the last of which was in 1947.

Such longevity can be explained: the Brothers remained (and still remain) very attached to this text coming from their origins, where the source of their original strength, the spirit of the Institute and their own identity, as it was conceived and lived by the Founder and his first companions are expressed.

The Rule of 1967.

However, the source of the Spirit is channeled into practical settings. After three hundred years the letter became archaic. It was paralyzing the Spirit and making the entire Rule fall into desuetude.

It was in 1934 that a General Chapter recognized the desuetude of "several points" of the Rule. It recommended a revision which would be so conducted that it would be finished and presented to the General Chapter which would take place in 1946, right after the war. The revision was too timid, a truly futile attempt. On that point, the following Chapter, in 1956, called for a complete and substantial recasting.

The Rule which we present here in these lines is the *fruit of the impulse given in 1956,* but an impulse which was put in step with, and singularly amplified by, *the orientations of Vatican II.* (The Decree Perfectae Caritatis on the adaptation and renovation of the religious life, and the practical guidelines in "Ecclesiae sanctae" of 6 August 66).

In fact, the malady of ageing was general among Religious families. The Council called upon them to hold a *special Chapter* to revise their "Rules" or "Constitutions" and to bring them up to date, but still in accord with the Founder, with the mind of the Church and with the needs of the times. This revised Rule would be provisionary and would be submitted to experimentation before being evaluated, rewritten, and presented for the approval of the Holy See.

The 39th General Chapter established this provisionary Rule during the two sessions of 1966 and 1967.

The experimentation of the provisionary Rule went on until the Chapter of 1986. Moreover, its text will remain in force until the Holy See approves the one established in 1986. Still, since 1982, Brother Jose Pablo, Superior General, launched with all the Brothers the work of evaluation. These Brothers turned out several thousand of notes, which were then collected, classified, and synthesized in 1984. In 1985, a Committee for Revision worked together with the General Council and drew up a "REVISION OF THE RULE". It

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was sent out to the entire Institute at the end of 1985 and even to several of their friends, priests and laity, to find out what they thought about it.

The Rule of 1986.

★ *The three contributions:*

It was with the material gathered between 1984 and 1986 that the capitulants worked. As a result, the RULE of 1986 was the fruit of THREE CONTRIBUTIONS:

— The contribution of the "original" Rule of 1718;

— The contribution of the "experimental" Rule of 1967;

— The contribution of the experience accumulated between 1967 and 1986.

The contribution of the original Rule (1718)

The word "contribution" is weak in describing what the Rule of 1986 owes to that of 1718, which is in fact the *Mother Rule:* no one in fact, in translating the contents, can willingly dispose of the heritage of Saint De La Salle. The work required by the Council consisted of restating in today's language the original thought of the Founder, and, in his name and under his inspiration, taking the positions and making the decisions imposed upon us by the new circumstances in which we live.

Three attitudes

Regarding the text considered, the capitulants adopted three attitudes:

1. The Rule of 1718 contains a certain number of *texts replete with inspiration.* They bring out the finality of the Institute, its spirit, and the meaning of the Rule. The capitulants of 1986 preserved these almost integrally, as we shall see a bit further on, whether in adopting a direct quotation, or in expressing the thought in modern terms.

2. A second sector is composed of *texts dealing with regulations,* and it is there that one loved to find the breath of inspiration: community, consecration, and prayer. The capitulants of 1986 did not reproduce these texts. Still, they were inspired by the thoughts of the Founder expressed in places other than the Rule of 1718: they "Lasallianized" these chapters, if I be permitted this neologism.

3. Finally, the Rule of 1718 contained *numerous regulations,* calendars and time schedules for the schools, the prayer life of the Brothers, meals, daily life, as well as guidelines for politeness and personal conduct. All these referred to usages and customs of the Golden Century!

Three Procedures

The *direct* spiritual heritage from Saint De La Salle, gathered from his writings or from the examples of his life, is present in the Rule under three types of procedures:

1. Quotation:

★ *The Rule begins by quoting two long and important passages from the original Rule:*

Before even introducing the official text, the Rule presents the Chapter of 1718 on *the spirit of faith and of zeal* which ought to characterize the Institute. This passage does not form a part of the Rule: it is, as it were, the "umbilical cord" which affirms the filiation with the Mother-role of 1718.

★ After this integral passage, the Rule begins with an *exergue,* literally borrowing nine-tenths of the passage from the Rule of 1718. It makes the meaning of the Rule precise: to help those who practice it to live the love of God and neighbor.

★ More often, the *quotation is shorter,* inserted within the modern text. The procedure is frequent in the first chapter, and that is significant because this chapter defines *the purposes and the spirit of the Institute:* here, for example you have the spirit of the Institute (note the importance of the words within the quotation marks) Article 5: "The spirit of this Institute is a spirit of faith" which leads the Brothers "to look upon everything with the eyes of faith, to do everything in view of God and to attribute all to God".

2. The modern restatement of the text of 1718

This procedure is used for an essential article, one which defines the finality of the Brothers' Institute. One quickly perceives the reason for the solicitude over affiliation affirmed throughout the literary procedure: it indicates a fundamental aspect.

The Rule of 1718 said: *"The end of this Institute* is to give a Christian education to children; it is for this purpose the Brothers keep schools, that, having the children under their care from morning until evening, they may teach them to lead good lives, by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and by inspiring them with Christian maxims, and thus give them a suitable education".

In 1986, as we shall see a bit further on, it was necessary to remain completely faithful to this finality: Christian education, all the while accepting a certain openness to the principal means: the school. The text attests to this double solicitude in its very literary form: "*The end of this Institute* is to promote a human and Christian education for the youth, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the church has entrusted to it... The Christian School, which has always to be given new vitality, is the preferred field for the activity of the Brothers. The Institute likewise explores other possibilities for teaching and education that may be more adapted to the needs of time and place".

3. *Recourse to the totality of the Founder's thoughts*

The Rule of 1986 did not limit itself to finding its wealth in the Rule of 1718: it was further inspired by the life and other writings of the Founder, either directly or by a clear reference. The solicitude over "lasallianizing" the Rule was ever present and this was manifested in two themes: first by the abundant references to the De La Salle heritage, secondly, by their "*strategic importance*".

It is thus that almost all of the Chapters open with an explicit reference to what the Founder has done or has said, situated in a strategic place: that of definitions. This is true, for example, in the first article, which summarizes the main historical features of the foundation. This is again true of the first article of Chapter two on the Institute's Mission.

The tenor and importance of the preliminary article can be verified in the same way: in Chapter 4, which deals with the Community, and in Chapter 6 on Formation, in Chapter 7 on the General Chapter, and in Chapter 10 on the Vitality of the Institute.

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11-O-18

THE RULE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (2)

The Contribution of the Rule of 1967

The Rule of 1967 is then that provisionary text, established by the 39th General Chapter, following the resolution of the preceding Chapter of 1956, seconded and confirmed by Vatican Council II. Still, this Rule cannot be considered independently of the historical circumstances in view of which it came into existence: that of *a crucial period* which was going to witness the effects of a considerable diminution of the Institute.

The principal concern of the 1966 capitulants was not to produce new regulations, but *to come to grips with the crisis* which had already begun: it was in 1965 that a considerable diminution in the number of Brothers was first noted in the statistics. Now that the crisis has abated, we can readily see what was then only an intuition: the crisis dealt above all with the *identity of the Brothers,* but this was quite the same generally throughout the Church: where priests, men and women religious all faced similar difficulties: the shock of modernization. The styles of the consecrated life conceived in other cultural and social epochs had to face head-on the full brunt of the secularization of the modern world.

It was urgently necessary *to respond and to undertake a renewal.* The questions were fast and furious: what is the truly essential element of the Brother's vocation? Is he primarily a teacher or first and foremost a religious? Is he committed to a Mission or to Prayer? What is the worth of the school in the evangelization of youth? Should the schools not be abandoned in favor of more effective apostolates? Should the Brothers continue to live and work together or should they not, on the contrary, stress the individual apostolate after the manner of secular Institutes? Only armchair strategists would consider such questions idle and would offer such stereotyped responses as, "it was only a case of...". The crisis was sincere and profound. Those who underwent it are worthy of respect.

The "Declaration" and the "Rules and Constitutions"

The Chapter of 1966 would consecrate two sessions and a fruitful interim session to respond to these questions. With 20 years of experience, these responses remain entirely valid, even if the unfurling of years has seen the affirmation of other elements which we shall consider further on. These responses are found explicity stated in a document which serves as a ready reference: the "Declaration on the Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today". They were taken up again and codified in the "Rules and Constitutions" published in 1967, "*Ad experimentum",* to be experimented.

Currents which intermingle

Before quickly reviewing the responses of the Chapter of 1967, we must underline several currents which intermingled in the "Declaration". We here cite without developing: the contribution coming from the Founder which people wished to express in modern terms; the contribution of Vatican Council II on the religious life, on the laity, on the Christian school; the contribution of biblical and theological renovations and their influence or how consecrated life beginning with the evangelical counsels should be conceived; personalist philosophy which places emphasis on the person; the contribution of the human sciences; and the realities of the characteristics of modern society.

The finality of the Institute and the identity of the Brother

The "Declaration" and the "Rules" are very rich in content, but the point of their contribution is manifest under two fundamental aspects: the finality of the Institute and the identity of the Brother.

— *The finality of the Institute,* as we have shown above, is both affirmed and enlarged in fidelity. But, above all, it is no longer referred immediately to the school, but to Christian education, of which the school remains the privileged instrument for the Brothers. That it should be a school put at the service of the poor is recalled with vigor by these texts.

— *The identity of the Brother* is defined in an exemplary fidelity to the Founder. The theoretical discussions gave place to a well thought out consideration of the history of the foundation: De La Salle constantly formed the Brothers in the entire life without any order of priority, a mission received from God, a life consecrated to God, a communitarian existence. Mission, consecration and community became recognized as the basic elements in the Brother's identity, which include the state of lay religious, service to the poor, and the preference for the school. All these elements are integrated into a living unity. There is unity without uniformity, for each practice accentuates one or other aspect, without detriment to the others. *A contribution situated in the heart of the Rule of 1986.*

This double contribution on the finality of the Institute and on the identity of the Brother is at the heart of the present Rule, *to the point of controling its structure:*

— Chapter one: the FINALITY and the spirit of the Institute.
— Chapter two: the MISSION of the Institute.
— Chapter Three: the CONSECRATED LIFE.
— Chapter Four: COMMUNITY LIFE.

The structure itself reproduces the elements recalled and fixed in the Chapter of 1967. This contribution nourishes the entire Rule and it appears everywhere in an explicit manner, as in this article 10: "Each Brother takes upon himself the responsibility for integrating within his own person these constitutive elements of his vocation; consecration to God as lay religious, apostolic ministry of education especially of the poor and community life".

Another evident trace of this "trinitarian" definition of our identity: each time that the Rule takes up *one of these elements,* mission, consecration, community, it does not fail to make a *reference to each of the other two.* This creates an impression of repetition, which has been noted by many people, still, it must run such a risk in order to affirm the constituent unity existing among these three basic elements.

1976: Evaluation and corrections

1. *First important innovation* of the Chapter of 1976: the *Annual Community Plan.* The capitulants considered the texts designed for the Community as a perfect model but a bit of a discouragement for those who had to live

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with its daily difficulties. Consequently, they proposed that each Community of Brothers, not redesign a new Utopia, but decide together, at the beginning of each year, a practical program with concrete stipulations concerning their apostolic life, their prayer life, and their fraternal life in community. Subject to regular evaluation, this "Plan" would allow for the adjustment of ideals and performances. After the initial misgivings, this method showed itself to be one of the most effective means of renewal. The Rule of 1976 devoted a large section of Chapter 4 do it.

2. *Second corrective: the "communion" of the Institute.*Subsidiarity, which was adopted in 1966 as a principle of government bore fruit particularly in the field of the decentralization of responsibility. It ignored in a rather big manner the lines which should weave all the parts of this "little Church", which is our Institute, together. The 1976 Chapter reminded us that in the bosom of the Church of the People of God, the Institute of the Brothers ought to live the "communion" among its diverse parties. Further, so that this would not remain as a mere vague concept, it reorganized the General Council as a center for promoting this communion. The General Chapter of 1986 took up this spirituality and consigned it to the Rule in such a way that it nourishes all the passages on: the General Chapter, the Central Government, its composition and role, the Region, and the District, as found in chapters 7,8 and 9 of the 1986 Rule.

Currents affirmed from 1976 to 1986

Spiritual and apostolic currents already present before 1976 underwent a significant development after that date. Our Rule 1976 incorporates them. Let us cite:

1. *Care for the Young Churches:* The Rule reminds us that it is the entire Institute which ought to be concerned with the Young Churches and ought to share their resources and personnel with them (Ch. 2; art. 15).

2. *Inculturation:* inspired by Paul VI's famous "Evangelii nuntiandi", article 18 reminds the Brothers that "the entire culture ought to be evangelized".

3. *Catechesis and evangelization:* It is Chapter 2 which, in its abundant and a bit disorganized richness, gives an account of the interest, attention and experience of the Lasallian world with regard to proclaiming Jesus Christ to today's youth: the role of the school, of its planning, of its community of educators — complementary roles of the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ and of evangelization — the problem of language adapted to the young... the total difficulties and approaches which the Brothers share with the local Churches, problems at the very center of the Brothers' exercise of their ministry and that of the laymen who work with them.

4. *The extension of service to the poor:* The Rule consecrates the evolution begun during the course of the decade in *two directions:* the extension of the service to the poor in the direction of the promotion of justice which invites educators to unite their efforts towards those who in the Church and in society are fighting against the *roots of poverty,* — extension of *direct service* to the poor, in complete fidelity to De La Salle. Chapter 2 on the Mission of the Institute, and part of Chapter 3, devoted to the vow of Association for the educational service of the poor express this double extension.

5. *The "Lasallian Promotion" of the laity: another great evolution of the 76-86 decade.* The sharing of apostolic tasks as well as of Lasallian spirituaity is vigorously affirmed by the Rule. Article 17 gives clear orientations for this collaboration. Also, article 116, after reminding us that the gift given to John Baptist De La Salle by the Spirit, is not limited to the benefit of the Brothers, discerns in the vigorous rise in the Lasallian laity, a grace which renew the Institute's own vitality.

A triple message

Live the Spirit of your Institute more deeply, pray more: the spirit of faith and of zeal, which is presented in the first chapter with regard to finality, is not in anyway less present throughout the length of the work, and it is particularly found in chapter 2 on the Mission of the Institute ((cf articles 11,20, and 21). Still, it is perhaps *chapter 5 on the LIFE OF PRAYER which offers the most original contribution.* The Rule defines the prayer of an educator. As a Minister of God, he is called upon to contemplate the designs of salvation at work in the world and particularly with regard to those confided to his care; he is invited also to communicate with the thoughts of God by the practice of mental prayer so that he might be able to share the word of God with others.

Look at your personal responsibilites. The Rule proposes to the Brothers a "personal plan of life" in order to invite them to enter more freely, vigorously, and consciously into the common plan of the Institute so that they may offer it what is best in themselves (Art 48 b).

Associate yourself in the name of the Lord: from 1691 until 1694, St. De La Salle together with a chosen group of Brothers pronounced the vows of association to establish the Institute for the service of the poor. Later, this vow was reduced to its "economic" aspects by the vow of "gratuity". The capitulants of 1986 deemed it opportune to re-establish it under its original form: "Vow of association for the educational service of the poor", pursuing in that way two principal motives. Firstly, to reaffirm the priority of service to the poor in connection with the obligations taken before God by the vows. Secondly, to invite the Brothers to re-enforce their unity in a world where everything calls for dispersion.

Conclusion: The Vitality of the Institute

Chapter 10, which concludes the rule, does so under an aura of hope in the future willed by God. It does not do so in a triumphal display to the illusory sound of the blare of trumpets. It does so *in an atmosphere of faith:* it is God who raised up John Baptist De La Salle, and the Brothers know that God will continue this same appeal. They see this in the proofs of the blossoming of new vocations, in the emergence of the Lasallian laity movement, and above all in the needs of youth who are waiting for educators: "This Institute is one of great necessity".

The Rule does not hide the necessity of formulating *a worthy response* to this appeal. The total vitality depends upon the quality of each individual response. Yet, it depends also upon the support afforded by the Founder and by the graces which he continues to draw down upon his sons.

It is thus upon this filial appeal to their Founder that the Brothers commit themselves to construct that future which the Will of God is tracing out for them, as it traced out the ways, along which, three centuries ago, St. De La Salle and his first disciples proceeded.

"Today, as in the past, he challenges the Brothers, not only as the one who established the Institute but as the Founder who continues to inspire and to sustain it". (Art. 119).

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11-O-19

DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW BROTHER ARNOLD?...

The topic of Brother Scubilion appeared in Lasalliana N. 6. In four successive leaflets, Brother André Fermet aroused our interest in the knowledge of this remarkable "missionary" about whom he had just written an interesting biography.

Because I have just finished relating the life of another Brother of the Christian Schools who was also called "to be elevated to the honor of the altar", Brother Lauraire had asked me to invite the readers of Lasalliana to discover or to get to know Brother Arnold, my hero, better.[1]

In 1956, Mr. Georges Rigault had written a biography of this devoted disciple of Saint De La Salle under the title of *A Lasallian Ascetic.* The adjective was becoming popular and the noun was still in style. I must acknowledge — the author must be turning over in his grave that I afforded little attention to this work however conscientious and well written. Neither the austere title, nor what I in my youth had heard about Brother Arnold from a jupiterian superior who had known him, succeeded in inflaming my enthusiasm.

Also, when in the Autumn of 1982, the Brother Regional of France proposed that I write a new biography of the Servant of God, I asked him to give me some time to think about it. A more serene reading of Mr. Georges Rigault, made me decide to try my hand at it although without arousing in me any enthusiasm. However, when I had read through the four huge volumes of testimonies coming from the family of Brother Arnold, from his former confreres, students, and friends, his numerous correspondence, the resumes of his conferences, some personal notes taken from his unfortunate autos-de-fe, when I visited Landroff, the Lorraine village of his childhood, not in the winter as did Mr. Rigault of old, but on a radiant afternoon in the Spring, I began to weave more sympathetic threads binding me to this confrere who was 150 years my senior. We could understand each other all the better being that we both were unconditional admirers of De La Salle and that we had the formidable honor of working in the formation of candidates for the religious life at different epochs, it is true, but just as passionately! What human tenderness there was in this rough native of Lorraine, so austere towards himself, but so tender toward others!

And under a humility which was ever on guard, what richness of intelligence lived within this solid rustic! What serene patience, what courage in work! Within the "Lasallian" spirit, what attention to live in the present an ever new ideal!

Well, Lasalliana readers, follow the guide! I propose to you an itinerary in four stages:

1 - From 1838 to 1890.

2 - Brother Arnold, teacher, educator, catechist.

3 - Brother Arnold, director of novices and animator of spiritual retreats.

4 - Brother Arnold "in the shade of the Spirit".

From 1838 to 1890

Brother Arnold lived till the age of 52. He was born 10 September 1838 about 40 kilometres southeast of Metz. This same year, Brother Philippe was elected Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and would remain as such for 36 years.

Brother Arnold died 23 October 1890 in Rheims, at a time when the Brothers were establishing themselves in Columbia, when Branly was discovering the principle of the wireless, Adler was inventing the steam powered airplane, and Renan was writing *The Future of Science.*

During the interval in France, the Revolution of 1848 had brought Louis-Napoleon to power and he would become Emperor of the French four years later. The 1870 war with Prussia touched Arnold closer to home because it lead to the partition of Lorraine which Germanized the village of his birth. The first Vatican Council (1869-70) does not

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seem to have had much bearing on his religious life, not more than the apparitions at Lourdes in 1858, the death of the Curé of Ars the following year, the death of Pius IX and the election of Leon XIII in 1878. On the contrary, he followed the progress of anti-clericalism which, in 1880 led to the laicization of the public schools of the homeland of John Baptist De La Salle, beatified in 1888 and whose disciples realized at the end of the 19th century an astonishing flourish of missionary activity.

The life of Jules Reche — that was the secular name of Brother Arnold — was quite commonplace and even strange. Until the age of 24, all his experiences were rather matter-of-fact. The son of the shoemaker of the village, Jules was the eldest of five brothers and three sisters. He attended the school in Landroff but had to quit at the age of ten in order to work on a farm. He had to help his father feed the brood in the family nest which the depressed mother often abandoned to wander around the countryside. As a farmhand until the age of 20, he engaged in the agricultural activities which changed according to the season. Life was hard at that time in the villages which lacked all comforts, where everything was done with human strength helped by the harnessed horses and oxen: plowing, planting, harvesting of crops and picking of grapes, and cutting and hauling wood. Jules Reche, nevertheless, loved this work on the good Lorraine soil in contact with nature: he would remain conditioned by it for the rest of his days.

If he quit in 1858 to become a coachman for a middle-class family, it was only to earn more money to better support the needs of his poor family. For a few months he was a daily worker to avoid unemployment. He found work as the driver of a cart hauling materials during the reconstruction of the church of Charleville. He treated his four horses as friends and divided his free time among prayer, preparing young chimney sweepers for their first Holy Communion, and taking evening courses in the Brothers' school.

After a long time he believed that he heard the call of God to enter His service'. The example of the disciples of John Baptist De La Salle clarified this matter for him and on November 13, 1862 he entered the Noviciate at Thionville.

A year later, Brother Arnold began the second period of his existence: that of religious teacher. This period had two phases: 14 years as teacher in the boarding school of Saint Joseph in Rheims and 12 years in exercising the delicate mission of formator of future religious.

Contrary to all expectations, this man who had quit school at the age of 10 in order to become a farmhand, coachman, daily laborer, and cart driver and who entered the Novitiate without any other intellectual baggage beyond the good but distant primary education and some night courses, this lumbering country boy was going to become one of the best professors of a flourishing scholastic institution. In 1868 he successfully passed the test for the Elementary Teachers Diploma and in 1873 the Superior Teachers Certificate. He prepared candidates for the School of Arts and Trades of Châlons-sur-Marne and they passed successfully. As professor of agriculture, he maintained this section on the same high level as that established by his predecessor. His former students and his confreres unanimously recognized in him "great knowledge and total dedication. An "Incomparable catechist" also.

Then when in 1877 Brother Arnold was named Director of the Novitiate of Thillois, this choice sanctioned an authentic sanctity put at the service of the young with an astonishing pedagogical sense.

Brother Charles LAPIERRE

[1] "If the grain of wheat..." Brother ARNOULD (1838-1890), by Charles Lapierre - DDB Editor - 1986 - 372 pages.

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No. 12

1 June 1987

FOREWORD

Amid the usual variety of subjects presented in this Issue Number 12, I should particularly underscore three articles concerning Brother Arnold. The preceding number of the Lasalliana has already introduced you to the biography of this holy Brother. At that time we were awaiting his eventual beatification. Now, the date has been set for November 1, 1987. Hence, it is but natural that we should give a particular place to Brother Arnold in this issue.

Throughout the liturgical developments of the beatification, there are certain things to think about. On reading the biography written by Brother Charles Lapierre, I became interested in the knowledge which Brother Arnold had of Saint John Baptist De La Salle and of his devotion to the Holy Founder. This is an area which might give us food for thought.

Do you not agree that the activities and engagements proposed by the Lasalliana over the past four year were an effective transmission of the charism of evangelization and of the educational intuitions of Saint John Baptist De La Salle?

For the past four years...: actually, there are 240 distinct articles which were presented for your reading and some of these were able to be used as working tools in all kinds of encounters with Lasallian groups.

As this fourth year of publication draws to an end, the Brothers in Rome who do the work of researching, translating, editing, and publishing this periodical, express their sincere gratitude to all those who have shown their appreciation for this work by submitting articles and to those readers and subscribers who have remained faithful to the Lasalliana over the years.

Brother Leon Lauraire

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12-A-52

RHEIMS MAY 1, 1687

In the parish register of the city of Rheims on this date, the signature of Brother Henry Lheureux appears. It can be read below a certification of death which is unfortunately too laconic. We present it here, based on a recent photograph (*Cahiers Lasalliens* 37, p. 40):

> "Jean Morice died on the first day of May, at the age of 17, or thereabout, a native of Chesne Le Pouilleux, and was buried in this cemetery. In faith of which, I, the pastor, have signed".

This signature, duly announced, however, is not found in that place.

Because it pertained to the register of Saint Etienne's Parish in Rheims, the said pastor would have been Simon Lhermitte, who was in charge of the parish from the year 1675 until May 30, 1695.

In the absence of the parish priest, Brother Henry Lheureux signed as witness. This signature is precious to us. It attests to the fact that on May 1, 1687, the Brother was in Rheims and was particularly qualified. He was more and better qualified, it seems, than any other member of the Lasallian community. This community was composed of three groups, sometimes mistaken by people on the outside, but clearly differentiated within the group: Brothers employed in teaching, novices in formation and the guests of the Seminary for the teachers for the rural region.

Contrary to what can be read in many other death notices, our text mentions neither the occupation nor the domicile of Jean Morice. It is most likely that he belonged to one of the three groups of the community, but which of the three?

Brother Maurice or Brother Jean Morice?

In his *Life of De La Salle,* Canon Blain mentions a young Brother Maurice who had died in Rheims at the same time and he portrays him as one of De La Salle's favorite disciples. Earlier, he gives the date of death as May 1, 1687; at another time he gives the dates as April 30, 1687. We can close our eyes on such minor discrepancies.

Yet, too quickly it seems, some people have identified the "Jean Morice" of this death notice with the "Brother Maurice" of the Founder's biography. This Brother Maurice Blain gives as being born in Rheims and dying in his twenty-second year, after a rather long illness and six months after refusing to return to his family. The doctor recommended such a move to assure his survival, if not the cure of his illness.

Doubtlessly it is known, that the parish registers of that period did not always exert great efforts at precision with regard to the age of the deceased whenever the place of birth was different from that of the death. Still, it is difficult, in the hypothesis of identifying the one deceased Brother with the other, how the register and the biography could differ on this point when they designate the place of birth in one place as in the city and in the other in a small borough some 40 or so miles away: Le-Chesne-Le-Pouilleux (or Le-Chesne-Pouilleux, or even more simply: Le-Chesne), which is in what is now the department of the Ardennes.

We also accept the fact of not being able to reconcile such discrepancies. Yet so many things remain certain in the first years of the Rheims community, which allow us to catch a glimpse of the quality of the first disciples of De La Salle.

Some deaths prior to that of Jean Morice

Of these young, and perhaps too young, disciples, we are told that a good number of them could not withstand for very long the exhausting demands of their apostolate and of the austere practices which they, perhaps too willing, embraced. Here, no more than elsewhere can be accept the great number given by Canon Blain. Still, the names and the facts which he quotes, he no doubt got from the mouths of the eldest among the Brothers and from one or other of those priests who shared the same lodging and perhaps the life-style of that small group of Lasallians in Rheims.

> "In seven or eight years, he writes, that is to say from 1681 until 1688 when De La Salle went to establish schools in Paris, of the fifteen first Brothers who were in the Institute from its birth in Rheims, Laon, Guise, and Rethel, more than six of them died a premature death, below the age of thirty, without counting those whom failing or ruined health had obliged to seek relief outside of the house".
>
> (Blain, I, p. 250)

From 1681 until 1688, the Institute lost more than six through premature deaths". More than six, but how many? Canon Blain presents us with only three; but he does so with a certain amount of detail and with evident care to edify us. However, his account here and there keeps a mark of truth, which makes us regret that the biographer did not take the means to let us know these other disciples of whom De La Salle would all too soon find himself deprived.

"Brother Jean-Francois was the first to blaze the way to heaven for the others". A native of Rheims, he had given up "a rather advantageous position which allowed him to live comfortably. What won him over to God and the new house was the good example of the Brothers. Touched by their piety, their fervor, and their patience, he understood that the one at their head was a great Servant of God and he conceived a holy desire to place himself under his guidance and to enter his house. He lived there only a short time, but the way in which he lived left his name in blessed memory". And when he comes to talk about the final illness of the Brothers, the Canon biographer multiplies the "I myself can say", "I would say that;" "I say these words", thus giving the impression of being an eye-witness which he certainly had not been.

Let us focus on these few lines which give precisely the year of death. "He did not have to live a long time, since he had already reached the goal which is usually reached only after a long life, namely, perfect charity. The control he had taken over his own soul made itself felt during the rude illness which in a few days led him to the tomb in 1684". (Blain, I, pp. 251-252).

"Brother Bourlette was the second in line among the martyrs of penance. It did not take long for excessive fervor to lead him to the grave. He was from Rheims, of a family which was honorable and rather comfortably situated financially. The outstanding virtues of De La Salle and his disciples brought about his vocation. The wish to walk

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along the narrow path which leads to paradise was the motive which attracted him to a place which he considered as the little gate which opens to heaven. He lived there as an angel, and he died there as a saint".

The biographer treats at length of the attempts which his parents repeatedly made to make the Brother return to his family home. Having been changed twice by De La Salle to a different place to avoid the determination of his Father, Brother Bourlette soon found himself alone in a small community, because his companion had fallen ill. He did wonders in taking care of everything, "having his right foot in one class, the left foot in another, his spirit with the sick Brother and his heart in heaven". The sick Brother recovered, but "a persistent and violent fever carried Brother Bourlette off in a few days, in the year 1686". (Blain, I, pp. 252-255).

"Brother Maurice, a native of Rheims, was the third of De La Salle's children who went to take his place in heaven". (What is given here is what has already been said above, and the account can be completed by reading Blain, I, pp. 255-257).

Can some useful rechecking be done on the accounts of the biographer through the citations taken from the parish registers? A careful reading of these registers have already provided us with some rather significant indications. (cf. Cahiers Lasalliens 37, pp. 27-28; 39-40).

Signed by the Pastor of the Saint-Symphorien parish, here is a notice of death and burial which could surprise us a bit.

> "In this parish, in the year 1682, the 14th day of the month of May, Christopher, a teacher of De La Salle's school in Rheims, died after having been strengthened by the sacraments of the Church and the next day his body was buried in the cemetery of the said Saint-Symphorien Parish. In faith of which, I have signed: H. Gonel" (after a photo, Cahiers Lasalliens 37, p. 37).
>
> It is in fact surprising that we cannot read here any other precise information concerning the place of birth, the presumed age of the deceased, not even a definite presentation of his name and surname, for Christopher could as well be his Christian name as his family name. Another surprise is that a death took place in De La Salle's own house during the year between June 24, 1681 and June 24 1682, that would be during the only year when the Saint lodged the teachers in his home before leaving the family home with them to take up new lodgings in the Rue Neuve in an apartment which would become the first community house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
>
> Our Christopher would have therefore died barely a month before this decisive transfer. Evidently we have no way of knowing whether or not he had already chosen to follow Monsieur De La Salle and the small group of his companions to begin the first Lasallian community with them.
>
> The registers of the years 1684 and 1685 contain two attestations countersigned by De La Salle himself. Here these are presented as they can be read from photographs: (Cahiers lasalliens 37, p. 39).
>
> "The 24th of this month (March, 1684) Cosme Boiserin, died at the age of 29, the son of (blanc), a native of Mans and he was buried the next day in the cemetery here where we brought him with the usual ceremony. In faith of which I, the parish priest, have signed: (s) S. Lhermitte; (s) De La Salle".
>
> "The twenty-sixth of this month (June, 1685) Jean Lozart, died at the age of 28, a native of Paris, the son of Lozart and of (blanc) and he was buried in the cemetery here. In faith of which I, the parish priest, have signed: (s) Rogier; (s) De La Salle".

In what capacity had De La Salle countersigned such testimonies? The accounts of the biographers (Blain and Bernard are the principal sources here) leave no doubt in the matter: in these two years, Father De La Salle was exercising in fact, if not by right, the position of superior of the little community of teachers, the teachers who already two or three years ago had started their lives as "Brothers of the Christian Schools". Yet, this was a community which had not yet any legal status in the city, nor in the diocese of Rheims.

Could Cosme Boiserin and Jean Lozart very well be considered as members of the entire community and could they be considered in the group of "more than six" young Brothers who had died before the Founder's departure for Paris in February, 1688? Let us say, in any case, that these two young men "under the age of thirty" appear as associates in one way or another of the person of the Founder and very probably also of the work for the poor children of Champagne.

One might want to go further and recognize in Cosme Boiserin the person of Brother Jean-François, which would be clearly impossible if confidence is placed in Blain who sets the birth of the Brother in Rheims and not in Sarthe, as the testimony of the parish register which sets it precisely in Mans.

We wish we could know much more about all of this: about those who succumbed to premature deaths, as well as of the initial years of the Rheims community, of those who were able to survive, and about the others who came to fill the gap around the Founder. Only some of these are known, these workers of the first hour: a Brother Henry Lheureux, whose exceptional role has already been mentioned; a Brother Gabriel Drolin, who entered in 1684 or there about (according to a Registry of Entries compiled much later); a Brother Jean Partois, called Brother Antoine, who came in 1686; a Brother Paris, called Brother Joseph, and a Brother Jean-Henry, of whom Canon Blain has kept a more precise memory and who came to join Father De La Salle in 1683 or a bit later (Blain II, pp. 69-76).

Both those who made only a fleeting appearance and also those who served the cause of De La Salle for a long time, were the pioneers who supported De La Salle, allowing him to take charge of the schools of Champagne and to build up the good reputation of these very schools in Rheims, Château Porcien, Rethel, Guise, and Laon. Often enough, they worked under difficult conditions; sometimes they added to his voluntary austerities which Blain is a bit too pleased to present as being the cause of several premature deaths.

Rome, 17 October 1986.

Brother Maurice Hermans
Rome

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12-A-53

DE LA SALLE, MORALIST

St. John Baptist De La Salle lived during what is generally accepted as the high point in French literary culture. This age was also a period in which France contributed significantly to the European philosophical climate.

Prominent among the many aspects of this culture scene of the Grand Siècle was a highly developed *moralism:* i.e. pre-occupation with right conduct (even if the criteria by which *right* was determined were not necessarily Christian, and even when its exponents did not always embody in their own lives the moral wisdom they taught...).

I recall here the names of the following outstanding religious figures whose lives in some part co-incided with the life-span of our Founder: Pascal 1623-62; Bossuet 1627-1704; Fénélon 1651-1715.

Descartes 1596-1650 dominated the philosophical scene, and, to a lesser extent, the now largely forgotten Malebranche 1635-1715 who applied the Cartesian system to theology.

More directly relevant here are the names of:

La Rochefoucauld 1613-80; his *Maximes* 1664; La Fontaine 1621-95; his *Fables* between 1668-1694; La Bruyère 1645-96; his *Caractères* 1688, 1696'

All these writers were noted and admired moralists, their works noted above were all published within the formative period of our Founder's life.

The moralism of De La Salle's writings:

There is good internal evidence for considering St. John Baptist De La Salle as a moralist or, at least, to show that a preoccupation with the moral aspect of conduct is a characteristic of his mentality. In his writings designed and addressed almost exclusively to his Brothers, this moral preoccupation shows itself in his concentration upon religious life lived out consistently with its basic principles.

It would be a subject for literary study to show e.g. from his *Meditations* how our Saint sometimes reads very much like one or other of the great contemporary moralists noted earlier. E.g. in his Meditation No. 73 (Battersby's edition, 1953): "We Must Not Expect God To Work Miracles Just To Please Us", especially point 2; again, No. 76: "There Are In Religious Communities Many Who, Although They Have Left The World, Have Not Lost Its Spirit", point 2; and earlier, No. 15: "Of The Three Classes Of Religious Who Obey Without Having The Merit Of Blind Obedience", point 1

My thesis is that in those of his writings designed especially for the Brothers considered as religious, our Founder's principal preoccupations and inspiration are those of a (Christian) moralist for whom the primary and essential notions for consideration are good and evil conduct and moral values, sin and grace, spiritual progress and spiritual perfection.

The Collection especially:

Let me illustrate my view simply from the *Collection,* using Brother Clair Battersby's edition (1965 printing).

In the Preface we read:

"It is of the utmost importance in a community that the Superiors endeavour, in all things, and with all possible vigilance, to foster the exact observance of such things as are essential and best calculated to preserve the distinctive spirit, while preventing laxity from creeping in" P. 65.

Then there is a consideration of "The Obligation of the Vows" "The vows oblige the Brothers to work together in the Society... They cannot leave the Society... without violating the vows and committing a mortal sin and a sacrilege" P. 69.

What is meant essentially to characterise the Brothers of the Institute is the spirit of faith; hence the "Explanation of the Spirit of our Institute"; here, significantly as illustrating De La Salle's own mentality, *faith,* which is an intellectual virtue, *is discussed exclusively in terms of how it motivates and actuates conduct.*

"The true Christian is such because he is guided by, and his actions are performed with, views and motives of faith" P. 93. And again: "The Brothers shall always have in mind the orders and will of God... by which they shall be careful to regulate their conduct" P. 94.

While Holy Scripture is presented as affording the spiritual sustenance for animating a life of lived faith, our Founder has made what is perhaps one of his more personal contributions to spirituality by providing an arsenal of scriptural texts accommodated to many specific occasions in the Brother's daily life. It will be noted that this accommodation is nearly always *in a moralistic sense.*

This same moral pre-occupation is seen even more particularly in various *Directories and schemas for self-examination which constitute so large a part of the Collection.*

This same preoccupation goes through the rest of the *Collection:* e.g. under the heading "Means of Performing Our Actions Well", we are told that "if we wish to perform our actions well, with the perfection that God requires of us, we should be particularly careful *not to perform any of them thoughtlessly or with precipitation"* P. 114; and following on this, several specific situations of the Brother's day are envisaged and prescribed for.

Similarly, under the heading of "Principal Virtues", we read concerning "Faith": "Let your first care be *to act by faith* and not by caprice, inclination or whim" P. 124.

Even the vagaries of the wandering mind are to be countered: "Be careful never to apply *your mind* to anything through mere curiosity, or to aim solely at intellectual gratification, but *apply it only to those things which befit your profession"* P. 127.

Then and now: Reconciliation or Rejection?

It is true that some of the detailed moral prescriptions and programmes enshrined in the *Collection* had lapsed before any one now living as a Brother can remember: e.g. "Directions for Giving an Account of

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One's Conscience" PP. 79-82; others had never been effectively operative: e.g. "Directory on which each Brother should give an Account of his Conduct" *Cahier Lasallien 15,* 1963 PP. 122-29; or the "Directory which Brothers should Follow when Travelling" same PP. 130-32.

On the other hand, it is remarkable how vigorous some other presciptions remained among us, at least in some parts of the world, until the early 1960's; and how deeply they had influenced our lives: e.g. "Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer" Battersby PP. 72-77; and the "Passages of Scripture which may Help the Brothers to Perform their Actions through a Spirit of Faith" PP. 101-106. These were the more influential because many of us had learnt them by heart during our novitiate days.

The strength of this outlook:

The spirituality of the *Collection* (as also of the Meditations for Sunday and Feasts) was a great source of our inspiration and strength and that, even if some of its prescriptions seem excessively moralistic, the general doctrine was sound.

Yet, now there seems to be presumption that not only are the detailed and moralistic prescriptions obviously out-moded, but more; that the general spirituality of which such prescriptions are at the worst merely an exaggeratedly emphatic utterance, is completely abrogated.

I put the question: how, in view of the insistence Vatican II places on the charism of the Founder, can any wholesale abandonment of a major part of St. De La Salle's spiritual legacy be regarded as valid and legitimate?

If distinction is to be made between rejection (or, at least, effective consignment to oblivion) and literal acceptance and observance, on what principles will such distinction be made?

Proposed solution:

If the Founder's charism is valid, then his express spiritual teaching may be presumed to be valid. Vatican 11 reminds us: "Therefore let their Founder's spirit and the special aims as well as their sound traditions — all of which make up the patrimony of each institute — be faithfully held in honour" *Perfectae Caritatis* art. 2b.

De La Salle clearly intended his Brothers to be *religious.* In the *Collection* (as in the *Rule* and the *Meditations*) there is a detailed working out of that basic intention. Such a programme is surely mandatory upon us, demanding at least our serious consideration, both as communities and as individuals.

Religious institutes — so it seems to me from the history of the past two decades — are not — immune from the danger of "revisionism" i.e. of re-reading and re-writing their history in the light of currently acceptable ideologies.

The authority of Chapters and of Superiors to interpret the mind of the Founder derives from their essential conformity to that mind; and it could be that sometimes this conformity may have to be demonstrated rather than simply presumed.

The relevance of this consideration of *St. De La Salle as a moralist* is that it may help us more readily to appreciate the special nature of our vocation as teaching religious or, if you wish, as religious educators.

If it should happen that the ascetical doctrine of our Founder as we find it in the *Collection,* seems to run counter to much of what is currently promoted as "spirituality", this might be seen a further indication of its validity' "The pursuit of perfection to which institutes devote themselves cannot consist only in certain adaptations to be carried out in relation to the changing circumstances of the world; they must instead assist the fruitful re-discovery of the means essential for leading a life completely permeated with love of God and man" Paul V1 *Evangelica Testificatio 1970 art. 37.*

And again, "Fidelity in *the exigencies of certain fundamental options* is the touchstone of authenticity in religious life" art. 12. emphasis added.

"... it must be possible to pass from external activity to the demand of the common life, taking care to ensure full effectiveness *to the elements of the strictly religious life"* art. 26 emphasis added.

The same insistent recall of basic essential practices may be found in the more recent Roman document: *Essential Elements of the Religious life* (1983), especially in articles 20 and 21.

"The local community, as the place where religious life is primarily lived, has to be organized in a way which makes religious values clear"; and there follow specific directives which embrace the ordinary recurring circumstances of such life on a daily, weekly and annual cycle".

Conclusion:

I consider that the presentation of the thought of St. John Baptist De La Salle over the past two decades has been to some degree distorted; the contemporary presentation is as much subject to bias of current assumptions as that of the eighteenth and nineteenth century interpreters of his thought, who have been severely criticised because they have read their own thought and values into the minds of the Founder. Physician heal thyself!

In particular, what seems to me to have been neglected is the *strong moral/ascetical element* of our Founder's views on *religious life.* This, naturally enough, does not come through so strongly in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* (because of their concentration on the school apostolate). What compounds the problem is these *Retreat Meditations* have been for some years now treated as though they constituted a *canon within the canon* of our Founder's writings.

To restore a balance it would be helpful to view exactly those elements of his thought which are least congenial to contemporary assumption; many of which are to be found especially in the *Collection* which was expressly designed by our holy Founder to be a kind of *handbook* - enchiridion - of spirituality - for his Brothers.

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12-A-54

PARENTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

If we want to read the Founder with today's eyes and judge him by present day standards then we must look at him in the historical context in which he lived, comparing his actuations within the situations which surrounded him. Likewise, in his writings, he paints a picture which is in no way flattering to the parents who fulfilled the role as educators of their children.

He states time and again and categorically that "among the duties incumbent on parents, one of the most grave is to educate their children in a Christian manner and to impart religious instruction to them". And in another place: "It is the duty of parents to feed, clothe, and educate their children, according to their means; to see to it that they learn a trade, or at least, find for them some suitable employment".

But it must be recognized with realism and sorrow that "the majority of parents do not possess a due knowledge of their religion" ...because they must leave the house, preoccupied with business concerns and the upkeep of their family".

A consequence of this inability and abandonment, "these poor children over several years become so accustomed to being raised in a life of idlenes, that it is with great difficulty that they can be trained to work. Besides, since they associate with bad companions, they learn to do a lot of bad things, so that later on it is very difficult for them to correct themselves because the vices and habits which have been contracted over a long period of time have become ingrained".

Based on this, La Salle time and time again urges his sons who are called upon to "substitute" for the parents, "You should look upon the children whom you are called upon to instruct as poor abandoned orphans, for although most of them have a father alive, they are as if they had not, being abandoned to themselves as far as the salvation of their souls is concerned".

This surrogation should be the exception while the children are within the school confines. A more effective and lasting solution must be found. Which remedy? *To associate the parents in the education of their children.* What this attained? If we compare the involvement which the parents had in the "Little Schools" with that which they had in Christian Schools, we would say, "yes". Proofs of this follow.

Answerable for their children

The father, the mother, or in their absence, a guardian were those who were to present the pupils to be admitted to the Christian school' The list of questions which they were to answer in filling out the admission form was as extensive as it was complicated: name and profession of the *parents* or guardia, personal data of the pupil, previous school. If then pupil were an eldest child, they were asked, "what do you want him to become, what trade would you want him to learn, in how much time, how was he in reading and writing".

We notice, in passing how the *professional orientation* of the pupils interested La Salle and that he wanted it to be shared between the parents and the school.

After receiving the admissions information, which included questions relative to the present and past state of health of the child, the Director or Inspector, responsible for the child's admission, explained to the *parents* the conditions *sine qua non* on the part of the parents for the admission and retention of their child in the Lasallian school. It will be sufficient here to simply enumerate some of them to get an idea of the vast field in which the parents had to cooperate with the school and vice-versa:

— that their childen always be prompt in coming to school and that they never be absent without permission;

— they see to it that their children are present for the catechism lesson each Sunday and Holyday;

— they have the children eat their breakfast and snack in school so that they can learn to eat in a Christian and polite manner.

— that the parents do not listen to the complaints which the children bring against the teacher, without speaking to the latter in the absence of their children;

— that their sons' clothes be clean and their appearance neat...

When the pupils applying for admission come from another school, the parents must give the admitting officer precise information concerning the reason for seeking a change. If they simply answer, "we just want to change", the parents should be informed that "this is enormously prejudicial to their children", and if they should leave school, they will not be admitted again.

If the change is due to a correction given to the pupil, the parents should be exhorted that they should be cautious about accepting complaints against the teacher... and they should be pleased that their child be corrected if he deserves to be so. The boy should be admitted only if the parents agree to this cooperation between themselves and the school in the future.

In readmitting pupils coming from another school run by the Brothers, the greatest prudence should be exercised, above all, if they left the school *motu proprio* or through the naive over credulity of the parents. In such a case, they should be made to wait sometime for a reply to their request, not so much to disregard them, but so that they would appreciate the favor being granted them even more.

Dismissal from school has always constituted the maximum punishment that can be imposed upon a pupil. Aware of this, the author of the "Management", after enumerating some reasons for dismissal, gives some reasons for trying to save the guilty one. If these do not get results, "before dismissing the pupils... the inspector will speak *with the parents a few times".*

For great ills, great remedies

To understand the pages of the "Management", we have to put ourselves within the atmosphere of the "Little Schools" of the Seventeenth Century. Therein,

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the idea of study was far from being the first concern in the scale of values of the clientele, be they parents, pupils, or teachers.

Faced with this neglect, the "Management" raises a menacing voice, even to the extent of an entire chapter aimed at absence from class. Absences were furthered and multiplied not only because of the weakness and thoughtlessness of the pupils, but also through the negligence, if not the complicity, of the parents. I shall singularly refer to the conduct of the latter.

The clarity and exactness of the texts require no comment:

> *The fifth principal reason for the absence of pupils is due to their parents, either because they neglect to send them to school, not taking much trouble to make them come or be assiduous — which is quite ordinary among the poor — or because they themselves are indifferent to school, persuading themselves that their children learn very little or nothing there.*

Further on, we read of the practical means of remedying this by dialogue with the *parents* in each one of these cases, for example, making them understand how important it is for their children to learn to read and write, because no matter how little intelligent they may be, knowing how to read and write makes them capable of doing anything.

The references would be interminable, so let the following suffice for all.

> If the parents have contributed to the absence of their son, the one in charge of receiving excuses (these must always be presented by the parents, except in the case of illness) will speak to them forcefully so that his words will make an impression on them and he will not excuse them very readily.
>
> In addition to this, he will give them some sound recommendation on how to avoid the absence of their children. If the child has been absent because of the fault of the parents, he will point out the harm that such absence is causing the child.. warning them also that if the child continues to absent himself for a similar reason, he will not be re-admitted.

Each must do his part

The great number of pages that the "Management" devotes to the correction of pupils, considered "as one of the most responsible duties fulfilled in the school", testifies to the psychological purpose and the pratical intention of De La Salle. Let us see if this is true or not.

It can happen the teacher receives some negative treatment by the parents. There is a natural impulse in that case to take it out on their son. La Salle reminds his disciples that "no punishment should ever be given because of that".

In applying correction, the teacher must adjust himself to the type of training the pupil receives in the home, where "there are parents who educate their children with excessive softness, who grant them whatever the ask for, never contradicting them nor correcting their errors; they claim they act in that way lest they cause them pain". The manner in which such children are treated must be different from that used with pupils "whose parents are absolutely not concerned with their comportment, letting them do whatsoever they wish from morning until night; they neither obey nor respect their parents; they speak poorly of them... they do this less out of malice than out of the neglect in which they live".

The family and school without mutually disclaiming responsibility, must work together so that the correction would produce the desired effects for those who apply it as for those who receive it or witness it.

Atmosphere of dialogue

Flight from the world was on the rise in the seventeenth century; consequently, La Salle took every means to see to it that his sons maintained as much distance from it as possible: that explains the directives found in the Rule, in the Collection, and in his correspondence. Notwithstanding this, the "Management" as can been seen by what has already been stated and what follows, supposes a frequent and direct contact with the parents of the students.

It was the job of the inspector of schools to see to it that the teachers were not interrupted in class by visits; the most that could be tolerated is that *they speak with the parents of their pupils* when they accompany their children to class.

The existence and effectiveness of these interviews were without doubt intended to examine the contents of the personal information which each pupil had to give the teacher at the end of the course. How could the teachers keep an adequate record of parents' reactions: "if the child is not pampered by his parents; if the parents do not want the child to be corrected in class; if they are parents of pupils who are always complaining..." *without this communication and direct contact with the parents?*

On the information sheet of eight-year old Francois Terieux, who had been in school for two years, we read among other things, "is loved by his parents who do not want him to be corrected".

On the contrary, the personal file of Lambert du Long, twelve years of age and in his fourth year of studies verifies that "his parents would not take it amiss if he were corrected".

Other useful items of information concerning Lasallian students could have been gotten only through dialogue with the parents. Think about this bit of information, for example... "if he sleeps alone, and if not, with whom, father, mother, brothers".

Conclusion

If we should compare the FAMILY-SCHOOL relationship of our first Brothers with that of the school where I began teaching, the former have the definite advantage. What has happened to the directives of the Management?

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12-B-59

ADULT EDUCATION IN MARIE-VICTORIN COLLEGE, MONTREAL

Marie-Victorin College has more than 6,000 students and more than 4,000 of these are in Adult Education. In this school we offer post-secondary education which is equal to the first cycle of university education. The students proceeding to the university follow the general program of instruction and those who are preparing for some particular employment follow professional programs of instruction. Marie-Victorin College is named after one of our confreres, Brother Marie-Victorin, who was a famous botanist in Quebec.

The college belongs to nine provinces of religious teaching Brothers and the Brothers Provincials of each of these make up the Administrative Council. Yet, after twenty years of its existence marked by a rapid evolution and the introduction of numerous programs, the institution can count only about a dozen religious among its personnel. However, the original purpose of the college, which was the training of teachers, has so left its mark that the social orientation of programs has been maintained. Thus, the college continues to train men and women technicians in specialized education, in social assistance, child care, specialized religious activities and the free care of the aged.

Adult education has always existed in the province of Quebec, but what is surprising nowadays is the adult population which has invaded the colleges and universities for full-time studies. It is true that a number of governmental programs encourage this movement by subsidies paid to the institutions and even by giving salaries to individuals, particularly those affected by unemployment. The efforts of the state in this regard are even more pronounced on the level of secondary studies. Parallel to this effort of permitting adults, to a certain extent, to satisfy the needs of the present economic movement, the State is trying to keep the phenomenon of illiteracy in check. Out of six million (6,000,000) people, more than six hundred thousand (600,000) persons cannot read and write in an elementary manner.

Adult instruction has been developed with programs on the post-secondary level. The types of instruction have so quickly multiplied that soon it went beyond the confines of the Marie-Victorin Campus.

At present, 75% of its adult clientele receives its instruction outside of the main campus in more than fifty (50) different sites located in general in the metropolitan region of Montreal.

The programs provided which correspond most closely to the orientations of the college are those in our Center for specialized pastoral activities. There, both men and women are trained as technicians of pastoral communication. Specifically, that means teachers of parish catechism, people for carrying out religious activities in the schools, and catechetics for maladjusted children. This year we have more than 1000 adults in these programs. We work together with organizations in charge of teaching the faith in six (6) different dioceses. It should be noted here that in Quebec, religious or moral instruction is in the program for primary instruction, but preparation for the reception of the sacraments and religious practices is in the hands of the parishes or the parents. It is there that the bishops have decided to train numerous lay catechists.

We also have a gerontology Center which has been in existence for ten years already. During the initial years, those trained there were adults who, for the most part, were already working in institutions caring for the elderly. Then a program of active retirement was inaugurated intended for persons on the point of retiring, which has al-

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ready been taken by twenty times as many people as expected. This intended one-year program was such a success that many adults who followed it have asked for a second or third year to allow them to obtain their college degree. It was from within this same group that we were requested to train volunteer workers who wished to devote themselves to working in institutions for the elderly and in hospitals. This year the gerontology Center has more than one thousand (1,000) adult students.

The college offers to adults other programs which can be found also in other similar institutions. We train particularly men and women technicians in social work, in specialized education, child care, and techniques in clothes making. Of course, we also provide what is called general education. That is where Marie-Victorin College has distinguished itself in the way it carried on its instruction. Thus the flexible time schedules, the venue and the manner of instruction allow the adults, both men and women, to receive their courses locally, during the daytime as well as at night, and even during intensive weekend courses.

To this we might add, that several of these programs cited previously are given also in the English language. From this was born an entire English-speaking section which at present counts more than seven hundred (700) students. What is more, our institution provides instruction at the college level in English as well as in French to the state prisons of Quebec.

To the longer programs, training courses have been added especially with regard to economics. We have training programs in management and administration in connection with the Chamber of Commerce and a training center for professional salesman. We also offer a course in collaboration with the biggest French daily in Quebec, *La Presse,* through two weekly publications during each of the autumn and winter sessions.

Adult education is ever taking on more numerous and varied forms. The fact of not being linked to traditional places of an institution but of giving courses at various times and places allows for meeting the needs of various people and organizations. This is a type of popular education which is different from that intended for youth. We must add that the North American youths are very well taken care of educationally at least as far as the material resources and personnel resources put at their disposal. But the adults who have not had the possibilities of enjoying the same advantages or who further have been short changed by an economic world in development very much appreciate an education which is at their disposal and they are highly motivated in benefiting by it.

A well established institution, with good teachers and a bit of imagination in setting up adapted programs is all that is needed to pursue our objectives of popular education.

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12-B-60

THE LA SALLE INTEGRAL FORMATION CENTER OF TIJUANA (1)

(Districts of San-Francisco and Mexico-North)

From 1978 until January 25 of 1982, the Brothers were given the task of discovering the most urgent needs of this city and they decided upon a Pastoral Center.

Tijuana, founded in 1889

This is the most visited frontier town in the world: 40 million tourists come here annually. It is the common home of more than a million and a half persons from different points of the Republic, and of foreigners, emigrants and immigrants. They belong to different social economic levels and to different cultures and religions.

Eighty percent of these people are less than 30 years of age and they study and work, battling for survival. They are confronted by such problems as broken homes, the lack of proper living conditions and conveniences, low economic conditions, and religious confusion.

As a result of the above mentioned conditions, there is frustration, bitterness, despair, and irresponsibility, thus creating the need for leaders who can, free of charge, stir up conviviality for the success of the common good and to give a meaning to their Catholic Faith.

The Brothers, well aware of this situation, designed the:

"GOALS OF THE CENTER".

These have been continually refined from 1982 until in 1986 they are the following:

To evangelize and form in the Lasallian Spirit, lay leaders, preferably those the least well off, so that from their parishes they can work together for the promotion of Christian Life in society, in response to Medellín and Puebla, as well as to Vatican II.

To achieve this objective, they have gone on seeking ways of giving basic courses which answer needs in four areas: Church, Leadership, Culture and Academics. They started off which seven courses and by 1985 it had risen to 70.

With the commitment of both Districts (San Francisco, Mexico-North), each year, each district has been sending 2 Brothers to evaluate the work. Until 1986 there have been 5 evaluations, each of three day's duration, a marvelous effort and intelligent support on the part of both Provinces.

From August 1985 until March 1986, a change was made in the work to integrate those areas within the program which were seen to be most urgent. Thus, three areas were decided upon:

1) Guidance of Catechetics for adolescents and youths,

2) Guidance of youth groups,

3) Guidance of Pre-Marital and Marital groups.

Each program consists of a basic area, a specific area, and a general area and hours of service.

We brothers are aware that this new project must be presented in such a way that the poor will be the principal option. Because of this, requisites should not close the door on anyone, but all should be allowed to join and to follow the program slowly and according to his own place until he achieves a level which will allow him to serve his community with more efficiency. We realize that not all are of leadership timber but they are all people seeking a better way of living.

What kind of students (whom we call promoters) have we?

From January 1982 until March 24, 1986, more than 2,000 people 14 years of age or older have finished a minimum period of 10 weeks of studies, with classes held twice a week.

Although these people come from all levels of society, preference is given to the more simple people, most of whom come to the center because of natural attraction or friendship rather than being sent by the parish priests.

Courses of ten weeks' duration are given four times a year, from January to March, April to June, July to August, and September to November. The reason for such a schedule is that the people who come to the Center are either working people or students; they are people seeking personal upliftment and a type of Christianity for service towards others, but they cannot count on much free time.

During the ten-week periods in 1984, 1985, and 1986, we had an average of 550 people per session. Many of them have been studying since 1982 and there are some who work in their own parish. Others do not finish the course because of the mobility of their work, studies, or living

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conditions. Many of them return to their place of origin or to the United States and others just lack proper study habits.

"Mystique of the work"

1) The evangelical itinerary of Saint John Baptist De La Salle.

"I believe that this must have been the reason that God, who disposes all things according to wisdom and gentleness, and who is not wont to force the inclinations of men, was leading me to concern myself with the schools. He did this over a long period of time and in an imperceptible way. He worked in such a way that one commitment led me to another, without my having foreseen the final outcome from the very beginning".

2) The La Salle Center of Integral Formation, wishes to live the LIBERATING EDUCATION of Medellín, 1968:

— A Systematic Education which all the while contributes to the creation of a certain popular culture and to increasing the desire for change.

— Education which produces agents for transforming the community.

3) The La Salle Center of Integral Formation wishes to live the LIBERATING EDUCATION of Puebla, 1979:

— To humanize and personalize, that is, Personalized Education.

— To exercise the critical function proper to education, which allows for the creation of a new truly participative and fraternal society, that is, Education for Justice.

— To convert the student in question, not only for his own personal development, but also for the service and development of the community, that is, Education for Service.

— To produce agents of change with the strength of the Gospel by means of civic, moral, religious, and political values inspired by the social teachings of the Church, that is, Evangelical Education.

4) The La Salle Center of Integral Formation, faithful to its Founder, Saint John Baptist De La Salle, wished to live Popular Education:

— Human development implies activities which help to awaken the consciences of men in all their dimensions and to esteem themselves as capable of becoming protagonists of their own human and Christian development.

— To educate people to live together, to give an impulse to their organizations, to arouse the well being of the Christian community, and to help people toward effective participation.

— To give priority to living together, to give a new impulse to the numerous poor sectors of our population who are both materially and culturally deprived; orienting them preferably in accord with the bishop of the place, and toward the services and educational resources of the Church.

— Likewise, the education of leaders and agents of change with the strength of the Gospel is a priority.

Gratuity

The thoughts of Saint John Baptist De La Salle on this point.

1) The prime motive for gratuity is that the children of the poor might be served. Its basis is the Gratuitious Salvific Love of God towards all of us.

2) The second motive is educational service guaranteed by the Brother which in this way appears as an expression of the mystery of the Saving God, active today in the lives of people.

3) "Thank God because in His Goodness He makes use of you to procure such great benefits for children. You must be faithful and exact in doing this without receiving any salary whatsoever, so that you may say with Saint Paul: 'It is my great consolation to announce the Gospel without charge, so that it will not cost those who hear it anything'". (Med. 194.1).

4) Abandonment to Providence is founded on these words of Jesus Christ in the Gospel: "Do not be overly concerned about what you will eat or what you will drink or about the other necessities of life, for you must exclusively and before all other things, seek the kingdom of God and all the rest will be added unto you". (Med. 153,3 and Med. 134, 1).

5) We should like to finish with these words of Saint John Baptist De La Salle: "To serve gratuitiously to announce the Gospel, is then, to imitate God and to participate, in virtue of the gratuitous gift of His mission, in His free and efficacious love for all men". (Med. 201.3).

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THE LA SALLE INTEGRAL FORMATION CENTER OF TIJUANA (2)

As of now, the Center has been a success:

— In forming lay leaders who help in their parishes, and even directly in the Pastoral Council of some of these parishes.

— In the integration of small bible groups.

— In preparing various Promoters who contribute their services in Institutions for the Poor and for Orphans.

— In providing Catechists serving both adults and adolescents in their parishes.

— In setting up youth groups in the parishes, achieving a large participation in the Youth Paschal Activities and movements in the Church, thus strengthening the Apostolate of Youth in the Diocese.

— A miniature La Salle is located in the Independencia Colony through promoters who have been trained in this institution.

— In helping solve the great concern of the Church, by the training of lay people who are sensitive towards their brother in need.

— Since the arrival of the Brothers, four schools have been set up for the training of the laity: A School of Theology, A Catechetical School for Children, A Pastoral Social School, and a Biblical School.

— A great number of persons have found a greater sense of self-identity.

— Better preparation among couple engaged to be married and a commitment of helping in their communities.

— Greater integration among Catholic families.

— Sacerdotal vocations (8) and religious vocations (8).

— Brothers who live their religious life with more fervour.

For the Brothers it is:

— spiritual growth in view of the gift of our work.

— Living more freely, without feeling like being parts in a machine.

— Something that cannot be qualified.

— The Christian life is better lived.

— The people induce us to live our consecration with more integrity, seeing the way they (the poor) live the Gospel.

— We believe that this leads us to live what the Institute wants us to live and as it was in its origins.

— "God will provide" is lived among us, the Holy Spirit is the One giving us light and the One Who teaches through us.

— One lives without being concerned about power or riches.

— We feel that the moving power in our work is the Gospel as our first rule.

— We must keep adjusting our life of Faith with our life of zeal, so that there would be no dichotomy, but rather a unity.

— We are invited to get to know our promoters in their barrios, homes, and camps much better.

— We have increased the love for the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and our Holy Founder.

— Gratuity makes us look upon people with greater respect.

— An atmosphere of brotherhood and equality exists among us.

— We are amazed by the gratuity of all the Animators who freely give of their time and rarely fail.

— The Foundation consisting of married couples, where many of them contribute their time as animators and seek to maintain the gratuity of the Center.

For the future:

— To detect who are the leaders among the promoters.

— To prepare those who are willing for ecclesial service in their parishes, following some program with a definite Curriculum.

— To create a plan to achieve the Church's presence among the most poor, the sick, abandoned youths, immigrants, migrants, and factory workers in a complementary area.

— To experiment with apostolic work in a "Pilot Parish".

— To create new Centers in the Diocese.

— To form leaders for the ecclesial base community.

That is La Salle very much alive in Tijuana today, 1986!

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PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMME 1

Training of catechists for adolescents and youths

Basic area
(3 or 4)

1. Introduction to the Bible 1
2. Basic Elements of the Faith
3. Catechetical Pedagogy
4. Psychology of Adolescence

Specific area of electives
(5 or 6)

1. Introduction to the Bible 2, 3, 4
2. Let us Live the Mass.
3. History of the Church.
4. Liturgical Celebrations.
5. Elements of Christian Morality.
6. Catechetical Techniques.
7. Catechetical Documents
8. Lasallian Catechesis

Class hours: 20

PROGRAMME 2

Training of youth groups

Basic area
(3 or 4)

1. Psychology of Adolescence
2. Spirituality in Youth Groups 1
3. Organisation of Youth Groups
4. Process of Values Classification

Specific area of electives
(5 or 6)

1. Spirituality of Youth Groups 2, 3, 4.
2. Group Dynamics I
   (Human Relation in Youth Groups)
3. Methods of Group Motivation
4. Vocational Orientation of the Adolescent
5. Animating Youth Events
6. Group Psychology
7. Group Prayer
8. Group Singing

Class hours: 20

PROGRAMME 3

Pre-matrimonial and matrimonial guidance

Basic area
(3 or 4)

1. Community Development
2. Human Relations in the Family
3. Christian Doctrine Relative to Marriage
4. Conjugal Spirituality

Specific area of electives
(5 or 6)

1. Human Relations in the Family 2, 3, 4.
2. Community Development 2.
3. Process of Values Clarification.
4. Anthropology and Psychology of the Man and of the Woman.
5. Responsible Fatherhood and Conjugal Maturity.
6. Family Problems (economics).
7. Love and Egoism from the Biblical Viewpoint.

Class Hours: 20

General area of electives
(3 or more)

1. The Human Person.
2. Elements of Christology.
3. Elements of Mariology.
4. Elements of Ecclesiology.
5. History of the Church.
6. Catholic Social Doctrine.
7. School of Prayer.
8. Basic Notions on the Sacraments.
9. Lasallianism.
10. Religions, the Catholic Faith and other creeds.

Complementary areas

1. Social Doctrines of Our Times.
2. First Aid 1, 2, 3.
3. Nutrition and Dietetics.
4. Esthetics 1, 2, 3.
5. Cutting and clothes making.
6. Weaving 1, 2, 3.
7. Toy Manuals 1, 2, 3.
8. Decorating cakes and pastries.
9. Family Gardening.
10. Public Speaking 1, 2.
11. Guitar 1,2, 3, 4.
12. Commercial Art 1, 2.
13. Gymnastics for Women.
14. Gymnastics for Men.
15. Karate for Men.
16. Theatre.
17. Folk Dancing.
18. English 1, 2, 3, 4.
19. Newspaper Publishing.
20. Spelling, Penmanship and Reading.

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12-B-62

RADIO SAN GABRIEL AND THE AYMARA PEOPLE (La Paz, Bolivia)

Introduction:

In October of last year, the XV Interamerican Congress of Catholic Education was held in Buenos Aires under the theme of "Educating People according to their cultural heritage". The organizers, realizing that this theme was the same as the operational policies of Radio San Gabriel, invited it to participate. The article which follows is nothing more than a synthesis of what was presented there and which was so very well received.

We shall try to present it here in two parts:

1. The geographic and historical features of the Aymara people.

2. The cultural traits of the Aymara people and Radio San Gabriel's educational response.

Geographical features

About 2,000,000 Aymaras are distributed along the eastern and southern shores of the Great Titicaca Lake. More than half of them are in Peru and the rest in Bolivia. Some 30,000 inhabit even the heights of the Andes in Chile. Their base is the great plateau of Altipiano, whose height oscillates between 3,800 and 4,000 meters above sea level. On its eastern side it is adorned by the very beautiful Cordillera Real of the Andes with peaks up to 7,000 meters in elevation.

The zone which the Aymaras inhabit is cold and dry, with very cold weather in the winter and strong winds in August. Its five months of intense rains are followed by blue skies the rest of the year. The land is dry and without rivers but there is an abundance of water below the ground.

On its slopes, sheep, llamas and vicunas graze; in some places there are good herds of cattle.

The farmers grow potatoes as their principal crop and quinine as an additional product. Barley and beans also grow here and small hot-houses for vegetables have been springing up.

The Aymara dry and freeze meat (charki) to conserve it as they also do with potatoes (chuño).

They make their own clothes from the wool of sheep, llamas, and alpaca.

They are a self-subsisting people with neither technology nor industrial production.

Historical features

The history of the Aymara people is lost on the horizons of time. They talk about different original groups, one of which — the most important — is that of the TIAWANAKU, whose splendor dates back to the eleventh century and whose archeological remains are admired by tourists today.

In the thirteenth century they suffered a conquest by the Quechua Empire of the Incas and the region took on the name of Qollasuyo (qolliris). In the Sixteenth century the Spanish arrived and since the nineteenth century (1825) they have lived under the rule of an independent republic.

They themselves say that "they have experienced living under submission, subjugation, and exploitation, but that they have never been truly conquered". It seems that out of the mouth of each one who dies can be heard the voice of one of the oldest representatives of the Aymara Rebellion, TUPAK KATARI (1781): "I die, but tomorrow I shall return changed into thousands and thousands".

Now they already have nascent political parties: "The Tupak Katari Revolutionary Movement" (MRTK) and the "Movement of Indigenous Tupak Katari" (MITKA).

Culture and education

I shall try to present a brief synthesis which will encompass the educational work done by the Church in behalf of the Aymaras, and specifically, the work done by Radio San Gabriel.

This radio station, founded by the Maryknoll Fathers 32 years ago, has been under the direction of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the past ten years. The educational philosophy which orientates this work is "to educate the people according to their cultural heritage". This is sustained by the consideration that "an indigenous cause cannot grow without its roots", and let us get right to the point.

a) The *family structure* is the firm nucleus of this people's persistence over the centuries. That is why the Church and Radio San Gabriel conduct their spiritual ministry in deepening the conviction of the "Christian family", since almost 100% of the Aymaras are believers. Of late, with strong financial backing, an avalanche of Protestant sects have appeared and this has confused, alienated, and divided the people. The RSG is at present studying strategies for confronting this new invasion.

b) The base of the Aymara social structure is the *AYLLU*. A group of families-even though they may live at some distance apart- make up a real "COMMUNITY". When they group together, they make up a little town.

Well then, the RSG bases all of its educational work in the *CENTERS* in which the "participants" group together. If, for example, they receive some personal evaluation, it is only for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating group action. Before reaching any kind of a decision, they say, "let's talk this over", in other words, let us consult the community.

For its evaluation, Radio San Gabriel relies strongly on "*communitarian certification*". It suffices that three authorities of the Ayllu testify in writing that the "participant" has finished his work, for example, in farming, animal husbandry, or craftsmanship, for the RSG to recognize it as such.

c) *JILAQATA* is the ancestral authority within the Ayllu. (However, nowadays it is not recognized by the government). The Jilagata is nominated for one year and his authority is respected by the Community. He receives no financial remuneration and is assisted by a Council of Secretaries.

Radio San Gabriel requires that each Community Center name a Leader who will direct and animate the educational work of the participants. This Leader receives no salary from the Community, from the Radio station, or from the government. The Radio station provides qualifying courses and provides the textbooks free. In the fu-

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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ture, this ought to be the line of service provided by the Church's religious activities moderators.

d) The economy of the Aymaras is centered on the principles of SOLIDARITY, RECIPROCITY, and PARTICIPATION.

Through the *AYNI,* help is freely given to those who need to build a house, for example; the one benefited becomes a part of the support group when others need his help. Through the *MINK'A* they lend support to the work of others, receiving in return only something in kind. In the Ayllu, there is more "community land" than land belonging to families.

Radio San Gabriel does not give away anything free. All the material and services have to be paid for by the participants, even if it is only a token minimum price. The Aymaras maintain that "nothing has done us so much harm as paternalism".

e) The Aymara people's idea of religion is eminently cosmological. The *PACHAMAMA* (earth) is the one who offers food to their children, it protects them during their sojourn, and receives them in death. The mountains and the heights are sacred APUS and ACHACHILAS, and to them, equally as to the earth, "payment" is offered and they are celebrated with "*ch'allas*" and even with "*Fiestas*". Among the offerings, the *WILANCHA,* the bloody sacrifice of animals, occupies the first place.

Radio San Gabriel tries to see in the Pachamama the sign of what is called the "incarnate and committed presence of the faith" in what is "labored at and celebrated as a community". In the WILANCHA it sees the "presence of God among His people" and the "announcing of the sacrifice of the true Lamb" in the Holy Eucharist, in which the Aymaras are so fond of participating.

f) The Aymara people are singers par excellence. During religious ceremonies they sing for long hours the hundreds of "*Q'OCHUS*" whose melody and lyrics they themselves compose. It is said that the songs, the music, and the dances which they present during their fiestas are the best expressions of their authenticity and liberation.

Radio San Gabriel, which has already contributed by the printing of 300,000 copies of their religious song book (between 1970 and 1984), sees in this a challenge to do the same thing with songs with are not of a religious nature. On Saturdays, even though we dedicate the entire morning to it, we cannot listen to the dozens of musical groups which present themselves to the radio station, having come from far away and at their own expense. The groups play *pinquillos, zampoñas, bombos,* and even guitars and small native guitars called *charangos.*

g) We could say the same thing about the artisan production of tiles and ceramics which RSG is encouraging with its "System of Adult Self-education at a Distance" (SAAD-RSG) and with the future "handiicraft markets" and "handicraft exportation".

h) The *AYMARA LANGUAGE* has been preserved over the centuries. Although nowadays, almost all of the Aymaras are bilingual, all of them continue speaking their own particular dialect. The Aymara language is agglutinative and has already been experimented with for simultaneous translation, with it being the Matrix. Its alogorithmical character leads the Aymara mentality to be rigidly logical in its view of things.

Radio San Gabriel, as a proof of its respect for the culture of the people, has the Aymara language and grammar in its curriculum. Even the certificate of literacy, recognized by the government, which RSG presents is a *BILINGUAL DIPLOMA.*

i) In the citadel of Tiawanaku, the richest archeological relic is the *PUERTO DEL SOL* which Posnazky declares to be the "great page of ancient astrology". On it engraved in high relief are the movements of the sun and moon, solstices, the equinoxes, and the constellations.

Radio San Gabriel respects the knowledge of nature possessed by the Aymaras and is one with them when they maintain that "previously we did not suffer because we were following nature". Each year RSG prints thousands of calendars in which information on the rhythms of nature are features.

j) Finally, and as the last feature, we wish to point out the extraordinary riches which the Aymaras possess in *NATURAL MEDICINE.* The Q'OLLIRIS plants, which grow almost to the height of the YATIRIS plant, are excellent cures for illnesses and traumas and the THALIRIS is capable of curing illnesses which border on the psychosomatic. Their herbs are their inexpensive home remedies and are always within reach of their meager standard of living.

More than 90 per cent of RSG's medium wave and short wave broadcasts are in Aymara. It provides its listeners with many prescriptions for natural medicines. As one of its health projects, it maintains a Center of Natural Medicine in the vicinity of Tiawanaku.

Conclusion

What a commitment the government, the Church, and, in our case, Radio San Gabriel, have made in accompanying this people which, after eight centuries of domination have not bowed their heads, so much so that in their songs they call themselves: "the mighty race", "the noble race", "the sleeping Giant".

In the *PROJECT OF THE AYMARA PEOPLE,* which is stil in its embryonic stage and which Radio San Gabriel is trying to crystalize, we speak about *A JUST SOCIETY BASED ON BROTHERHOOD,* even though we are convinced that this will never succeed without "returning to their roots".

We are advised to respect their "language", their "spiritual solidarity", and their "love of nature". We are invited to multiply all means when it comes to "developing their culture". They seek from us "education and liberation", and they seek "full potential and production".

Radio San Gabriel in more than fifty different programs tries to echo these needs and invites these people to participate in everything from formal educational services to a gamut of daily enriched programs such as news, advice, stories, tales, songs, musical combos, religious activities, native music, lessons, Aymara fiestas, agricultural, animal husbandry, and craftsmanship training. At present a *CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING* (Ch'oquenayra) is being set up. There is also a plan for an *AYMARA BANK,* somewhat along the same lines as the already existing *AYMARA POST OFFICE.* Eventually, there will be an *AMARA TV.*

Does this not seem like establishing a ghetto? No, it is not. It is a question of harnessing the tremendous strength of this people to bring about in Bolivia and throughout Latin America a dynamic force capable of realizing truly revolutionary changes without weapons or violence.

Bro. Jaime CALDERON MANRIQUE
Radio San Gabriel
Calle General Lanza 2001
Casilla 4792
LA PAZ, Bolivia

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12-B-63

"LE BALUCHON" "THE BUNDLE": EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

After their normal class hours, and without being attributable to teaching method or capability of the teachers, certain students — more or less numerous according to the schools — need help in assimilating the subject matter, in studying their lessons, doing their home assignments, or finding a place to study which is not available in their own family home.

These needs seem particularly important for the medium of instruction is not the mother tongue of these students who have immigrated into the country.

This is the situation in this section of Montreal populated by people of the middle class with a large proportion of immigrants. Fortunately, some people had enough imagination to respond to the needs of these students by setting up an "Educational Assistance Service", which will be outlined in this brief presentation.

"Le Baluchon"

"The Educational Assistance Program" was the serious name given to this center at its inception. It was born in October 1982, at the time of the canonization of Saint Margaret Bourgeoys; the legendary clothes bundle of the saint inspired the team running the E.A. P. For the children, the new name become even more simple. Do you not see a similarity between the pupils' little knapsack for books and the tiny bundle of clothes of Margaret Bourgoys? Both of them, poor and small, contain only the bare essentials.

The Objectives of the Center

The name already reflects the mode of the services to be offered! Close to the Metro, very close to several schools, this non-profit service, received its first pupils in January 1983. This new project, planted among ordinary and underprivileged people, wishes to help the students on the elementary and secondary levels, give them some attentive and loving help and backing up which will provide them with confidence and sustain them in their human and pedagogical apprenticeship.

This service, therefore, has the following objectives:

— to allow youth who need some individual pedagogical follow-up to progressively get control of their own situation,

— to back up the parents in their difficult task as educators,

— to do some social work of a preventive nature for youths having difficulties and to keep from delinquency.

The Baluchon activities:

— Help to primary pupils and high school students having trouble in class work;

— assistance to students who wish to do their homework assignments and to study their lessons outside of school time;

— a sure quiet corner for boys and girls who want to study at leisure.

— Educational, religious, and cultural activities offered to children according to their needs and events and within the possibilities of the volunteer workers.

— Giving the children of immigrants who are still without legal or official status, the chance to learn the rudiments of the language.

The Willing Workers

The free volunteers working at *Baluchon* are nearly all professional and religious teachers. They devote their free time to explaining, directing, encouraging, and supporting the students in their early educational efforts. The majority of these teachers already have full-time work. Yet, they are asked:

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— to be responsible for some children on the same grade level, especialy primary pupils, for the children need to identify with an adult who loves them;

— to help to organize their assignments;

— to determine what their scholastic weaknesses are, and should the occasion arise, provide some extra help in this regard;

— to exercise patience, to listen, and to adapt themselves to the young. Many of them belong to broken homes, one parent families, and to families suffering from unemployment, sickness, and all kinds of other difficulties.

— to try to understand their instability, their aggressiveness, and their emotions;

— to put time aside for the monthly meeting of the volunteers;

— to pay attention to directives received: reading the minutes of meetings, announcements, etc.

— the willingness to cooperate with the other volunteers and with the full time workers at the Service in order to assure a better pedagogical and personal follow-up for the students;

— to believe in their personal possibilities.

Organization of the Center

The Educational Assistance Service is endowed with an Administrative Council, composed of eight members of various religious congregations. The Council provides the financing for the Service and looks after the orientations it has given or which it preserves. Every year it launches a campaign for funds as well as for people who will commit themselves to work at the Center.

The entire project, which covers three neighboring parishes, could not have been born and progressed without the financial support of the religious congregations and the diocese of Montreal. The future of the Center equally depends upon these same congregations at least until some humanitarian organisation takes it over partially or totally.

Concretely, *le Baluchon* is open:

— from Monday to Thursday:
for primary pupils from 15 to 16,30 hours
for high school students from 18 to 20 hours;

— on Fridays for cultural activities from 15 to 16,45 for the children of the last three elementary grades and the first two secondary grades.

Le Baluchon voluntarily opens its doors to visitors who wish to see how and under what material circumstances it functions. It is always appealing for the cooperation of new volunteers for a number of young people are still waiting to be helped.

Brother Rodrigue CYR
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12-C-46

THE ROLE OF THE BROTHER IN THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL

We sometimes speak of the United Nations presence in the Mid-East. We may also allude to the United States presence in Western Europe or even to a USSR presence in Cuba. When we converse in this manner we do not refer to a great number of people but rather to the reality that a certain presence is recognized. The presence is seen as exerting an influence in a specific area, it is looked upon as giving special service, and it is generally felt that this form of presence truly makes a difference.

When we review the Brothers' presence in educational service in the Chicago District, we find that this influence through presence has been quite powerful. Four schools — St. Patrick, De La Salle, St. Mel, St. George — which were staffed predominately by Brothers until the late 1950's, firmly established the Brothers' reputation for quality education. It was during the '50's and early '60's that a veritable explosion in Christian Brother education took place as the Order accepted the challenge to start ten new schools, take over the direction of four more schools which were already in operation, one of which was a college. Fourteen schools in just ten years! In subsequent years the Brothers' manpower shortage required them to withdraw from eleven of their seventeen schools. Most of these eleven schools remain alive and well today.

In this scenario we see the Brothers' presence felt by the impact of numbers in their early schools. We also see the Brothers' presence felt by the influence of a small group of Brother-educators, usually joining with a like group of Sisters, and surrounding themselves with a lay staff to establish new schools. And, yes, we even see the Brothers' 'presence' felt in their absence today as many of the schools that the Brothers started remain viable institutions today. Many educational faith communities exist today because of the Brothers' direction of these schools in the early days of their development.

Since the Brothers published their *Declaration* in 1967, the emphasis has been to focus on methods of making the Brothers' presence felt amid their dwindling numbers, by their influence, by their service, and by truly making a difference in their schools. The *Declaration* urged the Brothers to re-evaluate their school commitments and to understand that their influence in Christian schools will come more from the quality and excellence of the school than from the number of the schools which they conduct.

With the recent stress on the "Lasallian School", instead of on the "Brothers" school in the Chicago area, the question as to the role of the Brother in the schools is being asked by the lay staff, by the Religious, and by the Brothers themselves. Some may feel that the downplaying of terms such as "Brothers School" and "Brothers Boys" may be the signal that the Brothers are planning a quiet exodus. But, in truth, the Brothers in the Chicago District still intend to keep their schools as their preferred educational work.

The Lasallian school is to be a place where the Brothers, Lay Faculty, Religious, and Priests are all completely involved with the whole school — with teaching, with catechesis, with apostolic and service organisations, with administration, and in extra-curricular activities. As Brother Peter Clifford, Provincial of the Long Island/New England District, wrote to his communities in June, 1986: "We are all aware that our colleagues, lay, religious, and priests, are more than replacements in our institutions for the Brothers, or unavoidable alternatives. They are men and women interested in our work and in our mission. We owe them the same attention and opportunities for growth in Lasallian thought and idealism as we owe ourselves. In addition, our mission becomes more important as it expands through teachers, volunteers, parents, and alumni

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groups, and other forms of the Lasallian Family".

The Brother who is the school administrator has the power to set in motion programs which will make the "Lasallian Characteristics" come alive. Faculty members need to be encouraged to hop on the academic escalator to become master teachers or department or committee chairpersons. Teachers might consider becoming exchange teachers in other Lasallian schools, or become consultants in their particular discipline for other area schools. Some may wish to enter intern programs for school administration. It will be the principal's vision as to what the Lasallian school might become that will determine just how vigorous this whole movement will be in each school.

The teaching Brother should be one of the school's visual aids in the art of teaching. The Brother should also be an energizer to the faculty. As the scope of the teacher's responsibility broadens to that of human service eductors, teachers will at times be counselors, group leaders, designated thinkers, but always stimulators of the human potential in a variety of ways. The Brothers need to take the lead with their religious, academic, and social vision, and their strong commitment to education, to truly be the animating influence within the school and to the wider community.

The Brothers need to lead the faculty in discussing the great work that all of us are doing. Neil Postman reminds teachers of their importance: "The role of teachers, it seems, is to attempt to show youth that the young enter adulthood, not by TV information, but by having their questions. answered. We now have a society of students who have answers to questions they never asked. Unless students can lean on adults, especially teachers, they will not be hope-filled, courageous, or disciplined. The violence that is now revealed over television (their 1 curriculum) is seldom mediated by a mother's voice, is not modified to suit the child's age level, is not governed by any theory of child development. Teachers who are seen by their students as role models, listeners, value people, interpreters of society's mad violence and vulgarities, in addition to their competency in teaching, are needed today perhaps more than ever".[1] Brothers, we have our work cut out for us!

Brother Terence McLAUGHLIN, FSC
200 De La Salle Drive
ROMEOVILLE, IL. 60441

[1] Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood.*

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12-C-47

ACTION FOR CATECHETICS

Two items contributed by Brother Damian Lundy FSC, a leading figure in English catechetics. They were originally written for the District of England "Newsletter" and are presented here in slightly adapted form.

A. Catechetical weekends in Kintbury:

For several years now, the District Catechetical Commission has been organising a series of weekends at St Cassian's Centre, Kintbury.

These sessions are for teachers, catechists, adults of different ages. They draw together forty or fifty people from different parts of the country. Not all the participants belong to De La Salle establishments, but some of our regular participants come from schools like West Park, St. Helens, De La Salle, Salford, and St Peter's Schools, Bournemouth, where lay colleagues as well as Brothers are regular participants.

Topics treated during recent sessions have included Prayer and Religious Experience in the Secondary School; the Psalms, St Paul and the early Church: new perspectives; Liberation Theology and Britain Today; and — most recently — A Journey into Easter: the new Rite of Christian Initiation. Sometimes, the content of the sessions is offered in traditional lecture form, but more generally teaching-methods which invite full and active participation are favoured. This was the case with the most recent session on Christian Initiation during the 10th-12th October 1986. This weekend was led by two first-class presenters — real adult educators who invited lively participation and received a full response: learning proved to be very enjoyable, because there were no passive spectators — we were truly learning together, sharing experiences and reaching significant conclusions. The two Sisters who led this session were Céline Murphy (from Middlesborough) and Mary Bernard Potter (from Bradford). They really brought the best out of us all. Let me quote from their letters, reflecting on the week-end!

Mary Bernard wrote: "It was wonderful working with such a sensitive group at St Cassian's. Thanks for all your affirmation and good humour. I personally gained a lot from the experience".

And Céline commented: "So much to be grateful for and only a 'thank you' card to express my thanks for such a beautiful weekend. In every way, you and the Brothers were so right. Indeed the whole spirit of St Cassian's took us all over — and I know it was a Holy Spirit. An enriching few days like that won't easily be forgotten. I am so glad I was there and I can't get over my luck to have been invited!"

Two of the most interesting learning-experiences were an extensive role-play in which we became the early church in Joppa, receiving two new members into our community, and an excellent video of an international conference in Belgium which explored, from the point of view of different societies and cultures, "New Ways of Being Church". A reflection on the Joppa experience was written by Anthony McNamara, Head of English at St. Peter's Bournemouth, and it was read to us before we prayed together at the end of the weekend and received our commission to take the good news back to our local situations. This reflection is printed here:

On being the Church in Joppa:

It was a happy experience. We enjoyed seeing the living bricks being moulded and coming together to build a living church. We felt we had a part to play in the process rather than being spectators ("members of a congregation"). The church into which we welcomed the newcomers, Edmund and Margaret, was a reflection of what our faith meant to us and the joyful way in which it expressed itself. This was a persecuted church of signs, mysteries and revelations; yet everyone in it seemed to be laughing.

We felt a sense of wonder. Was this new world where people discovered and shared each other's gifts as "ministries" really "the Way we were"? Instead of a linear process along which we appeared to be discarding ancient traditions for novel forms of expressing our identity as Christians, we discovered that we were returning, almost as if it were along a full circle, to the very roots of the church — mustard seed from which the mighty tree had grown.

We felt we would be moving into a period of tension and confusion.

There was in the church a hierarchical structure that was, perhaps quite understandably, threatened by the proliferation of ministries and by the reaffirmation of the church as community rather than the Pope's divisions, complete with generals and poor bloody infantry. The laity had lost its sense of worth. It would need patience, inspiration and real skill, both imparted and assimilated, to bring those ministries out.

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It ministries represented new roles for the laity, the emerging communities in which they were embedded represented new structures — a challenge to ours, the most rigid of christian traditions. Basic communities in places such as Brazil and the Philippines were flourishing against all the odds and were now being grudgingly accepted by the Church. Perhaps the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) would be the catalyst for new communities in Europe. They could not be imposed from on high, however. The growing-process would be uneven, and would ultimately depend on the amount of leaven locally available.

(Anthony McNamara)

B. Planning a workshop to examine your school as a christian community

1. *Concerns of education*

I. Aims and underlying principles and differing expectations: What are we trying to achieve? Any conflicts of interest? Sources of such conflicts?

II. Knowledge and skills:

What is to be learned and why? How?

III. Persons involved in the process:

Who are learning? Who are teaching? How do teachers and learners relate?

IV. Society:

In what kind of society does our educational process take place?

How do our culture and society affect the educational process (in obvious and less evident ways)?

2. *Vision statements:*

I. Do they exist? Could we name them? Do we read them? Do we understand them?

II. How do we use them? How do we modify them and apply them to our situation?

Cf. three Lasallian documents: *La Conduite des Ecoles; Meditations for Time of Retreat;* the 1967 *Declaration.*

Cf. three Roman documents: Vatican II's *Declaration on Christian Education;* the subsequent documents on *the Catholic School* and on *Lay Catholic Teachers.*

3. *Possible workshops*

I. In which we examine *our own school now* by listing and exploring problems we experience and by proposing solutions;

II. In which we draw up *our own vision statement* and work out how it could be applied in the day-to-day running of the school: What Kind of school do we want? What makes a Christian school "different"?

III. In which we examine changes in society, school, church, and investigate new needs which have arisen and work out how the school can help;

for instance, in Herman Lombaerts' *ecological model,* the "ecology" of the Christian school in our society is examined: what supports life? What threatens life? What are our priorities for the future?

IV. In which we investigate the values of the Christian school (or the Lasallian school) and then use these as a checklist to evaluate our school; this involves going back to (or even discovering) our origins and sources *and* considering the present situation here;

V. In which we select one or two of the possibilities already indicated but limit our enquiry by concentrating on a specific group of persons within the process of education: eg. teachers, pupils, parents, administration...

4. *Running a workshop*

Who will choose one of the above workshops for our school?

Who will participate in the workshop?

Who will direct the process?

What do we see as the stages of the process?

How long will it last: one day; residential weekend; series of meetings?

Will participation be optional? If so, how do we attract participants?

5. *An outline of Groome's praxis method*

a. We state what we intend to do or explore in the process — we name the course of action we want to adopt;

b. we reflect on some of our recent experiences as a way into the course of action;

c. we study some aspect of our history, tradition, vision, with the help of suitable input;

d. we ask how our present experiences *and* the tradition/vision relate to each other;

e. we look to our future action, indicating concrete steps or plans to be adopted in the light of our workshop.

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12-C-48

THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE CHILD (1)

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is the only religious congregation which is an "active member" of the BICE (*Bureau International Catholique de l'Enfance,* International Catholic Bureau of Children). This may seem somewhat paradoxical being that teaching congregations, in principle, are concerned first and foremost wih children. Consequently, they should unite their efforts to those of this international Catholic organization in the defense of the rights of children and for the promotion of their well-being, their dignity, and their spiritual and human growth.

The readers of Lasalliana perhaps are not totally familiar with the activities of BICE. This organization is not essentially a funding agency as are so many other international organizations, but rather it is an organization which thinks about the problems related to children, comes to a deep understanding of them and then proposes and initiates action in view of ameliorating the conditions of children throughout the world.

With a view to making the programs which they have implemented more effective, the BICE maintains active relations with other organizations in the Church or in the United Nation which are also concerned with children. These numerous relations directly contribute to the impact of its action. Here are some recent examples of this.

Among the "Major Programs" recently initiated and implemented by the BICE, we refer to:

* The International Year of the Child (1979), an initiative of BICE which aroused considerable awareness throughout the world because it was accepted by the UNESCO and its various organizations;

* The problem, which is so great and lamentable these days, of "children of the street". For the past several years, the BICE has contributed to arousing a consciousness of this problem through colloquies which were organized, for example, in Marseille, Bogota, Bombay, and Abidjan. Thanks to this awareness and sensitivity and to the publications which flowed from them, various kinds of concrete assistance programs were inaugurated. It became necessary to create a new international organization which can continue to pursue the activity. This organization is "Childhope", which was temporarily based in New York but which is now based in Guatemala.

For the past four years, the BICE has been carrying out efforts on the vital but complex theme of "THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE CHILD" in today's world. Several particular programs within the greater overall program are already in progress. This was the object of a first evaluation and reflection of inner working organizations at the last General Congress of the BICE, held in Rome at the beginning of 1986.

These programs concern the following problems:

* the child and the spiritual life within the family;

* children and the media;

* the incultural and interreligious education of the child;

* the spiritual and non-material needs of children refugees;

* the spiritual growth of children who are handicapped physically, in their sense, or mentally;

* the spiritual growth of children deprived of a normal family life;

* maltreated children;

* child prostitution and pornography;

* one child helping another child: an older child looking after the health and welfare of the younger children.

With this as the framework of thought on particular problems, the BICE has drawn up a preliminary general text on "the Spiritual Growth of the Child" which can be read here below at length.

It seems to me that this text, in whose elaboration I participated, will be of great interest for all the Brothers and for all other Lasallians whose main task is to work together for this spiritual growth of children who are under their care in school, in group movements, and outside of schools.

As one can see by reading it, this text adopts a large perspective the only true one — with regard to the spiritual in the child and in every human being. Because of that, it seems to me particularly interesting for the understanding of our apostolic ministry of education, above all for those of us who work in a milieu which is largely non-Christian and who ask ourselves sometimes about the meaning of our activities and about the orientations which we give to them. It will be easy for us to find in these thoughts of BICE a field of action which is as vast as it is fundamental for the education of youth and a rich choice of elements for an educational project in common with our colleagues of different religions or even with non-believers.

Preliminary remarks

1. Since tens of millions of children in our times are growing up in a world which attributes little

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place to spiritual concerns, a positive answer should be sought for the varying demands deriving from such a situation. It is therefore essential to search for ways and means to give spiritual nourishment to those children. It is imperative, not only to satisfy their material needs such as food, sports, health, etc., but also to respond to their intellectual, cultural and spiritual needs; school, pastimes, arts, religion, etc.. Such nourishment inevitably raises certain problems related to the child's environment.

At the present time however, the ICCB has to face a more fundamental question. It is aware of the urgent need to set free the spiritual energy within each child, that source of growth which will enable the child to build its own spiritual life a growth process that will continue throughout its entire lifetime.

2. Such action touches a decisive and radical aspect of the child's identity as a human person; for the ICCB it is a specific part of its mission. Indeed, the ICCB believes very firmly in the spiritual dimension of the child as part of its very being, its nature, the dynamics of its growth. Created in the image of God, man became inhabitated by the Spirit at the very moment he emerged from animality. Because the child is the offspring of man, it is of divine race.Therefore, the child is unable to attain fullness of being, balance and happiness unless it has developed spiritually as well.

3. Although the ICCB is quite conscious of its specific task as an International Catholic Organisation, it feels that the ideas which are expressed hereafter do not follow exclusively from the Judeo-Christian tradition. The faiths specifically derived from that tradition are based upon the Bible and hold that in the spirit there is a divine seed, the image of both God and man. There are other creeds arising from other spiritual traditions, be they Islamic, Buddhist or still others. There are moreover agnostics and men of goodwill who, even if they do not always make explicit reference to the Judeo-Christian interpretation neverthless recognize the spiritual dignity of man.

The Spiritual Growth of the Child

Every child is born with a sum of basic physical, psychic, intellectual and emotional potentialities, but also with an innate spiritual potential. The development and the accomplishment of its being in its uniqueness, its entirety and its authenticity, are nothing other than the full achievement of its potentialities. That is the condition for the child becoming "in all truth" a human person. However, we should ask ourselves several questions: what is the meaning of such spiritual growth? Which is the way toward it? Who are its authors?

I - The sense of spiritual growth: analysis and description

The "spiritual" in the human being is of such density that, to analyse it, one needs to distinguish three different aspects, which have to be globally united afterwards, such as three facets of a diamond or three tributaries of one and the same stream.

1. The anthropological or constitutive aspect: TRUTH of the BEING.

This is the most *fundamental* aspect of the "spiritual" in that it answers for the specific nature of the dignity of the human person, as source and principle of human rights. This aspect is to be recognized in the founding event, which makes man, that is the moment when he emerges from animality. It is indeed in that sudden original mutation which produces him that *the spirit enters man.* The attentive observer will recognize three major expressions of this "spiritual":

— the passage from the instinct based on capture and enjoyment to LOVE, which is sacrificial and freely given. Man as an animal is possessed by the instinct to take more to have more: that means that he wants to grow in being through possessing more: such is his instinctive drive. However there is also a different movement in man, a drive which is also innate as the expression of the spirit and which tends to give, to offer, and consequently to lose: this is love, which may be defined as an act of "having less" in order to "be more". Through loving, one becomes more human.

— The passage from sensitive knowledge (by images) to abstract knowledge (by ideals). The second fruit of the spirit in man is the emergence of INTELLIGENCE, which consists of reflecting (i.e. conceiving ideas), reasoning (articulating ideas), judging (discerning among ideas).

— The passage from determinate and automatic conduct to the FREEDOM of choice by freeing oneself from enslavements and servitudes and mastering caprice: in man this is the third fruit of the spirit.

— This threefold ability for love, understanding and freedom is the constitutive element of man's specific nature, of his dignity and his identity: such is his fundamental spiritual being. Therefore it is of the greatest importance that the "servants" of children seeking their development "in truth" should give priority to this emergence, this awakening, this coming of he spirit. From this point of view there exists at the present time a terrible void, which brings about a regressive evolution leading in turn to human degradation and menacing the human species as such. Urgent action is needed.

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THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF THE CHILD (2)

2. The religious or relational aspect: ALTERITY IN FUNCTION OF GROWTH.

This is *the most factual* of "the spiritual". This aspect lies in what the psychologist Lacan defines as the passage from "the fusional state" (the child in the mother's womb) to "the relational state" (the child engaged in the pursuit of autonomous fulfilment). It is true that fulfilment is always conditioned by "the other". One has to define oneself in relation to the Other by viewing him as being "other", that is different from "me", but also as being the Other one in his alterity, that is, as a being endowed with an autonomy fully his own, in the same ways as I am myself.

This necessary alterity is a condition of development, fullness of being, happiness. Alone man cannot reach fulfiment. In order to liberate him from the permanent temptation of returning to the fusional state, the relational state must become "communional", and so we recognize the three main choices in human existence, which are the most explosive expression of the density and the originality of the human spirit:

— the choice of the conjugal partner: the couple and the family;

man develops through communion with *the other*;

— the choice of the social partner: society and profession;

man develops through communion with *the others*;

— the choice of the religious partner: the absolute and the infinite;

man develops through communion with *the Other*.

It is clear that, while these three choices have to be distinguished as such, it does not follow that they are always and necessarily separated in each person. There will normally be association and mixture of choices.

This is the second aspect of the spiritual existence of the human person. *The demands of the spirit which prompt a human being* towards achieving full development therefore guide him towards relation, communion, the choice of a partner, with whom he establishes, "community" in order to reach achievement. This threefold choice which consists in exercising freedom, as far as man is concerned, is therefore the major expression of man's spiritual being.

Thus, the religious aspect of the spiritual is a dimension of the destiny of man who develops through his relation to the "Other". In this sense man is a "religious element". "Man is a fallen God, who remembers Heaven", man is searching for the other side. He needs something absolute to feel he is alive; he senses that he came from elsewhere and is bound for that elsewhere. He finds his finitude unbearable. Those other places in which he seeks evasion are called alcohol, drugs, sex, travel, suicide. Those "absolutes" which seduce him are science, trade, power, good causes. Those other places which satiate him are sects, religions, faith.

Whereas the anthropological or constitutive aspect of the spiritual is the most fundamental, the religious aspect (or the relational aspect) is the most universal. As was the case at certain periods in the past, when powerful empires and great cultures fell apart, the present time also shows signs of dwindling religiosity, of religious disinformation as well as of religious fanaticism and imperialism. All of these create a serious danger for the human being. There is a disquieting spiritual void. Urgent action is needed.

3. The Christian and Evangelical aspect: the MYSTERY OF FAITH

This is the most original aspect of the "spiritual", which in this case and in this case alone should be written with a capital "S". It cannot be detected, unless by grace, that is, in the light of the Holy Spirit, the good tidings of the Gospel and the meeting of the Lord. This is the divine LIFE which is deposited as a seed through baptism, fecundated by the Word and nourished by the Sacraments.

In this sense the "Spiritual" consequently is the life of Faith, that is to say, a new life, which, as all life, is born from the contact of two seeds: the *Word* of God which is revealed and the *freedom* of man, which decides. When faith impregnates human existence in the entire person, both body and soul, it is an eminently spiritual activity.

It cannot be doubted that at this point in time the end of our century, a crisis of faith and hence a crisis of the Spiritual is weighing upon Western countries. This third aspect of the spiritual void raises a challenge for the ICCB, just as the other two aspects. This however touches ICCB more particularly a a Catholic organisation. And in this case too, urgent action is needed.

And so, as in the three panels of a triptych, the three aspects of spiritual growth of the child unfold in the promotion of:

— the spirit of its being human
— the spirit if its being religious
— the spirit of its being Christian

Given its specifically Christian nature, it is only natural that the ICCB places a particular

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emphasis on the Christian and evangelical aspects of the spiritual growth of the child. As already indicated in paragraph 3 of the preliminary remarks, this does not imply that it thereby rejects other religious or spiritual currents, which, eventually, may associate with the ICCB's project.

II - Path of spiritual growth: education and pedagogics

The spiritual exists in the child as a seed and a source, as a potential and an energy. Growth then means a pedagogy of arousing and of threshold; a pedagogy of promotion.

We can distinguish two levels:

1. The spiritual awakening and promotion: anthropological and religious action

— This may be accomplished in two directions:

I) The values of deepening consciousness and autonomy

— The birth of *interiority* for awakening conscience. This is an educational pedagogy which gives its density to the personal mystery of the child in the consciousness of its "I" and its "me". A reflection on the right use of active methods, audio-visual techniques, as well as symbols, silence, arts, might be put into motion in this perspective. In this way conscience, that science of the interior being, comes to life.

— The taste for effort through the joy of *surpassing* oneself. One only becomes oneself through concentration and transcendence. That goes for sportsmen as well as for artists, for researchers as well as for creators. Effort has no value as such, in human beings it is but the liberation of the being to be born.

— Learning *discernment* in the search for truth. Credulity as well as contestation are full of risks. A critical spirit implies questioning and evaluation. Full truth is never acquired, one approaches it through reflection, judgment, dialogue and sharing in patience and humility.

II) The values of relation and communion

— The sense of *nearness* in the practice of goodwill. The bringing about of community comes about through the mutual recognition of the other who has some value: one cannot be and develop unless one is recognized; this comes about through goodwill, by which what good there is in the other is recognized. And finally it comes about by the riches resulting from differences and the positive management of conflicts.

— The sense of *generosity* in a perspective of *gratuity.* In a world where everything bought and sold, the binding tissue of community is fed by the oxygen and the fresh blood of gratuitous acts which are carriers of love.

— The sense of solidarity in terms of *responsibility.* The privileged and the profiteers produce sterility in any community. A community cannot live nor can it progress unless every one of its members is servant to the commonweal and shares in the common task: responsibility fecundates the community.

These six fundamental values are efficacious signs of the spiritual growth of the child.

2. The arousing and the promotion of the Spiritual:

— *an education in grace:*

As any life, the life of faith cannot come to birth, nor can it be promoted uneless it is borne by a community which fosters it, and it is grafted upon or nestled in an amalgamating tissue for nourishment: this shows the importance of the family.

— *A quality seed:*

This is the Word of God revealed in the Good News in catechesis.

— *An initiation in the Sacraments:*

This means discovering signs and symbols, a meeting of man with God..

— *An education in contemplation:*

which means the most complete search of the Absolute.

III - The agents of spiritual growth: action and concertation

What is at stake today is spiritual growth and it is of such paramount importance that it requires vigorous and concerted action. The ICCB should promote such action.

1. *At the level of structures and institutions: the educational communities*

Research in that field should start in the family and the school.

2. *At the level of environment and climate: the educational factors*

An emergency programme is needed for promoting the spiritual growth of children:

— by media: press, literature, audio-visual means, cinema. T.V., video-cassettes;

— by free-time activities: sports, children's movements, tourism, art.

3. *At the level of Churches and Catholic agencies at the service of children*

— in communities of catechetical renewal,
— in apostolic children's movements.

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12-D-21

AN INTEGRAL LASALLIAN FORMATION COURSE

PRESENTATION

The formation plan which we are offering here arose, for the most part, out of the insistent desire of numerous seculars, as reflected in the Directives of the Mexican Lasallian Federation, of receiving a solid formation so that they might better cooperate in the educational task of the Brothers.

This impulse led to the re-enforcement and the offering of perspectives to those Brothers who were trying to find a more effective way of bringing about the participation of seculars in the work and mission of the Institute, particularly through so-called "educational communities".

Lasallianism, being an evangelizing movement, inspired by the spirit of faith and zeal and in a community projection, making seculars participators means, above all, promoting Christian faith in them, arousing their apostolic zeal, and making them capable of apostolic community activity.

Included among our fellow workers were those who, in obedience to a special call of the Spirit, wanted to make themselves in some way like the Brothers, which implied also, in a certain way, the Brothers' formation process.

Thus then, the contents of the program presented offers elements of an integral Christian formation leading to evangelizing activity in a Lasallian educational community.

With this end in view, the program includes five fundamental areas which are intimately joined together in such a way that they are complementary parts of a whole, which imply and presuppose one another.

1. An anthropological reflection which intends, beginning from Revelation, to reveal man to himself and to locate him in a salvific way, in earthly realities.

2. A societarian insertion of man and his conversion into the Christian community life started by the apostles in the same manner as his projection through the different forms of making the Church present in the world.

3. The Ministry of the Word in the History of Salvation, its urgency- ever present and the conditions of its effectiveness.

4. Evangelizing education as a process of humanization in the perspective of salvation, and in the Lasallian way of exercising the Ministry of the Word.

5. The historical circumstances which, from the Founder to our times, has forged Lasallianism as an evangelizing movement of education, moulded in the spirit of faith and zeal and in community activity.

As can be seen, the first four areas are common to any kind of solid and complete Christian formation. Only the last one is distinctive in presenting a particular style of evangelical life. It is an opportunity for locating and rooting persons in a defined historical context and at the same time for guarantees of apostolic fecundity.

For the purpose of invoking a total vision which is at the same time synthetic in plan, we arrange a picture in which the themes are set out by areas and cycles. It can be noted that the programed contents can be included according to areas or according to cycles, indistinctly, without substantially affecting the general object of the program.

Normally, the didactic procedure and the development of the theme will be inspired by:

— the magisterial exposition.

— Discussions and or studies in small groups or meetings.

— the help of appropriate didactic material.

— reading and investigation.

— prayer.

Each of the themes will have a "didactic package" consisting of:

— the general object and specific object.

— A synthesis of the expositions.

— A basic bibliography.

— An instrument for evaluation.

Finally, at the end of the course and as proof of the completion of the requisites, La Salle University, Mexico City through its Institute of Religious Sciences, will award each participant a corresponding Diploma.

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Project of the instrument of formation for members of Lasallian associations

What is it?

A practical and systematic means put at the disposal of those who wish to benefit by them of the contents, methods and indispensible activities for their adequate and effective integration into the Lasallian Associations, for the purpose of carrying out concrete tasks in the educational apostolate of the Brothers.

Why?

— The finality proposed today to the Lasallian Associations of collaborating in the educational tasks of the Brothers, requires an increase in basic Christian formation.

— There are ever more insistent appeals on the part of Lasallian Associations of starting a systematic and thorough process to know and live the Lasallian movement for the purpose of participating more effectively in the educational works of the Brothers.

— The objective adopted by the Mexican Lasallian Federation is: to take the necessary means to successfully provide a better formation to the members of the Lasallian Formation for the purpose of making them capable of collaborating in the work of the Brothers.

— None of the Lasallian Association taken separately, is in a position to integrally satisfy this need for Lasallian training.

For whom?

— Members of the Mexican Lasallian Federation.

— Members of the Association of Lasallites.

— Collaborators in Lasallian educational work.

— Interested person with proper prerequisites.

With whom?

— In the first stage:

* a joint coordination of the Brothers and the Mexican Lasallian Association.

* Those explaining and lecturing: predominantly Brothers.

— In the second stage:

* Coordinated cooperation between the Brothers and the Mexican Lasallian Association.

How?

— Exposition of themes.

— Discussions and study in small groups.

— Reflection and prayer.

— Readings and research.

— The aid of the "didactic package" for each one of the themes.

— A minimum of one hour per theme.

Validation

An "Integral Lasallian Formation Course" Diploma given by the Institute of Religious Sciences of La Salle University, Mexico City.

Plan of studies

1) Anthropology: inspired by the Gospel:

— History of the most significant anthropological currents.

— Man according to the Bible.

— The truth concerning man in the light of the pastoral reflection of the Church today.

— The Christian secular in earthly realities.

2) The Christian Community:

— The formation and development of Christian communities.

— Christian communities during the time of the apostles.

— The Christian Community and Salvation.

— Forms and modes of living the Ecclesial Community: the family, religious community.

3) Ministry of the Word of God:

— A Christian reading of the Old Testament.

— The Gospels of Jesus.

— Revelation in History.

— Pedagogy of the Faith.

4) Evangelizing Education:

— History of Education in Mexico.

— Lasallian Educational thoughts.

— Present and future Evangelization of Latin America.

— The school as an agent of Evangelization.

5) Lasallianism in synthesis:

— The life and work of Saint John Baptist De La Salle.

— Three hundred years of development of Lasallian work.

— Lasallian Activity.

— The Lasallian Educational Community.

Brother Adalberto ARANDA RAMIREZ
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12-E-28

A THEOLOGY OF MISSION FOR THE LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL CHURCH (1)

Early in 1974, I wrote an essay on the theology of mission entitled, "The Theology of the Overseas Apostolate (Missions), Yesterday and Today". Now, more than ten years later, I have been asked to revise that essay. I welcome the opportunity because the topic is so essential to our lives as they effect our students, associates, and the Institute. Furthermore, this is a perennial topic for the universal church, e.g., the synod of bishops planned for 1987 will have as its theme "The Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World".

As I review the 1974 essay, I find that the basic thrust of its theology is still valid. However, there are three glaring (even embarrassing) faults. First, the language is blatantly sexist. Second, I refer to the other Christians as "non-Catholic" and to the adherents of the world religions (i.e., the Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Muslims) as "non-Christian". In view of our more sensitive ecumenical attitude, these negative terms are obviously pejorative. Third, there is a total disregard of the Holy Spirit! Never once do I refer to the Spirit, the one who distributes charism; who assists the church's office-holders; who, as the Paraclete, not only defends the cause of Jesus Christ against the world but also teaches every believing Christian; and who directs the church's mission.

The brothers and mission

Everything that concerns the mission of the Brothers as Christian educators was reaffirmed at the 40th general chapter in 1976. In "The Acts of the 40th General Chapter", the Brothers are reminded that they "must integrate personally, as well in their communities as in their institutions, the components of Christian education, the ministry of the word, the service of the poor, and action on behalf of justice in the world" (p. 74). Furthermore, Community and district planning must create adequate guidelines for assuring the fulfiilment of our mission of imparting Christian education by association. Only in this way can the Brothers consider themselves, at one and the same time, "personally called and communally sent" (p. 42). Finally, the Brothers were seriously urged to "share their Lasallian spirituality and leadership of their works with all the members of the educational community" (p. 76). This last injunction, a firm reiteration of the 1967 *Declaration* (section 46), signaled a striking shift from the concept of "a Brothers' school" to "a Lasallian school". The reasons for the change of emphasis were obvious: As a group we are rapidly declining in numbers and our colleagues are increasingly aware not only of the apostolic dimension of their calling as teachers but also of the wisdom of our Lasallian spirituality.

In Circular 419 (April 30, 1984), the announcement of the preparations for the 41st general chapter in 1986, it says (p. 32): "The question of most interest to the Brothers is the future of their mission". I must leave to the general chapter the elaboration of the specifics of our Lasallian mission and how we can best integrate it into the local and universal mission of the church. The purpose of this essay is to outline a theology of mission that can serve as a basis upon which to build those specifics.

Developments in theology

But before getting to the revisions of the 1974 essay, it is necessary to outline four significant developments since then within society and/or theology that now nuance the mission of the local and universal church.

1. The growth of atheism: in 1900, a mere 0.2. percent of the world was atheistic. Today, some 21 percent of the world is atheistic. About 33 percent of the world's people are Christian, a percentage not likely to change by the year 2000. This indicates that the opportunity and challenge of mission have probably never been greater in the church's long history.

2. The development of political theology: the political, social, familial and economic issues of our day (e.g., abortion, world hunger, nuclear war, women's rights and dignity, the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor peoples and nations) have forced the church to listen to the victims of society, to analyze the structures of society that produce this victimhood, and to examine the extent to which Christian tradition, institutions, and language participate in these structures of sin. Bishops through their episcopal conferences have published social messages on such topics as the preferential option for the poor, nuclear arms and peace, and the economy which have evoked considerable debate within and outside the church. Furthermore, Paul VI and John Paul II have reiterated often the church's commitment to justice and mercy.

3. The emergence of the world church: in 1971, Walbert Buhlmann published *The Coming of the Third Church,* a book that is a phenomenological study of the notion that Vatican II marked the emergence of the church as a world church. However, in 1979 Karl Rahner (1904-1984), the eminent Jesuit theologian, produced a brief essay which has become the locus classicus for the discussion of this question and its far-reaching consequences. Rahner divided church history into three periods: 1) the short period of Jewish Christianity (30-49 C.E.) when Christianity was proclaimed in Israel and to it; 2) the period of the church in a distinct cultural region, namely European (and North American) culture and civilization (49-1962 C.E.); 3) the present period in which the sphere of the church's life is in fact the entire world. Rahner was fully aware that the church has always been a world church in principle because its mission has always been universal. But at Vatican II, due to the influence of the Spirit, the church appeared for the first time as a world church in a fully official way. This means that the church now recognizes and accepts the essential differences among cultures and is attempting to find ways not only to formulate the gospel within each cultural setting but also to learn about the risen Christ from the various cultures. In other words, every country is now mission territory. Finally, Rahner warned that if the church does not become de-Europeanized and de-Romanized, she will remain a Western church and so in the final analysis betray the meaning of Vatican II.

4. The emergence of the church as a community of disciples: as a mystery, the church is irreducible to any single image or model. After Vatican II there was consi-

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derable stress on models of the church, especially the five enumerated by Avery Dulles in his *Models of the Church;* namely, communion, herald, sacrament, servant and institution.

These five models are complementary and not exclusive. When they are interrelated, they denote that the institutional church is an interpersonal community as well as a missionary community with a threefold purpose: to teach the gospel, to witness the Kingdom of God, and to serve the needy and the oppressed. But something is lacking in this description; namely, the personal dimension. Is not the church also composed of individuals who personally respond to the God of Jesus in faith, hope and love? This dimension is important because at this level, although all women and men receive different gifts of the Spirit, all are equal in dignity and freedom. At this level, all women and men are followers and learners; all must embrace the cross; and all must appropriate the Spirit of Jesus and his mission. This model identifies the universal church a a worldwide community of disciples.

John Paul II stressed this model in 1979 in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (see no. 21) and Dulles wrote a perceptive essay about it in 1981. More than in previous generations, the discipleship model corresponds well to the situation and needs of the church in our own time. Because of the pervasive influence of atheism, secularism and anti-Christian values as well as the attractiveness to many of the world religions, Christians will only participate in the church and its mission to the extent that they have heard a personal call and respond in a free, self-conscious manner, allowing the risen Christ to be the focal point of their lives.

Missiology today

The church has always been missionary. It has gone forth at Christ's command and under the impulse of the Spirit to evangelize and baptize all nations. It has proclaimed to all men and women the gospel of Jesus and its belief that he is the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of what it means to be human.

The theology of the mission has always changed to meet the needs of those being evangelized. In our day there has been an intensive study of missiology. A theme of contemporary missiology is that there were two major weaknesses in mission activity and theology before Vatican II. First, missionaries brought the Christ of their own culture to the peoples they were evangelizing without much adaptation to the new culture. We lacked an appreciation of cultural pluralism We are not a world church in a fully official way. Secondly, missionaries strove to convert all nations and all religions to Christianity, based on the belief that Christianity was true and the world religions were false. We lacked a theology of religious pluralism.

Christ and cultural pluralism

Evangelization is the activity whereby the church proclaims the gospel in order to awaken living faith among those who do not know Christ and to deepen the faith among Christians.

There are two aspects of evangelization that have been questioned recently. One concerns the methodology of evangelization. In the past there may have been a rather widespread disregard for the autonomy of each culture. When a missionary went from the West to the East (or from the North to the South), it was understood that he brought the Western image of Christ and his church to the new culture. Before Vatican II, missionaries did not permeate an autonomous culture which already existed with its own human values and traditions so much as create their own type of society artificially.

Today there is a greater appreciation of the fact that the gospel can and must be adapted to all cultures. Not only can a foreign culture be enriched by the discovery that its true values and traditions can be referred to Christ as their source, but the missionary's own relationship to Christ can be enhanced as he discovers Christ and his Spirit already present to the people and their culture. If, in the past, missionaries thought they had much to give and teach, they now acknowledge they have much to receive and learn.

It should be noted that this change in approach to mission countries is simply a manifestation of a greater change taking place throughout the world as a result of a rise in nationalism and a development in conscientization. For example, the countries of the Third World have challenged the success of the Western nations for placing themselves at the center of the earth, for controlling the greater share of the earth's resources, and for understanding human history along an axis that passes through their own immediate past.

The other aspect of missionary activity that has been questioned is an evangelization that has been strictly spiritual and religious. It is argued by some that evangelization cannot take place if the political, social and economic structures that are inhuman and oppressive are not denounced and changed.

It is in Latin America especially that various liberation theologies have developed.

Liberation theology does not seek to be another department of theology. It is a serious reflection on the perennial Christian themes, but from within the experience of participation in liberation struggles. What the various liberation theologies have in common is their desire to reappraise the Christian gospel from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed and those who have been banished historically from theological reflection. Another change is that, whereas the theology of Vatican II concentrated on intrachurch reform, liberation theology in its various forms is committed to fundamental challenges of the liberation process within society.

At the present time, those influenced by a liberation theology have some serious questions to answer. Many enterprising missionaries have involved themselves in the political, social and economic spheres of the country. This involvement has brought some of them into revolutionary activities that involved acts of violece. They now question how revolutionary and political they can be. They want to know if they should restrict their activities to those which are strictly pastoral. It does seems — as with Jesus — that living the gospel faithfully by imitating his threefold mission of teaching, witness and service of the needy is the most revolutionary stance one can take. Furthermore, this way of interpreting the life of Jesus is in accord with the latest scripture scholarship which is trying to refute recent attempts to portray Jesus as a political revolutionary. The gospel says his kingdom was not of this world, i.e., the world as distorted by the history of sin.

It is not clear where liberation theology will finally rest. Nevetheless, what liberation theology has made clear is that those who teach and preach the gospel must be very conscious of "the sin of the world": there is a sinful situation of oppression, domination, and exploitation that must be denounced and overcome if the Christian gospel of brotherhood/sisterhood, justice and peace would be established.

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A THEOLOGY OF MISSION FOR THE LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL CHURCH (2)

Christ and religious pluralism

There are many religions. From the Catholic church's point of view, it has been customary to group them as "non-Catholic" and "non-Christian". The church's dialogue with these two groups has had a different scope. The church's dialogue with the other Christian churches is directed towards reunion and fuller communion in Christ. The length of this paper does not allow space for a discussion of recent developments within the ecumenical dialogue. It is sufficient to point out that the dialogue between the Catholic church and the other Christians seems to be moving in the very same direction as the dialogue with the world religions, i.e., towards a theology of religious pluralism.

Since the relationship of the church to the world religions is more complex and also more significant than the dialogue with the other Christian churches for an understanding of the theology of mission, it is this relationship which will be outlined here.

In recent times the church has moved through two paradigms to a third in its understanding of itself in relation to the world religions. These changes, pivot around Vatican II and are usually labelled as preconciliar, conciliar and postconciliar.

Roman Catholic missiology has moved to a new plateau because deeper consideration has been given to some of the most basic concepts involved in the ministry of evangelization. It will be possible to understand the present missiology after examining the changes that have taken place in our understanding of four interrelated areas:

1. salvation
2. mediatorship of Christ;
3. conversion;
4. true and false religion.

1. Salvation

All men and women have found themselves in a state of alienation from self, from others, and from God. Salvation consists in being delivered from alienation to integration, human community, and divine love and life. Christians declare that Jesus of Nazareth has brought salvation through his life, death and resurrection. Jesus' salvific life is found in his church.

The preconciliar understanding of salvation was that members of the Catholic church had available to them all the means of salvation. Membership in the visible church was the ordinary way to be saved. The duty and responsibility of the church were to preach her message of salvation to all peoples so that they could be converted and saved. If followers of a world religion remained in their religion, they could be saved if they practiced their religion sincerely and honestly. However, their salvation did require the extraordinary intervention of God in their lives.

At Vatican II the church moved away from this ecclesiocentric view and acknowledged the salvific value of the world religions. It declared that God and his Spirit have been working through these religions and not in spite of them. The world religions were legitimate and had a proper place in God's salvific plan (1 Tim 2: 4-6).

The conciliar view of salvation maintained that the world religions were the normal and ordinary way of salvation and that Christians, being so overwhelmingly outnumbered during the four million years humans had been on earth, had been given the extraordinary grace of knowing Christ. Christians should be a sign that all peoples are saved in Christ.

The postconciliar understanding of salvation for those not Christian is much more radical than the conciliar view. For one thing, there was a certain uneasiness and even dissatisfaction with the theology of the "anonymous Christian". When Christian theologians and missionaries started using this term in their dialogue with the other religions, the Jews and Muslims found it offensive and the Hindus and Buddhists found it incomprehensible. It would be like whites in the U.S. trying to express their esteem for Martin Luther King, Jr. by saying that he was anonymously a white man (or for men to say that women are virtually as good as men). Furthermore, it seems that to read Christian ideas into the world religions does not do justice to the distinctiveness of these faiths. What we encounter in each religion is a different faith and, therefore, different patterns of behavior; different standards and ideals of ultimacy, happines, and salvation; and different claims to present the truth about God, the universe, and the nature of our humanness.

The act of faith is the basic foundation of each religion. Each religion has its own identity and autonomy because of the specific epistemological nature of faith, i.e, because of the "absolute" certitude that faith confers upon the believer concerning the content of his faith. When the Muslim, for example, makes an act of faith, he stands in a relationship to Allah, to the Asolute, which is in no way less immediate than that of the Christian to the Trinity.

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The postconciliar theology of salvation states that the gospel of Jesus Christ is only one way of salvation. The preconciliar understanding of salvation was ecclesiocentric: salvation in the Catholic church alone. The conciliar understanding was christocentric: salvation in Christ alone. The postconciliar understanding is theocentric: salvation in God who works in the heart and history of each person.

Theology has taken this theocentric position for two reasons: the church is relative to the kingdom of God, and the work of Jesus and his Spirit is relative to the work of the Father. In other words, our theology of salvation has shifted its focal point from the specifically Roman Catholic to the total Christian community — and, now, to the entire human family. The reason for this shift is the rediscovery of a basic fact about Christ: He calls all people to be totally open to their humanity so as to receive the grace of his Father. Christ says all people are of infinite worth to the Father.

Some question this theology of religious pluralism, fearing that it is really indifferentism and a denial of the primacy of Christ. This is not so. Christians still evangelize knowing that every religion affects the quality of a person's personal and communal life. Those in other religions need to hear how Christian life is distinctive from their religion.

How is Christianity different from other religions? Christianity does not add new truths to people's knowledge of God, but it does create a transformation of consciousness whereby a person acquires a new awareness of all history, self, others, the world and God. All history is lived from its eschatological dimension. Christians believe that their daily lives are filled with the glory of the risen Christ and his Spirit. Jesus Christ has transformed reality. He has brought about a new creation. The risen Christ is present transforming all space and time so that life, death, suffering, love, work, food, sexuality, etc., are understood and lived in the light of his resurrection. Christian life conists in sharing Christ's transforming love. Christian life consists in living with and for Christ as one lives with and for others.

So, while this theology of religious pluralism clearly rejects indifferentism, it does state that it is not necessary for others to join the Catholic church to be saved. A theology of religious pluralism argues that God's mission to transform people and make them whole can be carried forward through any and all faiths — although it is far from complete in any one of them.

The conclusion from a theology of religious pluralism is that the aim of the missionary's message is to free the adherents of other religions for a saving contact with the best of their own religious traditions. The missionary helps these people solve their own problems, humbly, genuinely, openly, with respect for their traditions and a willingness to learn about God from them.

2. The mediatorship of Christ

The church teaches that Jesus is the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of what it means to be human. The function and mission of the church follow from the function and mission of Jesus.

In the preconciliar church, the missionary taught that Jesus founded the one true Catholic church and this is where he is present, mediating the Father and sending his Spirit. There was a radical discontinuity between Christianity and the world religions. Jesus was the world's exclusive savior (Acts 4:12).

At Vatican II there was a refocusing of the scriptures. As a result of this refocusing, it was seen that Jesus is the fulfilment of the world religions. The authentic seeds of the gospel are contained within them. Christianity is not discontinuous from the world religions, but the leaven which is interior to all of them. The relation of the church to the other religions of the world is not one of competition, or an effort at substitution. It is one of sublimation. The mission of the church is to take what is holy and true in the world religions and show its fulfilment in Christ. He is constitutive of these religions.

In postconciliar theology the universal mediatorship of Christ is still maintained, while respecting the pluralism of religions. This is no simple task since a theology of religious pluralism accepts a diversity of mediators and avatars whose relationship to Christ is more equal than had been thought possible before in the history of Christianity. Postconciliar theology retains Christ's universal mediatorship by pointing to the fact that the crucial decision regarding the divine is made by people in their relationship to the human community. The Gospels say that in people's relationship to the human community they are open to the Spirit, are addressed by the Spirit, and can commit themselves to it. When the missionary teaches people to love all peoples, especially enemies, he is actually evangelizing them.

In our postconciliar theology, Jesus is the normative mediator. This term is not without its difficulties. It can seem to be no more than another version of the "exclusive mediiator" of the preconciliar theology. The best explanation I have seen is that of James Redington: Jesus is the one who illumines for the missionary as he encounters the other religions "other ways in which God has saved and is saving people". In other words, Jesus is the touchstone by which other religious experiences will be examined and related.

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A THEOLOGY OF MISSION FOR THE LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL CHURCH (3)

3. Conversion

Conversion consist in changing from one way of living to another.

In preconciliar missionary theology, overt conversion from a world religion to Christianity was the goal. Missionaries went forth in the name of Christ and his church to baptize every individual in the Spirit and to make every nation Christian.

At Vatican II the Catholic church adopted a policy of "mergerism". Since the world religions prepared the way for Christianity and since thay possessed elements that could be fulfilled in Christ, the dream was for a gradual convergence of all religions into one.

This theology was hardly acceptable, especially to those not Christian, because it meant a union by absorption. In postconciliar theology, there is greater respect for the autonomy of each religion. In view of the tenacious persistence and steady growth in numbers of the world religions, there is an increasing tendency to accept religious pluralism as part of the divine dispensation. The primary conversation that the missionary tries to effect is that each believer should be converted within the framework of the religion he/she already professes. The initial task of the missionary is to help the believer live his/her religions more integrally and honestly.

4. True and false religion

Religion pertains to the relationship of God with humans. Every religion declares that God has revealed himself through its sacred persons, signs and symbols. Every religious group thinks that it has received the true way. Each religious group often has little use for the other religions.

In preconciliar theology the Catholic church professed to be the home of the one, true religion. It could point to "the marks of the church" as the signs of its veracity. The other religions were considered to be natural, imperfect, and ultimately, erroneous. The missionary attempted to prove the superiority of Christianity over the other religions.

In conciliar theology, as the church moved from an ecclesiocentric to a christocentric position, it acknowledged some truth in the other religions. This truth had its source in Christ who is the fulfilment of these religions. The missionary attempted to explain the developments required for each world religion as it evolved towards the Christian ideal.

In postconciliar theology the concept of true/false religion is approached not from a study of the quality of ecclesiastical doctrines, but from the conviction that true religion humanizes and reconciles persons whereas false religion dehumanizes and fragments the human community. This is a theocentric approach to religion. It begins with the fact that God incarnates himself in every human person, above every religious barrier.

Jesus taught a theocentric religion. He said that a person does not relate himself/herself to God in worship (a religious practice) and then, as a second step, seek the right relationship to his brother/sister (Matt 5:23-24). What is revealed in Jesus is that in people's relationship to the human community, people are related to the Father. The Father is love and anyone who does not love his brother/sister does not know God (Matt 25: 31-46). The ultimate test in the struggle between true and false religion, then is the reconciliation of persons in community. Anything in the church that hinders human community is false religion.

This understanding of true and false religion does not demand that the members of the world religions become Christian. When the missionary helps peoples overcome whatever fosters egotism, hatred, and injustice, he/she is evangelizing.

Summary

The postconciliar missiology summarized in this paper is different from two other understandings of missionary activity and purpose. On the one hand, a liberal but secular approach maintains that there should be no Christian missionary activity because this is an age of religious pluralism. Jesus is *not* the way. On the other hand, very zealous evangelicals insist that there is to be missionary activity directed towards conversion to Christianity, because not only is Jesus *the* way, but also all the other religions are not legitimate for salvation. The liberal position rejects the universal mediatorship of Christ; the evangelical position rejects the salvific character of the world religions.

The missiology outlined here states that, from one point of view, Christian evangelization has three dimensions: human, religious, and Catholic Christian. The Catholic church evangelizes both Christians and others on any (or levels, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the people.

The Catholic church evangelizes on the human level by teaching Christ's call to all people to accept their humanity and to accept all persons as their brothers/sisters. "The church promotes the human by evangelizing, and the church evangelizes by promoting the human".

The Catholic church evangelizes on the religious

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level by teaching that any religion is true to the extent that it contributes to humanization, liberation and reconciliation (James 1; 27), and any religion is false to the extent that it contributes to superstition, injustice and exploitation.

The Catholic church evangelizes on the Catholic Christian level by teaching that people can know Jesus Christ through a living tradition that is guarded by a community of disciples, and people can respond to Christ through this community of disciples.

Conclusion

Christian Brothers are always missionaries "personally called and communally sent", whether they are active or retired, and whether they educate in their native country or abroad. They have the opportunity to teach the gospel, especially to their students and colleagues, on three levels: human, religious and Catholic Christian.

On the human level, the Brothers have the opportunity to deepen the humanization of society through education. To teach languages, arts, science, history, philosophy and religion is to help students develop as human beings. It should be remembered that the humanization of persons is itself a dimension of salvation and not simply a tactical prelude to teaching the gospel. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Dec. 8, 1975), the document that was a follow-up to the 1974 synod on evangelization, Paul VI taught that whatever helped people become more human was already evangelization "although in its initial and incomplete stage". Furthermore, in view of the developments in political theology, the Brothers must at times take a countercultural stance. They will have to educate their students about those sinful structures of society and church that foster racism, sexism, oppression and violence.

On the religious level, the Brothers have the opportunity to witness by word and deed to Christ's call to universal brotherhood and sisterhood by their own community life and the kind of community they foster in their schools. People should experience us as communities of disciples genuinely open to the power and presence of the Spirit. True religion reconciles people; false religion divides people, creates injustices, and destroy community. The Brothers should teach the differences between true and false religion.

On the Catholic Christian level, the Brothers have the opportunity to teach about Christ as interpreted in the long and rich tradition of the Catholic church. When serving in a foreign country, the Brothers will have to discern Christ as he is present in that culture. If the Brothers teach Christ so that he is simply a replica of the Christ they discovered in their own culture, their teaching would be a positive countersign: it would signify that the Catholic church, far from being a world church, is essentially bound to the civilisation of the West. The heart of the Brothers' teachings about the risen Christ, then, should point to Jesus as brothers, friend, teacher, example and liberator. Jesus is the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of what it means to be human.

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12-E-31

"YEAR OF CALLING"

On 20 April, 1986 the Old Collegians' Association of De La Salle College, Malvern, Victoria, Australia held its Annual Reunion Mass and Dinner, a highlight of its constant and varied activities. This particular occasion was of special significance, for it marked the 40th Anniversary of the reformation of the Association which took place in 1946 at the end of the Second World War. (The Association, which was first constituted in 1929 seventeen years after the De La Salle Brothers began at Malvern, had been in recess during the War Years).

The 1986 Reunion was also the occasion for the launching of the "Year of Calling" programme, aimed at increasing awareness of the need for Vocations to the Priesthood and the Religious Life, and also seeking prayerful consideration of the ideal calling in life for each and everyone, especially those students of the Brothers who are presently completing their schooling.

Some twelve months ago, one of the older members of the Malvern Association made an offer of a substantial donation for the purpose of preparing and distributing a special card with appropriate prayers for vocations which could be made available to students of the College and to members of the Association. In due course, after discussion at the Committee level, it was decided to accept the offer and to augment the donation with additional funds so that the widest distribution would become possible. At that time the National Federation Secretariat, which had previously distributed book-mark cards and memento cards for the Canonization of St. Miguel Febres de Cordero F.S.C., both bearing prayers for vocations, agreed to design the card and to utilise such capabilities as it has to contact all the Brothers, Houses in the Australian District for the purpose of requesting the Directors and communities to participate in whatever way they could. A decision was made to print 10,000 prayer cards to begin and to commence the distribution to those attending the Reunion and then to widen the circulation through the entire District.

A Brother Moderator on the Association Committee came forward with a theme which was adopted for the initiative - it reads

"All are called to a Vocation

All are called to a degree of Religiouus Vocation

All are certainly called to what is, for each, a good vocation".

Two prayers were selected. The first is "To know my vocation".

In the Divine Plan everyone has a special role in life and it is in the fulfilment of that role that the greatest happiness will be achieved, both spirituality and materially. It is essential to know how each and every one should fit into the role for which each is best suited and in the prosecution of which one's God given talents can be utilised. This is something to pray for and about, so that in all our actions we might be guided by Providence. The second prayer is "For special Vocations". These are Vocations to the Religious LIfe, so this prayer asks God to call many of our youth to become good priests, Brothers or Sisters in the "vineyard of the Church" and as an extension of that request seeks the graces necessary for those who are so called to accept the challenge, in order that the work of the Church may go on.

In the case of our own Institute, the figures prepared for the 41st General Chapter, recently concluded in Rome, indicate some vital facts. The steady decline in the number of our Brothers is a matter for real concern. A comparison of figures taken from the early 1970s with those for the early 1980s indicate that we now have almost 4000 less Brothers and further there are currently 100 less novices than was the case fifteen years ago.

The average age of our Brothers throughout the world at 31 March, 1986 was 57 years and 7 months. 190 Brothers died during the course of 1985 and 139 having either perpetual

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or temporary vows left the Institute during that year. With greater calls than ever being placed on the available personnel, this situation must be reversed if the Institute is to survive. This is grim reality. If Vocations to the Institute do not increase dramatically, how long can the work of the Holy Founder continue? "The harvest is great, but the labourers are few".

What applies to the world scene, certainly applies to Australia, where Priests, Brothers and Sisters are far fewer than needed and considerably less than 30 years ago, whereas the population is increasing and the pressure of educational advancement is placing more and more stress on the Catholic Church and the education system which it has fought to preserve and maintain. Since their arrival in Australia in 1906, the De La Salle Brothers have been leaders in the field of Catholic Education, despite the fact that their numbers have been historically less than many other religious congregations having education as their principal work.

The "Year of Calling" programme provides an opportunity for our students and alumni along with our associates and friends to join in prayer to the end that our greatest need, that of increased vocations, will be fulfilled.

Other Districts, all of whom are experiencing the same difficulties to a greater or lesser degree, may decide to follow this initiative and embark on a similar programme, for "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of".

It can be anticipated that many individuals and groups with the advancement of the Institute and its works at heart will come forward with offers of assistance for such a programme which aims at involving as many people as possible in the simple effort of regular *PRAYER FOR OUR NEEDS.*

Continued prayer moves God and touches men- St. John Baptist De La Salle.

Hilary J. HAYES
Director and Secretary,
National Federation De La Salle Alumni
(Australian District).
"Long Swamp" OSBORNE'S FLAT 3691 Vic.
20 July, 1986. (Australia)

Prayer to know my vocation

Heavenly Father, You have created me to fulfill some particular work which nobody else but me can do. Enlighten me, O Lord, to know my vocation in life, then give me the courage and strength to follow that enlightenment. Whatever you want me to be and do, I, like the prophet, Isaiah will say, "Here I am, Lord, send me".

Prayer for special vocations

O Heavenly Father, Your Son Jesus Christ said; "The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Pray therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers to do his harvesting". Therefore, we beg You to invite many of our youth to become good Priests, Brothers, Sisters, and lay apostles in the harvest of the Church.

Amen.

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12-0-20

BROTHER ARNOLD: TEACHER, CATECHIST, EDUCATOR

A Teacher "of great knowledge and total dedication".

Such were the qualities attributed to Brother Arnold by one of his former students. However, when, at the end of his novitiate, when he was sent by Brother Enthyme, Visitor of Champagne-Lorraine, to the boarding school in Rheims to handle classes, more than one person was surprised. What was this ungainly 24 year old farmer who had not set foot in a school for the past 14 years going to do in such a flourishing educational institution? I have previously spoken of his success in the examinations for the Elementary Certificate and of the Superior Certificate and that he aroused the admiration of his students and of his fellow Brothers with his "great knowledge". "We often asked ourselves", wrote one of his colleagues in Rheims, "but from where, then, has he been able to collect so much material for his lessons which made them so interesting and so captivating even to the most rebellious temperaments? Sciences, mathematics, languages, his avid intelligence and his quick assimilation provided him with a treasury of knowledge which made of him a living encyclopedia".

Intelligence, memory, yes. Strenuous work also and a pedagogical sense, no doubt! All this put at the service of whoever had recourse to him. The Brother ever available! In his 14 years at Saint Joseph, he had taught children and then youths French and German, geometry and algebra, physics, chemistry, botany, anatomy, and agriculture. He prepared students for the entrance examinations for the School of Arts and Trades at Châlons-sur-Marne and they were accepted. He prepared "Volunteers" for the examination which reduced military service from five years to one year and they also were successful. He took upon himself to teach the agricultural course whose founder, as Brother Arnold wrote, acquired a "colossal reputation". Yet, Arnold maintained the same excellent level of instruction.

An incomparable catechist

A teacher of rare quality, Brother Arnold, ever faithful to his Founder, knew that he should afford the same care in teaching the Christian faith as to teaching secular subjects. Today, his students in the boarding school come from "Practising Catholic" families. Tomorrow, in the Noviciate, he will be concerned with youths wishing to consecrate their life to the Lord. He will not disappoint either of the two groups. Both of these, when asked for their recollections of him, will join together in the same praises: "His catechism lessons were taught in such a simple and convincing manner as to edify the pupils", is how one of them sums it up.

Nourished by Holy Scripture and by the liturgy, Brother Arnold has recourse to the most serious theologians. He puts at the threshold of his students the doctrine which he has assimilated in his study, reflection and prayer. His method is inspired by two centuries of his Institute's traditions. It is these which surface in the plans of his conferences to the Novices on the teaching of catechism. To initiate them to that "ministry", Brother Arnold simply tells them what he himself has done.

His well-balanced charts are, however, only weak echoes of teaching which ought to be, he writes, "instructive, interesting and practical". His teaching was perfectly in accord with the Gospel, which was always open to a good passage for it had been meditated upon and lived by an apostle who possessed the gift which Paul desired for the Christians of Rome and De La Salle desired for the Brothers of the Christian Schools, "One who is a teacher should use his gift for teaching; one with the power of exhortation should exhort." (Rm. 12, 7-8; MTR. 193, 11).

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Concerning a little treatise on know-how

An excellent teacher and catechist, Brother Arnold is also an educator who is concerned about leading the young people who are confided to him today towards the adult life which they will live tomorrow. Also in this, he is at one with the Founder of his Institute for whom the school should be an instrument for total development. The conscientiousness with which Brother Arnold taught the human sciences and religious sciences are a testimony of this.

Another witness to this is the 152 pages covered with a fine script which constitutes a little treatise of know-how. Neither greater or less original than the 140 pages of his agricultural course, the former owes much to "The Rules of Politeness and Christian Civility", written previously by Saint De La Salle. The disciple is set apart from his master by a less biblical inspiration and by quoting authors who had been ignored by his predecessor. The objectives pursued were the same. The young students of today will be tomorrow's merchants, industrialists, and vine-growers. The former farmhand whom life had taught very much, puts them on guard against whatever might render them offensive. He teaches all that would make of them men of esteem, and since they are Christians, witnesses of humility and of evangelical charity, two essential components of an authentic politeness which they should consider, as St. De La Salle had written 160 years earlier, "as a virtue with regard to God, neighbour and one's self".

Have I said enough about it to give you patient LASALLIANA readers a desire to read between pages 112 and 159 of my book the testimonies presented by his confreres and his students about this skilled teacher and excellent catechist, of this remarkable educator who was in Rheims from 1863 to 1877, Brother Arnold? And will you be astonished when you learn from the next article that the Superiors confided to him at 39 years of age the direction of the Novitiate at Champagne-Lorraine, and then from 1879 the animation of the spiritual retreats organized in this same district for the Brothers about to make their perpetual profession?

Brother Charles LAPIERRE

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12-O-21

BROTHER ARNOLD DIRECTOR OF NOVICES AND ANIMATOR OF SPIRITUAL RETREATS

"An Institute in a storm"

In 1880 during a conference to retreatants Brother Arnold asks:

> "Who gives us saints? Not simply those holy men who are good hearted and pleasant to deal with, but true saints, united to God, dead to themselves and who are the great resource of the Institute during the storm».

A violent storm was indeed stirring up the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the entire Church at the same time in the native land of St. John Baptist De La Salle for the past several years. And the waves, far from calming down, washed away all the prospering apostolates to the point of expulsion in 1904 until it arrived at the separation of Church and State in 1905. What would become of these men battered about by the turbulence, especially the youngest among them?

Brother Arnold, who had been named Director of Novices in 1877, two years later added to his duties those of animator of the spiritual retreats held during the summer school vacation. To these retreats came not only aspirants to perpetual profession to invigorate their soul, but also already professed Brothers in need of spiritual revitalization. Both novices and retreatants were all in the same boat and were asking the same question: "What does tomorrow hold for us?" To this anxiety, Brother Arnold had only one reply: "Be saints and you will have both the light and the strength to make the necessary decisions". This answer was understood by the majority. Some left France to go "on the Missions". Others stayed where they were; changing the robe for a business suit, at great personal sacrifice, they maintained the works, which without their dynamism would have disappeared in the storm. Some others, of course — could they have done otherwise? — returned to their family.

"A Guide as sure and energetic as he was discreet"

Nevertheless, at Thillois from 1877 to 1885, and for the next five years at Courlancy, the captain of the crew did not panic nor did his passengers. The firmness of his faith shone through a spiritual direction which steered towards the essential. All those who sought his advice, his former pupils, novices and retreatants, the Brothers who helped him in the novitiate of the Jesuit Fathers who preached the retreats, all recognized in him "a guide as sure and energetic as he was discreet».

His reputation was such that the Brothers in charge of religious formation had recourse to his direction or at least to his occasional advice, and priests consulted him on cases of conscience or they would simply come to spend some days or hours in contact with the strength and serenity of his interior life.

His theological knowledge and his spiritual experience aided by a pedagogical sense to which I have already referred at length, worked marvels in an otherwise delicate area, it is true, as the teaching of mathematics and the natural sciences! Young novices and the more experienced professed Brothers could tell all their problems to this elder brother who was so humble and so clear that he seemed to understand the maladies of the soul as well as those of the body and could treat them with tender and firm charity.

One recognized in him such concern for wanting to direct all towards the one Master that one felt confident in making whatever effort he exacted. If someone gave up on trying to reach the proposed height, still he remained no less attached to this guide whom he lacked the courage to follow. It also happened that a person following his directions, changed the pathway yet all the while aiming for the

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same summit: thus some of his generous novices became diocesan priests in France or in America.

"A perfect copy of the Holy Founder"

In 1888, John Baptist De La Salle is proclaimed "Blessed"! Brother Arnold had not waited until the Founder of his Institute was officially proposed by the Church as an example and object of veneration of the faithful to pray to him and to make him his model. Now the time had come to offer him as a model to his disciples. He had not waited until he was named Novice Director and retreat animator to study the life and writings of De La Salle, or to permeate himself with the Founder's spirit and to live according to it. It was simply that this wonderful news revealed openly what his approach led one to surmise.

Henceforth, he felt himself obliged — and with what filial joy! — to share with his disciples what he called "our homemade bread», which he had saved up until this time and which he now presented to them for them to savor. How interesting it is to find in those conferences and letters of direction written by his pen what he knew and thought about such a biographical trait or of such or such a writing of the Founder!

In particular, his practice of the Method of Mental Prayer impressed the young people whom he initiated into prayer. They felt — in a strong sense of the term — how much he understood prayer intellectually, no doubt, but how much more because he lived it.

What can we say about the humility, poverty, obedience and devotedness of our Brother Arnold if not that these virtues which he had practiced in his youth took on a Lasallian hue from the day on which he discovered De La Salle? Perhaps this imitation seems to us to be too realistic after the same manner of certain French painters, his contemporaries. Would it be fair not to take into account the spiritual atmosphere of the 19th century to which Brother Arnold himself belonged?

In this regard, looking more closely, how could we not ascertain that the Lasallian dynamism of Brother Arnold is the spirit of the Founder? In a few phrases — we could certainly quote others — Brother Arnold writes:

"*We cannot renounce certain positions, nor even practice certain acts of virtue which he practiced, either because of a lack of circumstances or because of a lack of moral perfection, but we can and should take upon ourselves his spirit. We are Brothers of the Christian Schools to the extent that our Blessed Founder's spirit is in us*".

Brother Charles LAPIERRE

P.S. The book of Brother Charles Lapierre: Si le grain de blé...» — Frère Arnould (1838-1890) published by Desclée de Brouwer, can be purchased in bookstores, especially Catholic bookstores. You can also order the book directly from:

Oeuvre du Frère Arnould
71, Rue Claude Bernard
57070 METZ-BORNY (France)

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12-O-22

BROTHER ARNOLD "IN THE SHADOW OF THE SPIRIT"

"By the movement of the Spirit of God"

If there is one recommendation of Saint De La Salle which our protagonist followed to the letter, it was that of Chapter two of the Rule of 1705 inviting all the Brothers of the Christian Schools to do all their actions "by the guidance of God, *by the movement of his Spirit* and with the intention of pleasing Him".

It can be said of Brother Arnold what is sung in a recent liturgical hymn about the Blessed Virgin Mary, that is, that he lived "in the shadow of the Spirit". Do we not hear him express the meaning of this verse when he writes:

> It is the Spirit of God who brought about in Mary the divine work of the Incarnation by the creation of the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ.
>
> It is again He who returns to accomplish in us the precious fruit of the holy life brought by Jesus Christ to the world".

For Brother Arnold, the third Person of the Holy Trinity was not, as He had been for so long in our Church and as He was called in 1921 by one of our well known confreres, "the Divine Unknown".

It is interesting to discover the progression with which his story unfolds, how from Landroff to Courlancy the Spirit of God, received in baptism, made his imprint increasingly more demanding and at the same time more tender on this generous soul.

The frightful austerities with which the servant of God wove his nights and days were not blind masochism but the "wisdom of God" such as that defined by Saint Paul (1 Co. 1, 22, 23)). Penetrated with the so-called theology "of compensation" so much valued in the nineteenth century, Brother Arnold, as he exhorted his disciples, offers

> "with steadfastness to the Heart of Jesus the sorrowful compensation exacted by sin".

"An enlightened charity"

However, this "Lasallian ascetic", as he is called, has too much common sense and evangelical sense not to place fraternal charity above mortification. Sketching the portrait of a mortified man, he speaks about an "enlightened charity" as a lamp before one's steps or of a proof of truth.

His confreres, students, later his brothers and sisters, his companions in schools and those who worked with him are all unanimous in underlining the place held in the life of Jules Reche by the "fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, benevolence, mildness, and self-mastery" (Ga 5, 22, 23). And these manifestations of an "enlightened charity" help them acknowledge the other panel of the diptych: "Those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires". (id. 5, 24). They recognize the bonds which unite "Austerus" and "Agape" in the same man whom they admire: "If we live in the Spirit let us also walk under the impulse of the Spirit", concludes St. Paul in the same letter (5, 25).

Living by the Spirit, Brother Arnold seemed to all who shared his existence or those who met him occasionally, as a charming man, pleasant and full of good humor, delicate in accepting others, and attentive to all, especially to the timid and those most deprived.

His relations with his family were such that he wrote to them often, paid them visits, and shared their joys and sorrows. He suffered deeply over the partitioning of Lorraine in 1872 which made the village where he was born German territory.

Going back to his students and confreres of the Rue de Venise, and to the novices and retreatants of Thillois and Courlancy, they all pay homage to his "indefatigable devotedness". It was a devotedness which really overlooked nothing, especially to the sick to whom he consecrated himself, even during the night if needed, so that his Brothers would not be fatigued or be irritated because of missing their sleep.

Still, what struck his students the most was the patience of this educator. He had patience to the point that his students believed that he had absorbed this difficult virtue "with his mother's milk," as the pious hagiographers were wont to say. Nothing is further from the truth! Many attest that this seemingly jovial fellow was quite violent by nature. Then suddenly, it seems, he becomes mild with his very tender infancy from "the Holy

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Spirit who was been given to us". Brother Arnold received from Him the request of the liturgy of Pentecost: "Come, Holy Spirit... make supple what is rigid, warm what in us in frozen...".

"... seeking together with Him to whom we pray"

> "We can be sure that it is never alone that we pray so well. Someone is living within us... It is He who creates the words within our heart ... He makes us ourselves say the psalms, the hymns, and spiritual canticles... It is the Spirit within whom we pray all the time, through every prayer and supplication...".

It is with regret that I cut this quotation short for it is a beautiful text written by Brother Arnold. It is a text with a Pauline resonance which brings us to the keystone of his spiritual life: the HOLY SPIRIT. He revealed to him Jesus given by Mary; He guided him to the wisdom of following the Crucified; He taught him the unique love of God and men. It is again with the Holy Spirit that our protagonist rejoins his Savior in prayer.

We do not in the least doubt that the Spirit was already guiding him as a child, as an adolescent in Landroff, as a young worker in Charlesville. "Led into the desert" of the religious life by the same Spirit, Jules Reche in a favorable climate brought to fruition this gift long known by his family and comrades, and later by his students, his confreres, and his novices. All of them equally speak of the long hours consecrated to prayer by the young pupil, the farmhand, the wagon driver, and the religious apostle.

At what source did he supply this insatiable thirst for praying? The same source that Catholics for the past fifty years have found to their taste: the Bible and the Liturgy. We do not hesitate to say that in this domain, Brother Arnold was a precursor and merits our attentive recognition.

His knowledge of the Bible and in particular the New Testament was that of one possessing a prodigious intelligence and memory; furthermore, he had a heart which beat to the rhythm of the word of God, not morally meditated upon, but contemplated, lived in the slightest detail of an existence totally dedicated to His service. He held a preference for the psalms which expressed his praise, his contrition, his supplications.

A compatriot and contemporary of Dom Gueranger, restorer of the Roman liturgy, Brother Arnold exhorts his novices to "pray with the Church", as we would say today":

> "I beseech you, he writes to one of them", use the prayers of the Church; they are so beautiful and so well adapted to the needs of our soul, for it is the Holy Spirit Himself who teaches us the way to pray with His Church".

We are thus led to the Holy Spirit! Cardinal Marty perceived this primordial action in the existence of Brother Arnold. He explains it at the conclusion of the preface which he so kindly agreed to write for my book;

> "The Holy Spirit ever breathes among the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Pentecost happened yesterday in Judea; Pentecost is presence and action of the Holy Spirit at every stage in the life of the Church. The testimony of Brother Arnold is a luminous arrow on the spiritual and apostolic highway for all Christians".
>
> No further comment...

Brother Charles LAPIERRE

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N° 13

1 October 1987

Dear Lasalliana Readers,

This Issue Number 13 will also be the last one to appear. The number of subscriptions should be sufficient to cover the cost of printing the LASALLIANA.

This had been the case during the first year of its appearance. Subsequently, the fluctuation in the dollar's rate of exchange, the progressive diminution in the number of subscriptions, the normal increase in production costs have made it impossible to cover expenses, despite two successive increases in the annual subscription price.

After studying this situation and taking into consideration the prospects for the year 1987-88, the General Council decided last June to stop further publication with Issue Number 13.

During the course of the last four years, the LASALLIANA has tried to make the diversity and richness of Lasallian activities and initiatives throughout the world better known. At the same time, it has presented some aspects of the life and thoughts of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. It was thus a place of mutual convergence and knowledge, an instrument of exchange and a contributing factor of interdependence and communion for us all. Thanks to the LASALLIANA, quite a number of Brothers and lay people were able to express their views, at the Institute level, thus contributing to illustrate what we call "together and by association".

This final presentation is for me, therefore, the occasion for warmly congratulating and thanking all those who have contributed to the existence and to the interest in this review:

* the authors of articles for their availability and contributions;

* the faithful subscribers who showed their interest and confidence;

* those who read and made use of the articles;

* those in Rome who handled the correspondence with the authors, kept track of the subscriptions, translated the texts, did the proof reading, posted the issues, etc..

For the style and form of the LASALLIANA was truly a shared and fraternal endeavour.

A sincere word of gratitude to each and everyone.

Bro. Léon LAURAIRE

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13-A-55

AN UNFORGETTABLE CENTENARY: the beatification of Venerable John Baptist de La Salle, February 19, 1888

1. A long wait.

John Baptist de La Salle died on Good Friday, April 7, 1719 and was buried the next day in the church of Saint-Sever in Rouen. It was Holy Saturday and consequently the funeral ceremonies were without solemnity. But still, those who knew him did not hesitate to venerate him as a saint. The first transfer of his mortal remains, which took place a few years later, attracted a large crowd as the clergy and faithful of Rouen hastened to render him the homage of their veneration and gratitude.

We can very justifiably be astonished to see the Church wait nearly two centuries before authorizing his cult by proclaiming him Blessed. Without doubt, between 1700 and 1900 beatifications and canonizations were rather rare. Those who were proclaimed as Saints or Blessed waited a long time for their glorification. They waited as long as De La Salle and some even longer than he.

In the *Bulletin* of October, 1950, Brother Felix Paul († 1952) took up this subject with a bit of humor in his "a Palm of Paradise", where he placed, according to the duration of their wait for glorifiication, the servants of God canonized or beatified over the past three centuries. Beginning with Sister Therese of the Infant Jesus to the Founders of the Servites, the waiting period stretches from 28 to 488 years. All this locates John Baptist de La Salle in a rather good place, being exactly 23rd out of a total of 42.

2. A baseless suspicion

Still in Rome and elsewhere, some have thought that this long delay was to be attributed to a certain negligence on the part of the Brothers who were not solicitous enough about promoting the introduction of the process of beatification of the Founder. Brother Felix Paul, already referred to, rectifies this assertion. From the very year of the Founder's death, Brother Barthelemy, Superior General, set about gathering testimonies from the clergy and faithful who knew the deceased. Two years later, the first biography appeared. It was the work of Brother Bernard, who submitted it to the De La Salle family. Brother Bernard did not hesitate to speak of the "sanctity" of his hero, but in so doing, he was careful to in no way preempt the judgment of the Church to which alone belongs the task of recognizing and proclaiming the sanctity of an individual in two forms.

It seems that it was foreseen that Brother's manuscript would have a second edition. It would be the first part of a gathering of documentation in view of the beatification.

In the next few years, we see the Brothers of Saint Yon carefully publishing the greater part of the Founder's works which up to that time had been in manuscript form. They are very careful about keeping all the objects which belonged to him. They entrust Canon Blain with writing a new Life of De La Salle, and they urge him to complete this "life" with a fourth part designed specifically to extol the virtues of the Servant of God. The presentation of this fourth part leads one to consider it as the kind of *positio super virtutibus* which is required by the Roman Curia during the canonization process.

3. Initial Probing

As soon as the two large volumes of Blain are published, two parcels of the entire work make their way to Rome where the Brothers in charge see to it they reach the hands of several officers of the Pope and also of the King of France who eventually might be requested to intercede with the Congregation of Rites which is specifically charged with causes for beatification. On his part, Brother Timothy, Superior General, has attestations of several favours, particularly some cures and the multiplication of bread, attributed to the Founder's intercession, properly documented.

It would not be superfluous to recall here the interpretation of certain texts regarding the beatification process. Since Urban VIII (1623-1644) canon law forbade the recognition of the heroicity of a Servant of God until at least 50 years after his death. Consequently, some considered it obligatory to delay until the expiration of this period any presentation to the Curia. John Baptist de La Salle had died in 1719, therefore the earliest that any presentation could be initiated would be in 1769. Was this interpretation given to the law by Brother Timothy and the Brothers of the first generations? That is not unlikely. Later, however,during the generalship of Brother Florence (1767-1777), we still do not see the Brothers initiating the introductory process which they judged should be deferred.

Others have interpreted this regulation about the delay of fifty years, as pertaining not to a required delay before the introduction of the cause but rather for the conclusion of the Roman process regarding the Servant of God's reputation of sanctity and virtue. Following this opinion, one could introduce the cause prior to a half-century's delay. Meanwhile, the Brothers of the eighteenth century, personally and on behalf of the Institute, missed no opportunity of presenting to the goodwill of the Roman Pontiffs pertinent texts but without any mention of a request for the intro-

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duction of the cause for the beatification of the Founder.

Of course, soon would come the troubled times at the end of this century, then the upheavals of the great revolution! The Institute would survive all of this, thanks to the benevolence of the Popes, but neither they nor the Brothers could even dream about bringing up the introduction of the long process of a cause of beatification.

4. The long procedure

This matter was not taken up until the generalship of Brother Anaclet (1830-1838). What was particularly decisive here was the trip to Rome of Brother Abdon, the third Assistant. Contacts were established with the officers of the Curia. Then precise directives were sent to Paris. These led the Superior General to seek the initiation of the first process in the four dioceses where the Servant of God had lived for a long time, namely, Rheims, Paris, Rouen, and Marseille. If the fourth of these processes was soon abandoned, the other three continued on until 1838, with the hearing of the long testimonies of witnesses concerning the veracity of what they had read or had heard about the virtuous life of John Baptist de La Salle.

As a conclusion to all of this, on May 8, 1840, Pope Gregory XVI signed the decree of introduction to the court of Rome for the cause of beatification for one who from then on would be referred to as Venerable John Baptist De La Salle. Then, according to the requirements of Rome during this time, the bishops concerned drew up documentation which would seek to satisfactorily answer any objections which might be raised. It was during these years of investigation and study that the General Secretariat of the Institute had to produce some very detailed work, which was quite difficult to do during that period. The great revolution had either destroyed or dispersed too many documents, and while the items in the archives were being reorganized little by little, the Brothers were far from possessing the keys which were so indispensable to the investigation and research. So, we are not overly surprised then that it took some thirty years, years so replete with wars and revolutions, for the ecclesiastical judges to obtain the proofs of John Baptist de La Salle's sanctity. In 1873, Rome was in a position to affirm that the Venerable De La Salle had practiced the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance to a heroic degree.

5. The sanction of miracles

The Church had made its pronouncement, but awaited from God the confirmation of its judgment by the performance of several miracles attributable to the intercession of the Servant of God. In the case of John Baptist de La Salle, no eye witness to the holiness of his life being available, the rules of procedure required the presentation of four recognized miracles. Pope Leo XIII decided, however, that it would suffice to present only three. The three which were accepted were the instant and complete cure of Brother Adelminien, of the Christian Schools, of a progressive locomotor ataxy; of young Etienne de Suzanne, of a terminal capillary bronchitis; and of Marie-Madeleine-Victoire Ferry of an incurable chronic hydropericardiac, complicated by other very serious illnesses.

6. The solemnity of the beatification

The ceremony followed during that time was quite different from that which we are familiar with after Vatican II. The ceremony took place, not in the basilica itself, but rather in the so-called Beatification Hall on the upper floor above the door of the basilica. It was there that on February 19, 1888, a number of Brothers, including Brother Miguel Febres Cordero, were able to be present for the reading of the brief of beatification and then to join in the celebration of Holy Mass. The Mass celebrant was a Belgian prelate, Archbishop Felix-Marie de Neckere, who was chosen probably because of the functions which he fulfilled as secretary-econome of the maintenance of the church of Saint Peter in the Vatican.

7. The Festivities which followed

The awaiting of this first glorification of the Founder had lasted a long time. It was a waiting period accompanied by prayer and also by research and study. During the previous two centuries, within the Institute, the Brothers who could not yet publicly venerate John Baptist de La Salle, compensated for this by solemnizing the feast of his holy precursor and patron of his baptism on June 24.

The beatification opened the way for the future public and external cult and immediately triduums of thanksgiving were organized everywhere even before the celebration of the liturgical feast which was designated for May. In the houses of the Institute as well as in the parishes and dioceses, the priestly orators lauded the person and works of the Blessed De La Salle. The more remarkable of these eloquent homilies have been gathered into seven thick volumes in octavo. In song, on canvas, and in marble, artists memorialized and praised the Priest, Founder, Apostle of the lowly, Educator of little ones, and Formator of teachers. One hymn perhaps more than all others preserves for us even until today the memories of February 19, 1988. This is the hymn *Honneur a Toi,* "Honor to you, o Blessed De La Salle", where it is believed that the word "Blessed" was replaced by "Glorious" following the canonization of May 24, 1900.

Rome, 4 mai 1987.

Brother Maurice AUGUSTE

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13-A-56

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE (1)

What can a human being add to the Gospel? Nothing? St. Paul affirms: "In my own flesh, I make up for what is lacking in the sufferings of Jesus Christ" (Col. 1, 24). What could possibly be lacking there?

Perhaps, by this expression, Saint Paul is trying to divide the human act into two possible aspects: the first, a situational one which locates Jesus in the history and milieu of man and which through his resurrection creates that space of absolute and vital possibility. But this first aspect is occupied by the being of the God man. The second aspect is occupied by the existence of created man which unceasingly explores the area where human space exists and he contemplates it from his concrete historical situation. But man perceives this space as lacking something fundamental which he has not yet come to define. Man must try to join these two aspects. Of course, the human aspect produces secular fruit. When man explores it, he perceives the lack of unity and a kind of alienation from his natural destiny. Therefore, the human horizon becomes sterile if it does not make contact with the fruitful horizon of the God man.

Thus is explained the subsidiary redemptive action done by man and which is easily understood as an explicit intention throughout the entire course of the history of humanity. There is no epoch in history which does not consider this redemptive task as a vital and inevitable commitment for that time. Thus there are the geniuses, the heroes, and especially the saints who most explicitly wish to fulfill that part of redemption which they are called upon to do. That is what any person can add to the Gospel: "to do what he has to do".

When John Baptist de La Salle comes forth as a protagonist in the seventeenth century, to propose by his way of living, thinking, and acting, a new solution to the ever present human misery, he detected a need and to fill that need. In doing so, John Baptist de La Salle was doing what he had to do!

The reality was this: the needy child had no one to help him or to appreciate him. Who in the evangelical sense is his BROTHER? His parents cannot take care of him for they are poor artisans and laborers who must spend a good part of the day in seeking their daily food; little time remains for the spiritual welfare of their children. What can their blood brothers do for them? What can their peers do for them, let alone those of a different social class?

There is another reality and with which the coredemptive activity of St. La Salle is going to meet. The situation in France is no different from the life in Spain, Portugal, or on the Italian peninsula. Soon La Salle sets into motion an ecumenical movement interested in the underprivileged children of the world. For this the army of "white rabats" are repeatedly called to the four corners of the world. La Salle is the precursor and protagonist of a movement which if it has continued on until our own day, is because its substance is nourished on human necessity. This is what keeps the Lasallian world living in perpetual youth. To be otherwise would have spelled the death of an organism which could no longer operate. On its tomb would have arisen another response!

But how did La Salle give this group the strength they needed to survive up to our present day?

Among the various realities which present themselves as possibilities, we will take this one into account: La Salle saw as the strength of his group the possibility of a permanent *Brotherhood.* If there is *Brotherhood,* there is a redemptive historical strength. It is must be lived in a concrete environment and for La Salle this concrete environment is the *Community.* The *Community* is the place of *Brotherhood.*

Let us take this last sentence as a declaration of principle and let us treat it, in the Lasallian spirit, carefully probing what it says, without weakening anything, without opportunist, convenient or triumphal accommodations. It is really a question of a principle upon which we must begin. Today's man meets with today's Lasallian and wished to know before all else: "Who are you? and then, where do you come from? and what were you before? And thus we keep on going back until we come to the question: What were you originally? and then finally, How much of that past do you still hold on to today?

When you are beside a river, the question immediately arises: where does this river come from? Then there will follow a lesson of how things in our world our constituted, power going back to its source, always following its banks.

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Then a singular calm will be experienced: It begins here! Here starts all that follows, all along the way, ever increasing, until it arrives at the sea...!

This question as a principle can be posed in various ways.

We can do this by interpreting the meaning of the word *Community*. Not so much what it means to us, men living on the threshold of the twenty-first century. We have to find out what it meant for La Salle. From the strength of the *Community* the possible strength of *Fraternity* is derived. If our exploration brings us to the evident proof that *Community* is *Fraternity,* the conclusion of our brief exegesis is clear: *Fraternity* exists only to the extent that *Community* exists. This leads us to a significant Lasallian corollary: La Salle's intuition of *Community* travelled along the current of the river of time and of life, applicable in his time only as a concrete, religious *Community,* and now applied by extension to what is called an educative *Community*. It is a *Community* which comprises such diverse atmospheres as that of the father of a Lasallian family and his conjugal and family *Community,* and of the Lasallian student and his *Fraternal Community,* of the Lasallian teacher and his professional *Community,* and of the former Lasallian student and his social *Community,* and of the Lasallian employee and his working *Community...* This concept, narrow at its starting point, already reaches an ecumenical breadth, until it reaches a universal *Brotherhood*.

I do not believe that one can object that these premises do not lead to this conclusion. Or what is the same: La Salle never contemplated nor did he intuit what we now obtain as a projection of his teaching under such various aspects. How do we answer this?

Words have a life of their own. Their beginning is in a stammering existence which qualify equally stammering actions: we must recall that action precedes language. Born within a precise place and determined historical time, words have special connotations in their meaning and projection. Then comes their time of full maturity, but a maturity full of the action which gave them their origin and which was elvolving towards the development which tried to encompass more than it did at its inception. This is logical. What historical movement, whether idealogical, political, or religious... lives on as it was at its beginning? And their founders are considered as heroes who never thought to raise their primordial idea to what it is today.

We have failed to advance one most important idea: the *Community* is not made up only by men and women who have come together of their own free will. There is no community if the God Abraham, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not present.

Brother Jorge BONILLA

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THE BROTHERHOOD OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE (2)

Now we can explore what *Community* is for La Salle. La Salle does not give definitions. He seeks God in the happenings where he finds the manifestation of the Spirit according to which he allows himself to be led. His meditations are where he shows his particular way of thinking, allowing us to see two powerful points which illuminate and at the same time explain his thinking: his meditation on Holy Scripture and his experience in dealing with his *Brothers.* These two points make up the strength of his theology of *Community.* Two lines converging at the omega point: Christ in the person of the *Brother.*

The *Community* is the "place where God gathers together those whom He has chosen as His own (6.1).[1] La Salle affirms in the same text: "If we leave this sanctuary it must be only because God so wills it, because we are called upon to go and preserve the life of Christ in the hearts of those whom we have to instruct" (Ibid). In a religious *Community,* you are in a house where prayer should be your chief occupation. The spirit of God will dwell therein, and God will shower His blessings thereon, only in so far as it is a place of prayer. As soon as you lose the spirit of prayer, and a love for this holy exercise, God will cease to look favorably upon you, but will consider you rather as one unworthy of your employment, which is really His own work, and as one who is turning His house into a den of thieves (62.1). This spirit of prayer is manifested in the practice of two virtues: obedience and the union of hearts (charity) in view of "helping one another to be of God" (113.2; cfr. 65). La Salle asks with exquisite delicacy: "Are you at one with your *Brothers?* Do you speak to them and treat them with love? Do you not hold any ill feelings or grudges? (Id.). The Founder at this time holds up as a model the early *Community* which Luke tells of in the Acts of the Apostles (4,32). La Salle does not create a utopian illusion. He knows full well that perhaps there are those who joyfully commit themselves at first, something like newly-weds, but, how many remain faithful until they end? La Salle points out the reason for the desertion: one is that a person has failed to learn how to pray and another is the failure of being careful about the observance of the Rules. He says with a calm realism "As there are few in religious houses who acquit themselves perfectly of this double duty, there are many who have not the graces necessary to persevere and to preserve the spirit of their state, and who therefore belong merely to the body of the *Community,* and whom it is necessary to cut off as dead members, as being a source of corruption for the others" (72.1). Is this not the situation, unfortunately, in human groups: between husband and wife, family members, working groups, school *Communities?* If there is a lack of prayer and if there is infidelity to common norms, there is no fundamental fidelity. The richness of the group lies in persons. It is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who animates the human spirit. Each *Community* ought to be a gathering of those men and women animated by the Spirit of Jesus who make up the Church of Jesus Christ.

We have already given some of the elements which are the means which must be always present in a *Community* in order to further the *Brotherhood,* prayer, mutual love, and perseverance. Let us proceed a bit farther with a deepening of this idea. It is clear that this spirit in community requires a special type of "living member". La Salle makes an allusion to this in referring to obedience as the foundation of *Communities* and if it is lacking "they soon find themselves in ruin" (7.2). The practice of this virtue establishes "...order, union, peace, tranquility" (Id.) What happens in a human group when there is no hierarchy? Is horizontalism possible? It is obvious that new modes of authority-obedience have been appearing, but the binomial authority-obedience of whatever shade is a social fact which is not limited to the religious life. La Salle sees the absence of authority and a lack of obedience in a *Community* as "the abomination of desolation in the holy place" (15.3).

There is another way of posing the opening question. It would be a question of capturing from the thought of La Salle what would be the prototype of *Brother* which our religious congregation and our civil society need. We are within the same schema: we run down the road along the river, with rapid steps, very rapid ones, among which there are too many questions to be asked. Still, we profit also by the successes which we have achieved up to this time: 1) La Salle wrote for the Brothers of today; 2) La Salle's thoughts on *Brotherhood* are implicitly found in his writings on the *Community;* 3) the doctrine on *Brotherhood* transcends the religious *Community* of consecrated *Brothers* and embraces whatever type of human *Community* which is searching for the installation of the kingdom of God.

The force of a group is shown, the dynamic society tells us, in the interdependence of its members in view of a common destiny. If those bonds which unite the members with one another are strong, the group will be perceived as indestructible; difficulties are obstacles which are to be overcome, and never obstacles which are unbreakable barriers. Crises invigorate! If the *Community* of *Brothers* has its purpose clearly in view, if the bonds which unite the members are sufficiently strong, the *Brother's Community* will have the strength to continue on permanently.

One has to be a fighter in order to be considered a member of a Lasallian *Brotherhood.* The person as an individual is difficult and the human environment is not easily overcome. Misunderstandings spring up spontaneously; it is not difficult to recognize the fact that there is something in man which cannot be contai-

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ned. Man has a weak nature from his origin; this has caused disorder at every level of man's life. How much it costs a new order to succeed! The *Brother* is asked to show patience which is a powerful reconciling force. "There are many religious who wish to see miracles and wonders in their Brothers, in the sense that they would like to have to suffer nothing from them, which is a thing quite impossible... Do not, therefore, be so lacking in sense, so unreasonable and so unchristian as to pretend that you should not have to suffer anything from your Brothers". (73.2). In a human group there are all types of personalities. "... one will have a capricious temper, another will be combative, one will be too obliging, another will speak his mind too freely; others will be too reserved, or dissimulating or critical".

To allow the Founder to speak on this theme is somewhat of a delight. "Some perchance will say: 'I do not mind suffering such a thing from my Brother, but as for this other matter, I cannot bear it;' ... Think well on this. If you fancy you can live in *Community* without supporting the defects of your Brothers, you are mistaken," (74.2). He speaks of burdens to be borne which are the defects of others (73.3); he recommends good example "because the *Brothers* continually observe you" (69, 2; cfr. 180, 1), but one should not act out of human respect; the pharisees and Herodians praised Jesus Christ because he taught "without human respect" and La Salle adds sententiously: "Those who live in *Community* have special reasons for imitating Our Lord in this respect" (75, 1; cfr. Mat. 22, 15).

La Salle misses no opportunity in the daily life of a *Brother* to put him on guard against possible lapses, and apart from pointing out the danger, he recommends the remedy: to rise above one's evil inclinations there is no better remedy than retirement and prayer which "are the means which you can use to overcome your inclination to evil and to consecrate yourself to God without reserve". (161, 1); ... in order to fully possess the spirit proper to your state and in order to persevere in it, nothing contributes so much as obedience which gives the soul solidariity and constancy (12, 3; cfr. 7, 2; 89, 1). "Obedience is the most necessary and principal virtue... for all who live in *Community*" (Col 44) [2] Obedience as a "virtue by which one submits his will and judgement to a man as being the representative of God" (id). Who obeys whom and why in the family, school, political *Community?* Within guarded proportions, there are serious reasons for thinking about revising those fundamental spiritual attitudes which will contribute much in creating harmony within the human group... to make others more aware that you are risen with Christ and aspire to lead a new life for a Brother ought "to order his conversions well, seeing to it that they are holy and agreable to God" (30, 1). "As the disciples of Emmaus, do you leave these conversations, burning with divine love, better instructed in your duties, and encouraged to acquit yourself more competently thereof? (Id; cfr. Mat. 24, 32).

So much could be said about human conversation! One modern writer claims that more people are killed by words than by bullets. How much the human community would gain by guarding its words! When a society goes astray, the first thing to be done to reform it is to control the tongue. The care which La Salle took in this matter is evident on many occasions. Thus he offers the *Brothers* an "exhaustive catalogue of topics for conversation during recreation time". Whose purpose was to preserve the *Brothers* from the corruption of their day: (Col. 59); he recommends how the Brothers can become interior and he prescribes the following necessary privations: 1) from human conversations; 2) from useless words (Col 109). Why should we deprive ourselves of human conversations? Because they "drain the soul of the spirit of God", and if anyone speaks, "let him speak the words of God" (Col. 116). La Salle, knowing the weakness of human nature and the words of St. James: "if anyone fails not in words, the same is a perfect man" (3,2), insists upon silence as a virtue which brings one close to God and withdraws one from the world (16,2). What a surprising thing it is, says La Salle "it is in solitude and silence that one learns to speak well" (135.1). Going into the least details, he asks the *Brothers* "Do you want your students to be silent? Then keep silent yourself" (33,2).

What possibility exists for today's society to observe a measured discipline, in the way required, which is going to entail the control of words? There can be no possibility of Brotherhood in a society where words cease to have their proper significance. The word is the house of the person, but if this house is invaded by undesirable tenants, what hope is there for living a fruitful *Fraternal* life if there is not peace within it?

Conclusion

La Salle shows himself as a bulwark of *Brotherhood.*

For La Salle the consideration of *Brotherhood* is closely linked with the idea of *Community.* Whoever says B*ROTHERHOOD,* says *Community;* whoever says *Community,* says *Brotherhood.*

La Salle, finally, traces a rather severe sketch of the *Brother* who lives in *Brotherhood,* a profile which applies to every other person who aspires to a universal *Brotherhood.*

If La Salle was able to add something to the Gospel: he did what he had to do!

Brother Jorge BONILLA
CIL staff Rome

[1] Saint John Baptist De La Salle, *Meditations,* London, 1970.

[2] *Collection of Short Treatises,* Paris, 1939.

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AT THE SERVICE OF INTERDEPENDENCE THE DE LA SALLE FOUNDATION

The interest of the Montreal District in mission countries goes back at least to the year 1927 when the superior of the Dominican Fathers of Canada expressed to His Holiness Puis XI their desire of getting the cooperation of Canadian communities for the diocese of Hakodate, Japan, the administration of which they had just accepted. From this moment appears the first exchanges between the authorities of the district and other groups engaged in missionary activities.

Beginning in 1932, the Montreal District decided to invest men and money in the formation of several men, and in sending them and maintaining them, at first in Japan, then in the Cameroons, in Guadeloupe, and in other countries under the jurisdiction of French or English speaking Districts of Canada.

It would be difficult to come up with statistics concerning the financial contribution made by the Corporation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the Montreal District over the past fifty years. The total sum goes into eight digits in Canadian dollars.

In 1974, a field in the missionary apostolate was opened to the French speaking Brothers of the Canadian districts and the FSC Corporation of Montreal assumed the financial responsibility for this field. We are referring to Haiti, a small country in the Antilles. Because at that time, benefactors began getting more interested in the development of this mission, the Procurator and Visitor of that time considered making use of the privileges offered by the Canadian Government and the Government of the Province of Quebec in the development of works of charity.

Notification of the registration of a charitable organization

On January 1, 1978, the sector for Canadian Taxes and Revenues released a NOTIFICATION OF REGISTRATION of a charitable organization which would be called "Lasallian Missions: Haiti, Japan, Island of Tortuga, etc.". The notification carries the following mention:

"In the calculation of their taxable revenue, the donors can claim as reductions the gifts given to charitable organizations or associations starting from the date of effectivity, in conformity with paragraph 110 (1) a) of the law of taxation upon revenues to the extent provided by the dispositions of said paragraph, if the gifts are supported by a receipt containing all the required information by part XXXV of the rules on the taxation of income".

A corporation duly recognized by the law on Companies

In 1980, the Montreal District Council decided to go even further by transforming the already existing charitable organization into a corporation duly recognized by the law of companies of the Province of Quebec. This transformation would allow for changing the name of the organization, of forming an administrative council with laymen recognized in their circle as upright and devoted administrators, and of going in search of benefits and rather interesting concessions from the Canadian Agency of International Development (ACDI) and other funding agencies. Here are the reasons given for the founding of this corporation, as they are defined in the official document:

1. To further the development of education in Haiti and in other countries of the Third World;
2. To contribute to the material help of underprivileged people in Haiti and in other Third World countries;
3. Without prejudice to the Law on private education (L.R.Q. 1977 ch. E-9) to enact, encourage, and promote activities regarding the education and instruction of underprivilged persons;
4. To facilitate the introduction and re-integration of deprived people into society;
5. To administer, manage, finance, and subsidize all activities, operations, research, studies, and projects leading to the realization and execution of the objectives of the corporation;
6. To acquire, keep, sell, give, administer, or manage movable or immovable goods to be used for the accomplishment of the objectives of the corporation;
7. To collaborate with any organizations having similar objectives;
8. To initiate fund raising drives in favor of the corporation;
9. The objectives above mentioned do not permit however the corporation to offer to the public plans for singular or periodic contributions whereby contributors or fund raisers are re-imbursed or benefited in any form whatsoever for the money they have donated to the corporation, except as a remuneration to be paid on occasions to certain persons working as officers or administrators.

A corporation: The De La Salle Foundation

On March 15, 1980, the organization "The Lasallian missions: Haiti, Japan, Island of Tortuga, etc." became The De La Salle Foundation, an independent corporation, administered by a council made up of Brothers and Laity. The administrative council names a Director who periodically renders an account of his administration to the council members. At present, the director general is an unsalaried layman.

The Income of the De La Salle Foundation

The De La Salle Foundation derives its income from three principal sources:

1. Personal donations;
2. Grants from the ACDI and other funding agencies;
3. The Corporation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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With the view of presenting an annual budget which testifies to the importance and seriousness of the organization, the Brothers of the Christian Schools Corporation of the Montreal District sends to the foundation the total accounts which have accrued each year for the Haiti mission. The foundation becomes the intermediary between the F.S.C.. Corporation and the mission.

An understanding with the F.S.C. Corporation of Montreal

To make the relations between the F.S.C. Corporation and the Foundation Corporation official, an agreement has been approved and signed which specifies the functions in the transactions between the two corporations.

A tacit agreement between the Foundation and the missionaries also exists. When the missionary receives an in hand donation or through the intermediateship of the Bulletin of the Foundation, the account is remitted to the Foundation which issues a tax receipt in the name of the donor, endorses the donation in the name of the missionary and sends the sum of money back to the latter who uses it according to the norms set up by the mission council.

A director of communications

To assist the director general, the Corporation has named a director of communications, at present a Brother, who edits an informational bulletin which is sent to benefactors four times a year. The director of communications also maintains relations with those in charge of the missionary apostolate of the dioceses and of the region of Montreal. On occasions, he will give a homily during the Sunday Mass and realize some funds from the special collection which is usually taken up on such an occasion. To do the above, he must receive permission from the local ordinary and from the parish priest.

Sending out goods by container

We should mention that the Foundation also looks after the sending of good of all sorts to the Haiti mission. These shipments contain anything from teaching materials all the way to heavy construction materials. Two Brothers work the year round in receiving and packing, materials, and then twice a year they send such by ship in the special containers made for this purpose. Occasionally, these two Brothers are helped by missionaries who are passing through.

"Trust" funds

Certain benefactors prefer that their gifts be invested only progressively. They therefore choose for their manner of donation loans held in "trust" or wills and testaments.

The Foundation authorities have therefore created a "Trust" fund which at present is approaching the amount of 100,000 Canadian dollars.

These funds, invested in the City Savings Bank of the District of Montreal, is further augmented by the following gifts: a) personal gifts; b) gifts left in wills; c) gifts from "lost funds"; c) others. For tax purposes, an official receipt is issued to the benefactors for the interest received from these placements.

The accomplishments of the De La Salle Foundation

Each year sometime near the month of May, the mission council must draw up, after consultation and according to the order of priority, the list of projects which will figure in the annual budget for the year and which are financed by the donations received by the Foundation.

The list thus drawn up is sent to the director general who sends the necessary amounts for the realization of these projects, as rapidly as the reception of donations will permit. Up until the present, the salaries of our lay teachers in our religious schools have received the top priority. Many other request have been considered but the list is so long that not all can be accommodated. The projects realized are similar to those which missionaries carry out everywhere in the Third World countries.

Conclusion

The accounts over the past three years indicate that the total gifts received annually from donors are about 100,000 Canadian dollars, with some variations, which would then put the total budget recorded in our books as between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Canadian dollars. That means that the material help realized by the F.S.C. of Montreal in Haiti since 1983 is only partly attributable to the De La Salle Foundation.

It is up to the De La Salle Foundation only to lighten the burden which the district would have to assume if it alone had to pay for the realization of all the projects carried out by the missionaries over the past few years.

The De La Salle Foundation has allowed the F.S.C. to receive, not only for the District of Montreal, but equally for the District of Douala, the governmental subsidies which these districts could not have received without the intermediacy of a foundation. Many donations are received only because the Foundation is authorized to issue receipts which are considered as tax credits and are deductible from the amounts due to the State. Finally, many of the donations come in as a result of the publicity transmitted by the trimestrial bulletin published by the Foundation.

For all the reasons enumerated above, it is advantageous, in the Canadian context, to create and preserve the existence of an organization which is certainly profitable materially, but which is equally for the spiritual profit of countries on their way to development.

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THE SCHOOL OUTSIDE THE WALLS

A progressive discovery

Ever since 1980, as a De La Salle Brother, following the footsteps of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, I found myself progressively involved in a mission to the poorest of the poor. First of all, this was with students of a "pre-professional level" which, in France, regroups children in difficulty; and at the same time I made my first contact with gipsy children through the influence of the diocesan chaplain in charge of this pastoral mission.

On All Saints' Day in 1981, in company with the regional chaplain of the Travelling People, I met the Romanies for the first time. That meeting, I firmly believe, was for me, very frankly, a revelation, a sign from God. I was seduced, conquered, by the very simplicity of these folk, by their sincere and friendly approach.

The Chaplain had introduced me to these pauper families, but now I had to make my way alone to get to know them personally. That wasn't easy! I wanted to contact them, but what was I to say really? What was I to do? I was a teacher; I had done many things for children which had taken up much of my time, but here, I felt drawn by a call towards these folk on the margin of society quite, quite different from those I had been in the habit of meeting normally.

I knew I would have to deal with another world, other life-habits. I felt that I had to get rid of ready-made, inbred ideas. I would go to their "school" and learn everything from them. I would have to listen and observe very hard indeed and keep my counsel. I was taking my first steps in a society about which I knew absolutely nothing. The world of the poor was near at hand and near at heart, I couldn't escape from it.

Courage for the Encounter

In order to meet the Romanies, I took my courage in both hands and drove slowly up and down the streets on the outskirts of the city. I found them near the public dumps, in isolated spots, in empty lots. I made acquaintance with them, passed the time of day, discussed things with them. We got to know each other... to appreciate each other... in a way "to tame" each other. Little by little, some families came to our community to spend a time here, to share a meal and to sing. These links of friendship continued to grow until the day when one family asked me to become godfather to their sixth child.

That day I understood the long road I had traveled. Until then, despite so many meetings, I had remained an outsider, but with the baptism of Heïdi, three years old, I became for that family the "kirvo", the godfather, which obliged me to become more "of the family", nearer to them all.

Since then, we have lived unforgettable times. Amongst these the greatest were First Communion days, pilgrimages to Lourdes, times of misery and troublesome court actions. Today after six years of meetings, exchanges and mutual listening, we are ready to go a bit further along the road of education, for we have been talking together from the start about schooling, reading, etc.. School for the travelling people is no part of their lives. Everything goes along day by day as if the school never existed. It was much too remote for them or they were made to feel unwelcome. The parents and the clan take care to initiate the youngest children into the simplest things, but they are all unable to read and they depend on friends to discuss written plans or decipher official letters.

A Travelling People

Since January 1987, I have been going into this "wild" terrain three afternoons weekly. The vehicle bought by the District allows me to take in six to eight children at a time. I keep them for an hour and a half and teach them the first elements of reading, writing and arithmetic, normally working in groups, often dealing with them individually.

For the time being, my job is in an experimental stage since I am working individually before requesting the State educational authorities to create an official teaching position for someone who will take care of the schooling of the travelling People's children, as has been done several times for the Brothers in the Paris region.

I have a total of about twenty children whom I meet and instruct. These poor children who have no access to the official or "obligatory" school, can now get instruction because the school comes to them. The "school on wheels" is their

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means of learning, of becoming a little bit like the "gadgé" (the nongypsies).

The children wait impatiently for the arrival of the school-bus and don't have to be begged to take their places in this little "world of knowledge".

An adapted type of education

We owe the methods we have adopted to the extensive pedagogical research of Brother Etienne of Nantes. These very simple and highly motivated methods give very fast and positive results. The pupils learn to read by means of a card game. On the cards are depicted (in drawing and writing) the ten fundamental sounds of the French language: ON, IN, UN, OI, AN, OU, EN, AU, AI.

The children are given a permit to read and when three or four stages are passed successfully, they receive a kind of scholarship of 100 francs. Thus, at the ages of 10, 13 or 16 years, they can go for the first time to a bookstore to buy books.

Up to this time, the Bible, given to each family, is the book where the children take their first steps as young readers. And what a joy it is to be present at a Mission and to see and hear a youngster reading a passage from the Word of God in front of all the grown-ups!

This is the result of many an afternoon spent in the mobile school, afternoons that the youngsters could well spend running about the country side. But they come gladly and are not in any hurry to leave this haven of knowledge. Rather they often oblige me to stay on beyond the regular time to go over a problem with them or read another story.

If only the pupils in my ordinary classes at school had the same appetite for learning!

In the Lasallian tradition

The "travelers" understand perfectly why I do what I do. They know that I am a "schoolmaster" as they say and they trust my professional capacity, but they are also aware that I am a religious, a Brother of the Christian Schools and therein they discover the real meaning of my dedication. After having seen the film "La Rencontre de Parménie" (the English title is: "Who Are My Own") during a faith-encounter, they understood better all that the Brothers stand for. They saw how Saint De La Salle loved poor children and they were happy to see that in 1987, his work continues.

Maybe it's quite a modest job! But it is work being done now more and more by others. In Perpignan, several young Lasallians preparing for the Congress of "Quebec 87" have already volunteered their services part-time to work with gypsy children. Some teachers at the school have also offered to help. Actually, although it may be a small thing, the "travelling children" and their instruction are definitely a part of my "ministry" as a Brother of the Christian Schools.

The love for the very poorest, of which the Founder speaks, is ever present in my life today, and in my plans. Besides this work of teaching reading and writing, I belong to the Parish group in charge of the Gypsies or the "Travelling People". Our frequent meetings are mutually enriching and help us to further the Kingdom of God in a marginalized society. And this Kingdom is not necessarily built by words alone; more often by action where the qualities of the poorest are recognized and appreciated.

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BROTHERS OF THE THIRD AGE AT THE SERVICE OF THE HANDICAPPED

The Community of Lachine (Montreal) numbers seven Brothers, six of whom are retired.

To quote the words of Father Alfred Ducharme, S.J. the Director of the District retreat in December 1986, "Retiring age does not mean that the moment has arrived to stop everything and just go on living". And then he adds that the religious, by his profession, has given his entire life to the service of the Lord, not just up to the age of sixty-five.

Aging should not be an obstacle to the spirit of faith and of zeal which always animates the Brothers. On the contrary, belief in the values we are called upon to make known and to develop will always help us find a field of apostolate in conformity with the Church and the spirit of the Institute.

In the District of Montreal, teams of all ages dedicate their talents, their time and their physical capacity to the service of poor. Naturally, men in the prime of life, go toward organizations where more strength and activity is needed, while older men look for quieter jobs of general interest where the most important point is to listen to others.

Speaking again of the Community of Lachine, the principal fields of action are: the mission of Haïti, handicapped persons, helping the poor, students with special problems in their studies, regular courses and immigrants, etc..

At the request of LASALLIANA, the article will treat of the handicapped persons whom Brothers Albert and Réal Lanthier are taking care of within a club.

Beginnings and growth of the organization

In the spring of 1976, several handicapped persons got together with the intention of taking matters into their own hands so as to convince government authorities to have their own organization in the area with all the rights and advantages then existing.

They invited several volunteers to form a temporary council and to work toward realizing their project: recruiting, seeking resources, organizing transportation, drawing up a charter, etc.

Things went on so well that by December 8, of the same year, the Club for the Handicapped of Lac Saint Louis received official recognition from the government, with an approved charter.

The Club for the Handicapped of Lac Saint Louis is a nonlucrative organization with the following objectives:

— To regroup the physically handicapped regardless of age;

— To provide activities during their leisure moments;

— To favor formation in cultural fields or in sports;

— Diffuse information concerning their rights to various services: health, transportation, work, education, lodging, etc..

The Club operates with the help of volunteers, it is 80% self-financed and receives aid from government authorities, local organizations and personal donations.

From six beginners, the Club now has sixty-eight beneficiaries. This well demonstrates the need for an organization in this milieu to brighten up their situation and help them find their place in society on an equal rights basis.

One large family

The Club is their second family. So say its members and they are happy to do so.

There are different types of handicapped persons in the Club; some were that way from birth and others became thus in the course of life: paralysis, muscular dystrophy, accidents while working, the effect of illness or operations, amputation of limbs, etc..

Two categories of handicapped persons come to the Center: those who have only their home or an institution to share and those who after an illness or an accident have had to abandon their work, slow down their activity and adapt themselves to a new style of life.

After having taught for decades of years, it is now our turn to take lessons in accepting life, in being resigned under tribulation and in courage to face the difficulties of everyday life.

The animators and their Commitments

The religious belief of the ethnical groups in this milieu make it easier to offer different religious celebrations: the Eucharist, the sacraments, prayer groups, etc.. The presence of priests or religious does not bother them at all. On the contrary, they are considered as messengers of the Good News, always ready to understand, to listen, to encourage, to help physically and even in a special way morally.

Activities are not lacking. In fact, the Club is considered an active organization by its very nature: swimming, craftsmanship, typing, meeting

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days, trips, summer camps, participation in the city's community activities, sports competitions, telethons for the different groups, cultural expositions, social evenings, etc.. In internal as well as external activities, an active participation is encouraged rather than simply being present as spectators.

The participation of the handicapped is all the more comforting for them since they feel happy to be with others in thier competitions, outings, trips, public assemblies, etc..

How did Brothers Albert and Réal Lanthier come to get interested in the handicapped? As sons of St. de La Salle, the spirit of zeal is naturally in the heart of all Brothers. Having given of themselves all through life, retiring age lends itself to continue the process. Then too, occasions and organizations are never lacking.

As for Brother Albert, a request came to replace a priest who was called away to another ministry. Following a funeral service in the parish church, Brother Albert and I (Réal) went to visit the Club for the Handicapped in the adjacent hall. This first contact started a series of visits that has lasted ten years.

Brother Albert, already retired, was more available than I. Secretary-Treasurer of the Club's Council, he also directs the Club on working days, buys the food and materials for the workshops and accompanies the handicapped when they have to move about either in the city or on outings. By his very function, he is in contact with the group all day long. Thus he can freely exchange ideas with them.

To be available to these people who are alone or confined to institutions is the most important point. Giving them the opportunity of changing their horizon, of leaving their four walls for a few hours is gratifying to them.

Formerly, handicapped persons hid themselves or were hidden from the public eye. Today, mentalities have changed. Since adapted means of transportation exist, one finds them everywhere now: in shopping centers, restaurants, universities, etc.. However, priority where transportation is concerned must be respected: medical services, workmen, studies, leisure, etc.

Access to public buildings has been greatly improved as well as facilities for moving around outside by means of a wheelchair. The international year for the handicapped had done much to sensitize authorities and the population toward treating them on an equal basis. Of all the years dedicated to this purpose by the United Nations, 1981 will remain outstanding.

Concerning myself (Réal), as I was still teaching, I could be at the Club only during free periods or at meal time. My first contact with the handicapped, however, was previous to the founding of the Club. I had handicapped students in my daily typing classes and in my night courses for adults.

One day I was given the task of revising the three regular textbooks the Brothers used to teach typing. I decided to make special adaptations for the handicapped students. These appeared for LEFT HAND, RIGHT HAND and ONE-EYED in two languages, French and English.

Naturally, when a typing teacher appeared at the Club with textbooks he had composed especially for the handicapped, students were never lacking and they were delighted. Some of these at present write their own correspondence, do certain jobs, or better yet, find employment in offices as secretaries.

Besides teaching typing, part of my time is spent in the secretariate or with printing, photography, the news, etc.. What is left of it is devoted to accompanying the members of the Club in thousands of ways that are necessary in an organization of this kind.

Mutual evangelization

Our help as volunteers dates back to the founding of the Club. We number about thirty, depending on our availability during the week, in the evening or on week-ends and also during the vacation week in a camp especially adapted for the handicapped.

Thinking of others is a first step; giving to others is another, but taking on a personal, voluntary commitment brings incalculable joys and consolations. One understands better that there is greater happiness in giving than in receiving.

The handicapped show us signs of gratitude that are sincere and spontaneous. How often they tell us that they keep us in their prayers, in thanksgiving for what we do for them and ask the Lord to give us the health and the strength to remain with them a long time in the big family of the handicapped in Lac Saint Louis.

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INTERESTING LASALLIAN MISSIONARY WORK IN THE ANDES (1)

How it began

In 1977, three of us, Brothers of the District of Bilbao, Spain, presented a project for greater dedication to the poor. The Brother Visitor and his council approved it. The choice indicated was some poor area in Ecuador where our presence would be useful in various ways. The Brother Visitor and his Council received us graciously.

We joined the Azogues community where two elderly Brothers were running a primary school and a secondary school. We three Brothers made use of the weekends for making contact with the native country folk, so numerous in that area and with some less numerous ones at the school in the provincial capital.

We were going to a nearby farm community to do some work towards literacy. This simple experience was enough to learn the deep causes of the underdevelopment which was all around us. We then decided upon a plan of action for the benefit of these local country folk and we also involved the Brothers of the Bilbao District in the work. Their response was truly exemplary.

During the summer vacation groups of Brothers and secular helpers began pouring in. They worked not only in catechesis and evangelization, health, and advancement, but they were also making a well thought out evaluation of the work. The conclusion was this: "Enough of this petty almsgiving; we must have a group of Brothers and co-workers to live among the local people so that this strength in personnel and economic help could achieve a maximum of usefulness and could be a witness of the dedication which the poor deserve and which the Districts ought to offer".

So, since 1983, a team of three Brothers and four co-workers are doing this varied work.

Among the local people

During the mornings, we work in the school, which needs religious personnel so badly. This also provides us with some funds for our subsistence. Right after lunch, we go to the nearby high Andes to live among the local farm people and to share with them our faith in Jesus.

The choice of a place was not made at random. After studying the needs and possibilities of more than 40 villages, we chose, with the agreement of the local ordinary, the most poor, cold, deprived, and pastorally neglected place. The center of operations is found in Aquarongo: a small farm community at 3,500 meters altitude. The field of activities goes all the way up to 3,800 meters. The climate is very cold all year round. The soil is poor and the lands are the edges of the large estates. Still, for these country folk it is their only treasure; I say treasure because this is the first time that they have been owners of land.

Almost all here are immigrants from the nearby villages. They are a people with a will to work, with an immense desire to improve their learning, to create new sources of work, to better themselves, and to take better care of their families.

At the root of our first contacts with these people, we were asking the following quuestion: "What do you expect from missionaries?" The answer was always "We want them to talk to us about the Word of God and of things of the Christian faith".

Hardships

An initial investigation and visit to each of the families made us see clearly the grave problems which they were complaining about:

— High infant mortality.

— General illness: intestinal parasites, lung aliments, respiratory infections, cerebral hemorrhages, skin diseases of bacterial origin, etc..

— Deficient and unbalanced nutrition.

— Illiteracy.

— Superstition and magic.

— Sub-human living conditions, a deplorable lack of hygiene.

— A serious lack of infrastructure: they had no electrical current, no running water, no toilet facilities; many houses had no beds or furniture.

— Medical attention was distant and costly.

What should be done?

The feeling of inadequacy was enormous. We really felt ourselves poor in face of the magnitude and variety of the problems we had to resolve. But the strength of the Spirit and the confidence of our team encouraged us.

One rural family let us rent their poor house for the team's lodging. We moved in. They went to live in a nearby very poor hut. It was not possible to convince them to do otherwise.

Our team took periods of prayer and reflection in order to program the work we were going to do, confronted as we were with such an amount of work.

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We beg the readers' kind indulgence for stating in schematic form the fields of activities in which we are now engaged. We just want to say that these activities are carried out in the following country villages: Aquarongo, Yanochocha, Chiripungo, Cungapite, Charón, Curuquinga, S. Francisco, Quinuapata and La Tranca.

1. Christian animation

The urban center of the area and the 40 country villages were being attended to by a 94 year old priest. Therefore, the need was both serious and evident. We have been working in various ways:

Evangelization: the Brothers and helper, two by two, direct weekly reflection meetings in all the villages. They do this with the help of slides and other visual aids. They also help in the liturgical celebrations.

Catechesis: each week a Brother gives a two hour lesson on catechetical methods and content to 18 rural catechists, two from each village. Each week an evaluation is made of the progress made with the children. Now we are working towards the *formation of Christian animators* from the rural communities.

Youth Groups: there is one basic point which we are aware of: the country villages will be renewed, in all their aspects, to the extent that we prepare the young. Because of this we take special pains to look after the young people: Every fortnight we have a morning or an entire day dedicated to youth animation with an attendance and participation which we never would have dreamed of.

2. Culture

Taking into consideration the fact that, because of the non-existence of schools in the area, practically all the adults are illiterate, we have been meeting this problem with *literacy courses* in five villages. At this moment all those instructed are already literate and have had their courses officially recognized on three levels. We have continued on with:

Regular courses: With official recognition:

— electrical courses;
— carpentry courses;
— courses in cutting and sewing;
— care is also given to having a bit of humanistic culture.

Monographic courses:

— cooking, balanced diet, and culinary preparation;
— general and specific hygiene;
— childcare;
— accounting and basic administration.

3. Health

Upon our arrival in this zone, we observed a truly lamentable situation in this regard. Sickness was widespread throughout the population: intestinal parasites, colds, skin infections, lung maladies, and children dehydrated by diarrhea, etc..

Through the team's nurse, emergency aid, the study of causes, prophylaxis and health education were begun.

However, seeing that much of this was beyond our abilities, measures were initiated with the Regional Delegation of the Countryside Social Security as well as well as with a campaign to make the country folk interested in getting into health organizations. The work succeeded in getting the majority of them into this social service. This includes, among other things: free medical care and medicine, retirement pension, and also free surgery. A doctor and nurse offer their services in the zone.

Also a course for country nurses is given which has up to eighteen students. For our part, we continue to give special assistance to children between two and five years old. A large hothouse is being put up in view of cultivating medicinal plants.

4. Nutrition

The nutrition is very unbalanced. We notice grave deficiencies in protein because of the failure to eat meat and fish. Meat is sold to buy cheaper food such as corn, rice, and other cereals and for clothes, heating, minimum schools supplies, etc..

There is also a lack of vegetable vitamins. The cold weather does not allow for the cultivation of garden products. For this reason one of the big tasks of the Team was the installation of a *hothouse.* Various experiments were carried on and at present the production is significant. In order to provide meat, the raising of guinea pigs called "Indian rabbits" and poultry has been promoted. The hothouses have succeded in producing lettuce, cabbage, garlic, turnips, carrots, and leeks. Along the same line, facilities for fish production are being undertaken.

Brother Julián JAUREGUI

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INTERESTING LASALLIAN MISSIONARY WORK IN THE ANDES (2)

5. Organization

One of the problems in this missionary zone is the great dispersion of the population. Isolation, lack of communication, the lack of organization, all constitute great problems in various villages.

Therefore, the Team set about encouraging awareness and participation: organizing directing teams for the internal functioning of each village where they did not exist before; support for those already in existence, the promotion of joint meetings within the zone; common projects for all the villages. The projects, their planning, solicitude, their accomplishment, and benefits have constituted an important factor in organization and cooperation: this social organization is yielding important fruit.

Equally the internal life of each village has been optimized by means of:

- courses for leaders.
- Formation of catechists and evangelizers.
- Two rural nurses.
- Specialized courses in the husbandry of large herds, given by a veterinarian.
- Those in charge of the construction of small shops.
- those in charge of the hothouse.

6. Togetherness

— This togetherness is expressed in three ways:

The most evident means for the native people and the most effective means is *to live with them.* This is what they most need and most appreciate. It is also a *condition* for the realization of all the other projects.

— *Being together with the public officials and those in authority:* until recently the native country folk were looked down upon in public offices and in centers where things are decided.

The Brothers, through their commitment to the poor and through their educational prestige, are very much appreciated by the Authorities and by the common people. And the Brothers of the Team take advantage of this not to supplant the farmers but to support them. When the village representatives present themselves in some office accompanied by a Brother, success is always assured.

— *Technical and Administrative cooperation:* It is not sufficient merely to do things. Follow-up and evaluation are indispensable. Because of this the following *offices, free of charge,* operate in the mission house:

* law office: a lawyer (incredibly, the Provincial Fiscal).
* Animal husbandry office: a veterinarian.
* Agricultural office: an agricultural chemist and Engineer from the Ministry of Agriculture.
* A data bank.
* Office of the adviser on accounting for the Community Stores and cooperatives: sales and marketing.

7. Training centers

This is one of the greatest sources of developing the potential of the local village dwellers, particulary the youths.

Throughout the zone, the menacing shadow of immigration has already begun to creep in. The country folk who flee to the big cities along the coast in hope of finding a livelihood are easy bait for exploitation and food for corruption. It was imperative to avoid this scourge. Therefore we endeavored to create an *in situ* place of productive work, as an alternative to the present rudimentary rural economy.

The Training Center consists of:

- a carpentry shop;
- an electrical shop;
- a hydraulic engineering shop;
- a sewing and cutting shop;
- a shop for administration, accounting and typing;
- a popular library.

This Center is more educational than productive in purpose.

8. Agricultural and husbandry farm, educative and productive

This farm with an area of 25,000 square meters is at present in the process of being established in the following way:

- a poultry section for 500 chickens;
- a section for raising 500 guinea pigs or Indian rabbits;
- six large hothouses;
- a fish production pond;
- grazing land;

9. Spreading the production centers

We realize that it is not enough to set up sources of production and to create beautiful model centers. It is indispensable to increase the

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amount of bread. Therefore, we are going to set up production centers in various villages:

- Aguarongo: besides the centers mentioned above, it will also have hothouses and a Community store.
- S. Pedro: carpentry, cutting and sewing, block-making, and baking.
- Yanacocha: Hothouse.
- Carón: community store and dairy.
- Cungapite: dairy, piggery, slaughterhouse, and sausage making.
- Chiripungo: community store.

10. Infrastructure promoted and supported by the team

— The installation of electric current: no house had this basic facility before. It was only in the planning stage. We Brothers, together with the country folk, have paid several visits to the Regional Manager of the Electrical Company. At this time, all the villages are provided with this service.

— Installation of running water; practically none of the houses had this facility previously: because of representations made to the proper authorities, today almost all of the villages have clean running water, coming from little springs.

— Medical care: as previously mentioned above, the Team carried on an intense campaign of awareness and appeal with the health authorities. This service is now fully functioning.

— Roads: these were in a deplorable state. At this moment, all the roads in the area have been properly widened and rendered suitable.

11. Generous benefactors:

Without any fanfare nor prior conditions, we have received valuable economic assistance. We should like to take this opportunity to thank:

— the Lasallian District of Bilbao, Spain. Not only does it provide personnel to the missionary team but also supplies whatever they need, underwriting the general expenses of all the activities. It has sent thousands of items of clothes, medicine, shoes, and books. It also partly finances the shops in San Pedro. The travels of the Brothers and co-workers are also financed by this District.

— *Miserior* (the bishops' conference of West Germany:

This organization has provided the vehicle used by the Team. The pavilion used by the intercommunal stores and part of the food.

The Training Centers in their totality.

The Agriculture-animal husbandry with regard to the hothouses, various installations and part of the poultry.

Kirche in not: Bishops of West Germany:

— catechetical courses, library books and materials, various catechetical material.

— The Mission House and furnishings (partly).

— La Salle, New York: Food for the Community stores.

— La Salle of Austria: for the construction of the poultry, for hens, fish raising pond. Financing of Catechetical courses, materials, visual aids, etc..

— La Salle, Switzerland: Mission house (partly).

— La Salle-Villa Flaminia, Rome: Medicine.

— La Salle-Malta: Food for the Community stores.

— La Salle-Ireland: Hothouses for the villages.

— La Salle-North Mexico' upkeep of the Cultural Center.

— La Salle-Ecuador' the encouraging presence of the Brother Visitor, and his Council and the representatives of all the Lasallian schools in the country and their generous help and collaboration.

Parish of San Anton, Bilbao: the initial experimental poultry.

Parish of Albalate del Arzobispo, Teruel, Spain: community house and community store in Chiripungo. Father Oñate (brother of a co-worker), Bilbao: Medicine. De La Salle Brothers of Bilbao: individual donations, the results of their personal and community sacrifices.

Ecuadorian Institutions: they are many: Provincial Council, Ministry of Agriculture, Reconversion Center of Austro, Literacy Office, Municipal Councils: Soil removing machinery, wells, technical personnel, tip-carts, etc.

Carlos Perez-Perasso Foundation: *block-making.*

Diocese of Azoques: *block-making.*

And an important place is occupied by SECOLI, which has accepted, channeled, and supported our project request through Brother Pedro Arrambide.

Aguarongo is not only the name of a village. It is a ecclesial and Lasallian fraternity where painfully the Kingdom of Heaven is being developed.

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GIVING AND RECEIVING

Brother Gregory is at present head of RE at St Anselm's School, Basildon, Essex. He has been engaged for several years in facilitating opportunities for young people to work in the developing world from his own school. In this article he describes why this particular scheme is somewhat different from other similar ventures, and through the young men and women who have already participated sets out some of the teething problems and the rewards such a venture can give.

Community service at home

It is my experience that all young people have a latent generosity. This is easy to observe in the lower age groups of a secondary school when you have a surfeit of willing volunteers for almost anything you care to propose.

In the upper part of the school the response is more reflective and selective; just as these young people are learning their identity as adults and are tentative about career, relationships, beliefs, so too the same searching occurs in the areas in which they give of themselves.

At St Anselm's, the response of the staff has been to offer variety and opportunity. Sixth Form RE, for example, uses most of the time allocated to it in offering a number of different forms of community work.

After 11 years learning about Christian principles, these young men and women are timetabled to engage in some form of Christian practice. This has resulted in the development of their own maturity, has been of benefit to the local community and helped them reflect further on their own commitment and beliefs.

The developing world

An extension of this "variety and opportunity" has been to offer those who wish the chance to work in the developing world. For the last three years several sixth-formers have deferred university entrance and have committed themselves for a year in either Jamaica or Thailand. Soon it is hoped to send our first young people to Africa.

But to what purpose? Is it just a bright little adventure? Or is there a deeper significance or motivation? It was here that we learnt our first lesson in setting the scheme up.

From the point of view of the school the starting was that first hand experience of the developing world was infinitely more valuable than reading about it in books or watching TV documentaries; that upon their return these young people would have gained something for life and would influence their families, their colleagues at work, their fellow parishioners. In short, the young Christians emerging from such an experience would be aware of and wish to be part of a "global Church". This may, in time, be achieved.

In fact there were other unplanned spin-offs. The young people going out provided a quite outstanding witness for their families, their parish and their school. At least two kept up a regular "newsletter" correspondence with their parish; also, half of those who have returned to this country have already made arrangements for further work in the developing world.

Developing the helpers

This was not necessarily the motivation or the altruism of the young people who volunteered for this work before departure. In fact, the motivations as to "why" they wished to work in the developing world varied, and in at least one case was not clear even before departure. The problem of "programming" these young men and women adequately for their specific project also proved elusive. Consequently, the difficulties encountered varied from person to person.

CARL: "For me the isolation of the school I was working at and the lack of facilities to recreate in a fashion previously enjoyed by myself. Also, trivial though it seems, I wish to God someone had told me to bring boots, they were indispensable at the school.

CLAIRE: "The most difficult emotion to deal with, and the most frequent, was that of insecurity. It was frightening to think of what lay ahead: trying to "fit in", unsure of how much you had changed, whether people would accept this "new being", whether you would still be able to relate to others after so much isolation.

But now having returned, what do they think they gained from the experience?

PAUL: "My imagery of the Third World and its problems was very simplistic and black and white before I left the UK. Now I am more aware of its complexity and subtlety; most important of all, I can perceive it in human terms. Also, I found that my efforts in teaching English soon became outweighed by the love I received from pupils and frinds.

CARL: "My homesickness developed into a deeper and objective appreciation and care for people that I had somewhat taken for granted in the past. Before Jamaica, I would say that I was

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actually aware of the Third World and various countries (including my own) making efforts to help in small ways... But, to be honest. I always regarded these actions as good extras that First World societies performed "on top of all OUR problems". That has changed. Now, I know (not believe) that it is our duty to try to help the Third World, and we don't necessarily deserve a pat on the back, or recognition, when we do something.

Resources

An important question, frequently asked, is are these young people mature enough and do they have enough qualifications to be of any significant help in the developing world?

It is clear that an eighteen-year-old adult is going to be less mature than one, say, in his twenties; none have any degree qualifications, and their suitability for the work would depend on what their aptitudes were and the type of work being offered. But the primary purpose of the project is not to send a much needed helper into the Third World — though there must be worthwhile work for them to do — but to learn and understand and grow.

Here tribute must be paid to those people who, knowing what the purpose of the project was, still accepted these young people into their communities; in particular the Sisters of Mercy in Jamaica and the De La Salle Brothers in Thailand and their associates who shepherded them through their difficulties — and there were genuine difficulties, of culture, of homesickness, of isolation.

The romanticism of work in the developing world quickly wore off. The support and help of those receiving them was incalculable.

Special contribution

For this type of project fills a vacuum. The aid agencies and voluntary organisations such as VSO or VMM do largely require qualified young people and rarely below the age of 21. This makes sense when considered from the point of view that urgent help is needed in the developing world in nursing, education and agriculture, etc.

However, many generous young people lose out because while they are able to make that offering of themselves at 18, they may never be qualified enough or may have contracted other commitments by the time they are old enough to be accepted.

Also, the primary purpose is different — it is still basically about Christian education, of helping to develop a shift in awareness of our interdependence in the world so that most of the world will have a chance to truly develop.

In practice

How did they go about the project? The most urgent problem was raising the fare. The agreement is that the young volunteers would be given free board and lodging but would have to find their own way out there.

Early in the final school year a scheme is planned with each volunteer, for different fund raising ideas. These are many and varied: sponsored schemes, parish involvement, direct requests to local businesses, support from parish priests, weekend jobs and promotions such as local radio. These schemes are then time-tabled so as not to clash with each other or with their impending examinations.

In Jamaica, the volunteers worked at St Don Bosco School at Hatfield, near Mandeville. It is an establishment run by the Sisters of Mercy with the cooperation of some De La Salle Brothers.

It is run on the lines of a Boys' Town and contains youngsters from the ages of six to 18 years who have been put in care by the authorities or abandoned, or have been in trouble with the police.

The plan is to develop their skills in agriculture and to give them a basic education, thus leaving the establishment with the chance of a job.

The volunteers (five in the last three years), worked in the classroom and on the farm.

CLAIRE: "I shall always remember the chicken kill. Putting your hand up the backsides of eight-hundred chickens, the plastic dustbin full of innards and the smell...

In Thailand the activities were more varied, working in a secondary school in Nakon Sawan; teaching English to some of the children of the Karen hill tribesmen and working in an orphanage. Here the introduction into Thai society was preceded by developing at least a working knowledge of the language. Staying with a Buddhist family who knew no English was the speediest inculturation for Paul.

From my own school there have been a couple of volunteers each year, with a number of applications coming from elsewhere. For anyone who has pupils thinking of doing the same thing, I let Paul have the last word:

...For those going on to higher education, the experience is simply brilliant and has given insight and impetus to my studies. Good luck to all those who have the privilege to go on future projects.

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MALONNE
A CENTER FOR MEETINGS AND FOR PRAYER

Origin

The dream of having a special House of Prayer where young people would be welcome was not new when in 1981 and 1984, the District Chapter for South-Belgium expressed the wish that a Prayer Community be founded near the Mutien-Marie Center. This idea was approved and encouraged by the Superior General and his Council.

The retreat at Orval in January 1985, made it possible to set up the project. Previously, the Visitor had made inquiries to find out what Brothers would be willing to participate in new foundations. At the Visitor's request, and led by Brother Jean Thomas, four Brothers got interested in the project: Brothers Pierre Golard, André Rousseau, Joseph Verdegem and Roger Maloir. Brother Maurice Dachet who was finishing his career as a teacher, was also available.

Almost every Wednesday during the first trimester of 1985, these six Brothers met at Malonne from 4:30 to 6:30 to draw up a community program. To succed in such an enterprise demanded considerable consultation about the style of life, the times for prayer and the mission of such a Center.

Once the community program was drawn up, it was decided that the inauguration of the new Community would take place on Holy Thursday, April 4, 1985. In the presence of Brother Visitor, a representative of the District Council and of some Brothers who had helped arrange the building, the six candidates committed themselves to live the Community program. Four of them were to be permanent members. Brother Jean Thomas, the Directory of a nearby Community, accepted the responsibility for the house and took part twice a week in Community meetings. Brother Roger joined the Community on Saturday evening.

The Aim

The name of the Community, chosen by the Visitor, indicates the aims pursued. Prayer and welcome are the key words, the raison d'être of our living together.

As a meeting place, it welcomes persons of all ages, particularly young people, who want to share the life of the Community by spending several hours or several days of recollection there. There are seven rooms available so the Community can receive small groups of young people for retreats, or groups of religious who are looking for a place to get together. Our prospectus proposes an adaptable schedule for these people according to the demand.

The Community is very open to the parish. Animators of the liturgy and groups of catechists have a comfortable room for their meetings. Several Lenten activities take place there.

The community is a house of prayer in the first place for its own members who assure three special times for prayer each day: morning, noon and night. Complete independence with regard to television allows time for dialogue among the Brothers of the Community. Free time for adoration is foreseen each evening. Guests are invited to share our prayer life.

A library for spiritual reading is open to the public and to persons residing in the house. Records, cassettes, audio-visual montages offer the possibility of spiritual enrichment. Documentation on different themes is available for students.

Functioning

One Brother having been named to another post, the Community actually numbers three: one permanent member, one working half-time and another who teaches full time.

The Community welcomes visiting Brothers, acquaintances looking for a place of retreat, small groups or parish groups. The center has been functioning a year and a half and is slowly becoming known. A group of secondary students stayed there for a night; a team of young Focolari organized a week-end. The groups that stayed overnight with us have not been numerous so far, but we hope, next year, to welcome retreat groups from our schools and organize several week-ends for young people who want to share Lasallian community life. One experiment was made.

Days of great affluence at the Pilgrim Center in honor of Brother Mutien Marie and parish activities (visiting the sick or teaching catechism in

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the parish) are fields of apostolate which complement our specific mission.

Every month, at the Mutien-Marie Center, our House of Prayer organizes and animates a prayer-vigil for vocations. The Brothers from near-by communities and some parishioners participate. On this occasion, a periodical, "Prayer and Vocation", is written and sent to each community of the District.

Our house could also become a place to accompany young people in search of their vocation or during their postulancy.

Insertion

Insertion into the parish of Malonne was accomplished progressively and happily. The Community is very well received. It has just opened its doors to a group of parishioners who want to have a sewing room. A priest from Zaire who works in the parish on Saturday and Sunday is welcomed and lodged in our home.

We hope to establish contact with the students of Saint-Berthuin's Institute, located in front of our house. We have pointed out to the teachers and professors how we can be useful to them. During Lent, several prayer meetings and group exchange discussions were held in our oratory.

The day of prayer proposed to each community in preparation for the District Chapter furnished us the occasion to make documentary posters on the Founder, the Institute and Young Lasallians and to invite some of the professors to our chapel.

The Directors of the Institution have been very kind to us, but so far it has been hard to establish contact with the students. The layout of our house does not help matters. We hope, however, progressively, to increase contacts, especially through the library. Some parishioners undoubtedly will also come to share our prayer.

Conclusion

It is too soon to make an evaluation of our experience. If all our dreams have not come true, partly because of the layout of the house, the result is still positive. The Brothers of the Community are happy; the parish appreciates our collaboration; our guests are happy with the welcome they receive.

May prayer help us to discern and to carry out the will of God in our regard.

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13-C-50

PRINCIPAL ORIENTATIONS IN THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUTHS AT ARAVACA

Introduction

The La Salle University School for Teacher Training in Aravaca, Madrid, is a school which has its prime purpose the training of teachers who will teach in Primary Schools: in our case, teachers intended for children between 5 to 14 years of age.

This school, named La Salle and forming part of the Madrid District, has a total of 627 students. Of the 30 professors on the faculty, 9 of us are Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The students who study in our school are between 19 and 22 years and they have the choice, within the common three year program, of one of the following five specializations: Sciences, Philology, Social Sciences, Preschooling, and Special Education.

If the general objective and reason for existing of these University schools in Spain is the preparation of a faculty which is going to impart an education to children between 5 and 14 years of age, then it is easy to deduce that the general objective and, at the same time, the specific objective of our school, is the *Education of authentic Christian educators according to the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the present orientations of the Church and of the Institute.*

In this form, our specific objective contains, assumes, and embellishes the general objectives of these official schools in Spain, and for us is converted into an adequate indicator and into a fountain of inspiration of the *orientations of This School.*

In summary, they would be the following:

1. The student is the nuclear point of our educative style

We concentrate essentially on the *person of each student* as being unique and unduplicatable. We strive *to know him* and *to help him* in *discovering himself* and in *knowing himself* profundly. From this the acceptance and appreciation of his own person and the self-confirmation of his aptitudes and professional motivations will arise.

So that this orientation will not remain merely speculative, the school administrators, free of charge, administer a battery of tests to any students who want them. These tests are quickly corrected and interpreted, and are explained to the interested parties through a personal interview with the psychometrician of the school.

In addition to this technical service rendered to the person of each student, the School offers a Tutor-Guide who can guide him in orienting himself and can help him in his studies as well as in his personal life, and eventually in his career.

Prior to his admission into the School, each student is accepted as an individual person because of a personal admissions interview in which he explains his philosophy of life as well as the main thrusts of his activities.

2. Liberty, responsibility, two essential values in integrating our student as a future teacher-educator

Once our student recognizes and assumes his own personal "I" and discovers and accepts his vocation as a teacher and educator, there is a line of activity which summons him into the dynamics of the School: the balanced combination of the LIBERTY-RESPONSIBILITY binomial. Here is the program which is presented to him as a challenge and which commits him in his being and his work: I am a free person called upon to enlighten free persons. On my self-formation depends, to a great extent, the process of integrally perfecting many pupils who await and need the motivating influence of my person as a teacher.

The response to this real and hopeful commitment is called responsibility.

Toward this end, the School creates areas of liberty and endeavours to make each student aware of his person, his vocation, his future mission; of his time, his personal and group work; of the methods used, and of the materials at his disposal; of the explanations of the professors and of his own personal research and discoveries; of the observation and acquisition of experiences of every type, etc. etc..

A student in our school who knows well who he is, who discovers and interiorizes the true goals and his life and who commits himself to them, from his own personal identity and with his destiny is a person who makes of his liberty a permanent act of responsibility.

3. Discover and identity oneself with a world of a hierarchy of values

Every human person, and for that reason the teacher-educator, comes from a society structured by norms born of a philosophy and sustained by an order of values.

A question spontaneously arises: is our School identified, in its task of formation, with the world of values which defines and propels society today?

Also are we convinced that the mission of the School is the training of teachers whose task is, or is going to be, to forge the men of a new society.

Each year our students reach the conclusion that discrepancies and even contradictions exist between those values maintained and put forward by society and the principles and values which they discover and consider to be creators of a more just and beautiful society. How can we succeed in making the necessary re-adjustment?

Here arises the great unknown which has to be discovered and which constitutes the challenge for the School. Yes, we must prepare men, but for which type of society?

In order to respond to this interrogation, our School endeavours to form future teachers motivating and helping them to *observe* and *analyze* situations, to *reflect* deeply on what they hear and what they read, to develop a *critical sense* with regard to theories, events, and conduct, to hold respectful but open *dialogue* with all, etc. etc.

Thus, although not without difficulties, the student will come to discover and further his own hierarchy of values, obliging him to *define himself* and *assert himself.* Relatively soon, he will come to the conviction that his profes-

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sion is not private but public, that his teaching is worth little if it is not going to be accompanied by his personal witness and that his influence on the students will be infinitely greater by what he IS than by what he merely says or teaches.

Materials such as Anthropology, Philosophy, Pedagogy, Theology, etc. in their content as well as in their type of work on one side, and all types of visits to Centers and Organizations, personal work of a reflective nature and various experiences on the other, are the means by which the School collaborates with the students in the acquisition of axiological principles which will rule his life and educational undertakings.

4. The educator cast in the lasallian mold

In reality this objective has its framework in a previous setting. But so that it would be a particular feature which would define the proper characteristic of our School, I have wished to underscore it and give it its own personality.

The specific end of this School, the Statutes state, "is to train professionals in education, based upon a Christian concept of man and of life".

In the very first interview granted to the future student, he is informed of this and the school is presented to him as a School of the Catholic Faith.

By the manner and focus which is given to each discipline, by the respectful and friendly guidance and instruction given to each person, by the availability and spirit of answering the needs of each one who seeks help and accompaniment in his problems, etc., the School endeavors to present its Christian character. In all things there is love and service.

The subjects of Theology and Catechetics, presented at the informational and catechetical levels, work of individual maturation such as "My fundamental option", are some of the ways which are offered as means of fostering thought and commitment.

Every year, within the school, there is a convocation, by way of invitation for the students who so wish to be able to join Christian study groups with apostolic and social polarization.

The Vocational program, the Eucharistic celebrations and the celebration of the Word at the various liturgical seasons, etc. are some of the means the School offers to its students to awaken, cultivate, and testify to their faith and their Christian commitments.

In spite of these activities, so in keeping with the identity of the School, we are convinced that religious formation and Christian commitment are generated within the inner soul of each person as a personal response to the action of the Spirit.

We attempt to succeed in casting the students into a Lasallian die essentially by our contagious witness and our personal form of existence, in our life and teaching.

In all its forms, the figure of La Salle appears as much in the subject of pedagogy as in the Lasallian cultural week which we organize to celebrate the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, special Patron of all teachers.

5. Pedagogical methodology embodied in a serious and family organization

In the School there is a climate of work invested in a festive atmosphere of acceptance and friendship. This close relationship and pleasant and friendly treatment among teachers and students is one of the distinctive characteristics of the School. I think that this easy and friendly communication facilitates not only dialogue and understanding but also serious and satisfying educationl work.

The methodology which is followed is a mixture of the Traditional with the New School. The magisterial classes are carried on simultaneously in personal and group work. There are themes which are developed personally as well as group activities under the orientation and supervision of the professor. Small nuclei of scientific investigation and physiconatural experiences as well as working and cultural visits and excursions is only an indication of some of the activities which we undertake and which run the gamut of *different methodologies* for the training and education of these youths.

What we are trying to achieve in this variety of methodologies is to succeed in having our students undergo diverse personal experiences so that they can successfully make them a part of their personal lives and then communicate them in a creative way during their teaching activities.

6. Obstacles in the formative process

A situation which dims and militates against the objectives which the School proposes is the lack of job openings for those finishing the course of studies.

The deep motivation and desire to work which is found in our students who go on dedicating the best years of their lives to the task of education, are all too frequently frustrated by their inability to find work which is consonant with their preparation and vocational capabilities. For this reason, a sufficient number of them follow their studies in the University, to which they have access, in the fourth year of their career, by means of preparatory courses.

Final summary

It is time to state that these orientations or lines of action which have been briefly described, strive to achieve a *UNITY* in the process of the educational activity. That is to say: the building, the faculty, the methodology, etc. are the instrumental means which help each student achieve his educational formation according to the model of the man and the society which the School presents to him.

The student is the focal point of all that the School does. He is the principal agent of his own formation. Everything converges on him; but it is he who must make the selective synthesis in order to arrive at the desired integrating *UNITY*.

Here you have, in its more outstanding features, the dynamics of this Lasallian University School which, like other Lasallian Schools, strives to realize, here and now, the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle: to educate youth in the spirit of Christianity.

Brother Adelardo ALVAREZ PEREZ
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13-C-51

THE TEACHER AND THE PROFESSION

Public opinion pools tells us that the teaching profession is perceived as one of our most essential professions. These same sources, however, indicate that the profession lacks prestige. It is good for our ego that literature has from time to time sprung loose teaching personalities who have captured the reader's imagination. Chaucer speaks of the clerk "whose talk centered on moral themes, and gladly would he learn and gladly teach". One of Goldsmith's influential figures in the English shires before the herders drove out the dwellers was the village schoolmaster whose body language said it all: "Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace the day's disaster in his morning face". And Carlyle gave kudos to anyone who graced the classroom as he wrote that teachers should be world-honored and treated as generals or field marshals.

As mentioned, the profession has not generally received good publicity. Through the years teachers too often have been considered pedagogues in the original sense of servants who lead children to and from school. In ancient Greece, the philosophers were the honored teachers while those who taught reading and writing were generally ignored. In the traditional Chinese school of old, the schoolmaster was by definition a person who had failed intellectually. The Russian theological seminaries expelled their undesirables who were then assigned to teach in the common schools under Peter the Great. In Frederick the Great's Prussia invalids were assigned to teach.[1]

The poor opinion of the teaching profession spread to the New World in the seventeenth century. This could be seen by the low prices that the newly-arrived indentured servants commanded in the market place. Teachers were not considered to be valuable investments. And today high esteem still eludes the profession. This may be due to society's prevailing bias, the short-preparation period for teachers compared to that of other professions, and the union focus which causes people to wonder if our work truly qualifies as a profession.

But, let's face it! We all can remember being influenced by great teaching. The power of these good teachers is difficult to measure because their influence continues to grow in us. We must not forget that our classrooms also are filled with "students who are the messages that we send to a future we will not see".[2] So, let's sit back for a moment, relax, read, and enjoy some reflection on good teaching and the legacy that each of us can leave to those who come into our classrooms.

Marva Collins, the lady who started a private school in Chicago's west side ghetto, is one of the great ones. She states that she is pushed on by experiencing the feeling of epiphany in her students. She jolts her students, and they feel that they are leading a more quickened life because of her enthusiasm. She takes the dropouts of the public and private schools and starts them reading Emerson's *Essay on Self-Reliance.* She gives her students a pride, a belief, a hope, and these students soon discover that they too can learn.[3]

Martin Buber once stated that the greatest thing that one person can do for another is to confirm the deepest thing that person has within him/her. And following up on this idea, Douglas Steere, observes that there is little more to say about the greatest thing that a teacher can do for a student. That teacher can believe in the student; he/she can have faith, especially at times when all the conventional indicators point the other way in the student; he/she can affirm the deepest thing the student has within himself/herself. "That teacher lit my candle".[4]

A recent journal article in reflecting on good teachers said: "When teaching is artful, one sees a sense of wonder, and excitement in the subject matter, the free play of the imagination, a what-if vision of the world, an evoking of the unknown, and synthesis".[5]

Jonathan Kozol described the hidden curriculum as the teacher's own integrity and lived conviiction. The most memorable lesson is not what is written by the student on a sheet of yellow lined paper in the lesson pad; nor is it the clumsy sentence published in the official text. It is the message that is written in a teacher's eyes throughout the course of his or her career. It is the lesson which endures a lifetime.[6]

A good teacher is self-confident. Teaching being on show. It is challenging a student's ideas, an arrogant art if you are not well informed. It is being an oracle, passing along truths to less knowledgeable folk who depend on their teacher's accuracy. It is playing God, because a teacher's attitudes and expectations can pro-

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foundly affect young people, particularly the most vulnerable among them. You are reassured when your students do well on other people's tests or when they use in their future education the skills you taught them. You are reassured when students seek your advice, or when colleagues watch your students and your classes and respect what is happening.[7]

And one of my favorite teacher stories... "My boy wants to spend five months at your school", the farmer said to Professor Grundvig, founder of the famous Folk School in Denmark. "However, I've looked over your course of studies, and I see only such courses as history, literature, civics, geography, and science. Nothing about farming. Tell me, will my son be a better farmer after he takes this program with you?" Professor Grundvig was silent for a moment, then replied quietly, "No, your son won't learn how to make better butter at our Folk School. But all his life he will be ashamed to make bad butter".[8]

Good teachers like these cannot be ordered out of a catalog!

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[1] Alma WITTLIN, "The Teacher", *Daedalus,* Vol. 92, pp. 745-763.
[2] Neil POSTMAN. Quotation attributed to this author.
[3] Marva COLLINS, *Marva Collins Way* (Houghton Mifflin, Co.).
[4] Douglas STEERE, *Confirming the Deepest Thing in Another* (Pamphlet).
[5] E. DUCHARME & M. KLUENDER, "Good Teachers in Good Schools" *Educational Leadership,* October 1986, pp. 43-44.
[6] Jonathan KOZOL, *On Being a Teacher* (Continuum Publishers), p. 20.
[7] Theodore SIZER, *Horace's Compromise* (Houghton Mifflin, Co), p. 181.
[8] Eugene GROLLMES, Vows But No Walls (B. Herder Co.), p. 171.

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13-C-52

COMMUNICATION AND VALUES MILIEU FOR COMMUNICATING VALUES

One of the currents of pedagogical thought being most investigated today is the theory of "milieu", especially in the field of games and creativity. This means of communicating values applied to an educative context has hardly been investigated despite the research done in recent years concerning educational values. To introduce ourselves to the theme, we might use Alfonso López Quintàs's concept of "milieu" as

> "a playing field created by the structural interaction of elements which join to make a system more or less strict in form (...) A milieu or atmosphere arises when various elements integrate in such a way as to create a field of free expression (...) The milieu or playing field is made up of every reality that can be co-related by means of converging notes or the interplay of diverse tendencies".

Values need a milieu: this milieu is created by the value's own interior dynamism. A value has its own field: spiritual, ethical, esthetical, social, cultural, material, etc.. Because of this, it exists historically in a continuous flowing. Thus, man who is subject to values, uses his own milieu in a vital manner to create other milieus in the field of liberty, judgment, communication, behavior, interpretation of reality, etc.. But above all, values create a "meeting ground" in any educational system that unites a number of formal or informal elements that become a powerful force in the larger milieu which is society, composed of the family, church, means of communication which have their own system of values where they they take on a special meaning, as we shall see.

Concerning the milieu, we can compare the reality of values to a vast circle made up of concentric circles whose inter-communication creates a field of action for known or perfectible realities by the internal force of values and by others unknown that come to light. Values don't destroy themselves, they are replaced by others. Values of pre-technical times served to lay the foundations for the values of this technical era which in turn serve as a pivot for values to be attained in the XXIst century. Thus, in the course of history, the concentric circles will interiorize themselves more and more until they irrupt in the parousia of the great Milieu, the Supreme Value which is God.

Human existence develops in an atmosphere of liberty, liberty which gives meaning to life. When one accepts this meaning of liberty in a personal and responsible way, a surrounding milieu is created, made up of commitments which take on greater force as they incarnate values or contribute to promoting values in their own field or where they project themselves by means of words, gestures or behavior: this is communication of values. The surroundings are influenced by values, but values also need a concrete world: material and human. Thus, for example, artistic values exist in literature, in works of art, in cinema, in nature, material or cosmic, etc. just as moral values exist in human relationships, and because of this, they need norms, laws, "fields of action created by the structural interplay of various elements". When communicating, values respond to the call of other milieus because they are not only to be held or possessed, but they are very specifically meant for relationship, participation, donation, recognition, commitment, presence.

From the preceding, we deduct that values give man a great ability to create fields of action which become "events" in his life: material or economic values concerning production, the just use and distribution of the things necessary for life, for the individual and for society, at all levels. Corporal values, biological or vital, related to the transmission, reproduction and maintenance of life (health, lodging, food, work, etc.) cultural values which embrace wisdom and knowledge, technology and scientific development, but above all, esthetical values which mean to create, produce, amplify and appreciate the meaning of beauty, the splendor of truth. Social and political values which mean relations and inter-relations among men or communities, and generate milieus for living in common, for communication, solidarity, subsidiarity, etc.. Moral and religious values corresponding to that totally harmonious period which situate man in a trascendental milieu. Finally, as values intermingle and interact with each other, they acquire concrete and precise meaning, and at the same time, give rise to complex situations which reflect new sensitivities to which man must respond.

N. Hartmann (Ethik, XX, 6) quoted by J.M. Méndez, says "that creative energy, productiivity and actualization proceed from values. Va-

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lues are the power behind the "what should be", the center of gravity, the first entelechy of the moment".

In order that this creative process that Hartman refers to can take place, values have to be found in man: "A value is something in itself but in relation to someone", in an open, creative and communicative relationship where the person and the value are not the same reality but are inherent and inseparable.

"This creative process, says Alfonso López Quintás, is the privileged spot of self-revelation in man, because the privileged part of his constitution and his expansion within the reality of his milieu".

And he points out five concrete actions concerning milieu which man must attend to:

1. He accepts the reality of his environment, the situations that frame it, situations that helped create it.

2. He makes his option according to the environment and its exigencies.

3. He draws up his personal projects according to the demands of the environment and the resources it offers.

4. He creates milieus of inter-relationship with other realities, especially human ones.

5. He self-reveals his personal condition and promotes his personality by means of co-creating milieus.

If the life of each student is a project of values which he must carry out in a daily commitment, the others benefit from this action because communication has a very fundamental anthropological dimension.

The communication of values is the communication of an "ego" who lives certain values and not simply the communication of value contents which would be a cold state, without life, or as I. Lepp would say: "the communication of an être de raison". A value is not only a norm of conduct but it also orientates conduct both for the person living it and for the one who comes under its influence: this is solidarity of values which goes much further than simple sociability of values which would be the social resonance of optional values. The solidarity of values is living with others the plenitude of values chosen in common, which, in a school milieu, takes on a very special meaning: the choice of values and a personal commitment to them becomes an offer made to others; this is what caused Sartre's anguish: for him "hell is the others". The attitude of solidarity where values are concerned is expressed in a communicative manner by means of connotative language because the reality of the environment influences others, the group, depending on one's personal concept and experience of the reality. But it must not only be connotative communication (let's also call it cognitive) to avoid a manipulation, it must be accompanied by emotional and sentimental communication where objectivity and subjectivity find a good equilibrium and generate an authentic model of communicating values with interaction of persons and society.

There is a difficult which consists in drawing the lines which separate the two milieus of values: personal and social. In passing, it is to be remembered that the objectivity and subjectivity of values are their philosophical aspect and their aptitude to change and modification are their sociological aspect. Values are objective when considered as goods or aims; and subjective when taken as pleasure or personal preference. Consequently neither objectivity nor subjectivity, but rather objectivity and subjectivity; neither permanence nor change, but rather permanence and change. Thus real man prepares himself for a society full of possibilities of change.

Thanks to human nature, the mutability of values is a privilege which makes it possible to evaluate, reform and perfect scales of values that have been preconceived or inscribed in determined historical or cultural eras. To educate is not so much to create a scale of values as to "furnish the individual possibilities of constant change and renewal, including values".

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13-D-22

THE LASALLIAN FAMILY ENCOUNTERS

For the past several years all types of meetings with members of the Lasallian Family have been in vogue. I believe that in all this, the Holy Spirit has had an important role.

Various Facts

— As I have said, it is a fact that there is truly an abundance of Encounters of this type these days. It is also certain, that one well-conducted meeting leads to another of the same kind. The meeting which has left a good savor in the mouth of the participants suggests another of the same quality, and so the chain continues on.

— Everywhere. A first Encounter, Parmenie, for example, led to another there and another in Canada. A meeting in Los Teques, Caracas, led to a movement in a chain of meetings in Latin America. The meeting in Borassart at the world level led to the resolution of repeating the experience every two years, leading to the meeting in 1987 in Toulouse.

— Still more. In addition to this, these "major" Encounters inspired a multitude of "minor" meetings, geographically speaking, at the national level, and numerous such meetings at the regional, local, and other levels.

An encounter is a place for fostering:

* *Brotherhood:* and this alone is a worthwhile product. One afternoon in Mexico in the World Congress of 1984 was enough for the spirit of the Lasallian Family to triumph in spreading the law of friendship among all the participants despite linguistic difficulties. This always happens. Lasallian Brotherhood is a stimulating fact which enormously facilitates the work of the Encounters.

* *Prayer:* We must not fail to recall the example of Brother Athanase Emile in New York, when in front of a crowd of some two thousand former students, in order to call the attention of the crowd for the prayer before meals, simple said into the microphone: Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God". The group immediately fell silent. In the meetings, when the organizers want attention and preparadness, prayer quickly brings this about. It grows and even achieves high levels of concentration. This leads to extra hours of nocturnal adoration. And I think that this is not so mysterious. Someone has said: "Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them". And when the apostles, together with the mother of Jesus, were united in prayer, it was the favorable occasion for the Holy Spirit to descend upon all and to fill them with unction and courage. When our Lasallians are gathered together full of good will they attract the Spirit of Jesus. This might seem to be a mere theory. No, it is an experienced fact and sometimes amid great emotion.

* *A meeting with the Founder:* This is a section which deserves an entire article, but we must go on. Still, if there is one fact upon which the Brothers should reflect deeply it is this: the Founder exercises a mysterious, irresistible and impassioned influence on Lasallians of every age and condition. Saint John Baptist de La Salle is for our seculars "our Father and Founder". And they say so. In Mexico a slogan which became popular with the young people (and they made up 40% of the congress) "We are La Salle today!" When people come into contact with La Salle, "it is like a virus" which enters you and stay with you. From this comes the frequent appeals from our secular friends: "Speak to us about De La Salle". In these meetings there should never be lacking a Brother who is informed enough and devoted enough to St. La Salle to be able to explain him to the groups. If he is well presented, everyone finds in the Founder a model for their convincing and enthusiastic "radicalism".

Types of Encounters

Based upon what has happened up until now, I shall explain the different types of Encounters:

* Workshop for the leaders of a National Federation. This takes place for three days in some kind of retreat house, for a group of about 40 persons and the purpose is to train group leaders.

* Beginners' Workshops. When it was not possible to have a three day workshop as listed above, the solution was to meet on Friday evening, spend the entire day Saturday and end on Sunday with Holy Mass and closing exercises. Then the "team" reported to the Association which accepted this group. The number, as always is a maximum of 40 and an minimum of 20. This has to do with a workshop of "Lasallian awareness". These have been very numerous, around a hundred of them.

* Assemblies, National and International Congresses. This is another very distinct type of encounter. They do not seem to be very deep but at the moment of truth, they generate enthusiasm and open new roads for their sectors.

* Youth Encounters. These have been growing in numbers and density. Contrary to what might be expected, these meetings usually have good content, serious prayer which is at one and the same time alive and joyful and yet serious. In these meetings, the Founder exercises a great fascination. In fact, these Encounters of youths are giving a typical Lasallian meaning to those groups and even to those sectors which are also benefiting from them.

* Encounters with secular teachers. These will increase because of the enormous interest the Institute has in offering to these "collaborators" the spirit of De La Salle which will guarantee the continuity of the "Christian School" where there is a lack of Brothers.

Parents' Meetings. These parents are very interested in the schools and they do not limit themselves in their meetings to disciplinary aspects and school needs. These meetings can be and some are, special moments of communion with the school and its Christian ideals.

Meetings of Former Students. These traditional annual meetings are today becoming ones of some more substance than just the traditional friendly get-together. These "parties" have taken on a progressive transformation more in keeping with the Lasallian spirit.

* There are more, but it seems that this listing, though not exhaustive, is sufficient.

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Week-end and three day encounters

* Time and place. Look for a strategic location which will allow for optimum use of the time available. The school or some other building chosen for the occasion but a change of atmosphere is always preferable.

* The Number. This depends upon the type of encounter. For a workshop type of meeting the ideal would seem to be 25 to 35. For a Youth Encounter, depending upon the perspective, there can be 150 or 300 or even as many as 5,000. It seems that from the point of view of practicality, the number sought should be the number of those who can be personally reached by those running the encounter.

* Selecting participants. This does not demand anything special beyond good will, common sense, willingness to serve, and some kind of assurance that the desired activity will be followed.

* Encounter organizers. This is an important point. The Director should be someone well informed about what the Lasallian Family means today.

The team running the encounter should be well versed in group techniques. It is important that in the group there are some Brothers who can give a specific Lasallian tone and correct knowledge of the Founder to the group. The Brother will give the proper tone through his daily reflection.

* Punctuality. No one should be admitted who cannot remain for the entire time. People who come late or leave early demoralize the group.

* Materials for the encounter. The necessary thing is to have plenty of pens and paper. The sheet for preparation and explanation of them will be enriched as the meeting progresses with the summaries, talking matters over, results of work groups, and the like. The most practical item is that the meeting must be remembered.

* Meeting Room. This should be properly ventilated and comfortable in temperature. Everyone should be able to see one another. There should be a place for notes and diagrams, a blackboard for the presentation of themes and walls where slogans, statistics, and messages can be put up as the meeting goes on.

Within the meeting itself

* We have always taken great care to have the proper atmosphere, that is, immediate friendship among the participants and seriousness in serious matters; reflection facilitates prayer which is properly prepared, and there are opportunities to be alone with oneself and with God.

* We have had the knowhow of group dynamics leading to a deepening of experiences but without the appearance of being judges or of being stereotyped. We have been aware of the efficacy of breaking down into group meetings of six members each and into linguistic groups when such was necessary, or by age groups when this was called for.

* We have given much importance to doing everything in common such as the theme, as well as giving sufficient variation in expositions, art panels, montages, etc..

* We have encouraged extra hours of prayer especially during the night which the young people appreciate and benefit by. We have organized walks by groups where they can discuss things along the road and they claim that they went to the very limit.

* We have tried to make the Eucharist the center of the Encounters, if possible, each day and without any hurry, and with various interventions in the liturgy and in the Word which furthered understanding.

* We have given much importance to singing. In the Spanish youth group encounter in Chiclana last November, a Brother worked wonders in directing the singing.

* We have endeavored to get the groups to know one another as quickly as possible and to exchange experiences and impressions. Each individual group ought to appear as it really is, expressing its own ideas, activities, difficulties, and successes.

* We have given time for both personal and group reflection. If some delegation has decided to sponsor some idea or another, it is given sufficient time at the end of the encounter to make an application of what the members had learned together.

* Celebration. Each evening after supper, we have had a celebration organized each time by a different group coming from various places, if the entire group is made up a various delegations. It is important that the celebration be a success and that it originate from them. They sometimes last until late at night and are very joyful. There is no improvisation here. The groups have to present a plan of the schema which they are going to present. This is very important.

* In the celebration as well as in other activities of the day we always put them under the charge of the organizers of the distinct groups. In international meetings these are by language groups. This avoids repetition of numbers and favors a certain wholesome competition. Each group wants to do its best.

The theme of the Encounter

This is a point of major importance. The choice of a good theme ought to be one of the chief concerns of the Lasallian organizers who venture to have an Encounter at any level. The theme must be concrete, easy to understand, easily expressed, "with teeth". For example, for the Mexico Congress the theme was "Faith, Brotherhood, Service". It was so well received that it is still being used. For Toulouse '87, "John the Baptist the Precursor-John De La Salle, the new Precursor - Lasallian Youth, the precursor of today". It is important that each group which expounds a theme does so keeping to what it wants, even using the form of exposition which best suits it.

After the Encounter

All the efforts put forth would be useless if there is no *follow-up* after the Encounter. If the participants are not the object of special attention, then there will be little result in spite of the apparent joy and enthusiasm of the departure. Following up the groups which have met is absolutely necessary if we wish to further the "Lasallian spirit" and succeed in having our Lasallian groups be something more, much more, than mere groups of good friends, who continue to write to one another after the meeting. Stay with them!!!

Brother Manuel OLIVÉ
Secretary of the Lasallian Family
Generalate Rome

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13-E-32

LET US EVANGELIZE

In wishing to evangelize the teachers John Baptist de La Salle is evangelized by them

1) His desire to evangelize the school teachers, made him take their situation seriously and impelled him to tell them his own convictions regarding the faith.

11. He drew near to them, put himself at their service for he wished to see their undertakings succeed.

* What do we do personally and as a community to be close to our lay colleagues, the most deprived youths? (Visits, receiving, sharing...).

* Can we make a list of the concerns of each of the Brothers in our community — of each of our lay teachers — of the young people we know, of the most deprived — of the priests with whom we work...?

12. His solicitude for the teachers disrupted his life as a Canon. He took risks for them with regard to his friends, he kept quiet about his personal repugnances, risks in family relations...

* With whom do we share our preoccupations as Brothers?

* How do we accept, personally and as a community the important preoccupations of the poorest youth and of our colleagues? How do we share with one another in community? Within the Church? With the city officials?

* How have these preoccupations changed our personal and community life styles? In what way?

13. In order to strengthen the first teachers in the faith, John Baptist de La Salle risked in their regard his own convictions about believing.

* What words of faith do we dare to say to our colleagues, to the young, to the most abandoned youths?

Under what circumstances have we told them these things and why?

2) John Baptist de La Salle was reproached by the first teachers.

21. The teachers were able to make reproaches which had a basis.

* What would a lack of well-founded reproaches in our regard on the part of our colleagues, youth, and the poorest people signify?

* What reproaches have been addressed to us?

What reproaches have been given to us in response to words of faith? Did these reproaches seem to be well founded?

22. John Baptist de La Salle consults Father Barré.

* How do the reproaches which we meet become the object of seeking guidance, of reflection, of discernment?

23. The reproaches which he suffered became for him food for prayer.

* What about us?

24. Following these reproaches, John Baptist de La Salle opted for conversion by distributing all his goods to the poor and by relinquishing his Canonry.

* Can we say that the young, our colleagues have led us to opting for conversion? In what way?

* Can we say that we have accepted the same Gospel as those whom we have striven to evangelize.

Allow yourself to be educated and evangelized by the poor

Like John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers of the Institute, we believe that the Gospel is the first chance for life and human success for the most neglected children and youths and we have set our heart to bringing the gospel to them. But the Gospel is not a remedy, nourishment, or lifebuoy which is external to those who wish to bring it to others. It is the word of God which profits those who bring it as it does those to whom they wish to bring it. The Gospel is as prime for the missionary who wishes to be sent by Him as it is for those to whom he is sent. And this Good news understood by the missionary as the source of salvation for those to whom he wishes to give it, becomes also for him the Good News of salvation if he really sets about taking the means of making it understood by those whom he wishes to help; and the poor whom we wish to save become through the Gospel agents of our own evangelization.

"I would have to remain silent and would have no right to speak about perfection with regard to poverty if I myself am not poor; nor about

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abandonment to Divine Providence if I have financial resources protecting me from want; nor on perfect confidence in God if a good income frees me from any anxieties". (Blain 1 p. 131) "having established his schools on the Foundation of Providence, he would give all his goods for the sake of the poor while saving nothing for the Brothers' community... He gives all his savings away. Those who witnessed this magnanimity were struck by astonishment to see a man so full of confidence in the resources of Divine Providence..." (Maillefer p. 103-104).

In order to announce the Gospel to the teachers, who were just as poor as were the pupils, John Baptist de La Salle makes himself materially poor with them. He understands that "nothing can attract hearts to God as the poor and humble state of those who wish to lead them to Him". (Meditation for Christmas 3rd P.). "The Brothers, by his example, are so strengthened against mistrust and inquietude that they abandon themselves completely to Providence..." (Maillefer p. 105).

At the heart of all his riches, John Baptist de La Salle had the heart of a poor man. He took to heart bringing this Spirit to the teachers who were deprived of riches by risking the words of faith. This providential encounter had the double effect of bringing the benefits of material poverty to the missionary and to the others the discovery of the spirit of poverty within the depths of their privations.

This evangelical lesson of our Founder is an illustration of the mystery of the Incarnation: the Son of God became man so that men in their turn could become Sons of God by adoption. Those among the young who have the least chance of succeding at making their human lives into the image of God are very numerous and these are the very ones who are inviting us the most to make this teaching of God, which providentially is the foundation of our religious life, come alive. The appeal to live as poorly as possible is an invitation to us to reactivate ourselves in the source of our religious life. By accepting for the sake of God to become poor among the poor, to announce the Good News to them, we make the Gospel fruitful for them and for ourselves and we follow along the road to exaltation as did the Son to the Glory of God the Father (cf. Phil 2, 6-12).

Something to pray over

God will make Himself known to us more and more with each passing day if we try to live in His fulness (Cfr. John 17, 3).

By being accepted into His love, we have become participants of the manifestation of his Love for men in Christ (cfr. John, 4, 9); we are called in the same Spirit to the holiness of God and we have been sent to sanctify other people.

And the means by which he sends us to serve the lives of those whom he confides to us, and especially the poor for whom he has a preferance, are those by which he leads our own lives in Christ. The more we set about serving the life of those confided to our care, and especially those who are the least alive, the more we will dispose ourselves to grow in the life of God.

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13-E-33

VOCATIONAL APOSTOLATE

The vocational Apostolate is both a priority and disturbing factor in our District Plan. We are conscious of the difficulties of having too sanguine hopes and being convinced that "it is the Lord who does the calling". The clamor of so much work and the lack of relief, and the steadily rising median age of the Brothers are things which both urge us on and disquiet us.

The vocational apostolate seems to be the duty of individuals, even being an integrated area in the general pastoral activity of each school in which each Brother should be involved.

Because every vocational work implies:

— A call to define, revise, and question ourselves and our authenticity.

— It is to discover how we are and to feel humility and courage for how little our life is convincing.

— It is to feel ourselves summoned to account for the most noble ideals of our vocation, for the genuine charism for which we have been instituted.

— It is to return to the roots of the experience of God in poverty, availability, and unconditional self-surrender.

— It is to constantly examine if Jesus occupies the center of our life, and of our Community.

— It is to determine if our life is very far from being the explicit Good News which our young people are waiting for.

There is only one way of completing this "theory": Do I INVITE others and PROPAGATE my way of life because I feel happy in it and because the ideal I am living is well worthwhile? Our Rules, art. 85 have an identical message as that of Pope John Paul II: the campaign for Vocations will be successful when:

1) The Brothers live as consecrated persons.

2) The Community becomes a brotherly home.

3) When we walk constantly toward a conversion of hearts and of total surrender to the most needy.

1. Can we talk about our vocation to today's youth?

It is credible to invite others only if we love the life we are living. A VOCATION is an experience of God, a determined form of keeping the faith, it is to take upon ourselves the salvific plan of Jesus, it is to give off signals while leaving the initiative to God, to walk in the light of the blessed, to have made a fundamental option for Jesus. If this is not the case, we cannot offer any "bargains". In order to understand something, one must live it; in order to love something, one must live it with ardent dreams and desires.

Yes, it is possible to talk to some young people. They listen with the greatest respect and interest; but an echo is found in very few of them. There are some who are interested in knowing, but they feel themselves weak, harrassed, incapable of dedicating and committing themselves. A society which lives smugly, closed in upon itself, which seeks its own advantage and individualism cannot understand commitment and gratuitous service. Today's youth is devoid of ideas other than those of the superficial, consumer society defeaned by noise. He cannot hear the whisper of the call. Youths need more good example and opportunities for silence and prayer.

The Brother, in order to get himself across to his students, must present himself as a religious consecrated to God, and not simply as a Professor. He must be a witness who speaks and expresses the faith which encompasses him, the educator who transmits what he lives, and the animator who gets himself across to youth to help them discover the values which give meaning to life. This must be done because nobody can clearly propose a vocation which is in crisis.

Today our vocation as Brothers is being called into question by our older students, by many parents, by our very fellow teachers who know us well, when we do not radiate the Gospel, when they see the Brother content to remain simply a teacher, no matter how competent he may be, when he distances himself from the other Brothers and from his home community, when he gets himself all wrapped up in his solitary and smug life.

2. The subject of the entire vocational apostolate is the community

It is the duly established Community which assumes the responsibility of inviting others to live the joys of brotherhood and of the Good News. The mother of every vocation is the community; the team or animator-coordinator will simply be the "mid-wife". The living community which prays, which plans things together, is open and can be known from within is one which will be victorious.

There exists a fear that the inauthenticity, the "other hidden face" of the community will be discovered. Who in the Community is now living through the vocational anxiety? Who is praying fervently and is warmly open to candidates to the Brothers? What is the central interest, the prime objective, and greatest joy of the community?

3. The youth are afraid

Perhaps they do not meet anyone who "throws them into the water". They tell us "we live well", but this life does not attract them... To leave their family, their comfortable life, to immerse themselves in necessary ventures, to learn to give of themselves... that is a long dark road. It seems that the youth are afraid to begin flying. In reality, they have not discovered the most elemental human values. Whatever is undiscovered cannot provoke interest or allegiance.

One needs healthy "happenings", the joys of giving and of emptying one's self, of forgetting about one's self. The youth, Vatican II reminds us, will join those who are capable of giving them reasons for living and for hope.

The choice to follow a vocation goes contrary to natural tendencies, contrary to what is easy and egoistical. A total choice liberates, integrates, and matures. And, nevertheless, the young seem to indefinitely dilly dally in their reply and vocational commitment. A total choice, they think, will curtail their liberty and field of possibilities.

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4. The vocational apostolate of each brother and of each community

Such an apostolate is born of an expression of Jesus, of the presence of God maintained in a life which encompasses all:

* Our daily prayer and Eucharist in Community.

* Our openness of spirit of each day accepting our students in the reflection and in our solicitude for their formation.

* Our classes which are competent, pleasant, and motivating.

* The diversified dialogue with all our students, and with special attention to those most in need.

* The Catechism replete with warmth, and with saving and liberating meaning.

* The initiatives of formation during leisure hours, doing what arouses creativity, and initiative, in liberty and joy.

* The invitations to pray and live together, to savor silence and peace.

* Dialogue with parents and friends, opening ties of affection and of acceptance to the Lasallian Family.

5. Only thus will the brother plow the furrows of vocations:

* AROUSING, awakening Vocations, discovering the most profound joys in following God. Approaching the Gospel values by one's own witness and by one's own experiences in living its noble values.

* MAKING PROPOSALS and explicit invitations to those youths whom we find properly disposed and qualified, to follow our life.

* RECEIVING, and carefully CULTIVATING the process of growth of the seed of a vocation. Following with solicitude those uncertain and searching steps.

* HELPING the vocation GROW with its needs, invitation, and commitment; with human inquiries, serious proposals of religious formation and evangelical reflection; working along with it in the "desert" and in prayer. Furthering ideals leading to the crystalization of such a definite ideal and form of life.

* ORIENTATING the process towards a DECISION and option discerned by, and committed to, motives of faith and love. Inserting these same youths into Christian and religious groups and Communities.

6. The climate of our schools

All of our schools are training grounds of evangelization. The Lasallian ideal has to accept life as offerings in a fraternal relationship among the members who make up the educative community. Everything that goes on in a Christian school is pastoral and is repeated even day.

The healthy school climate must disintoxicate the youth from their vicious, secularized, and bourgeois atmosphere, develop a critical sense in them, and arouse their appetite for the values of the kingdom. The school ought to choose between the pastoral quality and the quantity of students and form them in an Educational Plan at every level. If the school does not define its Plan and its strategic lines of pastoral activity it is not possible for it to expect results and continuity in the process of managing a relevant Christian community.

We must avoid the extremes of sacralizing the mass or of reducing the faith to its bare minimum; we have to opt for Christian values and attitudes which will be seconded by the teachers and accepted by the parents. Our competency and our future are in the offering of Christian values and not in technology nor even in the quality of our teaching.

Communities must project this life into Christian groups which arouse an inner dynamism within their students.

7. Offerings to youth from the district pastoral program

Every pastoral activity specifies some clear objectives and throughout succeeds in having them cover every step of the maturation of persons. For the most part, the schools can maintain these offerings:

* Catechetical programs for First Communion and Confirmation.

* Beginning vocational groups for those 12 and 13 years old.

* Christian live-in groups for those fourteen years of age. Continue to form new groups to assure perseverance and deepening.

* From fifteen years on, the offerings must be more intense.

— Live-in groups, Youth Encounters, Youth Easter gatherings...

— Summer Courses: a week of intense religious, biblical, Lasallian formation.

— Workshop for university students.

— Missionary experience in Guinea, provides vitality to Christian commitment in advanced groups.

8. District structures and perspectives

A permanent inter-district communication is in operation which provides information on pastoral activities and on vocational and formation processes.

This work presupposes a network of many Brothers.

We have to restructure many pastoral projects and define priority objectives and urgencies. We must designate more potential workers, more Brothers must work for vocations.

Perhaps we have to revise the same structures upon which the collegial organization, the persons on which the burden of responsibility is based, in order to achieve other results or to suppress all anxiety in face of the impossible.

Yet, at all times, it has to be the Community itself which brings the initiative from its internal dynamism, from the gracious generosity of the Brothers. This includes the idea that the Brothers themselves will begin new ways of living which are distinct, committed, more evangelical, and which are characterized by coherence and authenticity.

It is possible for our ideal to be reborn, to spread, and to multiply because God is with us, our ideal is worthwhile and the "prime material" is in our hands. Let us have hope. Let us look alive.

Brother Lorenzo TÉBAR
C. Mariano Benlliure, 1
PATERNA, Valencia

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13-E-34

NEW LIFE COMMUNITY

In Melbourne, Brother Tom Clark is striving to provide a spiritual oasis in modern society — a place where young people can come together to pray, sing and exchange their ideas about Christian life. He has formed a group called the New Life Community, which evolved for secondary students, and now includes about fifty boys and girls between fifteen and twenty.

As a teacher of Religious Education, Brother Tom saw a great need for young people to look more deeply into their faith than they were inclined to do in the classoroom, or in the Church on Sunday. The formidable pressure of the peer group seemed to make his students reluctant to seriously address those topics which are central to Christianity — relationships, the Scriptures, and prayer. He wanted to create an environment where religious conviction was accepted and affirmed instead of scorned.

The origins of New Life

With the assistance of other brothers, and some members of a local Charismatic prayer community, Brother Tom conducted each year a ten week seminar. This seminar was similar in concept to the Life in the Spirit seminar which is used in Australia to introduce adults to Christ, but it was directed at young people, with a view to a deeper understanding and faith in God. The attendants were mainly senior students from St. Bede's College and of a neighbouring Brigidine girl's school. These seminars are continuing to provide a profound experience of Christianity. It became evident, however, that the impact of the seminar rarely lasted beyond the ten weeks, and that some sort of follow-up was essential.

The New Life Seminar of 1984 concluded with a Mass, after which Brother Tom invited the participants to return the following Sunday for an evening of prayer. This small group continued to meet for several weeks until they decided to form a community — something more permanent than just ten weeks. A logo was designed and incorporated into a banner, an identity evolved, and the group grew both in size and commitment.

One of the most striking things about the New Life Community is the nature of the young people. Something almost all new-comers comment on is the welcome they receive. The friendly atmosphere is often so different from anything they have experienced that they want to stay. They meet people who are generous, out-going, confident, but still within a sphere to which they can relate. These factors are vital, for they contribute to an environment which promotes freedom and self-esteem. This environment makes one's search for God so much easier; it allows for failure, for questions, for expression, and it returns love and acceptance instead of derision and contempt.

While most of the New Lifers are at secondary schools, many of them are pursuing tertiary study, apprenticeships, vocations, marriages or jobs. The values and images projected by society often conflict so strongly with Christ's teaching that the adolescent is swayed constantly from one view to another. New Life is a firm foothold is sound values which last, and weather periods of searching and questioning.

The meetings

The Community meets on Sunday evenings to pray and sing, to mix and talk. The meeting can take various forms, but usually begins with songs of praise, followed by some sort of presentation. Everyone in the group is encouraged to give a talk or present something on a Sunday night at least once. As well as providing an ideal learning experience, it ensures variety and interest. Brother Cal. Cusak also attends the meetings, and recently presented an insight into the life and philosophies of St. De La Salle. Each year he also shares some very profound thoughts on Lent and Easter. The issues of faith, prayer, community, the Eucharist, relationships, sexuality and family, as well as more immediate events like the Pope's visit to Melbourne, the La Sallian Youth Festival in Sydney, along with major events in the Church's calendar are presented in original and provocative ways by the members themselves. They then like to discuss the topic, either altogether or in small groups. About half an hour of shared prayer concludes the formal part of the meeting, then tea, coffee, biscuits and 'Milo' circulate with the conversation and news.

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Other activities

These Sunday night gatherings, however, are not the only contributor to the invaluable growth and development that take place within the New LIfe Community. A great deal of careful thought goes into the planning of many other activities. An important feature of New Life is the weekend camps and retreats which take place each year. The success of these is increasingly due to the young people themselves, who dedicate their time and creativity to choosing a theme, and presenting it through music, prayer, talks, discussions, reflections, booklets and a Mass. About fifteen of these camps have been held already. They invariably build a phenomenal community spirit, and bring each person closer to the Lord.

The practical details of running New Life are entrusted to the members of a council, who are elected by the group and meet each week with Brother Tom to plan the meetings and bring forward new ideas. This council was only initiated about six months ago, but has proven extremely successful. In addition, there are several smaller groups which meet fortnightly for prayer. These cater for the older members of the group who now need more than New Life offers. Instead of leaving the Community for want of a deeper experience, they have formed strong, lasting bonds with each other; together they pray for one another and the Community, they discuss problems that arise, and they minister to each other's needs for support in their struggle to be like Jesus. The faith of these people has grown remarkably through their association with New Life.

Ministering to youth in crisis

Brother Tom is also the director of 'Vaugirard', a home which welcomes young people with family difficulties or personal problems, who need some time to reflect and sort things out. These people come mainly from the La Sallian schools in the area, but boys and girls are also referred by local parish priests, social workers, counsellors, Community Policing Squads, the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, the Department of Community Services, school principals and the Children's Court. Vaugirard, named after La Salle's property in Paris, is very much a community centre. The New Life members are encouraged to drop by often, and they have a profound influence on the guests who stay there. New Life has also been the instrument of many fund-raising initiatives for the hostel, such as cake-stalls in the parish, competitions, raffles and a Charity Ball.

The New Life Community has been active for almost four years. Much of this time has been spent learning the needs and attributes of young people. One can look back over this time and begin to understand exactly what New Life is doing. These people will surely help to renew the Church, for they are taking Christ with them into the future. At New Life they listen and discover what God is calling them to, as individuals and as members of a larger body, the Church. They are finding encouragement to go out and do their Father's work.

Miss Beata J. MOLONEY

Beata Moloney is a student teacher at Melbourne College of Advanced Education. She has been committed to New Life since its outset and as a leader she has contributed actively to the growth of the community.

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13-E-35

"FE Y ALEGRIA" (FAITH AND JOY) THE EXTRAORDINARY MOVEMENT OF POPULAR INTEGRAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA (1)

"Where the pavements ends
Where the water doesn't reach
Where the city loses its proper name
That is where Fe y Alegria begins...".

Latin America is the continent of superlatives almost by definition. Unfortunately many of its "mosts" are on the negative side. As the continent draws close to the 500th anniversary of its European discovery and evangelization, an overview suggests "What might have been". The beauty of the land, its abundant resources, its hundreds of millions of inhabitants, might all have come together to form something as close to an ideal society as the real world would permit. But the weight of the real, and sinful, world has produced a present day reality in which the great majority of Latin Americans is very poor. Man's avarice and selfishness have resulted in an insurmountable gulf between the rich and the poor. Not even the Church can be entirely exempt from blame. In spite of numerous and heroic defenders of the downtrodden, as a general rule, the Church was seen as defender of the established order of things from colonial and republican times. This was true in the field of education. Church schools, the "colegios", were most often at the service of the monied classes. The poor rarely had the same advantages and, as the continent passed the halfway mark in this century, the sheer masses of the unschooled and illiterate seemed to pose an invincible challenge. The governments themselves, the ministries of education, could come together at international conferences such as the one sponsored by UNESCO in Costa Rica in June of 1983 and blithely pledge themselves to eradicate illiteracy by 1999 and ensure from eight to ten years of formal education for all children; but a deepening economic crisis, heavy external debts and grave social ills make even that target date unattainable.

What can the Church do? Even more quixotically, what can one man do? This article is precisely about one man who dared to take up the challenge of the unschooled millions — and greatly succeeded in his own lifetime. Even more importantly, his spiritual legacy lives on, his work constantly expanding. The man is Father José María Vélaz S.J., the founder of Fe y Alegria, "Faith and Joy", the Movement of Popular Integral Education in ten Latin America countries.

The time is 1955. The place, a slum neighborhood of Caracas, Venezuela, one of the infamous barrios that ring the glittering towers of the city center, clinging precariously to the hillsides. Father José Maria Vélaz, a Jesuit priest born in Chile but educated in Spain where he also entered the Society of Jesus, is visiting again with some of his university students. They have been coming for a good while now, helping out with catechism classes and some of the corporal works of mercy, but it is like writing in the sand at the edge of the sea, so easily is a day's effort forgotten by the time of the following visit. The grinding poverty makes a mockery of any little improvement they felt they had made. The young students begin to think that it is all hopeless but Father Vélaz has been thinking, praying, looking for a solution. He now feels that he can put his finger on the root cause of the injustices and inequalities that they see. It is ignorance. "It is absolutely necessary for us to start a school", he says. "Otherwise, we are just wasting our time".

The pronouncement is overheard by a cement mason. Abraham Reyes is an extraordinary man; already the father of eight, he would eventually have thirteen of his own children plus some twenty adopted children that for a time at least would form part of his family. He has expanded his house on the side of a hill so that each of the two levels can be entered directly from the street. At the moment his family is only using one of the floors. "I can offer my house", he says. And so, a sign is hung over the door announcing that a school accepts boy students. Thus, Fe y Alegria is born.

For the Brother of the Christian Schools, for the Lasallian Family, that chance meeting, that analysis, that generous response, have an echo that rolls back almost three centuries to the city of Rheims in France. A young Canon of the Cathedral Chapter, John Baptist de La Salle, met that enthusiastic sower of charity schools, M. Adrian Nyel, on the doorstep of the Sisters of the Divine Child. Providence would weave a web of persons, places and events and John Baptist would follow faithfully what he came to see as God's will. The result, thirty-seven years later, was the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At the time of his death, de La Salle could count more than a score of schools, nearly 250 Brothers and some 10,000 children in the schools, all in the Kingdom of France but for one small beginning in Rome.

Father José Maria Vélaz died in 1985. What he and Abraham Reyes began thirty-two ago has had an extraordinary development, far more impressive in the terms of mere numbers than the beginnings of John Baptist de La Salle's Brothers and the Christian Schools. To introduce a few of the statistics: at the end of 1986 there were 371 educational centers in ten Latin American countries, 303,249 students, 10,799 educators (administrators, teachers and auxiliaries); the centers include pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, plants for technical and special education, radio schools and "non-formal" or adult educatio. courses. An astonishing statistic is that of the 113 religious congregations, with 791 religious — almost exclusively Sisters — that collaborate with the Jesuit Fathers in the management of most centers.

The Institute of the Brothers bears the unmistakable mark of the personality and inspiration of its Founder,

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John Baptist de La Salle. That fact is the condition sine qua non of the growth and vigor of the Institute. In an undertaking of the scope of the Fe y Alegria Movement, the imprint of its founder has assured the strength, the unity of vision and growth of the whole system. What sort of man was José Maria Velaz? He is described by a fellow Jesuit, Father Fernando Gutiérrez Duque, National Director of Fe y Alegria in Guatemala, as a "good priest and religious", "an efficient poet, all that he dreamed of for Fe y Alegria, he brought about". It seems that he had an uncanny intuition for striking the responsive chord in possible collaborators and gaining their support. Here the superficial parallel with the life and work of St. John Baptist de La Salle does not carry through. Father Vélaz's itinerary is not marked by great crises and failures. There was some criticism and isolation. He was often charged with the "fetish of numbers". Nevertheless, from the small beginnings we've already seen, the work quickly burgeoned; he succeeded in attracting the support not only of private enterprise and international agencies but also managed substantial subsidies of governments that had done little for private education and have even acted in a decidedly anticlerical spirit. Towards the end of his life he was recognized as an educational pioneer in much of Latin America and had begun to be awarded honorary doctorates.

With his own Society of Jesus Father Vélaz passed through three distinct moments with regard to Fe y Alegria. The first was isolation. Here was a professor of humanities in the university who suddenly was dabbling in schools for slum dwellers. "He must be crazy but let him get it out of his system". The next moment was one of interest, but still from a distance. "Well, something is certainly happening. Let's see how it develops". It might be pointed out here that Vatican II had taken place and its interpretation for Latin America as the preferential option for the poor and for youth had been pronounced by the Bishops at their Medellin and Puebla Conferences. The traditional Jesuit apostolate of schools for the future elite was being examined critically. The notion of schools for the very poor and disadvantaged seemed to make good sense. The final moment, which Father Gutiérrez Duque smilingly dubbed "the most dangerous of all", was the full recognition on the part of the Jesuits of Latin America of the worth of the Fe y Alegria Movement. The "danger" was that the work would be taken over by the Society. Actually, Fe y Alegria is independently incorporated in each country in which it is present. It is all bound together in a loose federation of national directors and by the spiritual legacy of Father José Maria Vélaz who participated in the drafting of the "Ideario" or basic philosophy of Fe y Alegria. The commitment of the Jesuit Fathers is in personnel: nine of the ten national directors are Jesuits and, of these, five have been provincials. Financially, the Society has never made direct contributions.

How then has Fe y Alegria evolved in the thirty-two years of its existence? The Movement identifies itself as popular, integral education born of, and dynamized by, a living out of the Christian Faith which, faced with situations of injustices, commits itself to the cause of the poor and neglected in the building up of a more just and fraternal society.

The term *popular* seems to be applied rather loosely to most modern educational movements. For Fe y Alegria it has specific meaning: It is experiential rather than academic; it is geared to work, to production, to usefulness; it is, besides, gratuitous as are the public schools but with the stress on that quality education that private schools can offer; it is inculturated in the marginated, unattended, areas; finally, it offers diplomas, recognizing the fact that, for the poor person, the title is important for his or her self realization and for purposes of employment.

Integral applies to the entire person, at every level: faith, intellect and human values. It might be mentioned here that there is no discrimination based on ethnic, economic or religious considerations. Especially in these latter, Fe y Alegria provides an ecumenical meeting place for the many religions. It is a well-known fact that, in recent decades, evangelical and fundamentalist sects have made tremendous inroads in the poor barrios and villages of Latin America, precisely the target areas of the Fe y Alegria Movement. As a result, up to 50% or more of the student population is identified as non-Catholic. The parents and children are aware of the Catholic origins and administration of Fe y Alegria but they also know that the non-Catholic sects receive due respect even in the religion classes and class prayers.

In an interview, Father Gutiérrez Duque stated that for some years he has studied the conferences of Father Vélaz and had, besides, numerous personal contacts with the founder of Fe y Alegria. He has reached the conclusion that the essential character of the movement can be distilled in two concepts, alliteratively termed "*Marginality and Multitude*".

The first of these has to do with the absolute fidelity Fe y Alegria has had to its objective of quality education in the abandoned places, the zones of greatest demand and within the reach of the population that has the fewest resources.

The second, "multitude", is probably Father Velaz's sharpest intuition and his response to the "challenge of the millions". He firmly believed that Fe y Alegria should continually stretch its capacity because, for him, it is volume that increases the possibilities of quality. Against all the voices that expressed doubts or counseled prudence, Father Vélaz achieved official recognition for his schools and substantial government subsidies for his teachers' salaries. This help varies from country to country and also has some disadvantages but, in general terms, it has meant a per-student cost that is one-third of what is required by state schools. The wisdom of Father Vélaz's intuition is demonstrated today by the impressive panoply of human and material resources cited earlier in statistics.

Death came to José Maria Vélaz July 19, 1985, in the jungles of Venezuela. El Masparro was his last Fe y Alegria school and, to the very end, his mind teemed with projects and ways to serve more and more poor children. The spirit of this practical poet is captured in his testament.

Brother Martin SPELLMAN
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13-E-36

THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM OF FAITH AND JOY (2)

1. Identity of faith and joy

1.1 Faith and Joy is a Movement of integral popular education which was born and furthered by the life of Christian Faith and which confronted with a situation of injustice, commits itself to the historical process of the common people in the construction of a more just and fraternal society.

1.2 Faith and Joy has a preferential option for the poor, and in keeping with that option, chooses those most in need to realize their educative activity and social upliftment; it is from this base that it directs towards society in general its consistent concern and search for a more human world.

2. Objectives

This movement pursues the following objectives:

2.1. To further the formation of new men and women who are conscious of the potentialities and of the realities surrounding them, and who are open to Transcendence, who are agents of change and sponsors of their own development.

2.2. To contribute to the creation of a new society whose structures make the commitment to a Christian Faith in works of love and justice possible.

3. Means

To achieve these objectives in the service of those most in need, Faith and Joy:

3.1. Demands the presence and activity of individuals and groups committed to a posture of service.

3.2. It adopts an evangelizing and liberating pedagogy.

3.3. It promotes the integration of living local strengths to form an educational community.

3.4. It thinks about and investigates the causes which began the situations of injustice.

3.5. It utilizes a planning-evaluation methodology in the pursuit of its objectives.

3.6. It specifies an organizational structure which stimulates, coordinates, and orientates all its activities.

4. Educative activity

The educative activity of Faith and Joy is characterized by the following:

4.1. An evangelical and pastoral character of all the educative activities of Faith and Joy.

4.2. Consistent efforts to understand the local and national situations and to esteem and revitalize the cultures and experiences of the people in urban areas, as well as among farmers, and the local people.

4.3. Creativity in the search for pedagogical and educative forms, both formal and informal, which correspond to the problematic situation of individuals and communities.

4.4. Emphasis on formation in and for liberating and productive work as a means of personal fulfillment and community growth.

4.5. Concern for the continuing formation and motivation of all the members of Faith and Joy.

5. Dynamism

The dynamism of the Movement is characterized by the following:

5.1. Creativity in the continued search for new ways, in fidelity to the inspirational principles of the Movement as expressed in this program.

5.2. A spirit of participation of the community and the creation and operation of centers and projects and the solidarity of these in local life and problems.

5.3. Manifestations of the Faith in true commitments to justice.

5.4. The prophetical dimension of the Movement, in itself and in its educative activities, in the battle against injustice and oppression.

5.5. Defense of educative justice as a concrete manifestation of structural justice.

5.6. Continual growth, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, with a spirit of daring enterprise.

5.7. Multiplication and selection of all kinds of human and material resources and of their wise and judicious use for quality education.

6. Organization

The organization of Faith and Joy are characterized by the following:

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6.1. A functional autonomy in countries, regions, and centers within a communion of principles and objectives, and of an interchange and solidarity in problems and projects.

6.2. An ecclesial character of the Movement as the People of God in which are manifested the presence and activity of committed lay people and of institutes of consecrated life and their own proper charism, and in union with the Society of Jesus, the founder and animator of the Movement, and in communion with the local churches.

6.3. Strength so that in the organization and functioning of the centers, regions, and countries, those values are reflected which, in accordance with the objectives f Faith and Joy, ought to build up the New Man and the New Society.

6.4. Adequate use of public relations and the means of social communications as a supportive strategy in the work of Faith and Joy, while maintaining its identity and independence.

TESTAMENT
of Father José Maria Veláz, SJ

"I am thinking of you,
you that have yet to come.
I have been raising up Schools and Shops
for a new Youth,
Marking out paths
for footsteps that will not be mine.
Piling up books of Art
that are filled with hope,
because beauty
is the mother lode of hope,
readying teachers who
will regard you as their own sons
for you will be their heirs.

I have been thinking about flowers
may they bring joy to your lives
in the fragrance that permeates your hearts.
I have been planting trees
whose gentle pity
might soon shade my tomb,
forming the woods
that will embrace the mountainside,
transforming it into a Sanctuary
of peace, of power, of harmony.

For you that will come,
whom I do not know, but already love,
for you who have not yet been born,
for the sad little girl
that has never known a caress,
for the orphaned child,
graduate of the University of neglect,
for those who have no advocate
to defend them,
for those of you that have never seen
a house where Love can dwell.

Of the wild forest
I want to make a park,
where the pleasant ways and paths
may explore the secret
of the great stands of trees,
may bring forth the word
that is now heard only as
Far-off rumors, moans and cries,
a word that will translate
the language of the biting wind,
and of the gentle breeze,
that may comprehend
the profound voices
of the calm and the silence.

I want to invent
All sorts of cabins and shelters,
that have a welcoming air about them,
where the warm and eloquent solitude
will receive the new arrivals
as brothers,
and will teach them to delve deeply
into the forest of their own selves.

I have a dream of harmonizing all in one single theme
the Forest, the Shops, the Books,
the teachers and the Counsellors,
Faith, Landscape and Prayer,
the great Projects of the Future,
Art, Hope and Love.

How high can inventiveness, Illusion
and hopes soar?
I would want to have an heir
of my great desires,
for whom the barrier of death
is farther off
than it is for me,
so that the pressing tasks may multiply,
the horizons broaden,
and the heartbeat of my dream continue to throb
so that, from the dormant power
of this land,
a redeeming new start may spring.

The snow of these heights refreshes
the hive that is my brow, teeming with projects.
The breeze stirs new life
and its murmur
is my solitude.
In the niche that is this humble paper,
in this fleeting moment,
I leave hidden the testament
of my impotent striving.

Perhaps it will find
those who will carry it through.
Perhaps this spark may one day be a conflagration.
It is a seed, nothing more,
that seeks
the soil, the soil of multiplication
in dying first...".

El Masparro (Venezuela)
18 July, 1985

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13-E-37

"LA RELEVE": A SPRINGBOARD FOR THE YOUNG

1. Birth of the movement

The other day, I was talking about LA RELEVE (Relief) with one of my friends. Before I had the time to recount the experience which I have had among the young, he asked me: "LA RELEVE? What is that?" Because the movement is not very old (It has been in existence for only four years in the diocese of Quebec) I was not surprised by the question. However, I said to myself that perhaps the time has come to make this movement better known!

LA RELEVE is a Catholic movement, set up by the *cursillistas* (members of the CURSILLO movement, which is for adults) in the diocese of Saint-Jean d'Iberville during the years 1975-77.

La RELEVE endeavors to gather together young people of 15, 16, and 17 years of age who wish, together with youths of their age, to set out on the path to becoming at once human and Christian. These "adults of the future" are in charge of the movement and they are responsible for animating the activities. The adults who work along with them have as their mission helping them to get organized and to persevere in the activities which they undertake.

Some reflections on these youths

* They adore the "La Relève" weekends.

* Several of them are a bit timid during the first contacts with the community.

* They recognize that they need the adults so that the group functions well.

* They are lively enough, sometimes excited... this is not serious, merely a reflection of their age.

* They lack toughness. Their thoughts are not yet entirely formed. They sometimes allow themselves to say almost anything arising from poorly-based opinions. They must learn to correct themselves because that is necessary, and they must learn to accept certain "untruths" from time to time.

* They very much appreciate being able to share their faith. When there is a climate of respect and acceptance, they express their prayers easily enough.

* They are spontaneous and they make no bones about expressing their disagreement.

* They easily forget. They have to be constantly reminded!

* They always want someone to help them to persevere in carrying out their projects.

* They are not always very weak.

* They are never "in a hurry". They often wait for the last minute.

* They like to be able to meet socially occasionally.

* They appreciate the values of respect, being heard, liberty of expression, fidelity, punctuality, and responsibility, even if they, like us, do not always practice it.

* Finally, the more the adult couple interest themselves in the community, the more the community is dynamic and the more the young people appreciate it.

(N.B. *They* does not *mean* the young people but *some* young people).

3. The weekly meetings

In order to share the movement, some young people, boys and girls often are invited by one of their companions, who are already members, to live the experience of a resource weekend. This experience is prepared and animated by a team of both youths and adults and is lived at the Youth Hostel of Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures. This house has been maintained as a center of pastoral animation for the past 16 years by the Brothers of the Christian Schools who generously collaborate in various ways in the activities of the movement.

So that this weekend experience will not be just a "flash in the pan", the youths can continue on their way in an already existing group called the "community". At present, there are six communities and a seventh will be established very soon. They are located in Beauport, Limoilou, l'Ancienne-Lorette, Saint-Romuald, Saint Jean Chrysstôme, Sain Anselme and soon at Sainte-Catherine-de Portneuf.

Each community meets every two weeks. The meeting is usually animated by two young peo-

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ple who have previously submitted their project for the evening to the couple in charge and to the spiritual animator of their group. Of course, the meetings touch upon the concerns of the young. It is they themselves who choose the themes of the meetings. However, they are asked to reserve a moment to enter into a more spiritual part. Thus, these young people can progress in their faith life.

Two or three times a year, the young people from all the communities come together to live the time of renewal: it can be held on a weekend at the beginning of the year or as an evening in preparation for the Feast of Easter, for example.

Up until now more than 350 youths have live this experience on 14 weekends. There are about 160 active members in the movement. There are 25 adults who generously devote themselves to helping these young people discover the presence of the Lord in this world. We sincerely believe that the LA RELEVE movement can be for the young a springboard which will allow them more basically to participate in the building up of the Kingdom.

In conclusion, allow me to thank all those men and women who have contributed to setting up and promoting this movement in our diocese. May the Lord fill them with His graces. Thanks also to all our readers for the support, of one kind or another, which you have given us.

Mr. Paul FOISY
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N° 14

January 1st 1989

FOREWORD

The first number of LASALLIANA appeared in October 1983. After that, three issues appeared regularly every year until October 1987 when LASALLIANA n. 13 was published. This number signalled the end of all further publications.

However, Brothers from several parts of the Institute wrote to the General Council to express regret at the decision taken. They had found in LASALLIANA not only much food for thought but also a means for making the Institute better known to the lay staff and the pupils in their colleges as well as to friends and benefactors. Also, groups of individuals interested in Lasallian education made effective use of LASALLIANA in their meetings and group discussions. All concerned have expressed regret at no longer being able to count on this resource.

The General Council, therefore, considered it desirable that LASALLIANA be re-published. This task has been entrusted to the Secretariat for Mission Education. Hence, from now on LASALLIANA will again appear regularly in January, April and October.

LASALLIANA n. 14 will be the first of this new series. In offering it to you together with our best wishes, we would like to avail ourselves of the occasion to remind you kindly of two points:

a/ that these leaflets on Lasallian themes are intended for the use of all members of the Lasallian Family. Some of these papers will be of immediate use to the Brothers, others will appeal to the secular teachers of the college, and others again to the parents of the pupils. But all have a common denominator: our mission as Christian educators living our origins and traditions in the world of today. Hence, it is our earnest wish that LASALLIANA be widely diffused, read and used and not be consigned to oblivion in a library or hidden away in book-shelves.

b/ that all members of the Lasallian Family who wish to co-operate by contributing articles have free access to these Lasallian leaflets. For those who wish to share their experiences, views and opinions with members of the whole Institute, articles on the following themes will be most welcome: the Founder, the History of the Institute, the mission educator, the teaching vocation, the world of pastoral education, etc., etc.

As we begin the publication of this new series of LASALLIANA, it is but right and just that we pay tribute to two Brothers to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for the significant role they played in the preparation and publication of LASALLIANA during the period October 1983 - October 1987.

The first is Brother Leon Lauraire who, as Secretary for Education, was fully responsible for the direction and publication of the earlier editions of LASALLIANA. He measured up to his responsibilities with great success to the end of his term of office.

The second is the late Brother Maurice Auguste Hermans, who was called to his heavenly reward on July 16th 1987. He was an outstanding figure in "Lasallian Studies" and an excellent collaborator of LASALLIANA. His last contribution to LASALLIANA, dated April 30th and duly signed by him, was prepared just a few weeks before his death. It will be found included in the present issue of LASALLIANA. May our gratitude to, and admiration for him, accompany our prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

With the earnest wish that LASALLIANA will be a bond of fraternal union between Regions, Districts, Delegations, Centres of education, Brothers, teachers, catechists, past pupils, parents and present pupils... in a word, between all the members of the great Lasallian Family,

Yours cordially,

Brother José María Valladolid, f.s.c.

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
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300 YEARS AGO DE LA SALLE

LEFT RHEIMS FOR PARIS

It had not taken the Archbishop Maurice Le Tellier long to become interested in the Rheims "community" founded by De La Salle. He was prepared to give it his full support, even to contribute financially. But he laid down one condition: the community could not move out of the archdiocese. In this way he would be its superior and have control of it; he would draw up statutes for it, undertake to obtain letters patent from the King and so put the foundation on a legal footing.

De La Salle declined the offers of the Archbishop, preferring insecurity but also freedom of action. The community had only just been founded and De La Salle needed to give it enough time to consolidate sufficiently before even thinking of settling down permanently in Rheims or anywhere else.

As early as 1683, he had seen that there was a possibility of taking over one of the schools in the parish of St. Sulpice in Paris. In fact De La Salle had promised the parish priest, Father La Barmondière, that he would come and take over the school. In the years that followed, the Founder felt himself bound by that promise, even if looking after his schools in the dioceses of Rheims and Laon, and especially running his Institute, prevented him from fulfilling it immediately.

In 1687, stage one was completed: there were Brothers teaching in five towns of the dioceses of Rheims and Laon; on the Mother House premises there was a novitiate, a school for training village school teachers; two assemblies attended by the most important Brothers had been held there, had made their first Chapter decisions, had adopted several rules with regard to life in common, and had elected a superior.

De La Salle thought that he was now able to hand over various positions of responsibility to the Brothers, while he himself and two Brothers could go off to Paris and revive the fortunes of a school which had once been flourishing, but which now had fallen on bad days. This, however, was not the only reason for making this journey. In fact, for the Founder, this journey meant the transfer of the headquarters of the Institute. Once in Rheims, it would now be in Paris; once in the province of Champagne, it would now be operating at a different level, that of the Kingdom of France, and in a position to make a move to Rome. And so, what was happening had everything to do with the very character of the Lasallian Institute. This is what makes De La Salle's move to Paris 300 years ago so important for us even today.

Fortunately, the Founder's biographers can give us an accurate chronological account of this event. De La Salle arrived in Paris, in the parish of St. Sulpice, on the vigil of the feast of St. Matthias, 1688. He was accompanied by two Brothers. As it was a leap year, the date must have been February 24th. The Parish Priest gave the three travellers a warm welcome and lodged them in the school house. A short time afterwards, the Brothers tried to settle things with those running the St. Sulpice school. This turned out to be neither easy nor pleasant. As everywhere else, De La Salle and his Brothers introduced order and discipline; they enforced a timetable and regular attendance; they insisted on hard work and silence. Their approach did not endear them to those who had once run the school and who now worked with the Brothers. The Founder asked the Brothers to be patient, convinced that, sooner or later, the progress made by their pupils would convince people of their competence and devotedness.

And that is what happened; so much so that the parish school now known as the "Brother's school", created for the Brothers a very good reputation not only at St. Sulpice, but in the whole city.

Let us remain with these early beginnings: February 1988 marks exactly 300 years since the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools ceased to be a diocesan institute and became de facto before becoming legally so, an international Congregation in the Church.

For the time being, however, the "Community of the Christian Schools" was an association that was merely tolerated. Official recognition would come only in 1725 when Benedict XIII gave the Lasallian Congregation the Church's approval, making it an Institute of Pontifical Right and setting its seal on something that De La Salle had wanted as early as February 1688.

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It is true that the biographers sometimes stress, perhaps a little excessively, the fact that Father John Baptist de La Salle, former Canon of Rheims, wanted to leave his native town to free himself from the influence of his relatives who held high positions in both society and in the Church. It is true also that the priest who had declined all the help available in Rheims, considered his move to Paris as a means of making his break as final as possible. There was about all this a radical approach to life that was evangelical, and it was hardly surprising in a man who had placed all his trust in God as he set about his work of founding and directing a Congregation to teach and train the humble and the poor.

This move to Paris, however heroic, was significant in quite a different way. Within the first years of his arrival in Paris, De La Salle had transferred the Institute novitiate there. It is in Paris that his work really took on its true form and scope; it is from there that Brothers left to work in 15 other dioceses; it is from there that De La Salle went so often to visit the different houses of the Institute, without ever thinking, it seems, of returning to the birthplace of his Congregation.

One cannot help feeling surprised to see De La Salle take such an important step so early on in his role as Founder. His coming to Paris meant he was leaving Brothers behind in Rheims and elsewhere who needed his presence. His Director had been in two minds about letting him go for exactly this reason: "Your Brothers still need you", he had said to him.

And in fact, once De La Salle had left for Paris, the Brothers felt somewhat at a loss: those that the Founder thought could replace him were not up to it. There was more than one instance of floundering and it was noticed by people round about. One result was that recruitment, so good up till then, came to an end.

De La Salle must have foreseen something like that was going to happen, but perhaps he did not realise the extent of the crisis his departure would provoke. The fact that he made this move shows the great importance he attached to the re-establishment of his Congretation far from those who would only too easily give way to the temptation of taking it over for themselves.

Of course, De La Salle could not foresee all the different changes that would take place in the Institute in the centuries to come, but doubtlessly, he knew, with all the intuition of a Founder, that, especially once he had gone, the Institute would need a sphere larger than that simply of a diocese in which to exist and exert its influence.

Brother Maurice Hermans

Rome, April 30th 1987

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I KNOW

THREE DIFFERENT "FOUNDERS"

Strange as it may seem, the word "Lasallian" in Lasallian Family can puzzle people. It obviously comes from De La Salle, a name which serves as a rallying cry for the members of the Family. But many of these same members have no clear idea at all of who this Founder was, and yet they live according to his "spirit" and take him as their model. They do, of course, know something about his life, but certainly not enough to justify the admiration they intuitively feel for him, nor to imitate him.

And so, who was the Founder...?

The answer is not as straightforward as you may think... As a De La Salle Brother, I know I am supposed to know, but, to tell you the truth, I have come across three quite different Founders... I thought you might be interested in hearing about them.

The "traditional" Founder

Perhaps the best way to describe what I mean is to refer you to a painting of the Founder which used to hang in the hall where I took the habit, in the house of formation at Cambrils, Barcelona. In the picture, the Saint is sitting at a table, there is a sheaf of writing paper in front of him, a goose quill pen in his right hand, and his eyes are fixed on a ray of light shining down from Heaven... On the table in front of him there is a large crucifix and a selection of disciplines... The general impression created is that of a man who is a mystic, rather on the serious side, almost forbidding, a man whose chief concern is to keep the Rule perfectly, a man who lives a life of strict mortification; a man wholly engrossed in writing books like the Rule, the Meditations and the Collection. To say the least, not a particulary attractive Founder for the young person I was then. I did not actually dare to say so out loud, but I thought to myself that St. La Salle could not really be like that... at least, not only like that. To be able to do something for children he would have to be more approachable, less serious looking, less terribly grown-up looking, more childlike, as the Gospel says.

John Baptist de La Salle

And then, as time went on and I read about the fantastic research done by Brother Leon de Marie Aroz; as I read the early biographies of the Founder, especially by Bernard and Maillefer; as I dipped into Blain and the Cahiers Lasalliens, I gradually discovered that there was another John Baptist de La Salle that had been, as it were, kept hidden from us. There is another picture of De La Salle I can describe for you. Perhaps it will surprise you: it certainly surprised me.

* There is this picture of John Baptist, 17 years old probably, already a Canon, dressed up in his choir vestments, very serious looking, quite the young gentleman with his beautifully looked after hair. Bernard tells us also that he was over polite...

* The same biographer says it was difficult to wake John Baptist up and get him out of bed, and that is the reason he would come late for the Office. Funny, isn't it? That is something we did not know...

* He liked good food. When he brought the first group of teachers to eat with him at table, he had a different menu, and it did not worry him in the least. It did not worry the teachers either.

* Rosette, his favourite sister, joined an enclosed convent in Rheims. John Baptist would go to see her much too often and bring her presents quite out of keeping with monastic austerity: there were hampers for community, and especially Mother Superior's, feastday; there was a very expensive crucifix for Rosette's cell, a warming-pan, woollen stockings, books, etc.

* He had a great respect for money. His father left him quite a lot... as well as many forgetful debtors. He set about getting back the money owed him, using the police to deal with those who had simply forgotten, and the Courts for those who refused to pay. By the end of four years, as legal guardian of his brothers and sisters, he had greatly improved their financial situation by recovering a great deal of money. He left a list of outstanding debts for his successor.

* His social standing meant a lot to him. He bought back his father's noble title for himself. There was nothing about this aristocratic canon that foreshadowed the friend of the poor.

* He admires his friend Roland, a canon like himself, for founding a congregation to teach girls. Occasionally he gives him a hand, but there is never any question of his becoming involved personally.

* He thought he was all fixed up for the rest of his life. He had become a priest in spite of a great deal of opposition, not least from the purveyors of common sense –he was the eldest in the family. He was involved in a lot of charitable work. He was readily sought after to preach missions wherever they were needed. He took his priestly vocation very seriously, was faithful to his choir duties, and as legal guardian and elder brother, he put a lot of effort into looking after his brothers and sisters. What more could one ask? He neglected nothing: not his choir service, not his family duties, looking after his six brothers and sisters.

* However, we should point out also all the very positive things about John Baptist: his deep piety, his ability to make friends, his hospitality, his tender affection for his family, his determination, his intelligence, his availability, his apostolic zeal... This will probably be enough for the moment.

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Saint John Baptist de La Salle

And here is a third picture which contradicts the second one, and which perhaps seems somewhat disconcerting and astonishing. A few examples will explain what I mean.

* One time when he was travelling along the road to Rethel, some robbers stole his cassock. When they had a good look at it, they discovered it was not worth stealing and they gave it back to him. As for the cassock, some time later, a seminary companion of his, the Archbishop of Chartres, made him accept a more suitable one.

* When he began to feel he was being called upon to make great sacrifices he arranged for the sacristan of St. Remi's church to lock him in on a Friday night, and he would spend the night in prayer.

* Having accepted that he was the "father" of his Brothers, he decided he would eat the same food as they. Bernard tells us he found it impossible, and every time he tried, he vomited. Eventually he decided to starve himself and his appetite in time overcame his disgust.

* Whenever a woman religious asked him to be her spiritual director, he would tell her to get rid first of all the superfluous things in her cell.

* When God asked him he did not hesitate to give up his position as canon and to give away his fortune to the starving poor during the terrible famine of 1684.

* When he was finally convinced that it was God's will, he set about founding the Institute with great determination, with all his intelligence, with his ability to organise and above all with his great capacity for love.

God... wanting to involve me... did so without my noticing it.

Towards the end of his life, the Founder summed up how it had all begun: "Before it all started it was the thing furthest from my mind... Since I considered the teachers I had to employ especially in the early days as far inferior to my foot servants, just the thought of having to live with them would have been unbearable... God who is gentle and wise in all he does and who never forces people... brought everything about without my noticing it... in such a way that one commitment led to another that I could never have foreseen".

Here are some examples of commitments which successively led him in a direction he could never have foreseen:

* When he was a seminarist at St. Sulpice, Paris, he probably taught catechism. What is certain is that he joined the "league of prayer" started up by a certain Father Bourdoise to ask God to inspire the foundation of an institute of Christian teachers. This priest used to say that whoever undertook to found such an institute would be certain to be canonised.

* At Rheims he had got to know Canon Roland, a very good friend of his, who founded the congregation of the Sisters of the Child Jesus for the education of poor girls. On his deathbed Roland handed over everything to John Baptist de La Salle and asked him to help the Sisters. He did so, obtaining for them letters patent from the King... and thought that that was all there was to it.

* In Paris he got to know Father Barré who belonged to the order of Minims, and who had unsuccessfully tried to found an association of Christian teachers. The coincidence of so many holy people trying to do the same thing must have impressed him.

* There came next his meeting with Mr Nyel on the doorstep of the convent of the Sisters of the Child Jesus. He had come to start up a school like the ones in Rouen for poor children, and was looking for a certain Mr De La Salle, hoping he would be able to help him. A relative of his, a certain Mrs Maillefer, had recommended him... He did what he could, won over the opposition, talked it over with the parish priests, and finally a school was opened, much to the delight of Mr Nyel and that of Mr De La Salle who was able to get back to his duties as canon, as guardian of his family and so on...

* The teachers hired by Mr Nyel had been done so in a very haphasard way. They lacked the necessary skills and lacked commitment even more. Teaching was just another way, and one of the least sought after, of earning one's living. There was a very fast turnover in teachers... This difficult situation left an impression on De La Salle.

When actually did De La Salle commit himself?

It is difficult to say when exactly, but I think the following three sets of circumstances were of crucial importance in making him decide.

* During the course of his frequent visits to the schools (the one school had soon become several), De La Salle must have realised that although the teachers had absolutely no training, the children were changing and improving. The thought must have surely come to him that one could do such marvellous things if only... God! What an idea!

* Year after year, De La Salle had gone along the streets of Rheims, along Arbalete Street, for example, which led from the Hotel de La Cloche were he lived to the Cathedral and back, and never had his social conscience given any twinges. That is how society was and there was nothing more to be said about it. But one day he must have opened his eyes and seen, actually SEEN, the crowds of children and young people in Rheims (and all over the world) who had no future to look forward to, no chance of education, no chance of ever achieving any kind of human dignity. He must have thought: "How easy it would be..." And the idea was beginning to develop.

* During Holy Week in 1681, he invited the teachers (perhaps a dozen or so) to make a retreat with him. For this generation of teachers, probably the third by that time, this voluntary retreat was like a Lasallian Pentecost. Grace poured down in abundance on to these teachers who had opened their hearts, and they became changed men. The effects of this were seen immediately in the schools which became from then on "Christian schools" without actually yet being called so officially. At that point De La Salle, with great astonishment, must have said to himself: "Well, if that's the way things are..."

* During the very first years of community life with the Brothers of the Christian Schools he was able to observe how they worked and in what spirit; he saw his companions, his "brothers" doing marvellous work in slum districts; he saw some of them die in his arms, saints already, destined for Heaven.

And so he made his decision; and from that time onwards, nothing and no one would be able to divert him from the path he had chosen and which he followed for 40 years, working to found his Institute, in spite of innumerable obstacles.

One day he said:

"If God, when he showed me how much good this Institute could do, had also revealed to me the sufferings and crosses that this would entail, my courage would have failed me, and I would not have dared to touch it with the tips of my fingers, let alone take responsibility for it." "If God had not given his visible support to the Christian Schools they would have been lying in ruins a long time ago."

The nature of a vocation

What we have said should give us some idea how the Founder's vocation developed. I think also that it illustrates that the growth or lack of it, of a vocation depends on the care that is taken of it. I am thinking of writing another article for Lasalliana to examine in more detail De La Salle's vocation... and to reflect a little on the lessons we can learn from it.

Brother Manuel Olivé

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THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS

AN APPROACH TO TEACHING BASED ON KNOWING ONE'S PUPILS

"Nosce te ipsum"

Did St. John Baptist de La Salle know that "to teach John English you have to know John first"? Whether he did or not is not very important if his teaching methods were based on a thorough and detailed knowledge of each and every one of the pupils by the teacher. There is no mention in any of his writings of "differential psychology", but the methods he used in class, the advice he gave to teachers, and the results he obtained (according to his biographers), show quite clearly that he thought a teacher ought to know his pupils well if he was to teach them well.

I have restricted myself on purpose in this article to the Conduct of Schools: it is not a closely reasoned and tightly structured pedagogical or psychological treatise, but rather a work which contains a core of intuitive perceptions which have been subsequently turned into a system and given names which are more or less intelligible to educational non-experts.

The Conduct of Schools can be viewed from two angles: its content and how this is expressed; in other words, what one aims to attain and the manner of doing so. This is not an area I can get involved with at the moment and I will leave for some other time an examination of underlying psychological presuppositions. Instead I shall speak briefly of the practical means used to get to know pupils personally and as separate individuals.

There is nothing fanciful about the titles given to the articles to be found in chapter III, part II: The School Register, The Register of Lesson Changes, The Register of the Qualities and Defects of Pupils. Our modern education gurus would, of course, use much more grandiose terms like registration, assessment, transfer, equal opportunity, medical opinion, course counselling and psychopedagogical imperatives etc. A brief survey of the articles mentioned earlier will demonstrate that they are as valid now as they have ever been.

THE SCHOOL REGISTER (Conduite, p. 133).

The title indicates clearly what is meant. There was one for each year. These registers were entered in turn into a main register. At the end of this register there was a list of all the pupils in alphabetical order. Pages 133 and 134 give clear instructions how registers should be set out. To give an idea of the psychological insight of these registers perhaps an actual example of a model register entry would be most effective:

August 31th MULOT - C (The C means he has been confirmed).

Jean Mulot joined the school on August 31th at the age of 16. He had been confirmed two years previously. Began receiving Communion last Easter. Son of Joseph Mulot, textile worker. Address: rue de Contray, St. Stephen's Parish, at Croix d'Or. Lives over the shop.

Was classed third in Writing, first in Politeness. Due in school at 9,0am and 3,0pm. Was taught two years by Mr Caba in the school on St. Stephen's Street, 8 months by Mr Ralot, a year by Mr Huysbecq and 4 months by Mr Mulot the schoolmaster. After that his parents took him away thinking he would do better elsewhere.

He has difficulty in concentrating. He is absent about twice a month –helping his mother. He does not work hard, but does not find learning difficult. He has rarely missed being promoted. He knows his catechism but not very much his prayers. He is a habitual liar and glutton. He is not particularly pious and has no idea of recollection. He was absent from school for three months during the winter, and he finally left school for good August 31st 1706 to train as a sculptor, or to be a foot servant, or something else...

If you simply changed a few words, made the report sound a bit more modern, you could probably ask your school psychologist if his present day file records were any improvement on the one quoted above. The reader himself, I am sure, can draw his own –many– conclusions.

THE REGISTER OF LESSON CHANGES (pp. 133...)

These were kept by school inspectors who were in charge of "lesson changes". Their function was to keep a check on pupils' progress in reading, writing, counting etc. Each subject has as many registers as there were "lessons" or levels of attainment. There is a model example of such a register on page 135 of the "Conduct":

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WRITING REGISTER
(stage 3)

January 1st	Jacques Maturin	April 2nd
March 1st	Hubert Valle	June 3rd
May 2nd	François Duterioux	July 6th
June 1st	Nicolas Paulet	August 1st
July 1st	Louis Adam Rive	October 1st
August 2nd	Jean Grimoine	November 2nd
October 1st	Philippe Le Gendre	December 1st
November 2nd	Pierre Le Large	February 2nd

The dates indicate when each pupil began and completed the third stage in writing. Each "lesson" had three stages.

REGISTER OF CLASS SECTIONS (pp. 136...).

It was the job of the school inspector to see that every teacher had this register on the first of each month. There was very little of any interest for the psychologist in these registers as they contained only the times pupils were late, absent with or without leave, or unable to recite their catechism.

REGISTER OF THE QUALITIES AND DEFECTS OF PUPILS (p. 236).

These registers give an extraordinarily deep insight into the characters of pupils and their consequent behaviour. Keeping registers such as these implied constant and meticulous observation of pupils on the part of teachers. During the last month of the school year, the teacher would draw up a profile of each of his pupils, noting all the positive and negative things he had noticed about him during the course of the year. These profiles he would hand over to the Brother Director who would pass them on to the teacher taking these pupils the following year, but only for the first term. At this point the latter had to start making his own observations so as to be able to draw up his own profiles at the end of the year. When a teacher kept the same class for two years running because of staff changes, the register would be kept by the Brother Director. A comparison of the registers of successive years enabled the school inspector to get a clear idea of what the pupils were like and of the powers of observation of the teachers... When a teacher did not know how to write up these profiles, the Director or inspector would either help him or do it for him.

Probably an actual example of one of these profiles would give a better idea than any more description:

François de Terieux, 8 1/2 years old, has been coming to school for 2 years now. He has been on level 3 of Writing since July 1st last. He finds it difficult to concentrate. He is not very pious and cannot keep still in church or during prayers unless you keep an eye on him. He does this through an inability to keep his mind on things. His main defect is a lack of concentration. He is quite a willing lad but you have to win him over to get him to behave. Punishing him makes no difference as it does not register. He has been rarely absent from school, but he has been so sometimes without permission, having met up with some rascal friend of his and because he is easily led. He has often come late for school. He does not work hard: often he just looks around and has a rest if you do not keep an eye on him. He learns easily but he has missed being promoted twice from level 2 to level 3 through not working. He knows his prayers well. He will accept being told off by teachers who have authority but will be uncooperative with those who have none. All the same, he has not got a difficult character: if you win him over he will do anything for you. His parents love him and do not like to see him punished. He has never been given any post of responsibility because he is not very able. He is alert and could do well if he did not come late so often.

We may well ask if any of our files contain profiles as complete as this one.

HEAD OF ROW REGISTER (p. 238).

ABSENTEES REGISTER (p. 239).

The Head of Row Register, as the name implies, was kept up to date by a pupil who sat at the end of the row. He would mark down those who came late or were absent. In the Absentees Register were listed all the absent pupils who lived in the same part of town as the pupil in charge of checking up on them. The information contained in these registers was not particularly significant from a psychological point of view but provided an important element for the personal profiles.

These examples taken from the Conduct of Schools illustrate the extent to which St. La Salle and his first Brothers were keen on knowing their pupils as well as possible. Only ignorance or prejudice could lead anyone to believe that those who came before us treated their pupils as mass produced clones.

Brother Manuel F. Magaz

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TEACHING RELIGION THROUGH SONGS

De La Salle was at one and the same time a teacher, a psychologist and a saint, and this is reflected in his writings. He was aware of the various trends in educational psychology of his day and made use of what was best in them.

As far as the teaching of religion is concerned he was strongly influenced by the methods of St. Sulpice. These he had studied, used, adapted and passed on to his followers. In the "Directory of the Associates of the Catechism of Perseverance of St. Sulpice", St. John Baptist de La Salle and St. Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort are both listed as being the most famous practitioners of these methods.

In the Sulpician method, pupils were put into the right frame of mind for their religion lessons by a combination of the presence of God, prayer and singing. De La Salle knew how effective singing could be. From a psychological point of view, it can calm a person, bring peace; it can also stimulate and motivate. From a pedagogical point of view, singing makes the meaning of words more vivid, easier to assimilate and memorise. From the point of view of religious experience and worship, as St. Augustine says: "He who sings prays twice". One could illustrate very easily the truth of all this.

And so De La Salle spent much of his free time composing lyrics for songs which fitted in with what his teachers taught in their religion lessons during the course of the year. What he wrote could not compete with Corneille and Moliere for elegance, but it contained all the wealth of knowledge and expertise of a theologian trained at the Sorbonne.

In school, week after week, the pupils learnt the truths of religion which would turn them into committed Christians, by singing the lyrics of De La Salle set to popular contemporary tunes. Each day, teachers and pupils begged the Holy Spirit to enlighten their faith with his light, a faith which they followed in spirit and truth (intellectual acceptance and good works); a faith which finds its expression in a series of truths which must be passed on and accepted with a heart full of love.

The following table will enable the reader to judge for himself the importance attached to the various concepts which are repeated over and over again in the different songs sung each day of the week:

	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Holy Spirit	x	x	x	x	x	x
Light		x	x	x	x	
To enlighten	x	x		x	x	
Faith		x		x		
To believe		x		x		
To practise	x	x	x	x	x	x
Truths	x	x	x		x	x
To teach	x	x	x		x	
To instruct		x				
To listen			x			
To learn				x		x
Heart	x	x	x			
Love	x	x			x	x

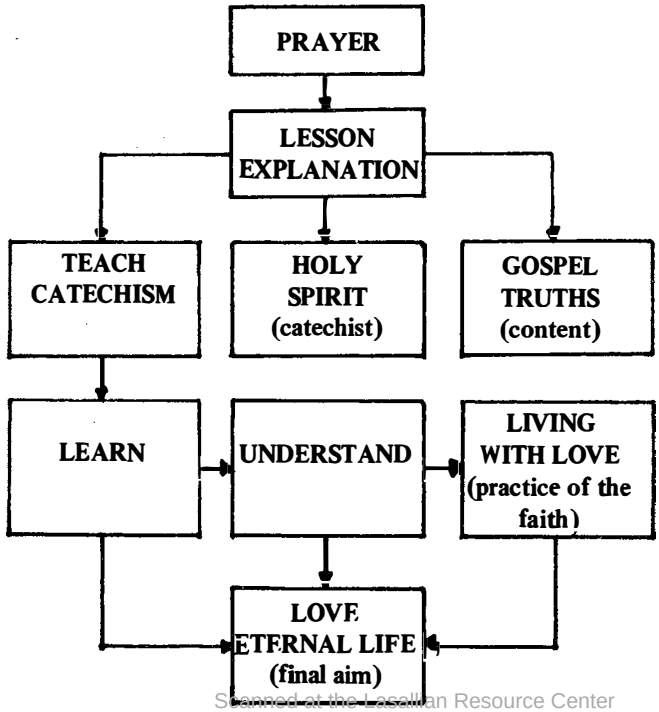
Here is an example of one of the songs, the one for Saturday which I think is one of those with the most meaning:

Lord, send me your Spirit
To make me good and wise;
To teach me about Jesus,
What a child of my age should know.

Holy Spirit, make me understand
What you are going to say;
And as you teach me your truths
Help me to practise them too.

Let us love God, however young we may be
Let us do everything with love in our hearts;
Let us learn how, here below,
To love him for all eternity.

The lines are short and few in number, but the religious concepts that are included are both fundamental and numerous. I have tried to illustrate what I mean by a schematic diagram accompanied by a commentary from the writings of the Founder.



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1. PRAYER

The St. Sulpice religion teacher (and his pupils) was supposed to begin and end his lessons by prayer, and pray during the lesson also (cf. Ms of St. Sulpice). In a booklet entitled: "Daily Exercises used in the Christian Schools" De La Salle bequeaths to us the sort of prayer that has been used for centuries now in Brothers' schools.

2. EXPLANATION

The reader can refresh his memory by referring to Chapter IX of the Conduct of Schools (pp. 96-109) if he cannot remember the general principles outlined there.

3. WHAT A CHILD OF MY AGE SHOULD KNOW

That is what the pupils say in their prayers. The Meditations as well as the Conduct of Schools are full of recommendations like the following: "Answers should be within the grasp of pupils, but not only of the cleverest and sharpest ones, but rather of the slowest ones. In that way most pupils will be able to answer questions without much difficulty" (Cond. Ch. 9, p. 102).

4. WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO SAY

What a frightening responsibility for a teacher of religion who really believes these words of De La Salle!

"It is likewise by the movement of the same Spirit that all those who announce God's kingdom speak even today" (Med. 3, 2).

"He wants your disciples to see him in you and receive your teaching as if he (Jesus) were teaching them" (Med. 195, 2).

5. TO TEACH ME ABOUT JESUS

This refers to Gospel sayings. Could there be a better summary of "The Duties of a Christian" than the following words?

"Because Christ wants all Christians to be perfect, he has given them and left in writing a great many Christian sayings, in his own words or in those of the Apostles. Christians should read these often and think about them so as to be able to put them into practice, and by so doing become perfect Christians" (Duties p. 192).

St. La Salle says the same thing on innumerable occasions throughout his writings.

6. AND AS YOU TEACH ME YOUR TRUTHS

On numerous occasions De La Salle repeats how important it is for teachers of religion and their pupils to know their catechism:

"Teachers will be so careful about the way they teach, that all their pupils without exception will know what they have been taught, at least, as far as what a Christian is supposed to know is concerned, with regard to both doctrine and practice" (Conduct Chap. 9, pp. 102-103). Once again the combination of theory and practice.

7. HOLY SPIRIT, MAKE ME UNDERSTAND

The main reason that De La Salle gives for singing before a religion lesson is to ask the Holy Spirit for help to be able to understand the truths that are going to be explained, and then to put them into practice.

In Meditation 193, he says the following with the psychological insight typical of him:

"For these children are simple and for the most part poorly brought up. Those who help them to save themselves must speak simply, so that every word will be clear and easy to understand" (Med. 193, 3).

8. HELP ME TO PRACTISE THEM TOO

For De La Salle as for Paul of Tarsus or St. James, faith without works is dead. This is something that De La Salle stresses very often, as in the extracts from his Meditations that follow:

"It will not then be enough to have taught your disciples the mysteries and truths of our religion, if you have not helped them to learn the chief Christian virtues, and if you have not taken a very special care to help them put these virtues into practice, as well as all the good of which they are capable at their age. For no matter how much faith they may have, nor how lively it may be, if they are not practising any good works at all, their faith will be of no use to them" (Med. 200, 3).

"It is then not enough to provide children with a Christian mentality and teach them the mysteries and doctrines of our religion. We must also teach them the practical maxims that are found throughout the holy Gospel" (Med. 197, 2).

9. LET US DO EVERYTHING WITH LOVE... TO LOVE HIM FOR ALL ETERNITY

As for the Beloved Disciple, so for De La Salle, fulfilling the Law is motivated by love. In the long and closely argued introduction to the Ten Commandments in his "Duties of a Christian", De La Salle uses as a springboard the words of Christ: "You will love the Lord with all your heart... and your neighbour as yourself". In the preface to this work, he writes: "All that a Christian has to do in this world is to know God and to love him".

CONCLUSION

I limited myself on purpose to only one religious song, one, you will agree, which is typical of the Founder's work. This whole area has a great deal to offer but is still untapped. I wonder whether prayer and the Holy Spirit are still valid in the teaching of religion these days? Or whether people could link up "What a child of my age should know" with catechesis based on the experience of the pupil? How deeply rooted are the religious beliefs of our pupils? Can modern man restrict his faith simply to a few beliefs? What is the point of frenetic activity if love is missing? Teach religion on a guitar? It is now more than 300 years ago that a certain religion teacher called De La Salle found an answer to all these questions through a happy combination of lyrics and catchy tunes.

Brother Manuel F. Magaz

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THE CHARISM OF BROTHER

IN THE WORLD TODAY

A Charism:
To Brother Our Sisters Today

"There can be neither Jew nor Greek,
there can be neither slave nor freeman,
there can be neither male nor female
– for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3: 28).

An old rabbi once asked his pupils
how they could tell when the night
had ended and the day had begun.
"Could it be", asked one of the students,
"when you can see an animal
in the distance and tell
whether it is a sheep or a dog?"
"No," answered the rabbi.
Another asked, "Is it when you can look
at a tree in the distance
and tell whether it is a fig tree
or a peach tree?"
"No," answered the rabbi.
"Then when is it?" the pupils demanded.
"It is when you can look on the face
of any woman or man and see
that it is your sister or brother.
Because if you cannot see this,
it is still night."

Tales of Hasidim

In this last part of the 20th century, the words of Christ: "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15) take on a new urgency, and conversion becomes an imminent challenge as we face the continued dawning of new insights and understanding. In an age glutted by a daily increase of information, as Brothers and as Christians, ours is the challenge of humanizing this global, electronic village.

Through news sources and the electronic media we share daily in the events and thoughts of our planet. And with this sharing, our packaged and honored understandings and language take on new richness or fall away as inadequate.

We, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, stand approximately two years away from the experience of our 41st General Chapter (1986). We hold in our collective hands a newly approved and promulgated RULE which confirms our past 300 years of tradition, challenges our contemporary creativity and fidelity and beacons us into a yet uncharted future. We have received two messages from the Brothers capitulant: one calling us to personal and institutional conversion, the other, addressed to those who share our Lasallian world, promising that we have opened our blinders and will willingly share the rich tradition that is ours.

As Institute, the "Body of the Society" reminds us that we do not exist for ourselves. We were created three hundred years ago because of a need that existed in France. We continue because we recognize that same need, now global, today.

Like all General Chapters, the 41st General Chapter was both an end and a beginning. Its formulations contain the collective wisdom of past experience even as they thrust us forward to uncharted future experiences and formulations. We are part of a living tradition –a tradition which while finding a source of identity and basis in its past, must creatively hear the contemporary voice of need and discern therein the call of God into the future.

The early biographers of St. John Baptist de La Salle recount how he and the first school masters decided that they would be called "Brother". Blain (I, p. 241) indicates that the title was a proper one since it included "the definition of their state" and indicated "the mission proper to their vocation." The title was to indicate fraternity both among themselves and those they served.

Today, there is an echo and a development of that seminal insight in the RULE of 1986. "The members of this Institute are called by the name of Brother. By the fraternal character of their community life and their active and disinterested presence among those they serve, the Brothers witness to the possibility of creating true brotherhood among peoples and nations" (9). The collective experience of the capitulants speaks the need of this fraternal element of solidarity as both global and transcultural. Indeed, the entire RULE speaks an incarnational solidarity WITH and FOR. The three chapters on government, for example, clearly indicate this by beginning with a passage from the Gospel according to Luke (22:24-27) which rejects dominance as a characteristic of government when exercised by brothers. Collaboration and fraternity are the hallmarks of all relationships called for by the RULE of the Brothers.

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But We Are Called to Recognize More than Brotherhood.

But while it is proper to call the men of the Institute to brotherhood, it is incorrect to say that we look for a world of "brotherhood", for to say this is to create a generic noun of a word that is specific in gender. What of our sisters, the women of this world? In this age of awakening social justice, are they to be forgotten, or worse, subsumed in a label that fails to acknowledge their existence? Is not the call of Christ something that transcends gender as well as culture and national boundary?

As we come to the end of this 20th century, there is perhaps no minority so oppressed or forgotten as that of women. Collectively, they span every continent and every culture. Yet, the major languages of the world use the masculine words to indicate both male and female.

Even more injust, many governments still reserve second class citizenship to women. Many nations pay lower wages to women for the same amount of high paid work done by a man.

Their "frailty" is by-word though they account for the bearing and rearing of all future generations. Even many religions ban them from sanctuaries by rule and reserve ordained leadership to men.

But, the voice of the poor cry out! (Ps. 69:33). Today we are beginning to hear the voices of women as they cry out with the power of the prophets of old. They who carry and nurture life speak out against impending nuclear holocaust with a strength that cannot be denied by those who devise weapons of destruction and strategies of war. They who dry the tears of babes speak in both silent and loud eloquence the ill-distribution of the world's resources, especially that of food.

If ours is the charism to brother our world, may we forget our sisters?

The Nature of Charism.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul describes "charism" as a gift in which the Spirit manifests its presence "for the general good" (1 Cor. 12:7). We have long recognized our call to be "brother" as a charism of the Spirit.

Surely, our contemporary charism to "brother" the world must include a championing of the cause of our sisters, the women of the world. Surely, in an age characterized by an almost apocalyptic "war-and-rumor-of-war" motif, we must recognize the charism of woman –the charism to nurture, the charism of lifegiving love, the charism of SISTERHOOD– and stand solidly with it in our role as brother.

The Lasallian Family: A Call to Conversion and Collaboration.

In his Pastoral Letter of 1 January, 1987, Brother John Johnston, Superior General, takes up the theme of conversion and collaboration in reminding us that we are called to a new challenge as we face the end of this century. There are no longer "secondary roles" for non-Brother collaborators in Lasallian works. The "secondary role" mentality and the structures which support it "neither can nor should continue to exist." He goes on to say that "it is important... to understand this movement – and to accept it... because I am convinced that this extraordinary development, which is not limited to our Institute, is the work of the Holy Spirit, a gift of the Holy Spirit in our day."

In championing the Lasallian Family notion, is not Brother Superior also speaking of something wider, more inclusive, when he says that this development is not limited to our Institute and is, in his observation, "the work of the Holy Spirit, a gift of the Holy Spirit in our day"? There can be no "second-class" citizens of the Kingdom.

If our call is to recognize that the charism of Christian education for poor youth which we have cherished for more than three hundred years is no longer the private province of the Institute –if our call is to recognize that "poor youth" is a generic term whose reality is both young women and young men– if we can understand this, then our mission takes on a new definition and a new urgency. It is no mere abstract principle, but the reality of the other person in need which challenges, summons, and makes demands on us now. This is a privileged time and place where it will be possible to identify again, a meaningful experience of the living God.

The call is clear; the gift is given; it remains for us to collaborate – to make God's work, the equality of our sisters, our work.

Brother Jeffrey L. Calligan.

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ARE TEACHERS STILL NECESSARY?

New Lasallian ventures in Amazonia

The poverty and neglect of most of the settlements in north and north-east Brazil are well enough known. Time and again, the needs of recent settlements have been highlighted, whether these are the result of official planning or represent simply the spontaneous migration of people looking for a better life.

The Brothers have accepted requests for help from the local churches of Para and Maranhao, and in recent years, have set up communities in Transamazonica, in the town of Abaetetuba, not far from the Marajo islands, and in the diocese of Candido Mendes, in Maranhao, near Para.

Apart from involving themselves in religious and social pastoral work, the Brothers have felt the need to set up courses to train teachers and village leaders.

1. Our Aims.

Basing ourselves on De La Salle's "Seminaries for Country Teachers", our aims are as follows:

– The training of teachers to work in rural areas by means of intensive residential courses in theoretical and practical pedagogy, and in community life.
– The setting up of schools completely in touch with the needs of rural communities, and catering for the needs of the local youth in such a way that they do not abandon the rural areas to swell the flood of people flocking to the city suburbs.
– Improvement in the quality and effectiveness of teaching, and the raising of the level of education in the area.
– Improvement in the quality of life through social and political action, increase in Christian commitment, increase of the influence of trade unions, and greater local involvement.
– Improvement in living standards, and the commitment of people to the struggle for social justice.
– To stimulate the growth of critical faculties, so that people become aware of their true worth, and of their strength when they unite and work together.
– An increase in wages.

2. Implementation.

The situation in Transamazonica and Abaetetuba in the Para region differs from that in Candido Mendes in the Maranhao region, but the general approach to the situation is more or less indentical, and is as follows:

* The creation of an officially approved Education Centre, able to function at different levels, in particular, to issue officially recognised diplomas to students. In Transamazonica, this Centre, known as the "La Salle Training Centre", is located in the small town of Uruara, and has a catchment area of about 450 kms. In the town of Abaetetuba there are courses, including teacher training, already being run at the Francis Xavier College. In the diocese of Candido Mendes, the La Salle Education Centre is based on a Brothers' school in the town of Presidente Medici, and extends its work to three other schools: Turiaçu (near the coast and 107 kms away), Zé Doca (106 kms away and on the BR 316), and at Candido Mendes (near the coast and 200 kms away).

* This Centre not only provides students with an officially recognised programme of studies, but it also coordinates the intake of students, their classification. the curriculum, the replacement of teachers, and the choice of classrooms.

* Depending on the intake, primary and secondary school courses are run during the holidays in July/August and January/February, and are divided up according to subject units, depending on which teachers are available. It takes 40 to 50 days to cover a unit at the rate of 10 to 12 hours of class per day.

* Teachers are recruited locally, and Brothers from the District of Porto Alegre volunteer to help and coordinate the process.

* In addition to their lessons, pupils receive free board and lodging and classroom materials, thanks to the help sent by such international organisations as CEBEMO-Holland, or by our own District.

* Students following primary and secondary school courses have also to do homework.

* The Brothers and the lay volunteers who run the courses have noticed what a great impact they have on their students. These latter may be lacking in what is commonly accepted as culture, but they have strong feelings of community, social justice, and a willingness to fight.

3. Those who benefit.

Our priority in all cases is to recruit first and foremost lay men and women, working as teachers in rural settlemens, whether in officially approved schoools or not. Settlements with no teachers head the list of priorities.

For the most part, teachers are chosen by the community itself, with the advice of the Parish Priest, religious and local pastoral coordinators.

More than 50 % of candidates are educated to about the 3rd year of primary school level. Some cannot read or write.

About 40 % are married women with children who, in addition to all the work at home, give themselves body and soul to the service of the community. Many of these women bring their children with them. More than a dozen

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have given birth on the way to the Centre, or at the Centre itself.

In our houses we lodge not only teachers, but also community leaders, young people seeking their vocation, and even others depending on local needs and circumstances.

Teachers who have completed their secondary schooling follow more advanced courses in pedagogy.

The only condition we insist on when we accept a newcomer is that he promises to work for the good of the community, and to help the poor and destitute.

4. Completed Courses.

In Transamazonica we set up our first course for a group of 90 lay teachers and some young people with certain responsibilities in the community, and for a dozen seeking their vocation. Of these 90, 54 completed their primary schooling in December 1981.

In January 1982 we set up a course in secondary schooling for 80 students of whom 70 completed the course in March 1984. The course consisted of 5 residential sessions of 50 days each followed by further study at home.

In July 1982 we set up another primary level course in the little village of Nazare in Altamira, some 200 kms from the Centre, and 95 kms from Altamira itself. The course was for two groups of 45 students. Later on the State took over responsibility for these students, with Brothers coordinating to a greater or lesser extent. At present these students are completing their secondary studies.

In these four years the following courses also have been run either by Brothers or by the La Salle Teaching Centre: 3 courses in Art, 2 in Pedagogy, 1 in the Humanities, 1 in Mathematics, and 1 for training future headmasters.

In the town of Abaetetuba, near the island of Marajo, at the confluence of the rivers Tocatins and Araguaia, the Brothers gave their help to two groups of teachers and members of their island communities, by directing their primary and secondary studies between 1982 and 1985. In addition they helped to run more advanced courses and seminars for teachers and trade union leaders. Even to this day, the State continues to a certain extent the work begun by the Brothers.

In the diocese of Candido Mendes, the Brothers have set up another La Salle Education Centre in their own community house. This they did on seeing the extremely precarious position of education in the region, in which hundreds of local communities have no schools, and hundreds study in State schools on a salary less than 7 dollars. This Centre has jurisdiction over the whole diocese. Courses began in 1984 with a group of 65 students in the town of Presidente Medici (also known as Santa Teresa do Parua). These students finished their primary school course in 1985, and the secondary course ended in August 1986, with 49 students remaining.

In answer to a request made by the Bishop, Mgr. Guido Maria Casullo, some Oblate and Holy Family sisters have set up a course in secondary education exclusively for a group of seminarists and novices at Zé Doca. This group has now reached the stage of preparing directly for the teaching profession and will finish their work in August.

In April 1985, following a request made by the Parish Priest of Turiaçu, Fr. Antonio Foggia, a primary school course was set up for rural leaders and catechists, and consisted of 7 sessions of 30 days. This group will finish its primary school course in July this year.

Several secondary school pupils belonging to the parish of Turiaçu, have undertaken as a special project to run a course for 30 pupils, in sessions of 15 days each every 2 months.

A new community of Brothers is moving in at the present moment into Candido Mendes with a view to running an agricultural centre. There are plans to form a group of primary school teachers for the month of July.

5. Some Results.

Although we have, for a variety of reasons, lost some of our students, and accept that some more thought will have to go into preparing our courses, yet we can list some positive results:

– an increase in status for teachers;
– inolvement on the part of many teachers and group leaders in trade union action, in teachers' associations, in supporting claims for social and community rights, and in the struggle for social justice;
– involvement in political campaigns supporting candidates fighting for the rights of the common people;
– greater coordination and efficiency in work;
– improvement in educational standards in the area and in the communities where projects have been run;
– creation of new schools on the initiative of already trained students.
– a stimulus to local teachers to improve their own intellectual and pedagogical standards.
– the stimulation of local authorities and regional Secretaries of Education to look into alternative forms of educations;
– preparing the ground for vocations among the young people in the schools.
– the cultural readjustment of Brothers and lay volunteers working in formation.

If there were more people involved in coordinating work and giving time to the students, the result would certainly be greater efficiency and work of a more lasting nature.

Finally we think we can say that we still have a lot to learn from the first schoolmasters of 300 years ago, especially in our return to the "poor" Founder.

Br. Jerônimo R. Brandelero.

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WHAT IS BAMCREFOUNDATION

BAMCREFOUNDATION stands for Bro. Andelino Manuel Castillo, FSC, Religious Educational Foundation, Inc. formerly known as the De La Salle Catechetical Center. It is primarily engaged in giving Religious Instruction in the Public Elementary Schools of Manila and its suburbs. It is an extension of the De La Salle Brother's apostolate and is supported by a number of local and international socio-civic and religious groups, private corporations and individual donors. As a token of appreciation for Bro. Manuel's dedication to his mission, especially on his pioneering effort on the professionalization of the catechists, the legal corporation behind the Center was named after him and the center dedicated to his memory five years ago, on October 19, 1983.

When the De La Salle Brothers came in 1911 to start a school in the Philippines, they accepted students who belonged to the upper classes in order to offset the influence of the Protestant teachers and at the same time to train a corps of future leaders of the country. From this elite class were drawn student catechists and volunteer workers who served in the public schools of Metro Manila. Trough their apostolate, the student catechists extended the mission of the Brothers to the public schools. The scope of their catechetical work was expanded during the late 40's and 50's. In 1952, De La Salle College, Manila, sponsored twenty nine student catechists, twenty three from its high school and six from its college department, under the direction of Brother Manuel. By 1958, the number of student catechists swelled to about a hundred. Since the services of part-time student catechists did not ensure continuity of instruction, Bro. Manuel saw the necessity of recruiting a corp for a full-time teaching position. Thus, the idea of "a professional catechist" was born.

Today, after almost twenty-eight years of existence and continuous service, the Center has twenty-seven professional catechists who teach 31.000 students in twenty public elementary schools. These schools are under the jurisdiction of six parishes within the Metro Manila area.

The professional catechists of Bamcrefoundation.

Each professional catechist teaches a combined load of twenty to twenty-two hours per week, half hour per class from Monday to Thursday. Specially designed syllabi for the public elementary schools, formulated by the Director of the Center, together with experienced catechists, serve as teaching guides for the catechists. A catechist may teach in as many as three grade levels during the schoolyear, but a few handle six grade levels depending on the assignement. A catechist prepares a detailed lesson plan for the grade level she handles.

Friday is set aside as In-Service Day for the catechists. Everyone reports to the Center where the day is spent conducting different activities to supplement the spiritual and professional needs of the catechists. The day starts with a Bible Service to provide time for sharing of experiences and insights regarding the Word of God. The First Saturday of the month is Recollection Day for the catechists. Three Saturdays after the Recollection, pastoral activities are held in their respective parish assignments. Preparations for special liturgies for children on special occasions and supplementary lessons during the schoolyear are also done during the In-Service Day. Problems regarding school and parish activities, scheduling of Parents' Sessions and Church functions that may have something to do with religious instruction, are also threshed out during this day.

The number of catechists assigned in the six parishes is not equal, because there are parishes that can afford only a limited number of catechists while there are some that can afford a team of ten. There is a parish with only two catechists despite the big student population in the area. Within the year, activities are planned so that the catechists can help each other. During religious activities in a parish where there are two or five catechists assigned, others from the bigger groups are called in to help their colleagues. This cooperation provides the Center the spirit of unity in the accomplishment of the tasks and gives the catechists the chance to visit schools and parishes where others are assigned.

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BAMCREF as a training center.

In the Philippines, with an 80% Catholic population, there has always been a considerable number of volunteers to work as catechists. Priests and nuns find it easy to recruit volunteers both from the schools and the community. However, most of these volunteers do not stay long because of the problem on how to perform effective catechetical work –a problem on methodology of teaching. Most of the volunteers find the job monotonous because all they ever do is tell biblical narratives; they have only a slight idea of how to use visual materials or are too bookish to be able to draw lessons from the experiences of the children. Some of them pack their lessons with unnecessary information rather than facilitate the children's activities and help these children discover meanings from their experiences. The professional catechists of the Center, some of them working for as long as 23 years, experience this problem, but are very eager to learn better methodologies of teaching and are always ready to experiment with newer and better ways. Religious congregations and organizations, from time to time, request the Center to conduct catechetical seminars and demonstration classes for their volunteer catechists. Other religious organizations, intending to professionalize their catechists, both regular and volunteer, also request the Center to conduct seminars on syllabus-making and lesson planning.

Many of the requests for lesson planning seminars come from far away places and it is more convenient to provide a team of about five members to go to the area rather than for the seminar-participant to travel to Manila. The team, including the group to be taught, live together during the workshop. This schoolyear alone (1986-1987), the Center is able to conduct eight demonstration classes and two week-long seminars on methodology and lesson planning. Demonstration sessions were conducted in the nearby towns and cities of Metro Manila. This usually lasted for one day. The first week-long seminar was conducted for a group under the Franciscan Fathers in Alegria, Northern Samar, 20 hours south of Manila by bus and ferry boat. A follow-up seminar is being planned for this Samar group since the Franciscans have sent in their request again for this summer. The second one was conducted on Mindoro Island, 12 hours southeast of Manila by bus and ferry boat. The Seminar was participated in by the Mangyans, a native tribe in the island occpying the highlands. The Mangyan Settlement is under the Divine Word Fathers.

The first catechetical exposition in the Philippines.

There has been a growin awareness of the value of the catechist in the propagation of the Christian faith. Last year, August 1986, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines honored the catechists by celebrating Catechetical Awareness Month. To heighten the effect of the celebration, the Archdiocese of Manila organized the first catechetical exposition. There were seven catechetical centers, including a number of prominent publishers of religious materials, that were invited to participate. The exposition was designed to pool together materials for religious instruction. BAMCREF presented its printed lesson plans and the activity books accompanying each plan.

Worthy of mention in the exposition is the presence of a large number of inspirational and reading materials, visual aids, religious textbooks and church paraphernalia. However, there was not a single book on how to conduct First Communion, Confirmation Activities for volunteer and professional catechists. In view of this, the Center is planning to write a guidebook on these. The experience and the knowledge of the actual condition of religious instruction in the country will be a big help for the Center.

During the 25th anniversary of the Center, Bro. Victor Franco, FSC, Provincial of the Brothers in the Philippines, wrote the catechists:

> "The parable of the mustard seed certainly finds its fulfillment in your history, for little did the late Bro. Manuel Castillo realize that in planting the seed of the Center 25 years ago, it would grow to the huge tree that it is today".

In fact, no other FSC affiliated apostolate "reaches so many with so few" and with additional improvements, BAMCREF has been reaching much more: A FULFILLMENT OF OUR FOUNDER'S VISION!

Tomasita Carrillo-Endaya,
Program Director.

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A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE AYAHUALULCO LASALLIAN COMMUNITY

Existence

Has been in existence since 1974. Is made up of Brothers and youth volunteers. The group lives, works and prays together among the local population on the slopes of the Pico de Orizaba volcano.

Reasons for being there.

The main reason is to make ourselves aware of the poverty and primitive living conditions of the peasant community. Our aim is to share their daily lives while trying to teach them to achieve freedom. This we hope to do by getting to know the conditions in which they live, by analysing them and, with the guidance of God's Word, making some specific decisions to help them to find dignity as human beings.

Main aim.

For the 13 years the team has worked here, the aim has always been to pick out from among the peasants, and to train, potential leaders capable of motivating and organising the others, and of getting them to undertake the task of improving their own conditions and those of the community.

Small group meetings.

We have used small group meetings as a means of making ourselves aware of the living conditions of the peasants, their basic needs and their ability to cope.

A gradual process.

Little by little, the main areas of concern became clear and leaders capable of organising their fellows have come forward.

Health.

Our main concern here is to make the peasants realise the importance of their health and life; the need of prophylactics and of going to the clinic in case of illness or accident; and the need to improve their food.

Production of goods.

The aim here is to improve, diversify and increase the production of foodstuffs so as to generate enough income to enable families to live with some sort of dignity. It is also to improve sowing techniques and the care of fruit trees; to encourage family vegetable plots, the planting of small areas of woodland; to increase the production of manufactured articles like wood carvings, simple dresses, bread, jam and so on.

Marketing.

Here the intention is to ensure a higher and fairer income. This is closely linked with the question of producing goods. It faces almost insurmountable problems because of the sharp practices of the middle-men, and the lack of funding for the producers and for the setting up an independent system of transport for the goods.

In addition to these very basic and urgent needs (life, health, food, a roof over one's head, basic clothing and footwear) there are also other areas of concern, like the following:

Education.

The aim here is to educate people sufficiently to enable them to know, to master and to transform the natural environment in which they live, so as to be free to take their position in society with a fair chance of being a success and not being doomed to failure because of their own ignorance or the exploitation of others. This implies also a process of education at a personal, family and society level within their peasant community without leading them to abandon their roots or their traditional values.

Most of our work and financial resources are concentrated at present in this area. We give our support to pre-schooling and primary education, and three years ago, we started secondary level agricultural courses by radio.

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Society.

The aim here is to help the peasants to take their place in society and take part in its activities, while preserving what is valuable in their background and traditions. It is also to encourage them to work together and so enable them to get themselves organised and to improve their standard of life. The aim is also to teach them how to vote, how to demand their rights and how to fulfil their civic duties. In this way a just and democratic society will be built.

Religion.

What we are attempting here is to make it possible to live our daily lives "sub specie aeternitatis", as God's children; our daily life together filled with brotherly affection inspired by the words of Jesus; every moment of the day a celebration, an act of thanksgiving which culminate naturally at the eucharistic assembly. The peasants' lives, work, sufferings and joys will find in this way their inspiration in the Word of God and in its practice. It is with a view to this that we work closely with the diocesan and parish pastoral care organisers. The maturity of our peasants is quite remarkable, especially in our religious discussion and prayer groups.

Our contribution to the local people.

This has been very extensive and includes the following: roads, bridges, classrooms, help in the parish, roofing, a reception centre for Alchoholics Anonymous, buying land for future village developments, a clinic, a clothes shop, a vast amount of basic foodstuffs like milk and cheese, teaching materials, libraries, loans, etc. All this was made possible by gifts from friends and various organisations.

Numerous obstacles.

There are many things that make it difficult to turn these peasants into fully free human beings, as for example: chronic malnutrition since birth, lack of hygiene, promiscuity, abuse of alchohol, family feuds, individuals working alone, negligence in sending children to school, domineering role of the male in the family, the herd instinct in the face of communitiy or town problems, distrust among more politically aware groups, lack of funds when needed, impoverished economy, advertisement campaigns for worthless or superfluous goods that create needs that are false and are beyond the means of the peasants to satisfy, the beginning of family quarrels for religious reasons inspired by the preaching of fanatical Protestant sects, etc.

All this slows down our work and makes it more difficult, but we remain convinced that man's ability to surpass himself, the power of the Word of God and our own determination will one day bear abundant fruit.

What keeps us going.

What keeps us going is the never-ending cry for help from thousands of our fellow human beings who still live in abject poverty, who are oppressed and discriminated against by members of their own race and creed; it is the Word of God through which the Spirit challenges us, and which the Church and the Institute are now reading again in a new light; it is the hope to see once again one day our country and this American continent of ours living as God our Father would want us to, with brotherly love inspired by his Word, and with the same opportunities as everybody else in the world. This is a Utopian dream which will come true at the Second Coming of the Son of Man who will judge us according to what we have done and not done: "I was hungry and you gave me to eat... When...? Whatever you did to the least of my brethren, you did it to me..."

Brother Juan Bosco Morales

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TEACHERS:

OVERCOMING A SENSE OF

IRRESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER

Cardinal Cushing liked to tell of his predecessor going out to a small parish near Boston during the depths of the depression and asking the local priest how it was going. The old priest replied, "Terrible, your Eminence, terrible, but thank God it's even worse with the Protestants" (1). Most people will probably agree that ecumenical thinking has put to rest such provincial attitudes in the half century since the statement was made. And maybe on the broad scale they would be correct.

But today do not our schools sometimes share in this attitude of irresponsibility for others schools? The principal, for example, who has made elaborate preparations for an impressive graduation ceremony, finds the ritual destroyed by bursts of firecrackers exploding just before the recessional. Someone immediately calls his/her attention to the graduation ceremony at a neighboring school where things were much worse. The intent is to brighten the day for the administrator. We might call this our "Chernobyl effect". If it is really bad someplace else then our "Three Mile Islands" do not appear so bad.

And how about the Catholic school and its perception of the public schools where the comparison puts public education in an unfavorable light. Really an attack on education anywhere has the force to lower the esteem for the profession of teacher everywhere. Catholic schools have their own reasons for existence and should not be defended at the expense of the public schools.

We need not, however, look to outside organizations to find a sense of irresponsibility for one another. This can happen in every school. Schools are loosely coupled organizations. Unlike some other professions such as the dentist who works so closely with the dental hygienist; the nurse anticipating the needs of the doctor during an operation; or a trapeze team who perform with practiced split-second timing; or even two adjacent workers on an assembly line, teachers do not usually need to work closely with one another.

The teaching profession, on the other hand, can produce insular thinking and independent work habits. Teachers can perform in their insolated classrooms, stake out their own turf as to space and equipment, and are generally left alone to direct their own programs. Many teachers claim, in fact, that they have not been visited by a school administrator or other teacher in years. These structures under which teachers work do not naturally lend themselves to sharing with one another in the support of each other's work. Sometimes the only way that one hears that a teacher is good or poor is through the student or parent grapevine. And, incidentally, this delivery system is also too often the only way that a particular teacher receives recognition for his/her accomplishments.

We need the challenge of "departmental crossfire" in our schools. Certainly the history teacher has something to say to the Religion teacher; the English teacher to the French teacher; the Religion teacher to the science teacher; and the music

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teacher to the math teacher, remembering that arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music were all linked together in the Renaissance interpretation of the liberal arts.

The lives of the students would be enriched if their art teacher visited their Religion class to speak of religion; if the physical education teacher spoke to the psychology class; if the health teacher spoke to other classes on the holistic approach to sound living. Teacher talking to teachers, teachers visiting other classes to challenge the students and to be challenged by the students, will make for an exciting school. The insights of all the faculty should be at the service of one another. The benefits that each teacher has received from his/her discipline can be shared and enjoyed by the entire school communitiy. Really, isn't this what a school is meant to be?

How can all of this be started in a school? The answer is that if everyone waits for the opening, it will never come. In this respect I am using the Talmudic story of Moses at the Red Sea. In the Talmud version when Moses struck the Red Sea with his staff nothing happened (unlike the Christian version). The Red Sea opened only when the first person plunged into the water (2). Some of us in each school must take the plunge, call the meeting, talk to others about all the possibilities, or just ask other teachers to exchange classes to get the program started.

Good schools cannot harbor irresponsibility for one another among faculty, staff, or students. The strong academic community needs the exposure of each person's skills, ideas, and enthusiasm. The school as a human organization hungers for such bonding, understanding, an appreciation of talent. The school as a Christian community is by definition a place of concern, recognition, and support.

One of the tasks of the Lasallian schools is to assess its school climate along the lines of this presentation. The result just might be a giant step in overcoming any sense of irresponsibility for each other that may at present exist in the school community.

Bro Terence McLaughlin.

(1) Steere, Douglas. *Together in Solitude.* The Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, NY, p. 18.

(2) Ibid., p. 23.

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THE TEACHER AS MINISTER OF GRACE

Not too long ago whenever we spoke of "vocation", we almost always had in mind the Priesthood or the religious life. Happily today we more and more realize that everyone has a vocation, a special, personal call from God to perform a life's work for God according to the talents with which God has endowed each individual person uniquely. The words of Yahweh to Jeremiah are applicable to each one of us.

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you". (Jer. 1, 5).

Jeremiah balked at this call from God. You might be doing that also. Jeremiah said he couldn't speak for God and that he was too young. You may have other reasons that you think are more substantial. But the Lord says to you what he said to Jeremiah, Have no fear. I am with you".

So we, too, who choose to be teachers, Christian educators, motivated by the circumstances of life and by our understanding of our abilities or our interests, must be willing to respond to the knowledge God had of us before we were conceived in our mother's womb, the dedication he made of us before we were born: our vocation, the call God is giving us even now for this point in time at least, and possibly for the rest of our lives.

This is the basic reason why teachers are called ministers of grace, or perhaps more clearly, ministers of God Himself, the author of the gift of his grace.

St. De La Salle has several ways of expressing this in his writings. The quotation in our brochure is one: Let it be clear in all your relations with the children entrusted to your care that you look upon yourself as a minister of God (MTR.9,1).

In other places he writes that teachers are ministers of Jesus Christ, of the Church, and of the New Testament (MTR 9, 2, and 7, 3). He also speaks of teachers as "co-workers" with God, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, God as it were appealing through the teacher, borrowing this imagery from St. Paul (I Cor. 9, 9, and II Cor 5, 20).

In a further reference to St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, De La Salle reminds us that as teachers we hold a very special place in the hierarchy of vocations in the body of Christ, the Church. St. Paul ranks these gifts in order: first-apostles, second-prophets, third-teachers, then miracle workers, healers, assistants, administrators and those who speak in tongues (I Cor. 12, 28). If you are a hard-bitten teacher, it may not suprise you that you come before miracle workers, but it must be a gratifying surprise that you rank ahead of administrators.

Because teaching is a vocation from God, it is also a work of spiritual growth, or holiness, for the teachers themselves: they are fulfilling their own personal responsibility and their own destiny before God in devoting their talents to the well-being of the young people whom they serve. Everything they do for their students is part of their own religious experience, their relationship with God.

This understanding of the dignity of the teacher is a primary characteristic of the Lasallian school. It was something of a revolutionary development in the life of St. De La Salle. He himself wrote that when he first met the school teachers and began to help them, he considered them beneath the social status of his manservant, his valet. But when he eventually threw his lot in with them, became as poor as they were and was organizing them into the Institute of the Brothers, he wrote in his meditations for them that they were doing the same work as the Priests and Bishops of the Church. He did not hesitate to say that they were carrying on the same vocation from God as the apostles and Jesus Christ himself. Think of that: the teachers who take their vocation seriously are collaborating with God himself for the good of the students who are entrusted to their care. Such is the dignity of a teacher.

We might reflect, too, that in today's world it is well that God is collaborating in our work as teachers. Young people today seem at times to be desperately in need of the miraculous intervention of divine help to achieve maturity in the face of life's challenges. The widespread use of all kinds of drugs, the atmosphere of sexual promiscuity and violence, terrorism, war, the prevalence of a very low self-esteem masked by bravado or manifest in terrible depression, the incidence of suicide among high school students, these are all symptoms of a profound confusion among the young about the meaning and purpose of life itself.

If we want a background for these symptoms, think of the considerable publicity given to the corruption among personnel in government, business and industry (labor unions for example), the erosion of standards of morality that can be accepted by the majority of people, the breakdown of family life, the high incidence of single-parent households, and even the tensions existing within the Church herself. Is there any wonder that the young are cynical and disillusioned with adults, confused about the meaning of life and very hesitant to commit themselves, to have faith in anyone, including God?

The young are living at a time when public opinion, revealed in all sorts of media as well as national polls, is not in conformity with the Gospel, when if they want to remain faithful to Christ and his teachings, they are often all alone. They have to be very lucky in their adult friends and very courageous in their own character to let the world know that they believe in Christ and show it by their decisions and their actions.

If teachers are at the core of the Lasallian School, as the brochure says so well, it is primarily as models for the faith and the values that are based on the faith, the truths that make life really and lastingly meaningful and joyful. While the academic purposes of the classroom cannot be short-changed, perhaps it has become more clear than ever that the most important purpose of the teacher is the communication of the true meaning of life, of the existence of God who is creator and loving Father, of the fact of the Incarnation and mission of the Church, and of the bond of love that unites all of us as children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ in the global village.

Teachers are said to be *at* the core of the Lasallian school. Presumably this means that they are at the center of the action, or at the heart of the school. Let it be added then that the students *are* the *core*, the center of the action, the heart of the school. Let it be further added that in the Lasallian school, it is not the intellect of the student, but the heart of the student, that is the ultimate center of the teacher's attention. Again there is no intent to by-pass the intellectual purposes of the school, but only to insist that the final goal of the teacher is the whole being of the student, his total life.

This is why De La Salle says that the teacher must frequently pray for the gift of touching the hearts of the students, since this, he says, is the grace of state for the tea-

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cher (December 7, 2). In another passage he says that "To touch the hearts of your students and to inspire them with the Christian spirit is the greatest miracle you can perform and one which God expects of you" (June 29, 3).

How then do teachers develop and preserve the profound spirit of faith in their vocation from God and have the power to affect the lives of their students not only intellectually but more especially in a spiritual way? Two qualities seem to be indispensable for this:

The first quality a teacher needs is prayerfulness. Lasallian teachers are prayerful in their own lives, and they make prayer a part of the classroom experience of their students. As the brochure states it, "(De La Salle) encourages the teaching ministers to recognize God's continual presence and his guiding spririt both in themselves and in the hearts and minds of students".

A familiarity with Scriptures is indispensable for any Christian who desires to be prayerful. The Lasallian teacher tries to read and pray over some part of the Bible every day. One of the best guides in this is the daily liturgy of the Church, both in the Christian's Prayer and in the daily Mass. This doesn't mean that the teachers must go to Mass every day; it may even be more important to set aside some time at the beginning or end of each day to read over these passages of Scripture reflectively and to discover in them what God is saying in them about the experiences of their daily lives, especially as teachers. It is a time, too, to pray for their students, one by one, asking God to bless them and help them through their individual problems.

De La Salle made prayer a part of the classroom activity. There were short prayers said actually every half hour of the day as well as morning and evening prayers for the students at the beginning and end of the day. That whole program is probably not feasible today in any of our classes, but the Lasallian teacher does not need a Supreme Court decision to make some prayer part of the classroom procedure. There are ways of doing this, of course, that are counter-productive, but there are also several ways open to the creativity of the teacher that will encourage authentic prayer in the lives of the students.

To discover what may be appropriate for a particular school in this matter is one of the purposes of this Workshop.

A second quality of Lasallian teachers, without which the exalted quality of prayerfulness runs the risk of being ineffective, is kindness. The grace of God is his kindness to us, the favor of his love that he gives us. It is in this sense that teachers are ministers of grace: they mediate the love of God to their students by their kindness.

De La Salle has a very insightful and quite contemporary description of good disciple when he writes that teachers must combine two balancing characteristics: firmness and gentleness. Three pages of his Conduct of Schools give a full picture of this balance (McGraw Hill, pp. 162-165). But when he speaks about effective communication of values, and of the faith in particular, he is unequivocal in his insistence on the need for kindness. His actual word is "tenderness". It is an attitude and a concrete practice of love. He is quite the psychologist when he says that unless there is an affective bond between the students and the teacher, the students will not accept the values that the teacher exemplifies (Faster 2, 2). He says, to quote him exactly, "Often reflect that, if you fail (to win the hearts of your students by your gentle manners), then instead of leading them to God, you will drive them from him" (April, 21, 3).

His understanding of this basic truth in human relationship goes beyond the purely natural laws. He says that the work of God on the minds and hearts of students is conditioned by the relationship that the teacher forms with them. To quote him again, he says, "The greater tenderness you show to the children entrusted to your care, the more wonderful will be the effects of grace which God will effect in them" (June 11, 2). To paraphrase another passage in which the same transcendental thought is expressed, De La Salle says that when you have a true love for your students, the Spirit of God is operative in you creating that love and is able through your love to be creative in the students, enabling them to accept and to practice the good that you are teaching them (MTR, 2, 3).

This affective bond between the teacher and the student motivated by the sense of being a minister of God, has been historically the hallmark of the Lasallian school. It has proven itself especially in the concern for the less fortunate, the less gifted, the more unattractive of the students, those who are poor in any one of several ways. It is when the teachers have the ability to reach out and become truly helpful to these students that the Lasallian school can be recognized as authentic.

The Lasallian teachers take the time and the effort to know their students individually, and to treat them as unique individuals, relating to them beyond the exigencies of the subject matter and the strictly academic demands of knowledge, performance and examination results. They seek the full development of the students' personalities such as God has given them. They seek to touch the hearts, that is, the whole person of the students. This generally means that some time outside the classroom is given up by the teacher in order to meet the students at various informal occasions and to be available for personal conversation initiated by the student. While such relationships may be enjoyable to the teacher, it is not for such personal satisfaction that they are sought but primarily for the good of the students, especially those who are in need of the guidance and encouragement they do not receive from home. Many of them are desperately in need of and seeking such adult relationship, despite their adolescent drive for independence. Not all of this kind of educational work can or should be left to the guidance personnel, most of whom seem to spend most of their time with the students on strictly academic matters.

In summary and in conclusion, you as a Lasallian teacher are a minister of grace because God has chosen you mysteriously to be His personal representative to the students whom you teach. This is, indeed, a sacred trust as long as you choose to be a teacher. It means you have been appointed by God to communicate his truth and his love to your students. Both truth and love are indispensable to your role. Through a prayerful way of life, especially based on the reflective reading of Scriptures, you will deepen your faith in God and in the revelation of himself to you through Jesus Christ and the Church. What he wants you to teach your students will become so much a part of you that they will intuit it even before you tell them. Through prayer, too, you will enter into and share God's love for your students; you will receive the power of love to be patient, kind; you will never be rude, nor snobbish; you will not be prone to anger, nor to brood over injuries; you will be compassionate and generous (I Cor. 13). Because you have this love, your students will want to imitate you and God himself through his Holy Spirit will be working on their minds and hearts, giving them the power to live according to that truth and love that he has given you. Such is the dignity, the greatness of the Lasallian teacher. This is why the teacher is at the core of the Lasallian school.

Brother Augustine Loes

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THE MINISTRY

OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION (1)

When we think about the life of a Brother the word "ministry" often crops up. The word gives rise to at least two possible questions:
– What do we understand by ministry?
– What connection is there between the Ministry of Christian Education and the religious life of a Brother?

* * *

PART I: THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ITS STRUCTURES

First of all, what is the relationship between:
* Magisterium and Ministerium?
* Service and Authority?

1. These two words, magisterium and ministerium, contain within themselves the complementary pair magis and minus. In the context of the words, they refer to more (magis) and to less (minus) important social positions. The actual relative importance depends, of course, on your point of view and on the socio-cultural context involved, and this implies a whole variety of consequences.
Whoever has responsibility for what is "magis" is the "magister". Whoever has responsibility for what is "minor" is the "minister". And each has need of the other.

2. The former is the one in charge. This position has always fallen logically to the person with experience, to the older person, to the priest. The latter is sacramentally consecrated as such.

3. The "minister" is the helper, in charge of running one part or other of everyday life within the framework of an overall plan. There is no sacrament to consecrate a person for this position.

4. There is a sort of theological logic about recognising the transcendental nature of the position of the magister because of the sacramental consecration. Another much more human sort of logic has to do with the specific nature of the relationship between the hierarchy and the others due to this sacramental consecration.

However, the notion of ministry does not originate in the sacramental nature of the Church, but in its nature as a society.

* * *

Ministry is something which is an integral part of the life of a group of Christians living together: it is what gives meaning to their relationships, and what transforms them.

1. Ministry is something that grows as a result of people living together. Of course, one of them, the minister, stands out from among the others, not that his "ministry" actually belongs to him: he has to consult the group, he works within a framework, he is responsible to an organisation... to a community. That is why we should avoid seeing in a minister someone set apart: he should always be seen in the context of a "ministerial" community.

2. Each member of a community has a contribution to make, specifically his own, to the building up of the ministry: the way he is, his quality of life. That is why apparently identical ministries may in fact be quite different: for example, being a catechist in a school, in a parish, in a base community cannot be equated: nor can the teaching of religion by a married layman with that of a religious. Human relationships are always altered by differences in individuals.

3. So we can see that, from a religious point of view, the quality of community life depends on the nature of human relationships with their challenges and mutual inspiration.

And so, for example, a Brother, cut off from his pupils, from his social milieu, from his Brothers, from his community house, from the past or recent history of his school... cannot as such be part of any ministry. On the other hand, when his faith leads a Brother to become conscious that he belongs to this or that group, to this set of relationships, to this community, he discovers in some mysterious way that he is capable of making a positive response to the needs of his fellow beings through Christian education. Awareness of the ministry and professional flair go together.

* * *

If people live together as a group it is for some purpose: without a common aim there can be no ministry.

1. Ministries are exercised within the framework of an overall plan. That is why the ultimate purpose of any concrete situation always comes from outside that situation.

The aim of the Church is first and foremost to make people aware that God is at their side and calls them to transcend this life. Its aim is also to make them make a personal commitment to answer that call. The aim of each and every ministry is, whatever the circumstances, identical.

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2. And so, even if in each different situation where ministries are exercised there has to be a specific immediate object in view (learning about one's faith, organising charitable activities, bearing witness to the silence of the contemplative life, celebrating the liturgy...), yet none of these specific aims is an end in itself. There is no concrete situation that can be the raison d'etre of a ministry, nor that can give it meaning. The justification for such a ministry, what gives it meaning, is the attitude of a person who feels himself called to be part of God's plan for the human race.

That is why the ultimate aim of every ministry is to bear witness to the Kingdom of God through the situations of everyday life.

3. In this sense, Catechesis has priority in the Ministry of Christian Education.

* * *

If we accept that the aim of a specific project dictates its content, then, what in the final analysis determines the nature of each ministry is the concrete way in which it chooses to be a means of mediation.

1. We use the word "mediation" because there are concrete situations in which God is alive. So in that sense, everything mediates. Each ministry must undertake to see in every concrete situation the Word of God.

In fact, ministers are a thousand different human faces if God. If we bear this in mind, it, and not current ecclesiastical administrative practice, will be the fundamental point of reference when dealing with the present subject. The theological quality of a ministry comes from faith in Jesus.

2. "Mediation", however, does not mean a half-way house or antechamber prior to entry to somewhere much more important. For example: Christian education does not exist for the sake of catechesis (even if quite a few Founders say it does): it is rather an initiation into the mystery of God who inspires what we know and how we live. "Mediation" means that if as a group we live as part of the social structure, we become identified with Jesus, we make him visible and we begin to share in a new form of life.

3. That is what we mean, in the Christian sense, by the "content" of each and every ministry. We are not talking here of new sorts of education, social work, cultural activities, medicine, methods of assimilation, political theories... but simply of living differently. The way we live becomes new through our faith and our hope.

That is why our life's journey is not directed towards the rites of worship and sacramental ritual, but towards the hereafter.

* * *

It only remains for us now to mention (although it has already been referred to) the final constituitive element of the context in which ministries are exercised: the Mission of the Church.

1. This is a logical consequence. The Church needs ministries, and so it creates them.

There is quite a lot that could be said about this.

2. When we speak of the "Church" we are not referring exclusively to its hierarchical structure. The Church we mean is the community of all the faithful, drawing its life from the Spirit, aware of certain needs and taking steps to fulfil them. That is why no ministry can be considered to be private property. Although most schemes originate in the personal initiative of an individual, experience tells us to base everything on God's plan: his living presence in a ministry always produces results we could only have dreamt about.

3. The hierarchical Church, the Magisterium, has the responsibility of recognising the gifts of individuals and channelling them into ministries. It does not mean, of course, that the Church owns them: it simply bears witness to the action of God. And so the Church's seal of approval (its "missio") is not the beginning of God's action in a given ministry; it is the recognition of its existence. That is why the "missio" of the Church, which is absolutely necessary and which confers the status of ministry, does not indicate what kind of work should be done; rather it is a call to a life of faith. As far as the work is concerned, those involved in the ministry sort things out among themselves. On the other hand, the assurance that God is present in the ministry comes from the seal of approval of the Magisterium and from being part of the universal Church.

* * *

So one could say that the constituitive elements of ministry, or the ministerial structure of education, can be said to be as follows:

1. A situation where people are working for the good of others.
2. These people live and work as a community.
3. They work so that God's Kingdom may be made manifest.
4. They are dedicated to being the visible presence of God (mediation) in real life situations.
5. Their work has the seal of approval: they have been sent (mission) by the Church.

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THE MINISTRY

OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

* * *

PART 2. THE MINISTRY OT THE BROTHER OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AS RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR

Let us define the scope of the article by asking –and answering– a question:

* What connection is there between Baptism and the Religious Life?
* They are two complementary ways of answering the same Divine Call.

1. Every ministry owes its existence to the constantly renewed call of God to the Christian. The dialogue between his call and our fidelity constitutes the life of the ministry and is a visible witness to the Kingdom of God among men.

2. First of all we are consecrated by baptism. By means of this consecration, God chooses an individual who, from then onwards, can respond as a Christian and as a member of Christ's Church.

He calls upon him to bear witness before all men today that everything in this world is included in God's plan of Salvation: consequently, everything has meaning, everything that is human is his concern.

That is the first answer, and it forms the basis of every ministry, including that of education.

3. The call to the religious life constitutes a further step: it is God's constantly renewed call now inviting the individual to involve himself in a more specific task. He calls upon him to witness with his whole being to the Mystery which Jesus' contemporaries glimpsed in his Word and which they saw fully only at Easter.

And so, as a religious, the Brother takes on in the Church the ministry of being a witness by his whole life and as a member of a community, to the absolute transcendence of the Kingdom.

That is the second answer, and it forms the basis of a specific ministry, that of the religious educator.

* * *

In the light of what we have said about the theology of mediation, we realise that neither of the answers given is first or second.

1. The life of a Brother, consecrated as a religious in the Church, is seen in the context of a specific task and in a specific area of the life of the Church. The task is that of mediation. Without it there could be no ministry, for there would no longer be any content.

2. Through the intermediary of his Church, the Lord sends the Brother into the world of young people, in particular to that of the poor; to that section of mankind which is poor and immature.

The ministry of the Brother of the Christian Schools is specifically that of Christian education: the Lord and the Church ask him to go and help others to read, right at the very heart of the process of promoting human development, the visible presence of the One who transcends all things.

3. The Brother knows that as a result of his "second" call, everything about him in the eyes of others has the seal of the Mystery of the Cross and Resurrection: he is called upon to show that this world, while being the place where God's love is made manifest, is "no lasting city".

In this way, the Brother sees his ministry as a combination of service to his fellow men and witness to the Kingdom. His fellow men must see quite clearly and in concrete terms that, when the Brother deals with the sciences and the arts, he believes in this world here below as well as in something that transcends it.

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The ministry of the Brother finds its authenticity in the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle as a member of the Church.

1. In the same way as the Founder gave the Brother a Rule of Life, and the Church approved it, so the Brother sees two elements in his ministry:

* there is the active side, since he is the brother of the poor, and since he lives with them and helps them to improve their lot through education;

* and there is the silent side that could even be called contemplative, which enables him to stand aside from everything and to forego living like other people.

2. These two elements combine to produce that mysterious feeling of peace that every educator who is a Brother feels. The human relationships involved in his work become a specific ministry from the moment that people around him see in him the unbelievable combination of creative flair, self-denial and a zest for life. That is the way a Brother works for his fellow men while at the same time being the visible presence of God.

3. By the very fact that he is "a minister of Jesus Christ", to use the words of the Founder, the Brother is finding, to his great surprise and joy, that at the present time, opportunities are becoming available for him to become a new kind of witness to the Kingdom for his fellow men.

For, as he goes about exercising his ministry, he discovers that there have come about in recent times some extraordinary cultural changes, all of which offer so many more and new opportunities to be the visible presence of God. However, he does not draw from this the conclusion that what he is doing now is dependent on what went on in the past. On the contrary, he finds that the fact of being a Witness to the Hereafter enables him in some mysterious way to recognise the signs of the times very clearly and to make the right response.

4. It is exactly this ability that the Church recognises when it makes it the specific aim of its Mission.

* * *

One could say, then, that the ministry of the Brother is built up of the following elements:

1. The call from God to be a Sign of the Hereafter.
2. Mediation through the educational service of the poor.
3. Creative flair and joy stemming from self-denial.
4. His connection with the role of St. John Baptist de La Salle in the life of the Church.

Brother Pedro Gil

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A SATURDAY MORNING AT "MIER Y PESADO" (MEXICO)

I. A Saturday Morning.

"Mier y Pesado" is a school in the picturesque, colonial style district of Coyoacan in Mexico City. It is one of the schools run by the Brothers and, as in most other schools in the world, school activities do not come to a halt once the school day is over: they simply broaden their scope and encompass the whole person.

There is no school on Saturday, and so that is the day when pupils from the infant, primary and secondary classes turn the sports fields into a hive of activity organised by their teachers or, in the case of the youngest children, by a group of enthusiastic parents. These same parents in addition to their marshalling duties also train teams, referee matches, mark out pitches and involve themselves in all varieties of sport like football, basketball, athletics... The atmosphere on these occasions is very lively.

For the school Saturday is also a "family day", when the educational community opens its doors wide to one and all and offers all kinds of courses and activities. Thanks to its staff (parents, teachers and former students), the educational community is able to run free courses for all who want, whether they are connected with the school or not.

If you strolled around the school you would come across a group of charming ladies in the main corridor, keeping fit with all the vigour and grace of aerobic exercices; elsewhere, other ladies are doing art appreciation. From somewhere you would be able to hear folk melodies being strummed on guitars; and out in the garden, in the shade of a tree a painting class would be under way. Further along you would find a first aid class going on for those who want to be able to help others in case of accident in the home or outside. And this would not be all: in other corners of the school could be found groups of studious looking people, worried by the present economic crisis, following courses in general administration, stenography, typing, electricity, weaving and macrame. What these good people learn at the Brothers' school helps them in many cases to increase their income as well as provide them with a pastime.

II. Lasallian Integration Courses.

Running side by side with all these other courses there is also a "community integration workshop" meant for the parents of pupils who have recently joined the infant school, and which consists of 10 talks on educational guidelines. From January to March there are organised also Lasallian Integration courses (cf. Lasalliana N. 12).

1. Origin and Aims.

The idea of running these Lasallian Integration courses first came up in the District of South Mexico after the 2nd National Lasallian Assembly held from August 3rd - 5th 1979. During the course of that year, a great many lay people spoke to the Brothers about their need for a solid grounding in the Christian Faith, and a wish to know more about the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle so as to be able to share more closely in the educational apostolate of the Brothers and to help to build up an educational community.

The first session began on November 17th 1979 in the Casa La Salle, a retreat house and house of formation (novitiate and scholasticate), and there took part young couples, Brothers, teachers and former students from a number of Brothers' schools.

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2. Organisation.

The course is run every school year in the various educational communities of Mexico. It is spread over 10 Saturdays, the official weekly day off. On each of these 10 days the session lasts 2 1/2 hours and consists of two talks. In all, then, there are 20 talks.

3. Those who run the course.

In general, those who give the talks are either Brothers or lay people who themselves have already followed such a course; or even other people who have some expertise in the topic being treated. As long as speakers follow the guidelines laid down by the Mexican Lasallian Federation, they can choose any method they like to deal with their topic.

4. For whom is the course intended?

It is meant for all those who share in the educational work of the Brothers: parents, teachers, former students and anyone else who feels he would like to be involved. For example, in the "Mier y Pesado" school, the course is really intended for parents of new pupils, but that is only one example. In practice, anyone can join in.

5. Results so far.

The most important result is that lay people have been able to share in the educational work of the Brothers, and that there has been formed an "educational community", an idea raised in the Rule produced by the last General Chapter which expressed so much interest in the Lasallian Family.

The courses which have been run at the "Mier y Pedado" school since 1980 are a good example of what such sharing can bring about.

Conclusion.

In a friendly, family-like atmosphere, fathers, mothers, children, former students and friends of the Brothers can benefit from the lead given by the Brothers working closely with their lay colleagues and inspired by the spirit of the Founder – a spirit of service, brotherly love and faith.

Brother Javier Hurtado

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A LEBANESE LASALLIAN DESCRIBES A

YEAR LONG REFRESHER COURSE IN PARIS

After teaching the Arts and Religion for 12 years and spending a year as an inspector to enable Brother Lopez to go to CIL, I was offered a chance by Brother Bernard, the headmaster, to go for a refresher course in France. He told me, as did the Visitor, Brother Ildefonse Marie, that I "had to make the most of this year" to study to make myself a more efficient Lasallian teacher by following courses at the Institut Catholique, as well as by finding out what was currently being done in the Brothers' schools at Regional level in France.

I left for France at the end of August and was given a warm welcome at 78A rue de Sèvres in spite of the fact I had not been able to make prior arrangements owing to the situation back in my own country. The house does not normally cater for long-term stays and so my plan to stay for a whole year made it awkward for the Brother Director, in spite of his understanding nature. He had any number of similar requests from French Districts. However, a helping hand from Brother Patrice and the support of the Regional Co-ordinator overcame all problems, gave me a fixed address and enabled me to obtain a residency permit.

As the year went by I became more and more convinced of the advantages of staying at the Rue de Sèvres. It was not only the geographical advantages, like being near the Institut Catholique, the Sevres Centre, the Rue du Bac; but also and mainly the spiritual and Lasallian ones. The Office, Mass, the library and the archives, the family atmosphere at meal times, feastdays, birthdays, community meetings, the presence of Brothers like the Regional Co-ordinator, the Visitor, the Secretary for Education were so many complementary elements in a situation which was enriching and made for lasting friendships and a clearer vision. Another great advantage was the never ending series of Lasallian sessions, meetings and days which tended to take place there; and the constant coming and going of visiting Brothers not only from all over France, but from all over the world. Exchanging information and experiences with these Brothers was a real bonus, for it enabled me to discover what was going on in the Institute the world over. Meetings of the members of the La Salle Association or of the French Lasallian Federation were so many occasions to get to know people and to become involved in discussions and exchanges of information in the context of the close collaboration of Brothers and lay people in France.

AMONG THE BROTHERS IN FRANCE

As everywhere else in the western world, the lack of vocations and ageing are sad to see... But one can feel also that there is a renewal and the dawning of better tomorrows can be glimpsed. New vocations, although few in number, augur well for the quality of our future Brothers. The new spirit which can be felt in the Church in France makes for deeper commitments, offers greater challenges to the generosity of young people, makes it possible for them to live out their consecration in ways that are more efficient and better adapted to the needs of the times. These ways which are better adapted to the needs of the present day world are what the Founder envisaged when he saw that a school was the ideal place for evangelisation. There is a need everywhere for a re-foundation: it has to be lived before it can become institutionalised in texts.

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In the schools which I visited (Charonne, Buzenval, Avignon, Auxerre, Romilly, Garges-les-Gonesse) and those whose Brothers or lay headmasters I met, the takeover or collaboration, as the case may be, is going very smoothly wherever the ground has been prepared. I was very edified by the religious conviction and commitment of the lay headmasters, and I learned a lot from them. Where there is still a community of Brothers, they and parents fight to save it. When the Brothers are no longer there, they try as Lasallian trustees to inspire an outlook on life and an approach to faith in the school. Thanks to these lay people (and to former students) most of the schools and property of the Institute have been saved or recovered. Thanks to their enthusiasm and persistence also, there has come about a demand for initiation into Lasallian spirituality; and even the Superiors admit that the collaboration of Brothers and lay people has led them to look for more permanent structures in Signum Fidei or some other framework which will be a living sign of the commitment of educators within the Institute. Everywhere research is going on, experiments are being planned or made in the whole area of Lasallian Trusteeship, reception, information, training and collaboration.

There is a prevalent feeling all round that what is happening is a process which complements and does not substitute: Brothers and lay people continue "together and by association" the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle, each respecting the other's ministry or vocation-charism. As in the case of the position of the lay people in the Church, this is not an interim or temporary solution. It is true that there are Brothers who do not believe that this is happening, and many despair that there will be anyone to take over from them. Others have taken on the role of "Institute gravediggers" by their intransigent negative attitude. It is quite true that the majority of teachers are not involved, but the Lasallian core group is slowly growing and spreading. What I admired most was the optimism and determination of the Superiors who believe in the future, are preparing for it with confidence and joy, and work with a view "to associate lay people with their educational mission... and to contribute to the promotion of the Christian laity, especially among educators".

Mr Elie Austat.

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DEVELOPING

THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL PROGRAM

Since the close of the Second Vatican Council, there has been a growing movement throughout the entire Church to recognize the vocation of all Christians by virtue of their baptism. This movement to call Christians to full participation in the life of the Church has become particulary important for the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. As lay religious devoted to the personal education of the young, the Brothers have relied upon a close association with their fellow lay teachers and staff members, alumni, parents of students, and other supporters of the Lasallian apostolates. Recently, the Brothers have been inspired by the increasing number of colleagues and associates in and outside of the school settings who have voiced their interest and even commitment to the ideals of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Nowhere is the growing commitment to Lasallian ideals and association seen more clearly than in the schools and institutions founded by the Christian Brothers in the District of San Francisco.

In this article I would like to describe the specific efforts being made throughout the District of San Francisco to enhance Lasallian education in the schools through greater association and collaboration among the Brothers and their colleagues. The "Developing the Lasallian School Program", as this effort has been named recently, is directed by Brother Gary York, the Director of Education, and coordinated by Mr. Gery Short, a former teacher at St. Mary's College High School, Berkeley.

Three factors seem most influential for inspiring this movement toward greater collaboration:

a/ the sophistication of the lay faculties and staff members in terms of their identity as members in the Church, especially when complemented by theological education and other advanced degree programs;

b/ the exposure of the Brothers' colleagues to the Lasallian ideals as lived out and experienced in the schools and programs throughout the District;

c/ the openness of the Brothers, especially the district and school administrators, to encourage and promote the ownership of the Lasallian tradition with others outside of the Brothers' communities.

The highlights of the Developing the Lasallian School Program over the last three years can be divided into two areas: District Sponsored and School Sponsored Programs.

District Programs.

In 1985, this new effort began with a workshop for the Principals and the Directors, a panel discussion at the Brothers' Christmas Convocation, and a February workshop for representative Brothers and their colleagues from each of the District schools. The objective of each of these programs was to outline the needs of the District in order to determine the appropriate support and encouragement the District administration might offer the schools.

Some of the programs that have been developed thereafter have included the following:

1. District Orientation Program.
A set of readings, information sheets, and a slide show has been developed to introduce new school and District personnel to the Lasallian tradition and the contemporary spirit and organization of the Institute and the District;

2. Coordination of Lasallian Reading and Educational Materials.
This is a collection of articles, books, and transcribed presentations on various Lasallian themes appropriate for the continuing education of District personnel. Also on file are examples of retreats and inservice programs organized in schools throughout the District;

3. "Lasallian Vision Workshop".
This has become an annual weekend gathering at the Christian Brothers' Retreat House for 4-5 representatives from each school in the District to introduce and discuss Lasallian education;

4. "Buttimer Institute".
During the summer, 1987, the District and St. Mary's College hosted this three week regional education program on the life and spirituality of St. La Salle for Brothers and their colleagues from across the country;

5. Coordination and Distribution of Faculty and Student Prayer and Liturgy Resources.
Model prayer service and liturgy programs, suggested readings, prayers, music, etc. have been distributed to school representative to assist the

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communities and schools to celebrate special events and holy days throughout the school year.

6. Justice Education Resource Distribution.
To respond to the contemporary challenges facing Lasallian and Catholic education, an extensive justice education resource program has been put in place. This program includes an ongoing collection and packaging of tailored resources for the schools, the coordination of individual school efforts toward justice education, and the preparation of programs for faculty education.

The District efforts for the 1987-88 academic year include the expansion of each of these programs and efforts to acquaint members of the District to the special gifts and needs of Lasallian educators in other districts and regions of the world.

School programs.

The most encouraging aspects of the "Developing the Lasallian School Program" have been the achievements of individual schools throughout the District. Some of these achievements include:

1. Lasallian School Coordination and Leadership.
Several of the District schools have initiated a faculty committee, named a facilitator, or incorporated the "Lasallian School" program coordination into the responsibilities of the school administration. In most cases this leadership is reflected by a partnership of Brothers and colleagues;

2. Workshops, Retreats, and In-services.
During the 1986-1987 academic year, over 20 workshops or retreats for the faculty and staff were held in schools throughout the District. Topics ranged from general discussions of the characteristics of a Lasallian School to specific topics such as prayer, discipline, etc.;

3. Faculty Prayer and Liturgy Programs.
Over de last two years, at least six of the Brother's communities have initiated regular joint Brother-colleague prayer services.

4. New Faculty Orientation Programs.
Within several of the schools, a specific and expanding effort is being made to introduce new personnel to the life of St. La Salle and the Lasallian tradition.

5. Hiring and Interviewing New Personnel.
An ongoing file of procedures and models of integrating Catholic and Lasallian ideals into the hiring and the interviewing processes has been collected from various school administrators.

6. Faculty and Staff Socials and Community Activities.
Generally, there appears to be a growing recognition of the value of both formal and informal social activities among school personnel for enhancing the Lasallian spirit in the schools.

Future Direction.

The District Administration has given its full commitment to the spirit of this program. The General Chapter has endorsed such collaboration in the Institute's world-wide network of educational apostolates. The invitation is that we share a vision and form an association.

Perhaps the spirit of the future direction of this movement was best summarized by Brother Mark Murphy at the Lasallian Vision Workshop in February, 1987. Brother Mark concluded his address on his understanding of this association with the following remarks:

Let me conclude by making reference to Saint La Salle's attitude toward Providence. In one of his later writings, called the **Memoir on the Beginning,** he says, "Apparently then, it was for this reason that God, who directs all things with wisdom and gentleness, and who is not accustomed to force the wills of men, but who wanted to lead me to take complete direction of the schools, did this in a very imperceptible manner and over a period of time, so that one commitment led me into the next without my having foreseen this in the beginning". So also for us, both Brothers and colleagues, we may not know exactly what form our commitment will take. We may not know the final shape of the educational institutions, the administrative structures, the personal implications of such a commitment. We do think we know the kind of education we want to provide. We know the kind of educators it will take to provide such an education. And so my hope and prayer for all of us is that by our common commitment, and hence our "Lasallian association" –out of that relationship we will be supportive of one another in our practical pursuit of this Lasallian vision of education.

Mr. Gery Short.

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CELEBRATING EASTER WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The experience.

The experience I am going to describe could just as easily have been recounted by any number of Brothers who have taken part in or organised similar events. It is worth noting at this point that this is not something only the Brothers have organised: there are a great many people involved with youth work who celebrate Easter very fervently with their youngsters. Begun by the Salesians and the Marists, and inspired by Taizé, this way of celebrating Easter has acquired through a fair amount of experimentation characteristics which distinguish it from all other approaches. This is not to say that there were no difficulties, nor that it was not necessary to separate the grain from the chaff. We moved from the early mass celebrations of Easter which, at times, were more like big friendly youth jamborees than anything else, to celebrations where numbers were restricted to young people who belonged to groups or communities seeking to deepen their faith. Whereas formerly the celebration of Easter was an isolated event, now it has become an element in a process which lasts all the year long. The hierarchy too has begun to look more kindly on what we are doing in spite of earlier frowns at the sheer vitality and originality of our liturgies, and a fear that somehow this was all happening outside the Christian community as a whole. A fair number of things which are not quite right still remain, but all the same we feel we can describe in positive terms what we have achieved up till now.

Our Easter with joung people.

The Easter I am going to describe takes place in San Asensio (La Rioja), in my District of Bilbao. The fact that the District novitiate is here with all its facilities enables us to cope with quite large numbers of young people. As the District Retreat takes place at the same time, the place is almost empty apart from one or two to keep the place running, and so the young people feel they have the place to themselves and so are less inhibited. In fact without the availability of San Asensio and the willing cooperation of the Brothers there our task would be very more difficult.

At Easter 1987, there were 150 young people aged from 17 to 21. The organising team consisted of one priest, thirteen Brothers, a nun and a lay supervisor. The young people came from all our different schools in the District, and also a fair number had already left school but kept in touch through the groups or Christian communities to which they belonged. There are, of course, other places in the District where various groups come together to celebrate Easter, and these are mostly younger pupils. There are also parish-based celebrations which are not restricted exclusively to the pupils of the Brothers.

The preparation.

Easter needs preparation. Three months beforehand, the District Pastoral Team chooses a theme for Easter (the year we are talking about it was "The Celebration of Life"), and sends the various groups three catechetical work-schemes to help them prepare themselves. Two meetings are taken up with planning the daily timetables, sharing out the work of preparation and coping with practical problems etc. In both the preparations and in the actual celebration the young people have a major part to play with the help and guidance of the Brothers. Two days before Easter, five young people and two Brothers go to San Asensio to settle the final details.

The Easter celebration.

In 1987, things began on Maundy Thursday morning. The young people were met on arrival, made to feel welcome and shown to their dormitories or rooms. Everyone was given a name tag to wear, which by a clever combination of colours, letters and numbers, would later enable the organisers to form groups and get activities going. There followed the usual round of greetings, the meeting of old friends, the making of new ones. After the meal and a period of recreation, everyone settled down to small group meetings at which the first serious contacts were made and the mood was set for the following three days. There was a choir practice before the Supper of the Lord which lasted two peaceful hours and during which we felt really welcome there, just as we were, with our own lives, in the same way as the Disciples had been invited to the Paschal Meal, invited also to do as Jesus had done, to wash the feet of so many people around us who had need of it. And then, in the silence and peace of a beautiful night, we gathered together beneath the trees for our "prayer in the Garden". It was a time, in the company of Jesus, to make decisions, an invitation for each one of us to make choices about our own lives. After praying together, we broke up to pray either by ourselves or in small groups.

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The following morning, our morning prayer drew us deep into the spirit of Good Friday. The re-enactment of Jesus' trial, the preparations for the Way of the Cross, a series of activities aimed at making each one of us think of death in our own lives, all this helped us to prepare for the celebration of the Death of the Lord with its climax, the adoration of the cross, which all took part in in an atmosphere of great peace and to the accompaniment of the hymn: "You will adore no one but Him". The night temperature was pleasant enough for us to be able to make the Stations of the Cross outside along the paths of the property. Each group took turns to carry the large cross, stopping at each station: the Lord walking to his death in the persons of these young people. When the Stations were over, those who wished were able to continue their prayers at the foot of the cross.

Saturday morning was divided into two parts. The first part was taken up with a group activity based on a "pack of cards", and the young people were asked to think about what were the things that kept their life going. In the second part, there was a penitential service. In the first part of this service there was an opportunity for the group to speak about the reasons each had for asking the Father's pardon; and then those who wished could go and speak to the priest individually. During the afternoon not a sound was heard anywhere: the group was invited to experience a few hours of the "desert experience"; to become recollected; to create an interior feeling of silence, ready to welcome the Great News later that evening. For those who found this too difficult, some rooms had been set aside where they could listen to suitable religious music, read, watch audiovisual programmes etc. Then, at night, there took place the most important celebration: "Jesus is risen!" To begin with, there was a proclamation similar to what we can find in our towns and villages, then the ceremony of the fire. After the procession and entry into the Church, the atmosphere remained recollected and the lights remained dimmed. Then there followed the readings retracing the story of Salvation, and at last came the joyful moment when the priest, having finished the Gospel, announced to us: "He is risen!" At that point the church was flooded with light, alleluias rang out in triumph, and from all corners of the church there floated up balloons of all colours, propelled in all directions by the hands of the youthful congregation. After the ceremony of the water and the renewal of the promises of baptism, the liturgy took on quite a different atmosphere. When we finally left the church it was already dawn and Easter Sunday morning, the bells of San Asensio rang out, and rockets streaked across the sky. Each one wished everyone else a happy Easter and celebrations went on till it was time to go. At six o'clock in the morning, coaches loaded up and everyone went home, enriched by this joyful religious experience.

Celebrating Easter in such an atmosphere is not the answer to everything and, if it is an isolated event, can smack of a pop festival; but for young people who week after week come together in their groups and Christian communities to deepen their faith it is an enriching experience and we can bear witness to that.

Brother Javier Lorenzo.

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THE CENTRAL POSITION OF CHRISTMAS IN THE LIFE OF BROTHER SCUBILION

On December 25th 1819, at the age of 22, the young Jean Bernard Rousseau joined the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the parish of Tharoiseau where he had been born.

On December 25th 1822, at the age of 25, Jean Bernard Rousseau joined the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

In the space of three years, Brother Scubilion, as he came to be known, chose the same date, December 25th, to make two major commitments which would influence the rest of his life.

Christmas 1819, when he joined the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, he made the commitment at the age of 22 "to spend one hour from 5.0am to 6.0am every Holy Thursday in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament". He kept the paper on which he had written the promise till the day he died. Is this not a proof that he always remained faithful to his promise?

Christmas 1822, on receiving the habit and taking the name Brother Scubilion, he began his novitiate. He was in his 25th year. This was a serious commitment that had been thought out and it was for ever. This new robe and white rabato which he wore all his life, and the new name which he was given were so many external signs of his commitment.

We should not, of course, attach too much importance to the choice of Christmas in the cases we have mentioned. Christmas is an important feast, and that is a good enough reason for choosing it. With regard to Christmas 1822, there are certain things one can say. In the Brothers' Institute it has always been a tradition to hold these ceremonies on some significant feastday. Brother Andre Fermet in his book (p. 62) talks about how the Institute was at that time in the throes of reorganisation and that there were many Brothers receiving the habit. What is more, the novitiate which Jean Bernard joined on November 9th 1822 was under the patronage of the Infant Jesus. So it is not surprising that Christmas was chosen. Even if we should not attach too much importance to all this, it is nonetheless true that this coincidence in dates meant something to Jean Bernard. The commitment of Christmas 1822 seemed to be an extension of the Christmas 1819 commitment.

To gauge the importance of these events in the life of Brother Scubilion, it would be useful, on the one hand, to consider the meaning of Christmas; and on the other hand to read the meditation for Christmas Day written for the Brothers by their Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle; a meditation which Jean Bernard heard for the first time at Christmas 1822, the day he received the habit and entered the novitiate.

Christmas is the coming of a Saviour, the Emmanuel, "God with us". It is the gift of the True Light, the gift of God to man. It is God being faithful to his Promise because "he wishes all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2, 4). This young man, 25 years old, was so convinced of the truth of this that his commitment is his response. Love answers Love: "love in return for love" is an expression that is thought to have originated with him.

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In his meditation, N° 86, for Christmas Day, the Founder stresses two points: poverty and humility. Here are three extracts. Let us not be put off by the style which dates from the 17th century: let us rather listen to the central message contained in these extracts.

"We are poor Brothers... Only the poor come to us, and they have nothing to offer but their hearts prepared to receive our instructions."

"Nothing so attracts souls to God as the poverty and humility of those who try to lead them to him".

"Rest assured that as long as you have a sincere love for poverty and for all that is humiliating, you will produce fruit in souls... that by your instructions you will touch the hearts of these poor boys..."

And so Brother Scubilion's prayer sprang naturally from the message of Christmas and the words of the Founder.

As he meditated on the poverty of the Child of Bethlehem he committed himself to the love of poverty and of the poor.

As he meditated on the humble submission of the Child of Bethlehem, he committed his whole life to the pursuit of God's will in his own life – "God's will be done".

As he meditated on the incarnate love of the Child of Bethlehem, he "opened his heart" and committed himself to "touching hearts".

God took possession of his life: As Chassagnon wrote (p. 207): "His sole concern, his passion was God".

And so during his life, Brother Scubilion:

* always sought to be with those who were most helpless, with the poorest (slave and free);
* was always concerned for those "who are far from salvation"; he would talk about "going to evangelise those good Malagasy people";
* he undertook his mission as a catechist with great zeal wherever he went, always trying to make sure everyone understood him;
* during the last stage of his life, he undertook to visit the sick and the dying;
* God's will ruled his life: "As God wants" he would say.

And when he came to the end of his earthly life it was by answering "Forever" to the Brothers' traditional invocation "Live Jesus in our hearts" that he went to the "God of his salvation", the same God he had committed his life to so generously at Christmas 1819 and 1822.

Perhaps for us too Christmas could be the centre of our lives?

Brother Roger Petit.

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THE INSTITUTE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE J.O.C. (YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS) - (1)

I was led to write this article after reading the fascinating book by Pierre Pierrard on "The Church and the Workers in France" (1840-1940), and more especially, the long chapter on "militant anticlericalism" from 1891 to 1914. The author was able to give a very well documented account of the use of the press, almanacs and songs for propaganda purposes, forming public opinion among the masses all the more easily as it fitted in with a situation in which the sufferings and revolt of the poor found no answer in the Church. This Church, seemingly unaware of the growing movement among the working classes to stand up and be counted, was identified with the various forces that oppressed the workers. There occurred at the time, of course, a fortunate and major event, the publication on February 16th 1982 of the encyclical Rerum Novarum in which Pope Leo XIII spoke of the conditions of the workers. However, in France at least, this first solemn declaration on a social question was interpreted in a variety of ways, coloured for the most part by a complex political scene and the unwillingness of many Catholics to come to the rescue of the Republic.

Pierrard reacts to this rising tide of anticlericalism by highlighting examples of a positive response, however restricted, to the words of the Pope by a number of small groups like, for example, the Christian Democrats, Christian Workers Congresses, Social Secretariats, the A.C.J.F, the Sillon and so on. What they did was good and interesting, but it was more or less similar to the work the leaders of these groups were already doing to help the young in need. Even when there was founded the first "Christian Shop Assistants and Factory Workers Trades Union" also called the "Petits Carreaux", it is Brother Hieron of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who was considered to be its founder, because, in 1887, he grouped together 18 young employees from a variety of youth clubs in Paris where they were being given moral and material help as well as some vocational training.

However, with regard to all this, reality is much more complex and in particular shows that evangelisation is a very long process. The JOC has its roots firmly planted not only in the working class, but also in the spiritual ministry which the Church, whatever its human limitations, has never ceased exercising among the insignificant of this world. There is a sort of "pre-history" of the JOC which most people are ignorant of.

* * *

To get to know about it, you have to go back to the first half of the 19th century, a time when our country was in the throes of the industrial revolution.

At that time, many young people were sent up to Paris from predominantly Catholic areas of the country. These young people came from large peasant families who did not own enough land to provide work for their offspring. And so, they "went up" to Paris to work as servants, in workshops, as clerks (a type of work in limited demand), or doing anything at all, however menial. Used to a hard life, they worked hard, saved money, led a life of probity based on Gospel values. The women were good housewives, and when they married a young man who also had "come up" to Paris, they could be counted upon to look after the family income and see to their children's education.

Of course, once they had become town-dwellers properly so called, many abandoned the practice of their faith and let themselves be carried away on the tide of anticlericalism, endemic in working class districts. However, the kind of work they did was looked down upon by the industrial workers, and this helped ancestral traditions to survive. And so they willingly sent their children to Christian clubs so that they would be "protected" and brought up in the same way as they had been.

As early as 1843, at the request of Armand de Melun and Brother Philippe, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a youth "club" was set up at the St. Margaret primary school (11th arrondissement) run by the De La Salle Brothers. This "club" had as its aim to offer adolescents a chance to continue to benefit from the salutary influence of the school: the first "patronage" was born. Others were soon to follow, so much so that, by 1879 in the Paris area there were 23 clubs attached to Brothers' schools, catering for 3.500 adolescents and young people. When in May 1882 there took place at the Pensionnat de Passy a General Pastoral Assembly, it was to this large group of young people that Brother Exuperien, Assistant General, and as such in charge of Youth Clubs, referred when speaking to the chaplain of the Mother House, Fr. Chaumont: "There must be among those attending this assembly a great many who could be transformed into real apostles by some sort of training which is more intense than that of the clubs. We must discover who these young people are, form them into a group, train them and use them to improve our pastoral work".

There was a prophetic quality about these words: by the month of June of the same year, the support of a priest of known spiritual acumen combined with the energy of a dedicated Brother had brought together 21 young people specially chosen by the Brothers running the various clubs.

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From that time onwards right up to the 1920-1930 period, the movement was supported from two quarters: by the Brothers and by the diocesan authorities who appointed a priest from Paris as director. These young people who had been picked out, it is true, but who were over 20 years of age, were from the start the real founders of their group. It was one of them who suggested their patron saint should be Benedict Joseph Labre, the last Frenchman to be canonised and known as the "beggar saint". The most striking thing was that they accepted willingly the demanding spiritual dimension their mentors had wished on them: the practice of their faith enshrined in a rule of life, hardly distinguishable from that of religious life in its programme of spiritual exercises: daily prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, recollection, retreats, spiritual direction... What is extraordinary is the acceptance of this spiritual dimension.

On October 8th 1882, the 21 members of the St. Labre group met together, prayed, had a meal and proceeded to examine the 16 resolutions which they then promised to keep faithfully. Subsequently they went to check in situ the various groups that had been formed locally in each of the local clubs –the first fruits. In 1888 the number of members had risen to 550; and by 1897 they numbered 900, of whom 400 had made their annual retreat at the Brothers' house at Athis Mons. The dynamism of this movement would bear fruit also on the social plane.

Its most well known achievement was the General Assembly which on September 13th 1887 set up the Christian Shop Assistants and Factory Workers Trades Union, continuing the work of the Employment Exchange Committee which with the active support of Brother Hieron had been functioning at 14 rue des Petits Carreaux since 1883. The minutes of the meeting entered into the register of the new organisation give the names of 17 of its young founders who were present, who all belonged to the Society of St. Labre and who would watch over its steady growth till 1919 which saw the birth of the CFTC (French Confederation of Christian Workers). Those were 30 years of hard struggle marked by the cold indifference of Workers' Organisations towards a trades union group including not only manual workers, and which dared advertise a religious affiliation. Its leaders, the Zirnhelds, the Desponts, the Viennets, the Teissiers to name just a few, continued all that time to draw their spiritual energy from the ideals that originally inspired them.

The dynamism of the St. Labre Association was felt also in other areas such as the "youth sections" of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (250 members and 29 teams in 1894), or the Support Groups of the clubs. By a process which bore witness to the depth of the spiritual foundations of the movement, there appeared a sign of astonishing vitality: this organisation to help young workers from families of modest means and with a minimal education to persevere in the faith, while developing in most of its members an apostolic outlook and the will to win back their brother workers to the faith, became also a rich source of "late" vocations, which was quite extraordinary for a time when becoming a priest meant studying the classics.

A typical example is Charles Fichaux who, for 34 years (1910-44), was the priest-in-charge, or rather the dynamic organiser of the whole St. Labre movement.

* * *

Charles Fichaux was born in 1869. His father was an agricultural worker from the rolling plains of the Soissons area who died in the 1870 War. His mother died when he was 7, and the nuns who ran the Hotel Dieu de St. Quentin accepted him into their orphanage. Here he found a new family, deep religious convictions and was given a solid primary education up to the age of 13. For the next 4 years, however, the young Charles was given no vocational training. In 1886, he "went up" to Paris and, thanks to the help of a friend, was given an unskilled job in a shop selling ties. He found lodgings near St. Pierre de Montmartre and joined the parish club. In 1887, he joined the St. Labre Association and became a very fervent member. He quickly came to the attention of Father Paguelle de Fontenay, who was in charge at the time and who noticed the depth of his religious convictions. However, it never occurred to this holy priest who was a close collaborator of Mgr. d'Hulst at the Institut Catholique, that this young uneducated man might have a vocation to the priesthood. It was while Charles was doing 8 months military service with the Light Infantry Batallion at St. Nicolas de Port that the question of the priesthood was broached to him by the chaplain, a question his innate modesty would have prevented him from considering.

In 1891, he joined the junior seminary of Notre Dame des Champs, and there he was, a young adult, 22 years old, alone in a class of third years. For 4 years he struggled with them to learn Latin, but he never mastered it properly. The following 4 years in the major seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris were no less demanding. However, the prayers and his studies made him ever more determined to answer God's call. On December 23rd 1899, at the age of 30, he was ordained and appointed chaplain at the Brothers' school of St. Nicolas d'Issy, a boarding school which catered for children from poor families and broken homes. It took him very little time to feel at home in a social setting that was very much his own. In the meantime, he continued to support now as a priest the Association in which he had grown up as a layman. In 1905, when religious Congregations were suppressed, many Brothers of the Christian Schools left and the St. Labre groups lost much of their dynamism. Prompted solely by his concern for the Association to which he owed so much, Father Fichaux volunteered his services to Mgr. Amette, the new Archbishop of Paris. And so, in 1908, while continuing to work at St. Nicolas, he was appointed second in command. In 1910, the diocesan authorities relieved him of all other work, to the delight of the young people who appreciated so much the apostolic zeal of this priest who had risen from their ranks.

In his letter of appointment, the Cardinal made a remark which was to prove prophetic: "I am giving you your Father Fichaux on condition you send me one day a hundred little Father Fichaux!" Their side of the bargain was easily kept as, 30 years later, in 1939, in spite of the cruel blood-letting of the War, 160 priests (of whom 3 became bishops) said they owed their vocation in one way or another to the work of fostering priestly vocations undertaken by the Director of the St. Labre Association.

Robert Frossard
Former aux. Bishop of Paris

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THE INSTITUTE AND THE ORIGINS OF THE J.O.C. (YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS) - (2)

The work of Father Fichaux led to two important developments which ilustrate how God makes his presence felt among underprivileged people in ways that humanly speaking are unexpected.

The first arose from the realisation that, during the holidays, many seminarists, most of them late vocations, could not go home. Father Fichaux turned a house over to them near Paris at Marnes la Coquette, and this enabled them to get to know each other, take their first steps together as ministers of the Church, adapt to a new set of cultural values and continue to benefit from the source of spiritual energy which set them on the road to the priesthood.

The other development was of a more social nature. In the period before and after the first World War, the suburbs of Paris had spilled over first into the area of the former city defences and then beyond. What used to be simply neighbouring villages were swamped by a series of jerry-built housing developments and soon became hastily thrown-together towns without any of the basic amenities. During the period 1920-30, Father Lhande described the saga of the pioneer priests sent out into the "bush" in such books as "Christ in the Suburbs" and "The Cross on the City Walls". The priests of the St. Labre Association, themselves drawn from poverty stricken districts, found it easy to identify with the people around them, convinced that these rejected people would welcome the Good News if only they saw it lived by people just like them.

It was against this background that the JOC was born. In 1926, a priest who had been ordained at the age of 34, and had been working in the Clichy parish in the west of Paris for only two years, heard about the work of a Belgian priest, a certain Father Cardjin. Georges Guerin was of true St. Labre stock. He was a member and on the council of the St. Ambrose branch of the Association; he trained as an apprentice and then worked as a metal assayer between the ages of 14 and 20; he was the union delegate of the CFTC; and he was close to the Sillon group. He served throughout the whole of the first World War, and was one of the stalwarts who kept the summer house for seminarists going. He was so impressed by what he had seen of the JOC in Belgium that he wasted no time in starting a small group consisting of 4 young workers. The movement was launched! He had suffered so much as a layman and as a young priest on seeing the increasing dechristianisation of young working class people that he could not bear to wait. Like Charles Fichaux, he was self-effacing and determined. He communicated the burning zeal he felt to priests who were his brothers by reason of the common path they had trodden to become priests, and who battled bravely in their clubs in Paris or in the suburbs. The resounding success of the JOC in the Paris area was due very much to these reasons; to the fact that here were priests who were convinced that these poor people could be evangelised, because they had been born among them and their lives as Christians and as priests had been deeply influenced by them. With the support of the diocesan pastoral commission run by Fathers Gerlier and Courbe, Georges Guerin was able to harness on a national level the cooperation of another St. Labre, Father Charles Bordet. And the rest is history...

* * *

The irony is that the succes of this development damaged the St. Labre Association quite severely: it was no longer the only spiritual driving force behind the mass trades union movement that the CFTC had become. What is more, the success of specialised movements was so extensive that they quite naturally began to absorb the apostolic zeal of many priests. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that during the events of 1936, Christians took their place in the thick of the workers' struggle, even if they had jobs, and non-Christian workers began to accept them as being totally committed to the common cause.

And so a new situation had been created... "Those who believe in God and those who do not, fight side by side for the same causes, for justice and human dignity, each inspired by his faith or his ideology; and in the process there grows mutual esteem and distinctions between motives become less clear. The impact of the Gospel through word and example will be powerful as never before among the working class".

The St. Labre Association would continue to survive, but only through the loyalty of its remaining members, married men now with families who, in 1982, would celebrate the centenary of the Association. The original dynamic inspiration, however, was to be found in the JOC movement.

A few words about this movement might be useful at this point. The early JOC members who had married and set up home did not want to lose their initial fervour for "bringing their brothers back to the faith". After 1935, they launched the Christian Workers League (LOC). At that time it consisted of a small group of very apostolically minded adults. Soon, following the collapse of France in 1940, they had the problems of the occupation to face: the predicament of wives whose husbands were prisoners;

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the difficulty of supplying food to the large cities... Being realists and close to the people living in their district, they formed associations with their neighbours, whether they were believers or not, in an attempt to find some answers. Soon they realised the name of their association was inappropriate since its members now consisted of anyone willing to help, whatever his religious beliefs. And so they named their group The Workers Family Movement (MPF), and by 1943, in the town of Clichy alone there were 2.000 families which has joined. The extraordinary mixture of people (their critics called them the MPF idiots) enabled Christians to show their fellow workers a solidarity of concern not seen before. In the same way, when the JOC had to face the needs of young people at the time of the Liberation, it created innumerable Workers Mutual Help Teams. These lasted for only a short time: with the return to France of people from forced labour camps, prisoners, deportees, many young people joined the surge to found families at long last. But what potential for adult Christian action! And what a difference those hard years in Germany had made: all the various pre-war labels and categories had disappeared, and now one bore witness to one's faith through the simple performance of everyday actions.

By 1946, the MPF was asking the Hierarchy not to be officially considered as a specifically Catholic action movement, even though it did provide small "Christian life groups" for its Christian members... It was not a very clear-cut situation, but it was resolved in 1950 with the foundation of the Catholic Workers Movement (ACO). The result of this new creation –the fruit of episcopal support and the determination of movement activists –was that the JOC, which continued to be a movement for fully committed young Christian workers, now had a very useful, similarly orientated adult partner. If one bears in mind the fact that about this time the Worker Priests came into existence, one is led to see in all these different happenings the dawning of the notion of the "People of God" which Vatican II in its "Lumen Gentium" constitution would proclaim as one of the best definitions of the Church of Jesus Christ. A truly Gospel paradox: it was among the working class, noted for its anticlericalism and so long undervalued or feared by the clergy, that the first attempts were made to bring about a situation in which the work of the baptised laity complemented that of the clergy –a true "mission" to spread the Good News.

The words of the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1, 26-29) come to mind: "Take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what was foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning; those that the world considers common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen... The human race has nothing to boast about to God."

We should note, however, that these things become clear only with time: when St. John Baptist de La Salle founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools, at the end of the 17th century, he could not foresee who would inherit his work. His Congregation, bruised like so many others by the anticlericalism of the beginning of the 20th century, planted a spiritual leaven among working class people which, in the name of the Gospel, was able to give rise to a host of young workers, despite their inherited class bitterness towards the clergy.

And so, from its very beginnings the JOC was rooted in the working class and the Christian fabric of our country, and drew its strength from both. It is the offspring of both the working class and the Church of Jesus Christ.

Robert Frossard
Former aux. Bishop of Paris (1)

(1) Born in Paris of Savoyard parents who had come to the capital at the beginning of the century to find work. A pupil of the Brothers. Between the ages of 15 and 21, he worked for an insurance firm, was a group leader in his club, belonged to the CFTC trades union, and was a member of the St. Labre Association. Went to the House for Priests at Marnes as a late vocation. Ordained priest in 1939. Worked as a curate then assigned to the Workers Mission at the diocesan pastoral centre. Was the co-ordinator of the first Missionary Sector (la Boucle). Member of the Workers Mission Secretariat from the time of its foundation in 1957. Bishop on the Episcopal Committee for the Workers Mission from 1967 to 1981. Belongs fully to the tradition of lay people and priests described in this article.

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LASALLIAN STAMPS

Lasallian stamps are a subject interesting enough to have found its way a few years ago into the Institute Bulletin.

– The Tercentenary of the birth of the Founder saw the first issues of Lasallian stamps in **France**, **Brazil** and **Panama**. The year was 1951.

– Three years later, **Monaco** and **Ecuador** issued stamps. Monaco produced three stylised portraits of De La Salle on the theme of "educator of youth"; Ecuador commemorated the centenary of the birth of a notable fellow countryman, Brother Miguel.

– In 1958, **Nicaragua** celebrated the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Brothers and issued a series of 15 denominations (surface and airmail). These stamps are the best Lasallian issues to date.

– In 1961, the **Philippines** showed their appreciation of the work of the Brothers by issuing a stamp to commemorate the 50th anniversary of La Salle College in Manilla.

– In 1962, **Belgium** commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of Brother Alexis Marie, an eminent geographer.

– In 1966, **Argentina** joined the almost world-wide acclamation of these pioneers of lower class education by issuing a stamp to commemorate the 75th anniversary of De La Salle College in Buenos Aires.

– In 1978, **Spain** issued a stamp to commemorate the centenary of the arrival of the Brothers in Spain.

– Finally in 1986, **Colombia** issued a stamp to commemorate 100 years of work by the Brothers in that country.

To give readers a clearer picture of the stamps issued here are some details. For each stamp mentioned we will indicate its number in the Yvert & Tellier catalogue as a help to those who are particularly interested.

* As was proper, because De La Salle was born there, **France** was the first country to show its respect and admiration for one of its famous citizens, a pioneer of teacher training colleges, of schools to teach crafts and trades, and an innovator in many ways in the field of education. The stamp issued by the Post Office is maroon/lilac in colour, perforation 13, vertical, 2.5cms by 4cms, denomination 15 francs. The inscription at the base of the stamp reads: "1651 Jean-Baptiste de La Salle 1719". The portrait is a bust of the Saint without any indication that he is a saint. (Yvert & Tellier catalogue, N° 882). Artist: P. Gandon. In his native town of Rheims a special commemorative post mark was used showing Lejeune's statue with the inscription above: "28-29 avr. 1951", and around it: "Tricentenaire de St. J.-B. de La Salle, Reims".

* **Brazil**: A Lasallian stamp was issued in 1951, pale blue in colour, vertical, perforation 11 1/2, 3cms by 4 cms, denomination 60 centavos. The Saint is shown in an oval frame of laurel leaves teaching three children (based on Aureli's statue) with a surrounding inscription: "1651-1951, São João Batista de La Salle, Patroeiro Universal dos Professores". On top: "Brasil Correio". (Yvert & Tellier N° 494). On April 30th a special commemorative post mark was used which we will not describe, but which those interested can see in issue N° 127 of Institute Bulletin, 1951, page 200.

* **Panama**: No special stamp was issued on this occasion but there was used in 1951 a black surcharge: "Tercer Centenario del Natalicio de san Juan Bautista de La Salle 1651-1951" on two stamps in common use (2 and 5 centavos, horizontal, 2 1/2 cms by 4 cms). The first, red and black, shows the transport of sugar (Yvert & Tellier N° 281A). The second, light blue, shows Vasco Nuñez de Babca claiming the Pacific Ocean (Yvert & Tellier N° 281B). We point out in passing that surcharges on a stamp alter its value in philatelic terms.

* In 1954, the **Principality of Monaco** wished to honour the Brothers for their work in the two schools and one annex of this tiny nation. It issued three denominations, vertical, 3cms by 4cms (Yvert & Tellier N° 402, 403, 404). The first, 1 franc, purplish red, negative half length portrait of the Saint, below a Brother taking four children to school. The inscription below runs: "St. J.-B. de La Salle, Monaco" followed by the signature of the artist, J. E. Lorenzi. The second, 5 francs, black, shows a stylised version of the Falguiere statue in Rouen. The third, 15 francs, purplish blue, has the same design as the first.

* In the same year, **Ecuador** issued five Lasallian stamps 2.5cms by 3.5cms, perforation 11. It wished to honour in the person of Brother Miguel the educational work of the Institute in this Latin American country. The first, 70 centavos, horizontal, dark green, shows the school in Quito called "El Cebollar" where Brother Miguel taught. The second, 80 centavos, vertical, sepia, shows Brother Miguel teaching two children. The third, 80 centavos, vertical, greyish blue, carries the standard portrait of Brother Miguel. The fourth, 2.50 sucres, dark blue, vertical, shows the tomb of Brother Miguel. The fifth, 3 sucres, lilac, horizontal, shows the impressive monument erected in his own country in honour of this famous educator and writer. The monument is the work of Ciocchetti. (Yvert & Tellier N° 269 to 273). All the stamps were printed by Heraclio Fournier - Vitoria. It is worth mentioning also that Ecuador produced a very fine postcard bearing the portrait of Brother Miguel with the inscription below: "Lirio azuayo". Azuay is the name of the province where Cuenca is the capital: it was in Cuenca that Brother Miguel was born.

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* In 1958, **Nicaragua** wished to mark the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the Brothers and issued a series of 15 denominations, surface and airmail. Eight different subjects appear on these brightly coloured stamps. These stamps measure 3 cms by 4 cms. Thirteen are vertical and two horizontal. (Yvert & Tellier: surface mail: N° 825 - 831; airmail: N° 387 - 394).

As it would take too long to describe all these stamps, we will simply list them in order of value: coat of arms, 5 centavos (surface) and 30 centavos (airmail); Pedagogical Institute of Managua, front view, 10 and 60 centavos; half length portrait of St. La Salle, 15 and 85 centavos; Brother Venero Carlos, 20 centavos and 90 centavos; Brother Antonio, 50 centavos and 1.50 cordobas; Brother Julio, 75 centavos and 1.25 cordobas; Brother Argeo, 1 and 1.75 cordobas; Brother Eugenio, 2 cordobas. This beautiful series was printed also by Heraclio Fournier - Vitoria.

* In 1961, the **Philippines** government wished to show its appreciation and gratitude for the work of the Brothers by issuing two stamps, one at 6 cents and the other at 10 cents, horizontal, polychrome and ochre, 2.5 cms by 4 cms. Both stamps show the front view of De La Salle College, Manilla, and bear the inscription: "Golden Jubilee 1911 - 1961" as well as the coat of arms of the Institute in a circle, with around it the words: "De La Salle College, Manilla". Perforation 11 1/2, (Yvert & Tellier N° 516 & 517).

* In its series "Famous Men", **Belgium** honoured an eminent geographer, Brother Alexis Marie Gochet, by issuing a stamp to mark the 50th anniversary of his death. The stamp is 2 francs, greyish blue, vertical, 3 cms by 4 cms, perforation 11 1/2, (Yvert & Tellier). On the same occasion the authorities organised an exhibition in the town where the Brother was born (Tamines, near Namur and on the River Sambre). The exhibition described and illustrated the scientific and pedagogical work of Brother Alexis who gave the teaching of geography a new lease of life in the second half of the 19th Century. The exhibition highlighted the issue of this stamp in honour of "one of the eminent men of your influential Congregation" by sending its respectful greetings to the Superior General.

* In 1966, **Argentina** joined in the jubilee celebration of the 75th anniversary of De La Salle College in Buenos Aires (1891-1966) by issuing a commemorative stamp. It is 10 pesos, burnt sienna, horizontal, 2.5 cms by 4 cms, perforation 13 1/2, lithographed in sheets of 100, an issue of 2 million stamps. The stamp shows the front of the building and, to one side, the picture of the Founder based on the Cesare Aureli statue in St. Peter's, Rome. The stamp was designed by Mrs Candida Gomez. (Yvert & Tellier N° 777). The stamps were issued on November 26th by decree N° 3498/66. The issue was the result of the work of Mr Angel Vago.

* In 1979, there was issued in **Spain** a stamp commemorating the centenary of the arrival of the Brothers (1878-1978). The vignette shows a picture of the Founder based on the so-called "rue de Sèvres" painting. It is multicoloured: maroon olive, lilac, red and blue; 5 pesetas, perforation 13 1/2. (Yvert & Tellier N° 2157).

* Finally in 1986, **Colombia** honoured St. La Salle by issuing a stamp to mark the centenary of the Brothers' arrival in the country. In reality, the District of Medellin was founded in 1890 but negotiations started in 1886, and in 1887 an agreement was signed between Mgr. Bernardo Herrera Restrepo and Brother Bernon Maria, Visitor of Ecuador and Chile and representing the Superior General, Brother Joseph.

This multicoloured stamp (airmail) shows a half length portrait of the Founder based on Gagliardi's painting, the latter having recently come back into favour. In the top left hand corner, the coat of arms of the Institute in black, and in the top right corner the three broken chevrons of the coat of arms of the Rheims De La Salle family. From the chevrons there radiate the three colours of the Colombian flag, yellow, blue and red; 25 pesos, perforation 12 1/4 by 12 1/4. Printed by Carvajal S.A.

Brother Francisco R. Rivero.

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Nº 15

April 1st 1989

INTRODUCTION

We have received many letters expressing satisfaction that LASALLIANA is once again back in print. This is hardly surprising when one realises just how many requests were sent to the General Council asking for it to resume publication.

– We should like to remind readers that **each issue of Lasalliana** consists of **20 articles** in loose-leaf form. Articles are classified according to one or other of six headings, each heading identified by a capital letter:

O. General topics, miscellaneous subjects.
A. St. John Baptist de La Salle: life, writings, spirituality, teachings, etc.
B. The Institute: past and present.
C. Education.
D. The Institute working with lay people. The Lasallian Family.
E. Accounts of personal experiences, events, celebrations.
In case of need, new headings can be created.

– **Numbering of articles.**
The system of numbering articles offers various possibilities with regard to classification and retrieval. Up till now, articles were identified by two numbers and a letter, e.g: 14 - B - 74, where
14 stood for the number of the issue;
B indicated that the article came under the heading B, the Institute;
74 indicated that the article was the 74th published under the B heading.
It has been suggested that it would be a good idea to give each article a further number, indicating its place in the issue and providing a means of checking to see if there are any articles missing.
This explains why as from now we are going to insert a place-in-the-issue number immediately after the issue number. For example: 15 - **3** - A - 63 refers to issue 15, article 3, heading A, 63rd article under this heading.

– The **Aims of LASALLIANA** are to provide information on Lasallian topics and on our educational apostolate; to suggest areas for reflection and study; and to provide material for meetings, study groups, etc.
Its articles are intended for all the various members of the Lasallian Family. Some articles will, of course, be of more use to some groups than to others. We are convinced that each community, each school, each Lasallian group, etc. should have its disposal one or more copies of this publication.
There are still **copies available** of all but a few **past issues.**

– Recently there was published the **Letter to the Lasallian Family,** which the last General Chapter had requested from the Superior General and his Council.
Such an important document deserves a lot of attention. In the next issue (No. 16 which comes out in October 1989), there will be a number of articles dealing with this Letter.

Brother José María Valladolid

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THE HOLY FATHER'S ADDRESS

TO EDUCATORS AT TURIN

4 September 1988

1. ...I consider this a privileged meeting with you, dear educators employed in the work of the school. I consider it privileged because you are carrying out one of the most important and delicate tasks for the future of the Church and society. This meeting takes place during the celebrations of the first centenary of the death of Saint John Bosco, "father and teacher of the young", "the missionary to the young' (Message for the opening of the General Chapter, 10 January 1984)...

From a distance of one hundred years, the Church desires to express anew Don Bosco's witness and strengh of faith in its value for addressing the pressing and immediate service of education to overcome the tragedy of the split between the Gospel and culture (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 20).

2. I have come to be among you today to attest my impassioned partiality for the young, to reaffirm, as I had occassion to do before the members of UNESCO, that "the primary and essential task of culture in general, and also of all culture is education. Education consists in fact in enabling man to become more man, to 'be' more and not just to 'have' more and consequently, through everything he possesses to 'be' man more fully" (Speech to UNESCO, 2 June 1980, n. 11).

Yes, I am here to tell you to be ever more aware of the mission given to you by parents for the education of their children! They have placed their trust in you. Moreover, the Church sees you as her coworkers in the formation of young people and the construction of the dignity of the person.

It is up to you to offer young people the truth about loving a person and teach them to examine thoroughly the new knowledge. Few challenges are as stimulating as teaching, especially when it involves religious instruction classes, and few are as difficult in the prophetic wisdom and creativity required.

3. As educators you experience the ambiguities and grave conflicts which characterize society today. As I have already observed in the letter for the centenary, "the youth situation at the present day, a hundred years after the saint's death, has changed a great deal and presents a whole variety of different conditions and aspects, as is well known to educators and pastors" (Iuvenum Patris, 6).

The profound and numerous scientific and technological changes which continue to mark our epoch have shattered its stability, presenting us with many advantages and inconveniences. In the brief space of one generation, we have seen enormous changes in social values and economic conditions. The crisis which we face is the crisis of the person uprooted from his or her environment and relationships.

Even though "today groups of young people can be found all over the world who are genuinely sensitive to spiritual values, and who are desirous of help and support in the maturing of their personalities" (ibid, 6), they are still not strangers tc the ambiguities, the antinomies, and contradictions which manifest themselves, especially when the young find themselves immersed in, threatened by, and often crushed under an amorphous, one-dimensional, dehumanizing universe. This happens when Gospel values seem to be overcome at times by poverty of relationships at all levels, by the excess of contradictory information lacking a hierarchy of values, by the lack of meaning in life and anxiety for the uncertainties of the future, by the lack of ideals, by a certain attitude of "letting things go" which can lead to crime and harmful consumerism, corroding love and making life barren.

To this picture of things which heavily influences the young people, one must add the crisis of schools which often suffer from a lack of values to give the young, are unfruitful in generating wisdom and culture, and are faced with families in which love is sometimes suffocated.

This is a challenge which presents a pressing obligation to those who work in the field of education. As teachers and instructors you must seek to face up to these changes with creative intelligence since they constitute the daily situation of your professional service and the environment of your Christian witness.

4. Christ desires to be newly present to this contemporary world with all the explosive force of his mystery of love. He wishes to meet the people of today through teachers and models who are true educators, endowed with a strong preference for the young, drawn by Christ who possesses the truth about man and imbued with a great wisdom for humanizing all the new discoveries (cf. Familiaris Consortio, 8), and for restoring the harmony of the person.

Today the world has need, on the one hand, of teachers endowed with a strong conviction that can bring the human person back to his original position, and, on the other hand, of models, rich in inventiveness, to overcome the growing distance between human civilization and Christian faith, and to reestablish the alliance of science and wisdom (ibid., 8). It will be necessary at the same time to enrich knowledge, stimulate action of solidarity and revive the interior life.

It is necessary, therefore, to recover the consciousness of the primacy of truth and perennial values of the human person as such; to face up steadfastly to the challenge of offering an education which aims rather at the person in his or her dignitiy than at things, more at the search for wisdom than at material things.

It is necessary for the young people in your schools to learn to raise temselves up. How is it possible to safeguard their faculty of concentration and silent maturation of the faith when they are assailed by an ever more rapid movement of external stimuli? How does one enlighten their consciences? How does one teach them to dialogue with themselves; to think of their own dignity and that of others; to cultivate still the sense of wonder and reverence, the ultimate possibility that we have at our disposal to love profoundly, devotedly and with self-renunciation? Because of all this it is necessary to reaffirm with Don Bosco the conviction that in every young person there are reserves of good and interior qualities which, if opportunely stimulated, can give wisdom.

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5. In the light of this, a fundamental aspect of your mission is to guide young people to Christ.

Christ is the constant reference point of Christian teachers. Only Jesus Christ is the adequate and ultimate answer to the supreme question about the meaning of life and history; but it is not enough to answer in words alone.

Your students must perceive from the witness of your lives that the person does not have meaning outside of Christ; that Christ is your supreme option and the nucleus of all your initiatives. Teaching does not simply mean imparting your knowledge, but revealing what you are, living by the inspiration of faith.

Giving yourselves to the young and starting with them means precisely becoming capable of understanding the condition of this section of society, taking into consideration their just viewpoint and expressing the tragedy that there is a culture and society which, rather than dedicating itself to accepting the young, concentrates on other marginal interests. Begin with the young; this is the field of your missionary work and your most precious cultural workshop. Be missionaries to the young! Go out to their very hearts! Enter into their spiritual intimacy! Find there the authentic foundation of a personality which feels forced to go beyond itself, from its own limits, from its own plans, to be open to the transcendental reality of a great destiny. Try to see the young with Christ's eyes. While aware of the deficiencies young people have, foster the conviction that the Gospel, if planted within the process of their human formation, can lead them to commit themselves generously in life.

To do this, give special place to the religious education class. Give it priority among your concerns. During that time the young should be in a position to find Christ and his Gospel, feeling the fascination of Christ's person.

6. Youth today are attracted by enticements which reach them from the world; yet they desire to find solid and lasting values which can give meaning and direction to their lives. The salvific message of the Gospel will have to tell them where to find this support and the right direction throughout the educational process. This mission is certainly demanding. It demands a twofold sense of responsibility from you: to direct the conscience and experience of the young towards the mystery of Christ, showing yourselves at the same time to be true sculptors of men and women endowed with a great sense of spirituality.

This ability to direct one's attention to Christ and this spiritual sense are the hidden incentive of all education and culture. It is in this way that teaching will be able, at the same time, to cultivate thought, enrich action, and promote the interior life.

7. Don Bosco was a holy educator who "proposed holiness as the practical objective of his pedagogy" (Iuvenum Patris, 5). "An interchange between 'education' and 'holiness' is indeed the characteristic aspect of his personality: he was a 'holy educator', he drew his inspiration from a 'holy model', Francis de Sales, he was the disciple of a 'holy spiritual teacher', Joseph Cafasso, and he was able to form from among his boys a 'holy pupil', Dominic Savio" (Id.,5).

What a great demand for an educator to be able to convince each of his disciples that he is called to holiness! Be concerned, therefore, to make the Gospel visible in your daily life. Only in that way can you have an evangelical influence on the students whom you teach.

Today it is necessary to repropose the great theme of holiness. Vatican II traces for us the specific objectives of a Christian education along these same lines. These objectives are a true challenge and clearly describe the delicate work of education: "Christian education... tends especially to make it such that the baptized, gradually initiated into knowledge of the mystery of salvation, always come to a greater awareness of the gift of faith they have received; that they learn to adore God the Father in spirit and truth (cf. Jn 4:23); and that they might thus reach the perfect man, the height of the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph 4:13), and might make their contribution towards the growth of the mystical body" (Gravissimum Educationis, 2).

I cannot but remember with deep gratitude all those educators, priests, religious or laypersons who, while confronting and overcoming difficult problems, are able to make their teaching penetrating and fruitful.

I thank such educators present here. Greeting them cordially, I wish to offer my encouragement in this initiative which aims at a renewed zeal.

The Church attributes fundamental importance to Catholic schools. Today there are no alternative forms which can effectively substitute for the quality of an education oriented towards the fullness of Christian life. Such a life should be offered by Catholic schools which give priority to translating their own specific goals into action; that is to say, to being a true cultural workshop which inspires people towards the Gospel for a Christian's journey in today's world.

In the face of an environment poor in relationships, the Catholic school transmits and strengthens a sense of community, of social concern, and of universal solidarity. Its finality, drawing continually from the sources of the mystery of Christ, is to prepare young people to see themselves as cooperators in human salvation, committing themselves concretely with an apostolic dynamism to the pressing needs, according to their own state in life.

Today more than ever, the renewed service of Catholic schools is to free young people from encroaching materialism and obsessive hedonism, to guide them with goodness and firmness towards the heights of complete truth and sacrificial love.

8. I appeal especially to parents also, the first educators and teachers of their own children.

Everyone should note what an importance "Mamma Margherita" had in the life of Saint John Bosco! Not only did she give the Oratory of Valdocco that characteristic "family spirit" which still exists today, but she was able to mould the heart of her little John into that goodness and tenderness which made him the friend and father of his poor boys.

The time of associations of Christian parents has come at last! They bring together in friendship families and educators, and help parents to understand better the present socio-cultural changes and to use the most appropriate methods of education.

Dear educators and parents: the Christian formation of the new generations is largely in your hands. Be aware of that! The Lord invites you to recognize the primary urgency of the education of the young.

May Mary Most Holy, your teacher and guide, assist you. May she enlighten you with her maternal intervention in transmitting the truth and in being teachers of goodness and of courageous witness for the faith. Furthemore, may the blessing accompany you which we, poor pastors of the Church, wish to offer you at the end of this meeting...

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THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE

In a previous article of mine I promised that I would discuss the mystery of a vocation, which under the influence of Providence was constantly redirecting itself. I shall try to uncover the underlying causes which made these redirections possible and which resulted in a sense of wellbeing, peace, health and honour in a man who was already born to honour, peace and wellbeing.

What was John Baptist like as a child?

Let us first take a moment to consider with Blain the portrait he gives us of the child John Baptist. This child apparently used to leave family parties and read the lives of the saints. He was also apparently captivated by church ceremonies, and would recite the divine office with his grandfather.

Brother Leon Aroz in number 41 of the Cahiers Lasalliens writes a very fine passage about the childhood of John Baptist de la Salle, which we reproduce here, since it is still relevant:
"A child remains a child even if one day he will be a saint. His games, play-time, the development of his personality should not escape our attention. The family home was a gathering place for the well-to-do of Rheims. They had concerts there singing and dancing. Maria de la Salle, in her youth was appreciated as a musician and violinist, and earned much applause... Is it necessary to think, as his biographers would have us think, that John Baptist's sainthood was foreshadowed by his sad looks and introversion, whilst the rest of his family lived a life of ease, paying and receiving visits? John Baptist met all these visitors, spoke to them, perhaps a little shyly, but openly enough. He would listen to them, ask them things, and answer their questions frankly and freely. Since he was only a child, he was interested in anything going, and as he was an intelligent child, his answers contained unexpected insights.

A short outline of a vocation.

This child of more or less twelve years old suddenly said he wanted to be a priest. His father, Louis de la Salle, thought that there might be something of a castle in the air in this idea of his eldest son, however, God took first place in his household, so the family showed no objection. He felt somehow that the idea came from the Holy Spirit, and he simply answered "yes". He went ahead with that vocation with intelligence and persistence. As time went on he went to Paris, to the Sorbonne and Saint Sulpice, and the influence of these two establishments made of him a learned and holy priest.

So now he was a priest. His journey had reached the goal he had dreamed of. Everything seemed finalised. His family, the divine office, and study occupied him until Providence once more had plans for him, and these he would find out through his friendship with Roland, founder of an order of nuns to educate poor girls. Next Nyel appeared on the scene, and De la Salle helped him to start his first little school, simply to avoid disappointing his cousin Ms de Ruan. He helped in the rather hopeless task of running that first school and then two others. The teachers were not up to their job, and Nyel was too often elsewhere. De la Salle increased his visits to the schools to help them out. He bought a house right next to his own, so that the teachers could live together. He invited them to meals in his own house, so that they could discuss how the teaching was going, and finally, he decided to give them rooms in his own house, without feeling that he was committing himself to anything permanent. He just wanted to help; but gradually other outlines in this picture begin to appear.

He bought a very ordinary kind of house for these teachers and went to live there with them himself. There is another enlightening point to follow. He attemps to start to live the Christian life, a life committed to working with children, with them, and in 1681 they follow the whole of the Holy Week ceremonies together. It was then that he began to realise, much to his surprise, that Our Lord seemed to be calling him to take over these schools completely. Another series of events next occurred, including his resignation from the canonry in 1683 and the giving away of all his property in the famous famine of 1684. From that moment he became fully available.

The spiritual Journey of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

I now want to concentrate on the spiritual aspect of John Baptist's journey, which he followed during the early years of the foundation of our congregation. I should like to summarize the four points which stand out in this connection.

1. *Piety.*

John Baptist's soul was completely dedicated to God. It was always so. When, as child, he went hand in hand with his grandfather to church, and spent hours at the ceremonies, it was not merely because he was good and wellbehaved. It was because something seemed to be working in his soul; God was gradually taking possession of that soul. It was not long, agree all his biographers, before he had made for himself a small cassock and cotta, because he did not want just to assist, he wanted to take part. As he got older, he would sit next to the big church window with his grandfather, and recite the office with all the seriousness of a litttle monk. His canonry filled a big need: a chance to praise God. He had no other thought than the praise of God, when, at the age of fifteen, he accepted that canonry. Normallly the idea of his becoming a priest would not have crossed the minds of his parents, for he was the eldest boy, and should have carried on the family name and traditions. Nevertheless, from childhood, he was being urged by God, and since in that household God counted for something, he was able to follow, without opposition that important vocation. Having become a seminarist, just at the decisive moment, he chose Saint Sulpice to complete his training. So he left his family, because he knew that the seminary of Saint Sulpice was a place for priests who wanted complete union with God and to base their vocation entirely on the call of the Spirit. John Baptist did not find himself out of place there, and soon mastered the "rules" of the spiritual life taught in that demanding seminary. He kept his eyes on a spiritual goal, and was a good example to everybody there, according to information that was still available in Saint Sulpice when he had to leave it on the death of his parents.
We know what happened from then on, but I would like to point out that Holy Scripture must have been read, reflected and meditated on and learnt by heart, for in his writings, and especially in his meditations, one constantly feels the force of the Word of God. So much so that in certain cases the

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"points" of the meditations are simply logical groupings of Scripture texts. It is not surprising therefore that God became the centre of his life and God's glory and service should be his great wish. His mission as a founder demanded it, but God, Our Lord and Our Lady were nothing new to him: they were the objects of his deep spirituality and of his love, all enlightened by an unhesitating Faith, which is all the more surprising when one considers the deep divisions that existed in those days in the church in France. So God knew that He could count on that Friend of his and he did count on him, nor did His friend let him down.

2. *Availability.*

He was completely available. This was not because it came easily, nor because it seemed the usual thing. We have already seen that God's plans were very different from what he himself had envisaged. However, when God suggested something and when John Baptist had understood His message, then God could trust him. John Baptist would answer that gentle call, which became audible in a multitude of events seeming at first to have little to do with him. His vocation as priest was followed with tenacity, as we have seen, and this was unexpected and, humanly speaking, inadvisable, especially after the death of his parents, when he had to become the head of the family and its legal representative.

His friend Canon Roland was full of enthusiasm, and suggested that he could change his canonry for a poor parish. He agreed, but the plan, having survived a short time, was rejected by the Archbishop; nevertheless, it showed how available John was. Then came Nyel with his ideas inspired by God, yet leaving him with the question of how to look after his family and perform his duty as a priest. But the signs of God's will were gradually conquering him, and he was surrendering bit by bit to the movements of grace. Provided he knew that something was God's will, he would go to any lengths to achieve it. Such attitudes made him look a fool in the eyes of certain dignified members of the Cathedral hierarchy of Rheims. I think that this availability of John Baptist resulted from his constant concentration on God's presence, from his loyal and generous search for the Divine Will and from that great desire of his to follow, like those great men of the Bible, the orders of God. He learnt it through a careful study of Holy Scripture, just as those readings of his grandfather had taught him the enthusiasm and determination of the martyrs of Christ.

3. *Radicalism.*

His radicalism was well camouflaged behind the aristocratic exterior of this man of God. He did not look, or ever would, on God's will half-heartedly. If at times he hesitated, it was to make sure whether it was really God suggesting these ideas, but once he was sure, John Baptist would go as far as God wanted, without waiting, wondering or worrying. Would you like some examples? When his parents died, he was unsure what he should do next, so he went to his spiritual director Canon Roland, who assured him that God wanted him to be a priest. And so it came about, for two months later he became a subdeacon and he cast aside any doubt. When he realised that God wanted him to help the poor teachers, he did not hesitate either: he rented a house near his own for them; and when he thought that was not enough, he invited them to lodge in his own home, much to the disgust of family and neighbours alike. At a family gathering called to see what they should do with this madmen who was a disgrace to the whole clan, John Baptist sat there, with his arms folded and his eyes lowered, just listening in silence, like a rock in the middle of the ocean: that was how his first biographer, Bernard, describes the scene. When he felt that God was urging him to give up his canonry, which meant giving up his "social security", he never flinched, even after the refusal of the Archbishop, the contrary advice of the other canons, his family and public opinion. An even greater surprise was that he did not hand over the canonry to his brother, as everyone was advising him, including the Archbishop, but to a poor parish priest, who was well known for his holiness. There was agitation in the chapter, but the radically-minded John Baptist had made his decision.

And in God's good time John Baptist heard God saying to him: "The foxes have holes and the birds have their nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head". Then it was that he decided to give everything away, and the sign to do it came in the terrible famine of 1684. He in fact gave everything away, as though it were the normal thing to do; he made that extraordinary move as though it was just the logical consequence of following the Gospel. Then came a series of personal hand-overs, in which he surely showed himself a record-breaker. In the poor community of La Rue Neuve he was always the poorest of the lot. He slept in an attic which was not big enough to stand up in properly or lie full length. He ate what there was, and you know how they got that: a Brother would go out every morning with a sack on his back, through the streets of Rheims and later of Paris and collect the left-overs from well-supplied religious houses. The Brother would come back, with his sack more or less full, they would prepare it as best they could, then those heroes, my first Brothers, would dine.

4. *Faithfulness.*

This was the most remarkable characteristic of John Baptist. He was faithful to God and he was faithful to the children in whom he saw Our Lord. They were the ones who made him change direction, and for that John Baptist loved them for ever. "For ever" is a strong expression, but in his case it was well deserved. Forty years of hard work contrary to the habits of centuries, and contrary to the advice of men of his time, who in every respect were worth listening to. Listen to John Baptist's own words, as he explains what he had to put up with to two friends who visited him in Saint Yon, a few months before his death: "I have had to suffer constant opposition and even actual persecution from many people. Clergymen, from whom I could have expected support, let me down; my own sons in some instances rebelled against me. Those external crosses have been aggravated by interior ones which were even worse." Those words might sound rather pessimistic, but they end with a calm and serene statement, which shows how he recognised in all those sufferings the hand of God, in whom he had entire confidence: "If God had not supported with his own hand this 'edifice' for everyone to see, it would have been buried under its own ruins long ago."
This explains everything. In a letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin he writes: "Personally, I don't like going ahead of Providence, and in the Roman matter, I shall not go ahead either. I want Providence to decide things first, then I am very happy to follow." John Baptist saw the directions that God left on his route to show him the way, and this strengthened his Faith and at the same time explains his faithfulness. How can one refuse to follow, if it is God who leads and calls one? A final picture at the very moment of his death. When Brother Barthelemy, the Superior, asked him whether he had any final advice, John Baptist answered in a calm and peaceful voice, slowly to give himself the chance to weigh every word: "I adore completely the will of God towards me". Those were the triumphant words to end a life of fidelity. He believed in God, hoped in Him and loved Him "with all his heart, with his whole soul, with all his mind and all his strength"... always. Just as Christ did.

Brother Manuel Olivé.

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THE USE OF HYMNS

IN BROTHERS' SCHOOLS

It is a verifiable fact La Salle introduced the singing of hymns into his schools. Cahier Lasallien No. 22 (CL22) contains the hymns that were collected for this purpose and which were approved in 1703. However, on the basis of these facts some rather fanciful theories have been built which serieous research does not support. We thought it would be a good idea to straighten a few things out.

The use of hymns in connection with catechism.

To begin with, some information would be useful about when catechism was taught and how long the lessons lasted on various days. On ordinary school days, catechism was taught at the end of the day, at 4 o'clock, except during the winter period. In winter, it was moved forward by half an hour. During La Salle's lifetime, the "school winter period", if we can call it that, lasted from November 15th to January 15th. Then, about 1720, the Conduct extended this period by two weeks at either end. Lessons lasted half an hour.

Other days included half-day holidays when catechism was taught last thing in the morning and lasted half an hour.

When the whole of the following day was a holiday, catechism the day before lasted an hour, with the first half hour given over to the study of the "principal mysteries".

On Sundays and big feastdays, catechism lasted an hour and a half, the first half hour once again given over to the "principal mysteries".

When did hymn singing take place?

There is a special kind of hymn clearly indicated for the purpose "which must be sung before catechism on each *weekday*." There is is one per day except Sunday (in 1703). This gap was filled in the 1714 edition. Some readers, basing themselves on a somewhat hurried perusal of the text, have attributed certain characteristics to the whole body of hymns and which, in reality, applied only to the first six or seven.

The *first occasion* when hymns are to be sung is clearly indicated: it is "to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit"; and the first group of hymns is designed to serve this purpose.

The second occasion when a hymn is to be sung is not immediately after the catechism lesson, but after the evening prayer which follows the catechism lesson. This practice is already mentioned in the "Exercices of Piety" approved in 1697. It is included in the "Conduct of Schools" of 1706, and is still to be found in the 1720 edition. It is also to be found in the Rule of 1726 (Ch. 29, art. 26). According to the Conduct, this hymn can be considered as a recessional one. It is limited to about six verses. Moreover, in the printed text, the groups of six verses are usually separated by typographical embellishments.

These facts cannot justify a point of view which would consider these hymns as a sort of sung meditation, serving to outline the main theme of the catechism lesson which was to follow. To believe this to be the case would be to confuse our own personal practices with what actually used to happen in the days of St. La Salle.

Singing a hymn at the end, alter evening prayer, served to ensure that the pupils left the premises in an atmosphere of recollection, even a little relaxed, but also with some good thoughts like "what Cristians must believe in order to be saved", as the introduction to the second group of 30 hymns tells us.

Later, there was introduced the practice of singing the "hymn of the week" in full, just before the extended Sunday catechism lesson. This is mentioned in the 1760 edition. From the documents at present available we are unable to discover exactly when this practice was introduced, but it was after 1726. We should perhaps mention that the expression "hymn of the week" implies that there was not a different hymn each day, or that different groups of six verses were used, and this was enough to ensure variety.

What were De La Salle's motives?

De La Salle has not given any clear explanation of why he thinks hymns ought to be used. The 1706 edition of the Conduct has a chapter heading "Of Hymns", but that is all: there is no actual chapter. Elsewhere, one finds that the final hymn has been made part of the leaving school ritual.

De La Salle, however, is convinced that songs can be effective. He says in the "Rules of Politeness" (CL. 19, p. 150): "The words of a song have a much greater impact on the mind than words on their own." This is a recognition of the spellbinding effect of music. Why else would he have used it? It was also to follow a recommendation of St. Paul who, as the Founder points out, "tells us quite clearly on two different occasions in his Epistles that what Christians should sing are psalms, hymns and spiritual canticles." (Ibid. p. 150). Hymns, in their own way, enrich one's life as a Christian. For once, De La Salle refers to pleasure (very respectable pleasure, of course) as a motive for using hymn singing: "It should also be a source of *great pleasure* and enjoyment for Christians to bless and praise often the God of their hearts." (Ibid). This affective aspect is important for De La Salle: "Christians should sing (these hymns) from the bottom of their hearts and with affection, because they express praise for God." In the light of these words, it is hardly surprising to find De La Salle taking the trouble to collect here and there a certain number of hymns "for use in the Christian schools."

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St. John Baptist de La Salle's choice of hymns

To speak simply of "St. John Baptist de La Salle's hymns" could lead to possible misunderstanding and give the impression that De La Salle composed these hymns himself. For example, to assert, as is done in issue 14 of Lasalliana, that "De La Salle spent much of his free time composing lyrics for songs which fitted in with what his teachers taught in their religion lesson during the course of the year" is to be excessively generous. The present state of research into these hymns does not in any way support such a confident assertion. We are still trying to discover the origin of the texts used by De La Salle.

Where do the texts used by De La Salle in school come from?

About 1986, I intensified my research into texts which could have been of interest to De La Salle when he was preparing his 1703 collection of hymns. At the same time, I tried to find the musical scores used in the singing of these hymns. My work continues in both these areas when time permits.

However, I have now reached a point in my research where I can say with certainty where 24 out of the 30 hymns of the first long series (CL. 22) come from: their origin is quite clear, and De La Salle certainly did not compose them. The oldest of these texts go back possibly as far back as 1669. Others date from 1681, 1671, 1696 and 1700.

One of the most interesting sources of these hymns is Abbe Simon Joseph PELLEGRIN. There is a somewhat hasty conclusion in the Cahier Lasallien No. 22 (p. IV, note 2) which says: "No text from the *Cantiques Spirituels*... by Abbe Pellegrin (Paris, Le Clerc, 1701) was included in the first (by date) of our two collections." If such a conclusion was reached it is obvious its author was unaware of the fact that in addition to Christmas carols and cantiques (hymns), Pellegrin published also in these same years some *Chanson Spirituelles*. In fact, De La Salle borrowed, and it was for his 1703 collection, hymn XXI, "Que de Trésors enrichissent mon âme" (What treasures enrich my soul) and XXIV, "Divin Agneau, qui sur l'autel..." (Divine Lamb, who on the altar...) These hymns were composed for the Jubilee France celebrated in 1701. The pupils in the Brothers' schools possibly sang these hymns even before they were included in De La Salle's collection approved in 1703. Two other hymns were also borrowed from Pellegrin. As far as the last group is concerned, thirteen out of the twenty-two hymns have been traced to their source. Consequently, we are in a position to say that a good forty of these texts were certainly not composed by De La Salle.

Was there an arrangement between Pellegrin and De La Salle?

Among the works of Pellegrin referred to by CL. 22 there is the following: *Cantiques spirituels sur plusieurs points importants de la religion et de la morale chrétienne* (Hymns based on various important points of religion and Christian morality) for use during catechism and in the Christian schools, set to the finest old and new melodies, by Abbe Pellegrin and other authors. New edition, revised and corrected, Paris, Le Clerc, 1721, in-12, 96 p. (AMG). As the last page of this book has been heavily trimmed, a certain amount of information is missing. As it happens, I have found this missing information, and have discovered two interesting formulas of approbation. One acknowledges receipt of 24 hymns in manuscript form from Pellegrin on "this 15th day of September, 1713." The other refers to L. Ellies du Pin, who has given his approval to "Hymns for the use of the Christian schools, this 5th day of January, 1703." The hymns referred to here are exactly those included in CL 22. This means that these approbations are very important. They destroy in one fell swoop the contention that the hymns in CL 18 belong to an edition which was published somewhere between 1720 and 1730, as the 1952 Institute Bulletin would have us believe. It is now beyond doubt that all the hymns included in CL 18 belong to a 1760 edition. Up till now, those editing these collections have spoken only in terms of the two outside dates of 1703 (1705) and 1760. In between, it occurred to no one that the 1721 edition was an intermediate stage between the 1703 and the 1760 one. And yet, to convince oneself of the truth of this, all one had to do was to check carefully the approbations I referred to above.

And so a first gap has been filled in the history of the editions of hymns for the use of the Christians schools.

Had I discovered a missing link?

This thought, lurking at the back of my head, became an exciting possibility when I was fortunate enough to discover a 1714 edition of "Cantiques spirituels... by Abbe Pellegrin and other authors." I rushed off to order a microfilm of the document so as to make a close study of it. It would be no exaggeration to say I had found a missing link. What I had discovered, in fact, was that the 1721 edition followed on directly from this 1714 edition, because Pellegrin referred to the approbation given him by Raguet on September 15th 1713. And in the 1714 edition, I found the complete text of this approbation which mentioned specifically which hymns, each clearly identified by a number, were approved.

Even more interesting than that was the reproduction of a "privilege" obtained by John Baptist de La Salle on December 19th 1711, which gave permission for the collection to be published. Pellegrin makes specific mention of this in his 1714 edition: "These newly approved hymns are published in virtue of a Privilege granted to Sieur de La Salle." Pellegrin is very fair: he gives the numbers of the hymns he has borrowed from De La Salle's edition. There are twenty-one of them.

So the question remains whether De La Salle and Pellegrin actually worked together and had some formal agreement. Further research is needed to discover the answer to this and to other questions. What we have established, however, is a linked series of editions: 1703 (1705), 1714, 1721 and 1760. We know who was responsible for them. But there are still other editions waiting to be discovered. These could throw real light on the significance of the collections of hymns for the use of the Christian schools, and on John Baptist de La Salle's real contribution to them.

Brother Gilles Beaudet.

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DO YOU KNOW THE "CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS"?

I must admit that there is one book of the Founder's which I dearly treasure above all else and that is "La Conduite des Ecoles". In the following reflections I would very much like to be of some help to those who may read it, and by chance with their better wisdom and insight they may reveal the "vetera et nova" that lie jealously guarded, and for the most part, forgotten in these pages. In this introduction I simply want to dispel a misunderstanding.

Conduct of the Christian Schools – Guide to the Christian Schools.

It is almost certain that if you were to ask many Brothers: "Have you read the "Guide" of St. John Baptist De La Salle"? they would undoubtedly confidently reply: "Yes, years ago it was read and studied in community".

The error arises in confusing the tittle "Guide of the Christian Schools" edited in Paris in 1903, with that of the "Conduct of Christian Schools" whose first edition is dated Paris 1720. However, they are two completely different pedagogical works in spite of the fact that the writer of the foreword of the "Guide" states "We have adhered to the general framework of the traditional "Conduct", a statement that has led quite a few people astray. Without claiming that this is the last word on the subject I would like to pinpoint one or two differences.

Conduct of 1720	Guide of 1903
THE AUTHOR	
La Salle together with a group of Brothers experienced in the teaching art. (Preface).	Anonymous; it lacks the richness of differing view-points which is normally associated with team work.
THE STRUCTURE	
The flow of the river of everyday school life follows its course from the first page of the first chapter: "Entering and beginning School", to the last chapter of the first part: "On leaving the school premises and how the students should leave", i.e. putting theory into practice.	The structure is determined by logic and theory rather than by life itself; i.e. from the abstract to the practical: though they are connected, the one follows the other.
The three parts in which the "Conduct" is divided correspond to a pedagogy as it is related to experience, day by day, moment by moment.	The four parts of the "Guide" have a scientific and systematic style, typical of a Cartesian and normative treatise.

THE LANGUAGE

Concepts and ideas have to be "clothed" in words to enable the listener or reader to assimilate them. This "dress" in literary works is called a text, and in the "Conduct" and the "Guide" the language of the text is quite different. So disparate are they that it would be like comparing a shirt with a jacket although both are articles of clothing. Only a few pages of the "Guide" show some relationship with the "Conduct".

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THE AIM

Where the two treatises are in accord is the essential meaning which they stress –it could not be otherwise. It is the human and Christian formation of the pupils, specifically in the Lasallian school. However, they both show evidence of the times in which they were written.

INNER VITALITY

As I have indicated earlier the "Conduct" is a document fashioned from the quarry of life by craftsmen at the "chalk-face". The composition of the "Conduct" came about after countless consultations between De La Salle and the oldest and most capable teachers among the Brothers of the Institute, and after several years of experience" (Preface). On the other hand the "Guide" could have been written –I don't say it was– by some professor of pedagogy. Let us compare by means of an example or two the quite distinct thrust shown in some of these pages.

Conduct in 1720	Guide in 1903
Teacher and pupil advance together from the first to the last page.	Teacher and pupil work separately for most of the time.
The pupil works with the teacher in the running of the class.	The predominant role of the teacher leaves very little opportunity for the pupil to work with him.
The pupil is an active agent in his own personal education and helps his companions in theirs.	This form of education in which teacher and pupil play their conventional roles weakens the education of the child.
Continuous assessment is basic to the personal progress of the pupil and so enables him to undertake self-evaluation.	It loses the advantages of "continuity" and gives rise to individual and group competitiveness.
The education (human, intellectual, psychological and moral) of the whole person is the object of the school.	Reduced in number, in comparison with the "Conduct" they are more practical and inpersonal.
The chapter on punishments – to quote one – contains a wealth of psychology and incentives of great value and profit to the pupils in showing them how to amend their ways.	More judgemental and less personal with regards to the one who corrects as to the one who receives the correction.
It is the school in action.	It's a preparation for the school to operate.
It is the very life-blood of genuine Lasallian pedagogy.	Ordinary pedagogical principles swamp, in part, the contagious, all-embracing vitality of the Lasallian pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

At no time have I attempted to claim that the "Conduct" is superior to the "Guide". Every society develops and writes its own pedagogy; not for nothing do two centuries pass by. My intention has been simply to motivate the reader so that he may personally verify that the "Conduct" in its quintessence is closer to today's pedagogy than the "Guide" of 1903; that the knowledge of the latter does not validate that of the former; and that whoever gives some thought to the "Conduct" will penetrate deeper into the rich personality of the Pedagogue from Rheims, and the worth of the creative team of Brothers with whom he worked in the composition of the treatise and on the subsequent revisions thereof.

Br. Manuel F. Magaz.

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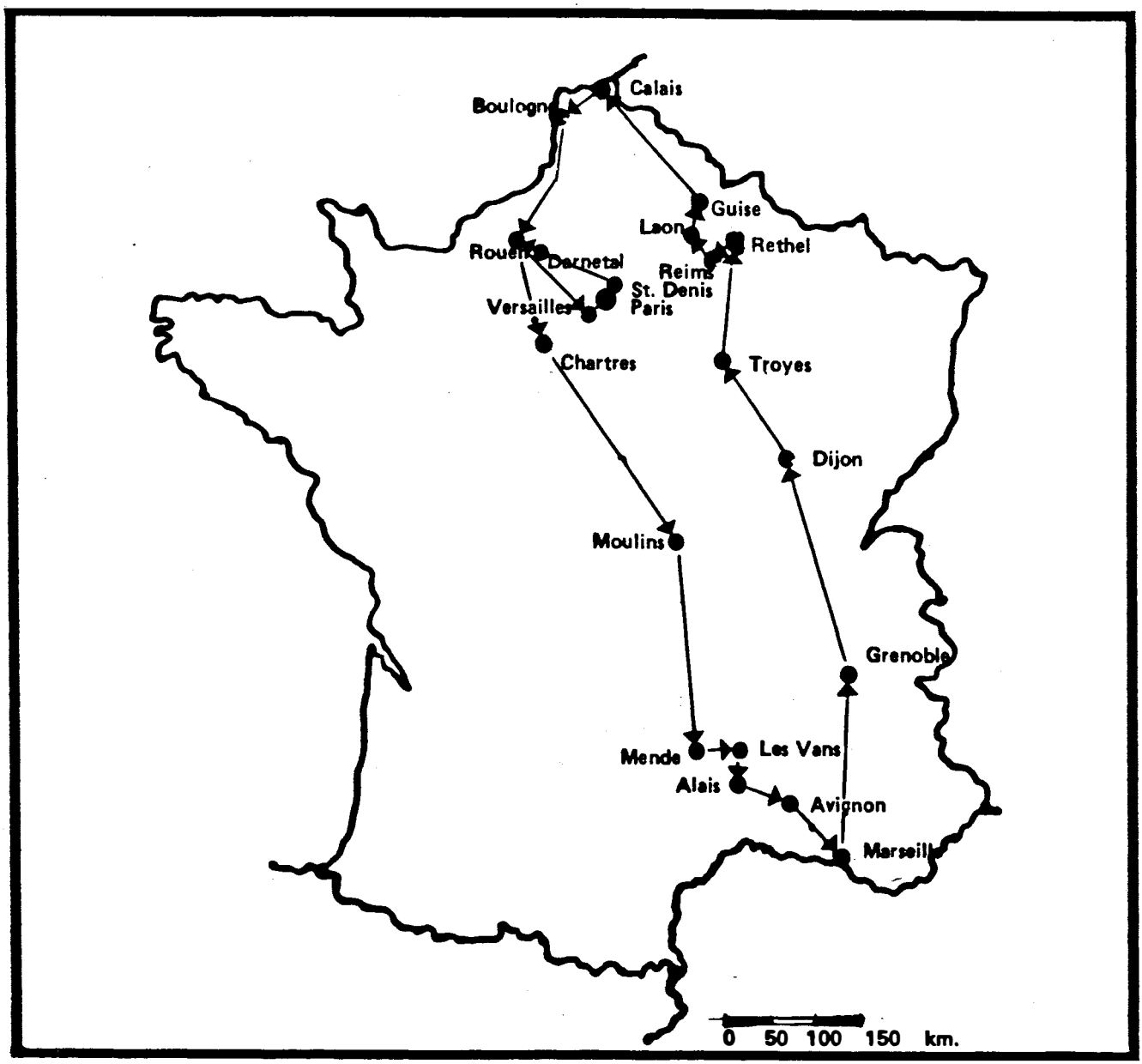
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A TOUR OF FRANCE – 154 DAYS ON HORSEBACK

WITH BROTHER BARTHELEMY

December 4th 1716 – May 7th 1717



At the end of 1716, St. La Salle sent Brother Barthelemy on a special tour of the communities of the Institute to prepare the Brothers for the General Assembly that was due to be held soon at St. Yon.

Brother Barthelemy did the whole journey –all 2240 kilometres of it– on horseback. In all, it took him 154 days, if we include the short time he spent in each community "visiting" the Brothers and taking a short rest. It was a real "Tour de France", but under what conditions! The "Petit Registre" kept in the Generalate, gives us a great many details: it is the first Institute census, in 1717.

Let us trace the journey undertaken by Brother Barthelemy and try to gauge his difficulties. The number of Brothers in each community is given in brackets.

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Departure:	ROUEN (St. Yon)	4/12/1716			RETHEL	20/02/1717	(4)
	CHARTRES	9/12/1716	(4)		LAON	4/03/1717	(5)
	MOULINS	16/12/1716	(2)	(6)	GUISE	? /03/1717	(3)
(1)	MENDE	24/12/1716	(2)		CALAIS	16-18/03/17	(6)
	LES VANS	31/12/1716	(2)		BOULOGNE	18-21/03/17	(6)
(2)	ALES	8/01/1717	(4)	(7)	ROUEN	27/03/1717	(10)
	AVIGNON	8-10/1/1717	(4)		DARNETAL	2/04/1717	(2)
(3)	MARSEILLE	15/01/1717	(2)		VERSAILLES	16/04/1717	(4)
(4)	GRENOBLE	22/01/1717	(4)		ST. DENIS	18/04/1717	(2)
	DIJON	8/02/1717	(2)		PARIS	25/04/1717	(11)
(5)	TROYES	15/02/1717	(2)	Llegada:	ROUEN (St. Yon)	7/05/1717	(9)

N. B. It was only nine days after Brother Barthelemy got back from his journey that the General Assembly at St. Yon began. It lasted from May 16th to May 23rd 1717.

(1) "Brother Barthelemy arrived here after many difficulties and dangers. It took him eight days on horseback in the middle of winter." (Rigault Vol. 1, p. 407).

(2) "The track was covered in snow, and the traveller ran the risk of losing his life. He rested till the day after the Epiphany." (id. p. 407).

(3) "It took him a week to get to Marseilles from Grenoble." (id.).

(4) "At the beginning of 1714, 'in the middle of winter', St La Salle sent Brother Jacques, Director of Grenoble, whose judgment he trusted, to observe, assess and report back." (Rigault, vol 1, p. 381).

(5) "Five days to cover the stretch Troyes-Rethel." (id.). Brother Barthelemy thought his last days had come, or at least, he was going to lose all his money:
a/ He fell off his horse; one foot got caught in the stirrup, and he was dragged along the ground for a long distance." (Blain p. 654).
b/ He met up with some shifty-looking travellers, but he got off lightly with only a bad fright. He went to recover in the community of the holy Director, Brother Louis, at Rethel." (Rigault, vol 1, p. 408).

(6) "It looks as though he stayed a long time in Guise." The "Petit Registre" referred to by Rigault does not say when he arrived there.

(7) "He took the shortest road from Boulogne to Rouen, going along the coast, through the Bray region." (Rigault Vol. 1, p. 408).

Bro. Michael Buttigieg

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THE BROTHERS

MARTYRED IN SPAIN

Around 1930, there began a very difficult period for the Church and Catholics in Spain. It was a time of great political, social and religious tension. At certain stages, legal measures enacted against the Church were particularly vicious. The outcome of all this was a civil war which lasted from 1936 to 1939. However, as early as 1934, a revolution broke out in the Asturias region of north Spain, and it quickly took the form of a violent persecution of priests, religious, militant Christians and the destruction of their property. It was during this period that the eight Brothers from Turon were martyred simply because they were religious. Once the civil war started, religious persecution became widespread and extremely violent. The thousands of people martyred – bishops, priests, men and women religious – included also 165 Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The first martyrs of this period have already been beatified, and so we hope the Causes of other groups will soon reach a successful conclusion. This is the case of our own Turon martyrs: the examination of their Cause, it appears, will be completed very soon.

And so we thought it would be interesting to reproduce here the Circular Letter the Superior General, Brother Junien Victor, wrote to the Institute at the time, as an introduction to the biographies of all these Brother martyrs.

* * *

Rome, March 15th 1940,
Feast of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

Very Dear Brothers,

May the grace and the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always!

We were filled with great sorrow when the forces of evil swept down on Catholic Spain in the summer of 1936. In the powerful words of the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius XI, these forces-"destroyed and ruines all that was most humanly human, and most divinely divine: people, sacred institutions and objects; holy lives dedicated to the service of others and entirely given over to prayer, study and charitable works. And the forces unleashed were so irrational, savage and cruel that one wonders how they could possibly exist". (Speech, September 14th 1936).

These terrible events caused us even more suffering because, ever since 1904, with the enactment of the Combe laws in France, Spain had become in some sort of way our adopted country, offering a fraternal welcome to our Brothers from the south of France. These events have been disastrous for our Institute: it has deeply suffered: many of our houses have been destroyed, our young Christians scattered, many of our Brothers massacred, a great many others imprisoned and destined to suffer atrociously, while others have been obliged to go into hiding, "with a price on their heads", as Pope Pius XI said, "sheltering in

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villages and towns, in people's homes and on wild mountain sides, like the first martyrs whom St. Paul admiringly described in the following proud and magnificent words: The world was not worthy of them".

The Pope had also this to say: "This was the apotheosis of Christian and priestly virtues, of heroism and true martyrdom in the sacred and glorious meaning of the word, martyrdom of innocent lives, of venerable old age and of budding youth".

More than 150 of our Brothers made this glorious sacrifice of their lives. Now that the storm has subsided and Spain, with the burden of its memories is working for a better future, we think it is time we published the official account of these glorious deaths. As is traditional, we will mention also the virtues these Brothers practised while they lived peacefully in our midst.

You have been waiting for these obituaries with some impatience. It has not been easy to gather all this material together, and it has entailed a fair amount of travelling. We offer it to you today, convinced you will read it with the respect we owe to the memory of these "witnesses of Christ". It is a tribute they have deserved by their heroic death. "In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die, their going looked liked a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation... slight was their affliction, great will their blessing be. God has put them to the test and proved them worthy to be with him" (Wisdom, 3, 2-6).

They share now in the glory of the eternal Church, guardian of the promises of Jesus Christ. They have shown that "the torch of faith handed on by Dominic, Ignatius, Teresa, Isidore, Pascal and the whole hosts of Spanish saints has neither grown weaker nor has it been extinguished by the wind of the Abomination of Desolation in the Holy Place: on the contrary, it is burning even more brightly in the hearts of true Spaniards, yearning in their hearts, overburdened with sorrowful memories, for a rebirth and renewal of religious life which enables the Christian to triumph over misfortune and suffering". This is what His Holiness, Pope Pius XII said while he was still Cardinal Pacelli. (Address given in the presence of the Holy Father on September 14th, 1936).

They are also the glory of our Institute, ennobled by their blood. What a joyful welcome must Saint John Baptist de La Salle have given them in Heaven, he who had such great admiration for the holy martyrs, as we see in his Meditations. In them we see the real enthusiasm with which he describes for us St. Andrew's joy at seeing his cross ready for him. He goes into great detail as he describes the sufferings endured by St. Laurence, saying: "What can we say about such fortitude? Will such an example make us love suffering?"

Our dear respected confreres who shed their blood in witness of their faith certainly understood the Founder's words. How eloquent, therefore, is their death! What a crown to reward a life consecrated entirely to the service of our Lord and to souls redeemed by his blood!

These examples should urge us, Brothers, to serve God and devote ourselves to young people with greater fervour and generosity than ever before. "Not having the good fortune, nor the opportunity to suffer martyrdom for the faith, make yourselves martyrs for the love of God by practising mortification", says our holy Founder.

May we bear all these thoughts in mind as we read the account of the deaths of our glorious martyrs, and let us pray humbly and fervently for the grace of final perseverance!

With confidence that our prayers will be granted,

Your very humble and devoted servant,

Brother Junien Victor.

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THE BROTHERS WHO WERE MARTYRED

IN TURON, SPAIN

on the 9th October 1934

* * *

On the 9th December, 1988 the Theological Commission studying the cause of these brothers unanimously approved their martyrdom. Although there are still some stages to be gone through before the process is concluded, this is a definite step in the direction of the beatification of these nine martyrs, (eight brothers and a Passionist priest). There follows a short summary of each of their lives.

Brother CIRILO BERTRAN
José Sanz Tejedor

He was born in Lerma, in the diocese and province of Burgos on the 20th March, 1888. He went to Bujedo in 1906 at the age of 18. He began his novitiate in Bujedo on the 4th March, 1907. He made his first religious vows on the 31st August, 1909 and his final vows on the 31st July, 1916. He taught in 13 different schools of the congregation and was director in five of them. He had been in Turón from 1933.

From his novitiate days his character was serious and reflective. He did not say much, was wise in the way he judged things and very affable in communicating with people. When he was a superior his wisdom and good judgment became apparent as well as his kindness in administration.

From material collected for his canonisation cause we can select the following from one witness: "He showed his love of God and of others by his zeal for souls. He prepared his lessons, especially his religious lessons with great care. With equal care he prepared the reflection that every brother has to give his students every morning". Some brothers who had lived with him had this to say, when they heard of his martyrdom: "We are not surprised; he was worthy of martyrdom and was made of the stuff of martyrs".

Brother MARCIANO JOSE
Filomeno López López

He was born on the 15th November, 1900 in El Pedregal, diocese of Sigüenza and Province of Guadalajara. He began his novitiate on the 20th September, 1916. He made his first vows on the 9th July, 1919 and his final profession on the 9th July, 1925. He was intelligent and could have taught, but when he was at Bujedo, he became deaf, so he had to take up manual work, and whilst doing that kind of work he showed a great affection for his vocation.

He had been in Turón six months when he died. One of the witnesses for his cause says: "He carried his cross with patience and love, and served his community, that is to say his congregation, with generosity".

Brother JULIAN ALFREDO
Vilfrido Fernández Zapico

He was born in Cifuentes de Rueda, province of León on the 24th December, 1902. Some people assure us that he was preparing himself to join the Capuchins, but had to give up the idea through ill health. He entered the novitiate of Bujedo on the 4th February, 1926. He made his first vows on the 15th August, 1927 and his final vows on the 17th August, 1932. From August 1929 until 1933 he was in the school of Caborana, very near Turón. He had been in the latter community only one year when he died. One witness says of him: "He always approached Our Lord when he had difficulties, and admitted that he always felt much better when he had talked with the prisoner of the tabernacle".

The following are some of his words: "Persecution has managed to unite me all the more with God through doing my duty, and has made this present world seem wretched, for there is only misery in it". "I am the Guardian Angel of my students and I must never lose sight of them". On more than one occasion he exclaimed: "If only I had the luck to become a martyr".

Brother VICTORINO PIO
Claudio Bernabé Cano

He was born in San Millán de Lara, in the province and diocese of Burgos on the 7th July, 1905. He went to Bujedo on the 26 August, 1919. He moved on to the novitiate on the 30th August, 1921, made his first vows on the 2nd February, 1922 and his final profession on 22nd August, 1930. He taught in Palencia from 1925 to 1934, except for a short time, when he was in La Santa Espina. He had been in Turón only 23 days when he died.

He was an excellent educator, a well organised and gifted teacher. His Brother Visitor testified for him as follows: "He loved his students very much, and had a remarkable enthusiasm for teaching."

He had a great devotion to Our Lady. He foresaw that the would die soon and told a friend of his so: a few weeks later in fact he died.

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Brother BENJAMIN JULIAN
Vicente Alonso Andrés

He was born in Jaramillo de la Fuente in the province and diocese of Burgos on the 27th October, 1908. He went to Bujedo on the 1st September, 1920. On the 2nd February, 1924 he began his novitiate, making his first vows on 15th May, 1926 and final profession 30th August, 1933. That same year he was assigned to Turón, after teaching for five years in Santiago de Compostela.

He was a jovial and affectionate man. One of the witnesses said: "He was obedient, hard working and loved the Catholic church very much." Another witness: "He loved his vocation so much and was so joyful and happy in it, that he was ready to go wherever obedience sent him, as he used to say: "even to Peking if necessary". His father confessor has this to say: "I cherish the hope that one day I shall see him numbered among the martyrs, for he was killed for the Faith and for the teaching of Christ, which he, with apostolic fervour, passed on to his students. That is why God has rewarded him with the palm of martyrdom".

Brother AUGUSTO ANDRES
Román Martín Fernández

He was born in Santander on the 6th May, 1910. He was a student in the brothers' school, but in order to follow his vocation he had to convince his widowed mother, who did not like the idea. He became very ill, and the doctors gave up hope of saving his life. His fellow students made a novena to St Teresa of the Child Jesus, he got better and his mother offered no further opposition to his vocation.

He joined Bujedo on the 8th August, 1922, began his novitiate on the 3th February, 1926 and made his first vows on the 15th August, 1927. He was not old enough to make his final vows. He was assigned to Turón in September, 1933, after teaching for two years in the school at Valladolid and another two in Palencia. In spite of his youth, he was a masterly teacher. At his cause the following facts were testified about him: "He had to struggle to save his vocation against his mother's insistance that he should return home."

Brother BENITO DE JESUS
Héctor Valdivieso Sáez

He was born in Buenos Aires in Argentina on the 31st October, 1910 of Spanish parents. Having returned to Spain with his mother and brothers and sisters, he entered Bujedo, and stayed there two years. He then went to make his novitiate in Lembecq-lez-Hal, in Belgium on the 7th August, 1926. He took the religious habit on the 7th October, 1926 and made his vows on the 7th October, 1927. He did not reach the age to make final profession. Although he planned to go on the missions, he began his apostolate in Astorga, stayed there four years and then went to Turón in 1933.

Witnesses have said of him: "His enthusiasm for the Holy Eucharist and for the apostolate were remarkable". In a letter to his mother he said: "If the government expells us, I shall come to pass a few days with you, then I shall go to South America or France or anywhere else they send me. My main wish is to remain what I am, a Brother of the Christian Schools". To his father, who was in Mexico, he wrote: "Try to be brave under persecution, and if God gives you the grace of martyrdom, know that I, your son, will be envious of you."

Brother ANICETO ADOLFO
Manuel Seco Gutiérrez

He was born in Celada Marlantes in the province and diocese of Santander on the 1st October, 1912. He became a junior novice in Bujedo at the age of twelve. On the 6th September, 1926 he became a novice and made his first vows on the 2nd February, 1930. He had only two years of teaching, one in the school in Valladolid and the other in Turón. Two of his brothers also joined our congregation, and he wrote to them as follows: "Dear Brother, I am writing to you to say how anxious I am for your dedication to God to be complete and for always." "Dear Brother, Let us persevere in our vocation not half-heartedly, but like real soldiers of our General Jesus."

Two of his brothers testified as follows: "He performed his religious duties exactly". "His great interest was for his students, whom he wanted to make into angels".

Father INOCENCIO DE LA INMACULADA
Manuel Canoure Arnau

He was born in Santa Cecilia del Valle de Oro, Lugo. He entered the Passionist novitiate at Deusto on the 25th July, 1904. He made his first vows on the 27th July, 1905. He was ordained priest on the 20th September, 1913. He taught Philosophy and Theology in different places: Daimiel, Mondoñedo, Mieres. He performed his pastoral work in several parishes especially in Santander. From there he was transferred to Mieres one month before his death. He was in the school of the brothers in Turón when he was captured. He had gone there to hear the confessions of the students, and had remained to talk to them at Mass the following day.

Concerning him one of the witnesses said: "As a priest he was very active, very religious and completely dedicated to the apostolate".

Extracts from the documents
of the Postulator for their causes.

Br. J.M.V.

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"LET THE GREATER AMONG YOU BE AS THE YOUNGEST, THE LEADER AS THE ONE WHO SERVES"

(Luke 22:26)

Rule, Article 61.
As a religious superior, the Brother Director is at the service of his Brothers to help them in their spiritual growth and in accomplishing their vocation as persons and as a community. He himself strives to live and help others live in the spirit of the Rule.

Rule, Article 62.
As the person principally responsible for the community and its unity, the Brother Director fullills his responsibilities with simplicity. He supports and stimulates the Brothers in their search for the common good. He listens to them but also keeps them informed. At the appropriate moment he intervenes to endorse decisions on which consensus seems to have been reached or to settle personally questions which cannot remain undecided.

I

"Authority is exercised with a sensitivity to persons and with respect for subsidiarity"
(Rule, Article 102)

The Lasallian community is basically a group of people in a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. The Brother Director's mission as a member of this group is to assist the community in making that dynamic relationship fruitful.

A relationship with the risen Lord is a call to continual conversion, continual growth. The Brother Director as the leader of a Lasallian community is one who has, himself, had the ongoing experience of conversion. He is one who has "fallen from his horse of security". It is from this experience that he ministers to his Brothers.

Much could be written about the role of the Brother Director. The following lines are intended to assist him realize his role as spiritual animator and guide to his Brothers as they meet Jesus in the events and people that constitute their everyday lives.

II

What is the Brother Director's role?

The role of the Brother Director is basically one of **dialogue** — a dialogue that is based upon a sensitive listening to and total acceptance of the other person, as a means towards encouraging the other person's growth. It is a dialogue carried out in openness to the Spirit and with the optic of the Gospel.

III

What does the role of the Brother Director involve?

The Brother Director is asked: *to listen accurately* to every other Brother, in such a way that he is able to discriminate between the feelings being expressed and the content of what is being said; *to communicate back* to the individual Brother or the community what is being said, separating the feelings from the content; *to accept others* as they are, without trying to see them as he thinks they ought to be; *to challenge and confront* when necessary; *to assist in clarifying* any lines of action or any decisions the individual or the community wishes to make.

Direction is a model for helping where both the Brother Director and the individual or community have a particular role to play. In order that his help be effective, the Brother Director will require certain skills. The effectiveness of these skills also depends upon the other person or the community playing a full, responsible part in the dialogue.

(1) The Brother Director must be fully present, not merely physically present. He must be psychologically attentive to the other. The other Brother is asked to be truly himself.

(2) The Brother Director responds to the other Brother's frame of reference. He seeks to understand that frame of reference, attempting an accurate empathy for what the other Brother is saying and experiencing. He tentatively expresses what seems to be implied by what the Brother is saying. He identifies themes, helping the other person to draw the logical conclusions from his statements

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or showing up the seeming contradictions in what is being said. He helps the other Brother to be specific in his communication. This quality of the Brother Director's response enables the other Brother to explore his own feelings and behaviors.

(3) The Brother Director stimulates the other Brother to look at other possible frames of reference, to see a broader vision, and to see possible leads for future movement and growth. This may involve the Brother Director confronting and challenging the other Brother.

What should one confront? He should confront (a) discrepancies between what is being said and the reality as he is able to perceive it or as revealed, for example, in the person's body language; (b) distorsions, where the other person is only seeing one side of a position; (c) any "game", tricks or smoke-screens that he believes the other person is using and finally, (d) any attempts to evade the real issue.

What is more important, however, is *how* the Brother Director confronts: it must be done in a spirit of accurate empathic understanding, and always tentatively, since his judgment may not be accurate. It must be done with care for the other person as the motivation. The Brother Director would need to check his motivation as to why he is confronting. For whose good? And it should be done by working from the other person's strengths and not from his weakness.

(4) The Brother Director helps the other Brother or the group to come to a decision about necessary action. The other person is enabled to act upon his self-understanding, working out a plan based on the dialogue and discernment carried out with the Brother Director.

IV

"I'm not well prepared!"

(A Note to the Brother Director)

It may be that your feelings on reading this outline leave you uncomfortably aware of your lack of preparedness for your role as Director. If that is true, it is a very positive sign. It indicates the need we all have for continuing formation.

To answer this need for continuing formation, it might help to have occasional gatherings of the Brothers Director of your area or District. There you can share your concerns and the mutual expertise you have for your mission. You might also seek more specialized help through workshops or courses.

What is certain is that being a Brother Director is a mission that you will carry out more effectively as you feel the need to develop certain skills and employ them in the service of your Brothers.

Text by CILists '87
Paul McAuley (London), CIL Staff
Thomas Biloca (Malta)
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PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

DURING FORMATION

The Scholasticate of South Mexico

"Formation should take into account the Brother's mission. The novices are progressively offered the opportunity to engage in apostolic work adapted to the capacities of each. These apostolic experiences are evaluated regularly with those who guide the novices in their vocation."

(Rule, Article 91 f).

What is laid down in Article 91 f of the Rule of the Novices applies likewise to the Scholastics. Their formation entails pastoral and apostolic activities which complement the religious and secular studies undertaken during this period of their initial formation.

These activities are a good sounding-board for each individual to find out how he will cope in the teaching profession and in the ministry of Christian education.

The contact thus provided with young people will put a balance in the life of the scholastic during these years of study. As the Rule states in Article 87 c: "These studies which aim to provide the competence necessary for religious education help the Brothers to have a better sense of their identity in relation to their vocation."

The details of these activities, as to the time spent and the organisation of these apostolic involvements, vary according to the Regions of the Institute. In the District of South Mexico the Novitiate and Scholasticate share the same house in a rather poor, very crowded suburb of Mexico City. There is unlimited scope there among the young and adults for boosting the morale, for training and for the work of evangelisation. It is an apostolate brimming over with opportunities to test the Lasallian fervour and zeal of the Scholastic Brothers. The short summary presented here will give some idea of the commitments proposed for 1987.

* * *

The General Aim.

To get to know, at first hand, in the immediate vicinity of the House of Formation, some of the basic needs the people lack and which cause so much hardship.

To promote and carry out the work in a selfless manner in favour of those children, adolescents and adults who are in the greatest need, through the ministry of catechetics and education.

Course of Activities.

1. Catechetics.
   - In two of our Colleges in the Primary departments (6-12 years) and in the Secondary departments (12-15 years).
   - In centres for children and adolescents of the neighbourhood; (the Novices take part in this).
   - Short courses for aspiring secular catechists.
2. Classes in one of our Colleges at secondary level (12-15 years).
3. A Scout troop.
4. A centre for adult education at secondary level.
5. Counselling for a group attending "Study Courses on Christian Life".

Some details

1. Catechetics.

* In one of our Colleges at Primary Level (6 - 12 years).
Days: Monday and Thursday at 8 a.m. until 1 p.m.
Personnel: Six Brother Scholastics. The Brother Director organises it.
Those who attend: Thirty groups from 1st to 6th Grade; a total of 1500 pupils.
Noticeable Results: Groups of First Communicants who are given prompt, specialist preparation.
A collection of $1000,00 (U.S.) for the Missions.
A collection of toys and presents for the Catechetical Centres in poor areas.

* In another of our Colleges at Secondary Level (12 - 15 years).
Days: From Monday to Thursday from 10 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.
Personnel: Three Brother Scholastics who teach for 12 hours each week.
Those who attend: Five groups; a total of 250 pupils.
Results: Impossible to say as this is the first time this course has been given.

* Centres for Catechetics outside our Colleges for the children and adolescents in the neighbourhood of our Scholasticate Community.
Days: Saturday afternoon from 3.30 to 5.30 p.m.
Personnel: 13 Brothers (including Novices) helped by 45 Catechists. A Brother Scholastic organises it.
Those who attend: 490 children and adolescents, spread over six Centres one of which is in the Scholasticate house itself.

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Results: Groups of First Communicants which are organised at the end of each term.

* Short Courses to train secular catechists.
Days: Saturday from 5.45 to 6.30 p.m.
Personnel: One Brother Scholastic who is the general organiser; he can get help from some others.
Those who attend: A group of 20 young people of both sexes who are already Catechists or who wish to be so.
Results: All the Catechists working now in the Centres followed this course.

2. Classes in one of our Colleges at Secondary Level (12 - 15 years).

Days: From Monday to Thursday.
Personnel: Three Brother Scholastics who give 9 hours of History and 4 of Spanish. They also do "supply" work when a teacher is absent.
Those who attend: Five groups of adolescents from the 1st and 2nd Grades.
Results: Impossible to say as this is the first time this course has been given.

3. Scout Troop.

Days: Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Personnel: Three Brother Scholastics helped by 3 of the dads and 10 young people from the neighbourhood.
Those who attend: Approximately 90 children, adolescents and young people grouped as follows:
– "Manada" (7-12 years): 60 (Both sexes in separate groups).
– "Tropa" (12-15 years): 25 (Both sexes in separate groups).
– "Avanzada" (15-18 years): 6 males.
Results: A small nucleus of young people open to accepting human and Christian values but who are living in a bad environment of gangs, alcoholism and drug-addiction.

4. Centre for Adult Education:

Days: Monday to Thursday from 8.30 to 9.30 p.m.
Personnel: Five Brother Scholastics to advise in the different apprenticeships. One of the Brothers is the general organiser.
Those who attend: 15 young people and adults of both sexes.
Results: Recognition by the Education Authorities in some branches of knowledge on a termly assessment.

5. Counsellor to the group "Study Course on Christian Life".

One of the Brother Scholastics acts as counsellor at least part of the time, to this group of 25 or 30 young people of both sexes who meet, in the Scholasticate House itself for the whole of the day, on some Saturdays or Sundays. The 'counsel' is directed especially at the accompaniment, the doctrinal content and the participation during times of group and shared prayer.

Brother Rodolfo Mendoza.

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THE ROLF OF THE BROTHER

IN THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL

We sometimes speak of the United Nations presence in the Mid-East. We may also allude to the United States presence in Western Europa or even to a USSR presence in Cuba. When we converse in this manner we do not refer to a great number of people but rather to the reality that a certain presence is recognized. The presence is seen as exerting an influence in a specific area, it is looked upon as giving special service, and it is generally felt that this form of presence truly makes a difference.

When we review the Brothers' presence in educational service in the Chicago District, we find that this influence through presence has been quite powerful. Four schools –St. Patrick, De La Salle, St. Mel, St. Georges– which were staffed predominantely by Brothers until the late 1950's, firmly established the Brothers' reputation for quality education. It was during the '50's and early '60's that a veritable explosion in Christian Brother education took place as the Order accepted the challenge to start ten new schools, take over the direction of four more schools which were already in operation, one of which was a college. Fourteen schools in just ten years! In subsequent years the Brothers' manpower shortage required them to withdraw from eleven of their seventeen schools. Most of these eleven schools remain alive and well today.

In this scenario we see the Brothers presence felt by the impact of numbers in their early schools. We also see the Brothers' presence felt by the influence of a small group of Brother-educators, usually joining with a like group of Sisters, and surrounding themselves with a lay staff to establish new schools. And, yes, we even see the Brothers' "presence" felt in their absence today as many of the schools that the Brothers started remain viable institutions today. Many educational faith communities exist today because of the Brothers' direction of these schools in the early days of their development.

Since the Brothers published their **Declaration** in 1967, the emphasis has been to focus on methods of making the Brothers' presence felt amid their dwindling numbers, by their influence, by their service, and by truly making a difference in their schools. The **Declaration** urged the Brothers to re-evaluate their school commitments and to understand that their influence of the school than from the more from the quality and excellence of the school than from the number of schools which they conduct.

With the recent stress on the "Lasallian School", instead of on the "Brothers" school in the Chicago area, the question as to the role of the Brother in the schools is being asked by lay staff, by the Religious, and by the Brothers themselves. Some may feel that the downplaying of terms such as "Brothers School" and "Brothers Boys" may be the signal that the Brothers are planning a quiet exodus. But, in truth, the Brothers in the Chicago District still intend to keep their schools as their preferred educational work.

The Lasallian school is to be a place where the Brothers, Lay Faculty, Religious, and Priests are all completely involved with the whole school –with teaching, with catechesis, with apostolic and service organizations, with administration, and in extra-curricular activities. As Brother Peter Clifford, Provincial of the Long Island / New England District, wrote to his communities in June, 1986: "We are all aware that our colleagues, lay, religious, and priests, are more than replacements in our institutions for the Brothers, or unavoidable alternatives. They are men and women interested in our work and in our mission. We owe them the same attention and opportunities for growth in Lasallian thought and idealism as we owe ourselves. In addition, our mission becomes more important as it expands through teachers, volunteers, parents, and alumni groups, and other forms of the Lasallian Family".

The Brother who is the school administrator has the power to set in motion programs which will make the "Lasallian Characteristics" come alive. Faculty members need to be encouraged to hop on the academic escalator to become master teachers or department or committee chairpersons. Teachers might consider becoming exchange teachers in other Lasallian schools, or become consultants in their particular discipline for other area schools. Some may wish to enter intern programs for school administration. It will be the

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principal's vision as to what the Lasallian school might become that will determine just how vigorous this whole movement will be in each school.

The teaching Brother should be one of the school's visual aids in the art of teaching. The Brother should also be an energizer to the faculty. As the scope of the teacher's responsibility broadens to that of human service educators, teachers will at times be counselors, group leaders, designated thinkers, but always stimulators of the human potential in a variety of ways. The Brothers need to take the lead with their religious, academic, and social vision, and their strong commitment to education, to truly be the animating influence within the school and to the wider community.

The Brothers need to lead the faculty in discussing the great work that all of us are doing. Neil Postman reminds teachers of their importance: "The role of teachers, it seems, is to attempt to show youth that the young enter adulthood, not by TV information, but by having their questions answered. We now have a society of students who have answers to questions that they nevers asked. Unless students can lean on adults, especially teachers, they will not be hope-filled, courageous, or disciplined. The violence that is now revealed over television (their first curriculum) is seldom mediated by a mother's voice, is not modified to suit the child's age level, is not governed by any theory of child development. Teachers who are seen by their students as role models, listeners, value people, interpreters of society's mad violence and vulgarities, in addition to their competency in teaching, are needed today perhaps more than ever" (1). Brothers, we have our work cut out for us!

Brother Terence McLaughlin.

(1)Neil Postman, The Disappearance of Childhood.

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THE SCHOOL MUST BE WELL RUN

This is the advice —or rather instruction— that De La Salle gives from time to time in his letters. This has been the constant concern of Directors and headmasters over the past three hundred years.

"The school must be well run".

There's nothing more to say, really.

Is sounds right. It says exactly what it means. It states clearly the aim of the whole undertaking. Nothing too grand. Just right.

For John Baptist de La Salle this is not simply a pious wish, a "wouldn't it be nice if..." saying.

It is the result of planning, organisation and a lot of consultation.

What happened was that, in the course of frequent and regularly held meetings with Brothers who had the greatest experience of working in schools, De La Salle drew up a Conduct of the Christian schools. This laid down rules to help teachers cope in school; advised them on their general behaviour; and indicated how a Brothers' school should be run.

Over the course of some twenty years, they worked out a very clear and detailed text, based on the research of the time, but adjusted to the educational and religious aims of their schools.

This "Conduct of Crhistian Schools" is certainly the most detailed educational handbook that was available at the time when primary education and education of the common people began.

For many years it remained the reference text par excellence for schools in France.

* * *

One of the characteristics of this "charter" can be expressed as follows:

* Make the staff work together to fulfil the aims of the school, do their work well, and cooperate with the school authorities.

* Everyone should have their part to play in the running and success of the school.

1. First of all, the customers:

a) The PARENTS who want their child to join the school.

* The approach and teaching methods of the school are clearly explained to them, and they are told what makes this particular school different from other schools.
* They are asked to support the teachers' approach to teaching.
* The school aims at satisfying parents. "Parents should be happy with the school".
* Parents are called to the school whenever necessary.
* School and parents part company if teachers fail to a great extent to marry practice with theory.

b) The CHILDREN:

* They study at their own pace and change subjects once a month.
* They learn by listening and seeing, and from the example of the teacher who is first and foremost a "master of apprentices", in its broadest sense.
* They have various duties vis-a-vis:
  - the teacher: recitation, distribution, collection, supervision;
  - the other pupils: support, vigilance, visiting those absent;
  - visitors: welcome, politeness, good behaviour;
  - the classroom: cleanliness, sweeping, tidying up.

2. The teaching staff and

* the Brother headmaster who organises and supervises the secular and religious teaching of the school;
* the Brother Senior Teacher, who has a great deal of experience and who keeps an eye on the younger teachers; the canes are kept in his class;
* the two teaching Brothers, often very young, who complete their training by being thrown in at the deep end;
  - every evening they report on the day's successes and failures;
  - every evening they spend long hours studying and preparing their work;
  - they keep their notes (catalogues) up to date, noting their pupils' progress and character traits.
* The non-teaching Brother:
  - He looks after the material organisation of the house;
  - He is sufficiently trained to be able to take

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over if a teacher is ill or absent.

* The Brother school inspector:
  – trains the other teachers;
  – is in charge of coordinating the checking, and the changing of "sections" and "orders" in a number of local schools.

From what has been said it is clear that the success of a school did not depend on one man's efforts at organisation, but rather on a combination of three groups working as one:

* parents, the customers, who were supportive and actively involved;
* pupils, willing to learn, taking active part in the process, having their say;
* teachers, working as one for the good of the school, and combining their efforts, their expertise and their research to ensure that the school fulfilled its three aims of teaching, educating and evangelizing.

* * *

The interaction of these groups should serve as a lesson for us today. The Conduct of the Christian Schools is one of the texts on which the Brothers' schools are founded: although influenced by practices current at the time, it demonstrates by means of practical application the principles which inspired the foundation of the schools.

A Brothers' school is composed of all those who are involved in it, by their active participation, their expertise, and by fulfilling a role suited to them.

Educational establishments have become enormous factories nowadays, extremely complex in their structure, serving a variety of purposes and clientele. They can constitute a very heavy burden; and one feels that the friendly family-business type of school administration that perhaps we knew is no longer sufficient and very likely to become impossible. We have to find other ways of going about things, while remaining faithful, nevertheless, to our traditions.

We are becoming more and more aware of the fact that the key factor in our organisations and in the success of our establishments is the human potential of all the people involved.

It is there that the imagination, the natural inclination, the will and creativity of the people involved –staff, pupils, parents– are brought into contact with new options.

However, nothing can even begin to happen unless the school organisers themselves set the whole process in motion by:

* distributing information,
* setting up channels of communication,
* calling upon people to try things out,
* giving concrete support to what is done,
* praising success, publicising it, giving clear signs of encouragement.

All this presumes that those in charge know what they want and are determined to achieve it, and that certain essential precautions with regard to approach are taken, so that raised hopes are not dashed yet once again.

One of the greatest enemies of this process of involving people with their potential gifts and expertise is sheer, unadulterated generosity. It has to be underpinned from the very start by:

– making people aware of what is expected of them,
– training them
– giving them the means to do what is required,
– detailed planning.

I have the impression that those schools, whether Catholic or State, that have undertaken to do all this, are now forging ahead: they have chosen to aim for quality, quality that lies dormant in everyone, waiting only to be aroused by respect and trust.

"The School must be well run" means nowadays that:

1. All those who are part of it are partners.
2. Each one is responsible for the running of the school as a whole.
3. The expertise of each person has a part to play in the work of the school as a whole.

All this presumes also

* on the part of those running the school: determination that is quantifiable;
* an atmosphere based on:
  – availability of information
  – communication, listening
  – training
  – willing cooperation.
* established procedures for:
  – defining areas of activity,
  – analysing them rationally,
  – taking into account possible changes,
  – making choices together according to qualifiable and/or quantifiable criteria,
  – keeping to a timetable with deadlines,
  – establishing a certain number of criteria for easy assessment.

These are the points which distinguish a school which has quality.

This quality is based on people, their commitment, their training, their trust in others.

It comes from taking the right means to achieve it, from establishing some rules to make the school run well.

It is quality based on the heart and mind.

It is another way of saying what our predecessors said:

"The School must be well run!"

Brother Nicolas Capelle.

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WORKING TOGETHER LIKE BROTHERS IN OUR MISSIONARY TASK

Some reflections on the lay-teachers in our Lasallian establishments.

1. ..."And the first school masters discovered that they were like brothers."

Saint John Baptist de La Salle wrote the following words: "I had at first imagined that my interest in the schools and their teachers was simply as their adviser, and that my only commitment to them was to ensure their well-being and to see to it that they performed their work like Christians and educated persons." (1). However he soon realised that he was moving along a road with those teachers that would result in a religious congregation, whose members would called brothers. In fact they were to be called "Brothers of the Christian Schools", because they wanted to live together and be able to show to everyone that they were real brothers.

John Baptist discovered that in order to do God's work in schools, the teachers had to be holy men. They needed a firm sense of God, a well-founded spirit of Faith and an unflagging enthusiasm for their work: a determination never to give up. In other words John Baptist found out through his association with school-work, what task God wanted the teachers to undertake. That task, which in its turn required a serious preparation. Now in order to make sure that the schools would continue, together with their mission and ministry, he concluded that the teachers should live together and commit themselves to supporting one another in every sphere. Living together naturally led to the idea of brotherliness or fraternity, since they had the same work to do and needed to show perseverance in that God-given work. The next step in this reasoning was for John Baptist to be inspired with a real sense of fraternity, which, resulting from living together, meant living like brothers and in fact being real brothers. This was a genuinely providential journey which led him gradually to greater and greater involvement without his at first realising it. This was remarkable, because he later wrote: "If I had known earlier that the interest that I took through kindness in those teachers, would force me to live with them, I would have given up that interest". (2). However, inspired by Providence, he managed to make a true family out of those men; a family in which they not only made every effort to live like brothers, but were in fact brothers indeed. Thus work led to mission, mission to living like Christians. After that came living together, then the common task of ensuring the schools' continuation, fraternity, and finally the making of religious vows. Those were just some of the steps along which Providence guided John Baptist and his early teachers.

Blain tells us why he decided on the name "brother". The changes in their way of life led to the change in their name. The name "brother" was entirely fitting and was thus adopted; the name school-master was to be reserved for men who taught to earn a living. Blain continues: "If the name "schoolmaster" had been acceptable up to that time in a residence where togetherness and equality had not succeeded in uniting people unsure of their vocation, it was certainly unacceptable once they were united enough to form a single body. Therefore the name "brother" was entirely fitting, for that is what we call children of the same blood and the same father, and what kind people call those who have the same spirit and the same Father in Heaven. Thus the title "Brothers of the Christian and Gratuitous Schools" became the name of the sons of Mr. De La Salle. This is a very appropriate name, because it carries the very sense of the love which inspired the beginnings of their congregation and which should continue to be its life and soul. That love and charity should be present in all their discussions and be at the heart of all their plans. It is what must urge them to work and action, must surround all their activities, inspire all they say and do. The name "brother" shows them the worthiness of their profession, the excellence of their way of life and the dignity of their work. It reminds them that since they are true brothers, they should have a heartfelt but spiritual friendship with one another, and that, because they are like elder brothers of their students, they should give their lessons with love and an open heart." (3).

Hence according to the biographer of our Holy Founder, the first members of the institute really understood the meaning of "brother" and had a genuine sense of "brotherliness".

* * *

2. Lay-teachers share in the mission of the Institute.

Throughout its history and owing to a variety of circumstances, the Institute has had to ask the help of lay-teachers to accomplish its educational work.

It has happened that in certain places and at certain times this help has been looked on as a necessary evil, which time would remedy; the lay-teacher was something added from outside. This way of looking at the matter resulted from the period and circumstances in which those reflections were made.

Nevertheless these teachers were offering themselves and their work to the establishment in which they laboured and that establishment had a mission it could never abandon, namely to form Christians. It is an apostolic mission given by God and the church to the Institute and which the latter

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fulfils in every one of the its undertakings and by means of everyone of its members.

Therefore the lay-teacher who works in any of our establishments is a co-worker in that establishment and shares in the mission for which it was founded.

It is true that in order to share in a mission certain qualities are needed. For example one should know about the mission, feel in sympathy with it, become qualified for it and even be a convincing witness of it.

The mission of the Institute and of each one of our foundations is an apostolic one, which results from the Faith and apostolic commitment of the people who work in that mission.

It follows from this that the teachers who share in our work should also understand the meaning of that mission and their own vocation to share in it. But how will they find out these things if no one tells them?

Now our Founder worked with the first teachers in helping them to find out God's plan for them and for the Christian Schools. So in the same way the Institute should make efforts to help the lay co-workers to realise the apostolic meaning of the place where they work and whose very reason for existing is the apostolic mission of education.

This is the responsibility of the Institute and of every educational establishment. The lay-teacher might be very well qualified at a professional level to teach the subjects in which he is specialised. But as soon as he joins a community of apostles to undertake with them some of the teaching, those apostles should provide him with what the community stands for. He should in fact receive a spiritual and apostolic formation. In other words we have the duty to give to our lay-teachers that aspect of formation that they were not able to acquire before joining one of the De la Salle schools.

We might think that this is wishful thinking. We know that among our lay-teachers there are some who are not believers or who have lost the Faith; there are even some who have a different religion. How can we count those as co-workers in the mission of the Institute? That is the question, and nevertheless their association with us is a definite fact. Let us not forget that there is a parallel in the ministry of the church, for Baptism is considered valid even when administered by a non-believer. Without a doubt, a thought which is worth reflecting on.

One thing is certain: the lay-teacher in an educational institution which has a religious mission is not a mere instructor; he is called to be an apostle, and that call requires an answer of fidelity to God; in other words holiness.

Thus it is that lay-teachers in our Lasallian institutions are sharers in our mission, companions in our commitment and in our call to holiness via the ministry of teaching.

* * *

3. Is it possible that we ourselves will find a new meaning to brotherliness through our association with lay-teachers?

If these lay-teachers are called to the same mission and apostolate and have to achieve their goals whilst working with us, do they not share in our brotherliness? Do they not have a part in the very same brotherhood that was discovered by De La Salle and the first brothers?

When I read the documentation on our Lasallian family and on those who form it, and when I reflect on our lay-teachers, I often recall that passage in the Acts of the Apostles which tells of St Peter's vision when the Holy Spirit urged him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 10, 7-16) "Do not call that impure which God has purified". From then on the Gentiles were called to the Kingdom without the slightest discrimination.

Surely those in our teaching establishments who have received God's call to an apostolic mission have to be looked on in the same light. Today the Institute is opening out to them and is telling them to share in the inheritance of De La Salle. Can they possibly be excluded from our brotherhood if the are included in our ministry and our mission?

If we give a clear answer to all those questions and if we decide really to consider as brothers and sisters those lay-teachers who work with us, we have already discovered a new role and depth to the term "brother", and perhaps too a new meaning for our Institute.

Br. José María Valladolid.

(1) Origins of the Institute. Blain, La Vie de Mr. J. B. De La Salle, 169. Cahiers Lasalliens, n. 7.
(2) Idem, Blain, p. 169.
(3) Blain, 1, 240-241.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF LASALLIAN SCHOOLS

— ASSOCIATION —

As we have worked with this document on the Lasallian vision, we have been struck by the quality of Association in our own educational becakgrounds. Somewhere in that diversity and variety of curriculum, and myriad of educators was a unified vision which made all difficulties and shortcomings insignificant beside the greater value of the individual's personal, spiritual, and professional development.

In his writings, La Salle refers to Union in a community as a precious gem. He states that if you wish your community to continue, you must cherish and preserve this virtue.

La Salle's point professes the essential meaning, purpose and strength of the Lasallian school.

Attainment of this union in community and its nourishment and preservation is critical to that which distinguishes and defines the successful and productive Catholic school.

In light of this, please consider the following scenarios, created to provide example, as to how they each fulfill, or fail to fulfill, the Lasallian ideal of Association in the school.

Consider a "basketball coach", in his mid-thirties. He spends long hours practicing whenever he can squeeze gym time from the flea markets and dances that invade the facility. Coaches, generally, are paid poorly. He is paid less than that. Yet he works, year after year, driving, chiding, teasing, scolding, and elevating his team in perfecting their play in the game of basketball. He absolutely knows the kids on his team. He knows how they are doing in the classroom, how they feel at home, and how they are with their friends. The school he coaches for would never want another coach.

What about the case of the "first year teacher" in his first classroom. A nun, with years of experience, takes him under her wing, advising, helping, comforting, and inspiring him in managing the classroom, and reaching his students.

A group of 'lay teachers" banded together as a Union challenge the religious administration on salary, benefits, work conditions. Both the administration and bargaining group begin all conversation with the word "Demands."

Consider an "English teacher" just completing her third year of teaching in a Lasallian School. She questions her next contract. The school makes a commitment to her in offering tenure. What kind of commitment has she made and is she going to make to the school?

"A Brother Principal" of some experience is given a new assignment. He arrives to find his administrative team a mix of religious and lay individuals of obvious professional competence. He is uneasy with the team and tends to become a narrow autocrat in his role.

Review for consideration a new teacher, with "outstanding academic training", who professes witness to Gospel values as evidenced by their work in the community, but who is also as yet uncertified. Both a department chairperson and academic principal encourage that teacher to pursue greater professional qualifications.

What about the "established master moderator" of an excellent program, who never yields to a possible greater good. "Oh, you need to take class pictures... take them during the Religion classes, they won't mind."

Consider situations like a "non-practicing catholic" teacher, with a heavy class load and coaching duties, who experiences a personal family crisis, the loss of a loved one. The staff in his Lasallian school rallies around him, covering his classes, his coaching duties, supporting him emotionally through his hardship.

And, finally, what about an extremely competent teacher who, in "subtle ways", sets himself apart from the presence of the spiritual dimension of the school. He regularly sees to handing out his mimeographed papers for class while a prayer to begin the day is being read over the public address system.

"Ministers of grace" —what an honor— what an ennobling of our vocation. St. John Baptiste de La Salle, the Patron of all Christian teachers, was a pioneer in recognizing the special dignity of the teacher.

This was very simple to St. La Salle —Ministers of Grace should "work in UNION, in a spirit of charity, tolerance, patience, humor and humility." With a shared acceptance of Gospel values, they should strive to relate as Jesus did with the Apostles —as the early Christians did in their experience of community.

Having Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper in mind, St. La Salle referred to unity as a "precious gem"! God knows how often we aspire to the ideal of union —and how often we fail! Consider St. La Salle's meditation for the 12th Sunday after Pentecost: "In fact, a community where charity and union are lacking, is a "species of hell". Here one complains, there another raises his voices against his brother

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on account of some grievance; a third is angry because someone has annoyed him; a fourth denounces his brother to his superior for what he has done to him. Nothing but complaints, murmuring and backbiting is to be heard, causing great trouble and disquietude. The only remedy to such disorders is union and charity."

It is consoling to realize that even the brothers in community with St. John experienced some of the same problems we face today.

In our secular society, charity and union, at times, seem remote and idealistic. We are influenced by the prophets of the ME-GENERATION, to get ahead at all costs. We find ourselves concentrating on the development of our own interests, in siolation, with little regard for unity, charity or the development of a WE-GENERATION.

The so-called "master moderator", immersed in his all important program, seeking his own aggrandizement, while oblivious to the work and needs of his colleagues – or to the goals of the school, does little to promote a spirit of union and charity.

"Lay negotiation teams make their demands as they pursue their interests using a completely secular process. Only conflict can ensue when such a team locks horns with an unyielding, unrealistic "board of control". How much better it would be if both sides strove to view the process as an "act of christian justice" –the TEAM realizing the financial constraints of the school and the BOARD being realistic and sensitive to the actual cost of living.

The ideal of Lasallian Association can be distorted by an "all-knowing, authoritarian Principal – oblivious to the expertise of his colleagues– doing things the way he's always done them in obstinate isolation. Such an administrator will have great difficulty adapting to a collegial style.

In our attempts to "rise from a species of hell" –to approach our Assiciation with charity, patience and tolerance, we have developed in-service programs in spirituality and retreats. We discuss the scriptures, pray together and celebrate liturgies. We support one another in times of crises –in much the same way depicted in the scenario of the man who lost a loved one, and at times of joy – professions, weddings, baptisms, etc. We have been quite successful in creating the caring environment which has become the trademark of any good Catholic school.

Most of us have been fortunate enough to have experienced the good nature of a veteran teacher –like the supportive NUN– who took the time to help a novice teacher adjust and develop professionally. I can remember the concern and kindness of Brother Henry Mischuk who took me under his wing and helped me survive my first year at CBA. People like these nourish and sustain us both professionally and spiritually.

However, Lasallian ASSOCIATION requires more!

The outward manifestations of our concern for one another must be motivated, not by the desire to ameliorate our position in the community, but by an interior heartfelt commitment to Gospel Values. It is possible to fake a commitment –to render lip service to the ideal– to be a modern pharisee.

Contrast the epitome of the Minister of Grace depicted as the "basketball coach" to that of the "secular professional". The Secular Professional who views his position only in terms of academic subject matter, good position, comfortable life style and job security does little to promote the Lasallian character of the school.

In his address to the Brothers at the General Chapter in Rome, last spring, Pope John Paul II, stated that: "The Christian Educational Plan must be carried out by everyone". And cautioned that: "It can so happen that administrators, with the respect and justice imposed upon them, are led to help such or such a teacher to voluntarily withdraw from a contract which he cannot integrally assume."

This approach should certainly influence our hiring practices. In fact, the article entitled, "Religion Teacher Hiring Interview" presented as a project at the St. Mary's Press Workshop in July/86 stresses the importance of selecting teachers who will be receptive to Lasallian Ideals. The well-qualified student depected poses the dilemma: Do we hire someone lacking a teacher's license who will be receptive to the school's philosophy or a credentialed individual like the "secular professional"?

The "English teacher granted tenure", having the school's affirmation, faces the future contemplating whether she can integrally assume the responsibilities imposed by working in a Lasallian school as a Minister of Grace.

We are Ministers of Grace in Association.

It is my hope that what we have shared here today in our discussions will be more than an intellectual exercise or a three-day holiday – that what we discuss today will motivate, animate a new spirit in our schools. This is just the first step – we have much to do!

In closing, may I suggest the following for your consideration. Fully realizing their idealistic nature:

1. That a person's ability to be receptive to Gospel values and the teachings of St. La Salle be a criteria in the selection o new teachers.
2. That Lasallian ideals be infused into the orientation of new faculty.
3. That faculty members be expected to participate in programs designed to explain the Lasallian character of the school.
4. That administrators be bold enough to realize the incapability of certain faculty members to fulfill a contract infused with Lasallian Value –and act accordingly.
5. That we investigate, possibly at the district level the development of a model for a collegial style of administration.
6. That the Brothers realize the growing need to be the animators of Lasallian spirituality, and:
7. That their lay colleagues, realizing their special status as Ministers of Grace assume a more active role in the propagation of the spirit of La Salle.

LET US REMEMBER:

"Union in a Community is truly a precious gem. When this is lost, all is lost. Hence, if you wish your Community to continue, preserve this virtue carefully!"

Peter Santanello and George Linke.

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THE MISSIONS AND LASALLIAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE (1/2)

For some years now a number of young people have been wondering whether they could make a more worthwhile contribution to the missions than by just giving a donation. With a certain amount of reluctance and not a little fear, but at the same time showing great willingness, they offered their services to work for a period of time in one of the Lasallian missions. Since then five youths have committed themselves for three years and have gone to a Lasallian mission to assist in spreading God's word.

At the present time there are in the District of Bilbao several groups of Old Boys (some are university students, some already in employment) who meet every month to study the question of missionary vocation. Some of them are already fairly decided on the idea of offering their services for a period of several years as Lasallian Voluntary Workers, on a La Salle mission.

What is a Lasallian Voluntary Worker? What do we Brothers offer these young people? What criteria do we consider necessary? What demands are made of these young Old Boys in accepting this missionary work? What challenge does this desire of commitment, that these young people show, present to the Brothers?

IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF:

1. Escaping from problems.

To undertake missionary work in order to sidestep personal problems —whether consciously or unwittingly— is a mistake. Everybody at some time or another meets with family problems, upsets at work (stress, strikes etc.) and costly re-adjustments, in one way or another, to our modern way of living. To run away from, rather than face up to, these situations is to betray an attitude of mind completely inconsistent with the missionary vocation. The only consequence would be to carry the problem from one place to another. But even more, the trouble one is escaping from here only becomes more acute there, and the problem becomes even greater. To enjoy missionary work one has to have experienced the joy of having commited onself previously to other enterprises.

2. Searching for Adventure.

Often the missionary was associated with exotic countries, adventurous journeys, tribes whose customs were quite unknown in Europe... The missionary was looked upon as a research worker and mistaken for an explorer. But that all followed from the main task which was to evangelise. The missionary life isn't just another experience for idle, bored westerners; the missionary life is a commitment to spreading the Gospel.

3. Projecting a False Image.

In the interweaving skein of social relationships each individual presents himself in a certain light to others. Our manner of acting is noted in a certain way by all those around us; these concepts of ourselves create an image which is the presented to us. But this image of ourselves which others present us with does not always please us. It is then that we are tempted to build another image of ourselves, more attractive but false. As a result one embarks on ways of behaving which seemingly reflect attitudes of mind and feelings which really are foreign to us. Yes, the image has changed. But now it is wrong to assume that "actions are the expression of a way of being and of feeling".

Missionary life is an undertaking which starts from the premise of what one really is, and not from the image which one would like to portray.

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4. Allowing oneself to be used by political and economical organisations.

The voluntary worker arriving in the Third World enters fully into an arena of powerful ideological and economic interests. Almost as a matter of course the countries of the Third World are sought-after prizes by the great powers who see in them the possibilities for the furtherance of their political views and as an untapped source of economical enterprise which makes the rich, richer, and the poor, poorer. Taken up, as the missionary is, by his preference for working with the poor, he runs the risk of being caught up in rivalry between the forces of the two ideologies. And all the good work for freedom and human advancement that might materialise as a result of this involvement, will be the fruit of a living faith at the service of the weakest.

IT IS A QUESTION OF.

Living out a Christian challenge.

A time comes when some young people, buoyed up by the demands of their own developing faith, offer themselves to be of service by way of some Christian venture. Just now there are in our La Salle centres a good group of youngsters who have undertaken a variety of things: some have become group leaders in work-camps during the summer, some are catechists who work with the Brothers in parish and college groups; others devote themselves to try and better the lot of tramps and down-and-outs in the towns; they try to lessen the friction between rival groups of gypsies living in town areas; some have finished their schooling in a La Salle school and have become teachers with the same Lasallian mentality in La Salle centres; some have even decided to become De La Salle Brothers; others have taken steps on the road to the seminary to become priests; and some of the girls have also decided to enter the religious life.

So then missionary life could be a worthy option to bear in mind by the young when considering the whole range of Christian good works. In fact the interest shown in this subject by many is quite surprising.

Following their training as teachers, doctors, engineers, mechanics, veterinary surgeons... and as a result of actively living out their faith, some of them could impart new life into the Church's missionary work.

Br. José Manuel Sauras.

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THE MISSIONS AND LASALLIAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE (2/2)

BASIS FOR MISSIONARY WORK

1. Age: 21 and over.

2. Duration of service: 3 years or more.

3. Health:

The voluntary worker must have a thorough check-up by the doctor. The climatic and sanitary conditions, as well as the food in the Third World, are totally different from the ones we know here and not all volunteers can master them. A number of bites and stings and infections are inevitable. Therefore it is imperative to be familiar with all the possible antidotes to ward of illness and disease.

4. Maturity:

4.1. *Personal:*

"Life is like a small rice shoot;
transported, it grows elsewhere."

It is extremely hard for the volunteer himself to judge what level of maturity he has reached. Those with whom he associates and who are with him all the time ought to be able to see and gauge his maturity, his tolerance, honesty, how he reacts to the group, his open-mindedness, his work threshold, how he fits into living with others, his desire to get on, how level-headed he is and how strong he is in the face of fatigue and failure.

4.2. *The mind.*

"If man's spirit dances badly
God silences the drum".

There are many unforeseen events in everyday life. Accustomed as we are to living in set social patterns we are psychologically tuned in to them. However, once there is a change of continent, social habits and relationships, frequently it occurs that some problems and traumas which have lain dormant in the subconscious come bobbing up to the surface. For this reason it is important that the volunteers, are not of a tense, nervous disposition but rather well balanced; that they have not suppressed their weaknesses but rather that they have come to terms with them. Everything that is tightly bottled-up like that, in the end will explode.

4.3. *Spiritual.*

"Love oneself like mouth and hand;
if the hand suffers, the mouth blows on it,
and if the mouth aches it is the hand that cures it."

The secular missionary who wishes to form a part of a Lasallian mission project has as his starting point a Christian and religious experience which he has lived-out with a group of fellow workers and which has supported him from one enterprise to another. Therefore, it is not solely a question of participating in the development of projects and human growth in the sphere of profane studies. Missionary work is above all a work of evangelising carried out by the community. The volunteer renews this role which the Church has had as a cherished tradition from the very beginning.

4.4. *The economics.*

"God scares away the fly
from the animal with no tail."

Very often our mental picture of economics is conditioned by the First World; that means we live in a world of "abundance and waste". It is true that there is the threat of unemployment but not even this problem has the slightest element of comparison with the economical situation in the Third World. For this reason missionary life depends on "economic maturity" capable of accepting the renunciation of safety and everyday commodities without losing the joy of living.

What security has one to give up? Among other things a comfortable home, a monthly salary, a well-stocked market capable of keeping the mission well-provided with all it needs for its work. A missionary community's economy is simply to provide the bare necessities of life. Funds to support the community normally come from donations and the salary that a particular missionary might receive; for example, a teacher registered with a school.

5. Professional.

"You don't make your bow during the battle".

It does not suffice to offer oneself as a volunteer "to supply what is lacking". Nor is "good will" enough to join in helping adults to read, for example. It is essential to know HOW to set about teaching those adults to read and write. Many of the branches of knowledge and the qualifications obtained here at home are not of any use over there. Very often ability to perform simple and elementary tasks are of the utmost importance, whilst specialist expertise can be of no value.

A multifarious, inter-disciplinary training is the best way to guarantee help to the Third World. This training given to the volunteer should be as full and all-embracing as possible covering more ground than technical or university specialisation.

5.2. *Religious preparation.*

"There are people like smouldering wood:
one has to throw them into the fire to set them alight."

A volunteer would be unable to blend-in with an enterprise like that of the Lasallian missionary life if his living faith was

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puerile and feeble . It is important to possess a growing faith, a faith shared with others, one expressed in prayer: a faith that has led one earlier to embark on other ventures; a faith nourished by the sacraments, in junior Eastern celebrations; in reunions, in work-camps...; a faith, likewise, strengthened by Bible study and by the reading of books which strengthen the realisation of being Christian.

5. 3. *Pastoral preparation.*

"Make use of the right means to achieve the goal; a finger can't wash a face."

A possible professional contribution made in the fields of teaching, building, agriculture, medicine... is imperative: that's obvious. Nevertheless, all this is only a part of the work. The voluntary worker who assists on a Lasallian mission also takes an active part in pastoral care; the training of catechists, religious instruction for infants, juniors and adults, help in the liturgy etc. This, naturally, calls for previous training and experience. A good way to achieve this is by assisting the Brothers in their pastoral work in the colleges and parishes... and by taking part in the many day-courses, and longer ones, for the training of catechists; these are organised fairly frequently at different venues within a given District.

6. Contact with those who remain behind.

6.1. *The Christian Community at Home.*

"One arm can't encircle a baobab tree".

It often happens that many Christian endeavours come to light, and develop, among groups of friends, catechists and fellow students, who have evolved into Christian communities through the constant sharing of their faith together. A missionary enterprise can be another outlet for a group to adopt and help, through the services of one or several of its members.

The community decides:
- What undertakings it will accept.
- How they will be fulfilled.
- Who will accept the many responsibilities.

In such an undertaking there are two areas of responsibility: that of the missionary and that of those who remain behind. All has not been accomplished with the training, the departure and the journey to the mission. The volunteer is "the envoy", that is to say, he is the representative of the home community. This is, consequently, the beginning of an exchange: those who stay at home support the volunteer by their prayers, their letters, their financial help, their news, etc. He, in return, keeps them informed of his missionary work, its difficulties and successes. He informs them of the use that is made of contributions received and he tells them about the progress of his religious experience. In this way, the volunteer is far from being alone, but rather, he is a symbol of the presence and the life of a whole community who accepted the call from God.

6.2. *The secular missionary and the Brothers.*

"The intelligence of one single person is like a bag full of holes."

The volunteer takes part in a Lasallian mission because he has lived in a Lasallian environment where his vocation has developed. He is part of a team of Brothers and can count on the support of the Brothers of the District. The volunteer brings to the Lasallian mission his own personal ministry; a service complementary and distinct from that of the Lasallian religious.

The Brothers of the District, through the Secretariat of the Missions, accept all the responsibilities that go with all missionary works:

- training of candidates
- preparation for living in community with all that that entails: work, prayer, human relationships
- assessing the adequacy of the candidate for each of the missions
- the official backing of the missionaries
- constant support for the missionary communities.

7. Missionary attitudes

"Those who sail in the same canoe think alike."

EFFORT to integrate one's own cultural life and faith into the new social-cultural and religious milieu.

RESPECT towards the people and their surroundings: they have an identity and motive force all of their own.

TO AVOID the temptation to apply pressure to speed up projects, and to destroy thoughtful planning.

TO UNDERSTAND that evangelisation and improving the lot of mankind are the work of a team.

TO ACCEPT: that evangelisation and improving the lot of mankind are the work of a team.

TO ACCEPT the specific missionary enterprise undertaken by the envoy sent out to do the work.

INTEGRATION with a venture that is much greater than one's own work and set plans.

Brother José Manuel Sauras.

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS OF SECRETARY

LOURDES R. QUISUMBING

at the Elevation of La Salle College, Bacolod to University Status and the Investiture of Brother Rolando R. Dizon, FSC as the First President of the University of St. La Salle, July 5, 1988

On July 5th 1988, La Salle College, Bacolod, in the Philippines was raised to the status of a University. Brother Rolando R. Dizon was invested as the first President of the University of St. La Salle. The keynote address was given by the Secretary of Education, Culture and Sports, Secretary Lourdes Quisumbing.

In the latter part of her speech, Secretary Lourdes Quisumbing showed her great admiration for and understanding of the lasallian educational tradition.

* * *

... In my short encounter with the Lasallian tradition, several impressions have embedded in my consciousness. I found out that Saint John Baptist de la Salle was the proclaimed patron saint of all teachers by our universal church. Being a teacher myself, it was easy for this fact to stay in my mind. We had our very own patron saint who will intercede for us teachers! However, as I began to study the life of this saint, I began to be struck by his life and work. First of all, I was struck that this French gentleman was able to overcome the strong group bias of his society towards the bourgeoisie and the nobility when he committed himself to work for the education of the children of the working class and the poor, and to live with the teachers which he considered, as he himself wrote, as having a lower status than his personal valet! Second, I was struck that he was able to decide to work as an elementary school teacher even after he received his doctorate in theology. Third I was struck that he was able to see that salvation for his students meant both teaching them skills so that they can find work and inculcating in them the life-giving truths and values of Jesus Christ. To him, there was no dichotomy!

Given this brief sketch of what little I know about him whom you have named your university after, what are its implications for your university especially as they pertain to the threefold agenda of our government? Firstly, to be true to his name, you will have to be a university that serves the working class and the poor of Negros by making the university accessible to them. You will have to fight and resist against the temptation to turn your institution into a university for the elite for the sake of academic excellence. The orientation to serve the working class and the poor does not mean that you will have to sacrifice academic excellence. The real challenge for you is to be a university that genuinely serves the working class and the poor without becoming a mediocre university. Medriocrity has no room in an authentic educational service of the poor. This is your particular contribution towards participatory democracy and social justice.

Secondly, Saint La Salle was concerned about the welfare of children. Any institution who bears his name can do no less. Your programs and your degrees, your researches and your projects should have a particular focus towards the well-being of the children of Negros. On this line, I would like to personally commend the work of your Social Research Center which has placed itself at the service of the government's efforts towards the social transformation of Negros, and the undergraduate and graduate programs in education even when it is certainly not profitable to do so! I hope that your university can become the center of a vibrant renaissance in social research and teacher education for the Visayas region. Such will be a significant contribution to the building of a just and humane society as envisioned by our Constitution.

Thirdly, Saint La Salle was concerned that the

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children be taught to lead good lives by instructing them with the life-giving truths and values of Jesus Christ and by giving them suitable education. In our modern parlance, we would say that he was very much concerned with values education. Today, our young people are being bombarded by values which present a distorted version of the good life. Your university must put all her resources to help counteract this cultural domination of the minds and hearts of our young people. We need your skills, your knowledge, your expertise to help fashion a new Filipino educational paradigm that can retrieve the wisdom of our national cultural heritage as well as to fashion a Christian education where the teachings of Jesus are embodied in the cultural tradition of our people. To do these, it is important for us to be functional in our own national language because language is the best tool we have to decode the insights hidden within our cultural heritage. Remember that Saint La Salle fought for the right to teach the children in their own native French when it was the accepted custom to use Latin as the medium of instruction.

Simply, I am asking you as your Secretary of Education to be faithful to your tradition, the tradition of Saint La Salle. Education after all, is simply the drawing out of insights necessary for the continuing growth of our community, both locally, nationally and globally. You have within your educational tradition rich insights which our people need.

Jaime Cardinal Sin, during his homily to the Brothers on the occasion of the diamond jubilee of their coming to the Philippines said: "If St. John Baptist de la Salle were alive today in the Philippines, would he not plunge straight into the fray to educate the poor in the life-giving truths and values of Christ? Can you, his sons, the inheritors of his indomitable spirit and vision fail to plunge into the fray in his footsteps? In the children of the slums, in the children of the sacadas, in the children roaming (our streets) and the impoverished countrysides, (St.) La Salle calls to you. Fail him not, fail yourselves not in this crucial hour, and our country shall owe you a debt of eternal gratitude". I, as your Secretary, can only echo his plea and add my voice to his!

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SOME THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS FROM A GROUP OF TEACHERS

We are a group of lay teachers from the "Istituto Arti & Mestieri" of Turin, a school which runs industrial technical courses, as well as courses at secondary level, up to the end of the 4th year.

We felt challenged by the Message of 41st General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and we would like to share with you briefly and somewhat spontaneously some-thoughts that came to mind as well as some suggestions.

SOME THOUGHTS

1. The serious way in which the Message speaks about a "Lasallian family" made a profound impression upon us and a welcome one: we understood it not as a metaphor, but as the description of a deeply human and Christian community
which responded to the needs of a specific vocation which was to be found also beyond the confines of the Brothers' Institute.

2. The Message describes a Brothers' community not in hagiographical terms but realistically, and for many of us this was something new and moving.

This is how we saw the community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools:

A community which had solid foundations:

* in its fidelity to its Lasallian origins;
* in the effectiveness and capacity for work of the Brothers;
* in its rediscovery that a religious community is
— a community which is loving and which prays;
— a community which is available (chastity);
— a community which is poor and for the poor;
* in its role as a non-priestly vocation which is present as a leaven and which gives service.

A community which does not hide its problems, but which seeks to:

* redefine its specific vocation in the present day world and Church;
* give greater importance to the vows in a world that does not understand them;
* make itself understandable to young people (lack of vocations).

An Italian community which seeks to:

* establish a position for itself in a country in which it is at risk because of financial difficulties and the power wielded by those who control finances.

* give a more evangelical response to those who thirst for values, truth, freedom and love, a thirst so prevalent in schools in Italy.

3. 1. We are very grateful to see that we lay teachers are no longer thought of simply as "lay stopgaps", or as "a work force you make use of when there aren't enough Brothers around". We understand that we are full members of the Lasallian Family, because of our vocation as teachers,
Christians and fellow-workers in the Brothers' apostolate, with all the rights and duties that this vocation. By the fact that we are here and now doing the will of God, we are also "called" "here" and "now".

3.2. Consequently, we feel that it is urgent and crucial to take steps to:

A. Become aware of what a specifically Lasallian vocation implies at the present time;

B. Bring with us into the Lasallian Family values that are specifically ours:

— availability and personal friendship;
— professional competence;
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dence in the Lasallian vocation;
– efforts to make this vocation understandable to young people ("fostering vocations").

3.3. We feel we have the "right" to involve the rest of the Lasallian Family (the Brothers' community in the first instance) in our "problems":

– the devaluation and disqualification of the person of the teacher in modern society, and the frustration that this brings;
– financial problems;
– loneliness and isolation in an ever increasingly soul-destroying society, and sometimes in a "bureaucratic" Church;
– poor professional career prospects within the Catholic education system;
– And so on...

SUGGESTIONS

The above thoughts have led us to make a few suggestions which are not intended to be original, but which can be seen as a sort of follow through on a community or institutional level of many things which are already being done on a personal level here and there.

Some of the following suggestions could be put into practice quite quickly; others are medium term projects; while others still are long term projects which would take much longer.

1. Above all, we lay teachers feel it is urgent for us to establish a closer spiritual contact with the community of the Brothers: we sometimes get the impression that the wealth of their Christian upbringing, religious wisdom and prayer is all locked away in a safe.

In practice, we look for:

– opportunities to meet them so as to be able to think and pray together at important times in the liturgical year;
– a chance, to the extent that this possible, to join in Brothers' community prayers;
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2. On a strictly professional level, we lay teachers feel a need for:

– meetings or courses on a regular basis to study Lasallian pedagogy in action.
– the possibility to update teaching and learning methods together with the Brothers, extending this possibility also to former colleagues.
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3. With regard to decisions that need to be taken concerning the running of school, we feel it is important to study the question together (taking into account, of course, expertise and position in the school) in order to find solutions in the following areas:

– ordinary, everyday problems (allocating pupils to classes, choice of courses, timetabling, staff involvement, etc).
– the problem involved in establishing a small, stable group of lay teachers who, with the Brothers, can provide continuity for our teaching establishments.
– the problem of schools which are in danger of closing down or of losing their identity because of financial or staff difficulties, and thus depriving the "poor" of the "bread" they need.

There are other suggestions we could make, but we had better stop there: it is all very well to make suggestions, but to do something about them is not so easy.

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March 14th 1987.

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LASALLIAN FAMILY CONCEPT AND THE MALAYSIAN REALITY

Perhaps in a less formal institutionalised way, the Brothers in Malaysia have had different approaches to the development of the Lasallian Family. Almost every school director and Brothers' community have their own circles of friends, benefactors and co-workers. Through our formal contact with them there is imparted some degree of spirituality and educational philosophy.

Lay heads of Brothers' schools have, off and on, "get togethers" where sharing goes on regarding the specific identity and problems of our schools.

Then again in our schools with fairly active Catholic teachers there exists some coordination in the manner in which faith, values, and spirituality are imparted to our students.

OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATIONS

One feature of the Brothers' Schools which have had a long history has been the establishment of Old Boys' Associations. The more recently founded schools have also worked in the same direction. Their origin stems from the attachment of the former pupils to their Alma Mater and this attachment has its explanation in the tremendous loyalty and affection they had and retain for their former teachers who were Brothers. These Associations, by and large, are thus characterised by this deep attachment and a tremendous interest (and pride) in their former schools, their readiness to help out when called upon to do so. These Associations have always been autonomous and the Brothers do not exercise anything beyond a counselling role but their deference to the Brothers is unmistakable. Since most of the members are not Catholics, or even Christian, the religious dimension is not generally stressed but the moral influence of Christian formation and education is duly appreciated and most desired. These Old Boys' Associations (there are also lady members now by reason of the opening of pre-university classes to girls) are to be considered as genuine members of the Lasallian Family because of their close ties and their association with the support of the Brothers in their educational and social work.

PARENTS – TEACHERS ASSOCIATIONS (P.T.A./P.I.B.G.)

In general, the parents of our pupils have always been interested in the welfare of the Brothers' schools and they too have been of immense support in their expansion as well as in the general discipline of these establishments. Even before the establishment of formal PTA's by instruction from the Ministry of Education, groups of parents were to be found everywhere and, either individually or in groups, were able to render good services to the Brothers, even with regard to their communities' welfare. Parents who are also members of the Old Boys' Associations proved themselves particularly anxious to be close to the Brothers and helped to strengthen the ties between these Associations and the schools. With the setting up of the PTA for each school, there has been growing interest and support coming from a larger group of parents who now work more closely and with deeper attachment to the respective schools. This has strengthened PTA relations and, in practice, it is these Associations which are quick to detect what the schools need for improvement in facilities and the welfare of the pupils, especially the less advantaged.

Through these Associations, many more parents have come to know the schools better and to take genuine interest in them. Working with the Boards of Governors or Managers of each school, considerable progress has been achieved all-round. In general too, through meetings and discussions with the staff and, especially the Head Teachers, the parents have gradually come to a better understanding of what a Brothers' school is and what it is striving for. As such, the PTA's have greatly improved and cemented the good relations between the Brothers and their schools and the parents and made them true cooperators in the Lasallian enterprise. They constitute thus an important element in the greater Lasallian Family.

LIMITATIONS

However, is must also be noted that in Malaysia,. having a political set-up, increasingly manipulated by Islamic elements bordering on fundamentalist principles, within the last 5 - 10 years, there has been a concerted effort to minimise the Christian dimension of our Mission schools. This has been effectively done by the taking over control of students intake, staff transfers, curriculum determination, etc. As such, the number of Catholic students and teachers has been drastically reduced, forcing us to rethink our concept of the Lasallian Christian school. We have fewer lay Catholic teachers to draw from, in our attempt to establish the Lasallian Family.

Till now, many of our schools have been blessed with lay staff who despite being non-Catholic (most of them) are still sufficiently imbued with our Lasallian character. This has been due to a large extent to the fact that some of them were from our teacher-training college which has been closed since the early 70's. Besides this, there is the fact that in the "past", teachers tended to remain for many years in a particular school. So working alongside the Brothers, they inevitably absorbed the identity and traditions that the Brothers so well imparted.

However today, with the frequent transfer of teachers in and out of our schools by the Ministry of Education, longstanding teachers notwithstanding, we face the difficulty of having teachers who are imbued with or who understand our traditions. Teachers come and go before they even have time to

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develop any sense of loyalty or association with our Educational Mission.
What has become increasingly evident is also the posting of Muslim teachers into our schools. They, while being cooperative in some instances, may not appreciate fully the Christian dimension of our apostolic work. Many of our schools have more than half the staff Muslims and this phenomenon will continue to increase, as statistics over the last years show that all Teachers' Training Colleges in the country are practically Muslims in enrolment.

SOME BREAKTHROUGHS

Despite these limitations much effort has been given to deepen the commitment of teachers in our schools. At a more organised level, the "colloquium" (staff management programme) run by heads of Mission schools under the umbrella of the GACS (Guild of Assisted Catholic Schools) has conducted many programmes of staff development at our various Mission schools (girls and boys schools). The Brothers have featured most prominently in this movement, comprised of Religious and lay people. These programmes conducted for the staff of our Mission school provide opportunities for orientating our teachers into our own educational philosophy and emphasis. Much has been done, and to date, Staff Animation Teams are still in good demand.

However, the spectre of gloom looms ahead even for an organisation such as the GACS, since of late, there have been clear indications from the Ministry of Education to the effect of discouraging any educational endeavours initiated by groups other than those from the Ministry itself. This, coupled with the fact that many Mission schools are being heavily staffed and administered by Muslims, has somewhat begun to take the wind out of the "colloquium" sails. Nevertheless it will still struggle to carry on until such time when circumstances disallow its continuance.

With these factors in view, the prospects of the Lasallian Family as envisaged in some totally Catholic countries (Spain, the Philippines and the sort) seem less viable. We have neither the numbers of lay teachers to draw from, nor the"Catholic" atmosphere for them to function in. Leaving that aside, even the notion of the "Lasallian School with a Christian identity" is called in question, as Brothers are confronted by students, teachers, personnel and structures that are more than 90% non-Christian.

POSSIBLE INITIATIVES

Despite all this, the Concept of the Lasallian Family is not totally unfeasible. Perhaps workable at a smaller level, say 3-4 Catholic teachers from each school becoming an extended family to the Brothers community, attached to the school, where every now and then, they could be invited for a meal, prayer functions, faith sharing experience or other opportunities where interaction can take place and where we can impart our Lasallian charism to them. They may not even have to meet always at the Brothers' residences and may prefer to take turns at meeting at one another's houses for a simple meal and animated sharing as practised by ME, BEC, Charismatic groups, etc.

Another possible avenue to develop the Lasallian Family Concept is by tapping the rich source of Catholic teachers found in the parishes. These, more than often, are not from our Mission schools. In this vein there is a need to broaden our concept of the Lasallian Family to include the formation of Catholic teachers and others who will be willing to bring our Educational philosophy and emphasis to Government schools not run by Brothers. If organised efficiently, this move could prove a breakthrough for Christian educational influence into the National Education scene. Brothers could perhaps organise programmes at parish level or even set up appropriate structures for these teachers in order to share with them important aspects of education seen from the Lasallian and Christian perspectives.

Yet another initiave could be to develop closer links and communication with all those teachers who have been trained at our Teachers' Training College which has since been closed. They, above and beyond other Catholic teachers, would be most predisposed to continue carrying on and sharing in our Lasallian Mission.

The Lasallian Family Concept need not be limited to teachers only. At perhaps a different level the inclusion of parents, ex-pupils, male and female, Christian and non-Christian, benefactors and others interested in or who value Lasallian education and character training, human formation, would prove a rich and diversified contribution.

Finally, in a more specific manner, we could set before Catholic teachers, former pupils, parents and even benefactors, the ideal of the SIGNUM FIDEI whose more convinced and more enthusiastic members could publicly consecrate themselves to the Lasallian apostolate in a more specific and wholehearted manner. They could make a commitment to the pursuit of some Lasallian projects and to the expenditure of effort, sacrifices, even monetary help, etc., backed by a strong interior life of prayer, sharing and instruction in Lasallian love. They could form a sort of THIRD ORDER in the broader sense of the term become veritable SIGNUM FIDEI i.e. Signs/witnesses of the faith through Lasallian education.

Not many communities have exploited these possibilities to the full as yet. Perhaps the Sub-District Council could further discuss this matter and come forward with some concrete plan of action that will enable the various communities to explore and actively develop the notion of a Lasallian Family.

Brother Matthew Liew

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THE NEUCHATEL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

A CENTURY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (1/2)

1988 marked the 125th anniversary of the Brothers' arrival in Neuchatel. This was not the first Lasallian foundation in Switzerland, for that took place in 1750, only thirty years after the death of the Founder. In fact, apart from Rome, Switzerland is the first country the Institute spread to. What is more, the first biographer of John Baptist de La Salle was Brother Bernard, a native of Fribourg in Switzerland.

Many of the first Lasallian foundations in Switzerland encountered a great many difficulties and did not survive long. The primary school in Neuchatel, however, can take pride in having lasted longer. As far back as 1863, the local parish priest persuaded the Superior General, Brother Philippe, to send three Brothers to take charge of a run-down primary school, and the Institute is still running the school. To found a religious community in Neuchatel was not an easy thing to do in the middle of the 19th century, because the Canton authorities were not in favour of such a move in a town where there had been no Catholic presence from the time of the Reformation to the beginning of the 19th century.

The Opening of the Boarding School in 1893.

Thirty years after the arrival of the Brothers, a boarding school was opened next to the primary school. It was a modest start: in the first few years, numbers were low, and boarders were lodged in a local hotel provided for their use. This is how the boarding school which is the subject of this article started.

At first the school grew slowly and it was only after 1925 that it really expanded. The numbers of boarders reached their peak between 1950 and 1970, when they totalled almost 200. Such an increase in numbers made it necessary for some of the boarders to transfer to other premises in the Abbey of Fontaine Andre which the Brothers had bought in 1954.

For a variety of reasons, there are now only 90 boarders per year: numbers have been reduced because of the shortage of Brothers; dormitories have been transformed intorooms; and more space has been provided for the recreational needs and leisure activities of the youngsters we have to cater for these days.

Our Intake.

The educational system in Switzerland is in the hands of the various Canton Governments, and so it tends to vary accordingly. In general terms it can be said that compulsory education lasts 9 years (10 in some Cantons) and begins at the age of 6 or 7.

At the age of 15 or 16, pupils have to choose between continuing their secondary education in a Gymnase (Grammar School), or train as apprentices and learn a craft. The Law says no one below the age of 16 can become an apprentice. The immaturity of candidates and the shortage of places on apprentriceship courses, combine to extend this pre-apprenticeship period which then serves as a year during which decisions about future careers can be made.

There are three official languages in Switzerland, and in many crafts and professions a knowledge of French, German and Italian is desirable if not absolutely essential. It is, of course, a plus when promotion is sought. Because of this, boarding schools have been opened in various Cantons, in which boys and girls from Cantons where another language is spoken, come to learn an extra language and benefit from their contact with a different linguistic and cultural context, all of which will prove useful during their apprenticeship. All these boarding schools are private. Many of them are run by Sisters, Catholic lay people and the one in Neuchatel, by the Brothers. Some of these schools have foreign students also.

The Catholic Institute of Neuchatel, run by the Brothers in a French-speaking Canton, is almost a hundred years old. Every year it takes in 90 German-speaking boys for one academic year and helps them to improve their French.

A Few Words about these Students.

These boys are aged between 15 and 17. They are usually students with learning difficulties, and the reason they were not able to continue their secondary school studies in a Gymnase was either because they were slow learners, or had fallen behind in their studies, or simply because they had not worked hard enough.

For about 5% of them, this year at the Catholic Institute is only a postponement: at the end of it they will be able to take up their studies in a non-specialist Gymnase or in one offering commercial studies. Some go to a teacher training college to train as primary school teachers. Others go to special schools run by the Postal Service or the National Railways.

45% of the students leave the Institute for a period of apprenticeship run by firms and are able in this way to obtain qualifications.

40% leave and get a job, learning the skills they need in the course of their work. The kind of work they do is quite varied and includes engineering, electronics, electrical work, carpentry, catering, nursing and even agriculture.

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Fortunately, up till now, all our students have been placed on leaving the Institute. This is largely due to the support and help of parents and of professional career advisers who are available to guide them in their choices.

On leaving the Institute, students, with very few exceptions, go back to their own Canton to do their apprenticeship with a firm and under the supervision of the manager. The manager follows their progress and pays them a small wage according to the work they do. Once or twice a week, these apprentices go back to school to learn the theoretical side of their craft. According to the craft, apprenticeship lasts between 2 and 4 years. At the end of this period, the employer is under no obligation to offer a job to the youngster, although this often does happen. The youngster, on the other hand, has to find himself a permanent job and do his military service, In Switzerland, military service consists of an initial period of 4 months, followed by periodical training sessions up till the age of 40, adding up to between 2 and 3 years of service in all.

Recruitment of Pupils.

The reader will have realised from what has been said that one of the special characteristics of our establishment is that its catchment area is not in any way local: our students come from the central area of German-speaking Switzerland.

And yet, up till now, we have had no trouble in filling all available places each year. We do not advertise at all: people hear about our boarding school by word of mouth. In fact what usually happens is that the number of applications exceeds the number of places available. And so each year there is a waiting list.

We are careful, however, not to be over optimistic, as the pupils now in their tenth year of compulsory education belong to an age group affected by a decrease in birth rate.

As years go past, we notice that a large proportion of our students are the sons of Old Boys of the Catholic Institute, or members of their family. Others have heard about the Institute from Old Boys living in their area. We insist, however, that students who come to us do so of their own free will and not because of parental pressure: as one can imagine, boarding school life does not appeal to many adolescents nowadays because of the restrictions that have to be imposed. The willingness of students to spend a year with us is a point we watch for in the preliminary interview we have with each of them before enrolment.

A Boarding School for the Study of French.

Another special characteristic of our Catholic Institute by comparison with most other Lasallian schools in the world, is that we keep our students for only 10 months: our school population changes completely each year. The reason for this is that the aim of the courses we offer is to improve knowledge of French. While this is the overriding objective of our teaching, it is not the only one.

For a fairly long time, we admitted students without insisting on an adequate knowledge of French; but eventually we realised that those whose standard was too low soon became discouraged and did not settle down during their year in the Institute. And so, recently we have introduced a test to assess knowledge of French, which the prospective student takes on enrolment.

We have also recently begun to run special courses for weaker students in an attempt to offer them teaching that is more adapted to their needs and level of intelligence.

The 90 students are divided up into 4 parallel groups or classes according to their competence in French. At the end of the school year, the top two classes sit an exam set by the Alliance francaise; while the other two groups sit one set by the Association of Swiss Private Schools, which is somewhat easier. Results in both exams are regularly very satisfying, students achieving a pass rate of between 80 and 90%. The diplomas they receive do not confer any legal or professional rights, but they do have quite a standing and help students quite often in their search for a career.

French, but also other Subjects.

Given the aims of the boarding school, the teaching of French dominates both the curriculum and the weekly timetable, taking up 17 40 minute periods per week. Other subjects are taught also, but in French, as part of the process of improving fluency. These include accounting, commercial arithmetic, typing, civics, Third World studies, training in the practical problems of everyday life and catechism.

In addition, students have to choose one or two optional subjects from among the following: English, Italian, algebra and geometry, music and information technology.

In all, students have at least 36 periods of class per week plus study in the evening. This is quite a heavy timetable, in particular for students who have learning difficulties, and some find it difficult to cope with.

To help students improve their command of French, it is suggested they use it even outside classtime. Formerly, pressure was put on students to do so by a system of punishments and rewards; but times have changed and it has become more and more difficult to insist on such things.

There are 5 Brothers and a number of lay people working in boarding school at present. Together they seek to improve methods used in teaching the various subjects as well as the organisation of time outside school hours.

Brothers Richard Böhi and Romon Frey.

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THE NEUCHATEL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

A CENTURY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (2/2)

Outside Schools Hours

Another characteristic of the Institute is that all the students are boarders. They go home and visit their parents regularly every other weekend, of course, but that still leaves the rest of the time to be organised. This is something the Brothers are mostly responsible for, although lay people do take their turn at supervision during the day. Because of this, the Brothers have a lighter teaching load, and take over supervision in the evenings and at weekends when the boarders are there.

One of the Brothers' concerns is to ensure contact between the boarders and the French-speaking people of Neuchatel, a contact they would like to see improved by its frequency and quality. This is not easy to do even if, when the boarders are there on a Saturday evening, they can stay out in Neuchatel up to 10 o'clock at night. During the course of the year, we organise trips around the Canton and even outside it to introduce the students to French-speaking Switzerland.

There is provision in the timetable for external speakers to come and address the students on a variety of important topics. Such topics include the refugee problem, drugs, the Third World, prison, etc... We organise days also on which group distinctions are forgotten and students concentrate, through research and study, on a special theme like fashion, films, television, etc...

But the fact remains that evenings in the boarding school need organising, and that the 90 adolescents are used to having much more freedom of action at home. Coping with this situation demands a lot of imagination: activities have to be varied to maintain interest. There has to be supervision also, so that there is at least a minimum of order. And, of course, there are times when discipline has to be imposed.

All this is not always easy. It is mostly the Brothers who run the boarding department, and because they have to impose discipline, they are not particularly liked or accepted by some youngsters. There is nothing new in this, but it is still difficult to bear. We feel that most of these antipathetic feelings are not lasting, and will not colour the memory these students have of the boarding school once they leave. Our lay supervisors have their families to go to, and so cannot devote their evenings and weekends to working in the school. Their contract stipulates, however, that they take charge on two weekends per term when the boarders are in residence. Teachers supervise every other Saturday morning.

Secular Subjects but also Christian Education.

In spite of the problems we have mentioned above relating to running the boarding department, which spring from a permissive society and changes in youth culture, it has always been the ambition of the Brothers, and it still remains so, to give a human and Christian education to these young people, even if it is only for a short period of 10 months.

It is precisely this aspect of our educational work that was given prominence in the educational programme we recently revised with our whole staff. Our main aims which are stated in the introduction are as follows:

— *to enable young people:*
* not only to acquire a good grounding in academic subjects, and especially a good command of French;

— *but also:*
* to give meaning to their own lives
* to become men aware of their human and religious responsibilities
* to develop a spirit of tolerance and justice.

To achieve these aims, the Institute seeks to create an educational framework which promotes:

* character training through the self-discipline demanded by studies, and by living with others and forming relations;
* teaching which is suited as far as possible to the needs of each one;
* a personal interest in the students, made possible by the close contact between them and adults, who try to show understanding, patience and tolerance, while still being able to be firm when the occasion demands.

Education which opens minds and hearts to the needs of others.

In addition to its normal educational work, the boarding school offers its pupils an opportunity to undertake various special activities aimed at increasing their awareness of important problems locally and further afield.

The aim of the course on the Third World which is part of the curriculum is to make students aware of current major problems. This is backed up by concrete actions on an ad hoc basis in support of various minor schemes. Over the last few years, help has been given in particular to India and Latin America.

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At the same time, students are made aware of local problems by being involved in practical schemes offering help. Here are two examples:

The Christmas Campaign.

This campaign makes a very deep impression on most of the students and is something that is very practical. Its aim is to help poor families, especially those living in mountainous areas in the centre of the country. These families are pointed out to us by Social Security workers who are in contact with them. Our campaign is very generously supported by the former students of the Institute whom we ask to help us. Each pupil makes himself responsible for a mountain family. He begins by writing to them to obtain some firsthand information about their situation, about their needs, and especially the needs of the children. The main aim of the campaign is to provide clothes, toys and Christmas presents for the children. Once this first contact has been established with a family, the pupil sets about raising the money necessary to buy whatever is needed by his adopted family. It is at this point that the generosity of Old Boys becomes evident, and the usual school fund-raising activities prove useful. When sufficient money has been raised, goods are bought from shops in Neuchatel, are made up into parcels, and sent off by the pupils with a greetings card. The parcels are large, weghing 15 kilograms on an average. Last year, 116 families were helped, which is commendable seeing there are only 90 pupils in the boarding school.

Holidays for mothers.

In mountain areas, the mothers of peasant families can only rarely go on holiday because they do not have enough money. In 1987, thanks to money raised, in particular by the Old Boys, who really are generous, our boarding school was able to send off 37 mothers for a free holiday in the Swiss Tyrol.

Other things have been done at one time or another, mostly less expensive, but which have made a impression on the pupils. There have been, for example, contacts, visits and sports fixtures with the local prison; and similar contacts with adolescents between the ages of 16 and 20 in a youth remand centre; and so on...

Christian education.

Most of our pupils come from Catholic families, but there are a few Protestants among them. In addition to the weekly religion lessons which are part of the curriculum, the Catholic Institute organises also the following:

* Each class goes on an annual retreat with its classmaster. The retreat usually takes the form of a camp-cum-retreat, somewhere away from the Institute premises.

* Occasionally there are days of recollection held in the peace and calm of the Abbey of Fontaine Andre, the other Brothers' community in Neuchatel.

* There is a voluntary prayer session once a week. It is held on Thursday evening in the boarding school chapel, and is organised by a Brother from the primary school. The youngsters are interested by the different ways of praying suggested by the Brother: they are encouraged to write down their prayers and their thoughts, and these are subsequently published with their agreement. Attendance is completely voluntary, and numbers vary from week to week.

Old Boys.

One has to remember that our pupils stay with us only 10 months and that, after that, they go back to their own Canton. There is very little contact between successive groups, and so there is little chance of building up a common stock of memories or a group spirit. Each year is different. The situation does not lend itself to the setting up of an Old Boys' Association, and so officially none exists. But, in various towns, groups of Old Boys have got together and meet regularly.

There are various signs, however, that show that numerous Old Boys seem to remember their days in the boarding school with some affection. For example:

– They show great generosity in providing funds to help our Christmas Campaign and other activities.
– We receive a great deal of correspondence from them.
– About 200 of them come every year to call on the Brothers and have a friendly chat.
– Last year more than 150 accepted our invitation to come and take part in the traditional three-day Wine Harvest Festival in Neuchatel.

All this leads us to think that the work we do here and relationships we build up are not merely superficial.

Conclusion.

The pupils that come to the boarding school are usually from the families of middle class shopkeepers and quite well off.

They are not poor economically speaking: their poverty is rather educational, intellectual and sometimes affective.
While helping them educationally – and our results show a certain amount of success – we try to make them sensitive to the poverty of others, and teach them to to show solidarity with them, by offering practical help. This we try to do by the various activities we have mentioned.

We try to ensure our intake covers as broad a social spectrum as possible, and so we keep our boarding fees as reasonable as we can. This was relatively easy when we had a lot of Brothers who did practically all the teaching and ran the boarding school. These fees nowadays have to take into account the salaries of lay teachers and supervisors, otherwise it would be impossible to stay within the budget. It should be noted that the Government of the Canton of Neuchatel gives no financial assistance to a private boarding school like ours. In spite of these difficulties, our fees are among the lowest in this type of establishment. This is our way of contributing to the education of the poor.

Brothers Richard Böhi and Romon Frey.

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Nº 16

October 1st 1989

INTRODUCTION

This issue of LASALLIANA is the third of the three planned for this year, and marks the end of our first year of resumed publication.

As we announced in issue Nº 15, this issue is devoted in a large measure to the «Letter to the Lasallian Family» published by Brother Superior and his Council a few months ago. It is an important document, and we feel that the articles included in this issue will be useful as a basis for studying, understanding and assimilating it.

With this in view, we are publishing seven articles grouped under four main headings, and have included at the end of each a series of questions aimed at stimulating a study of this Letter, either in community or study groups, or with other members of the Lasallian Family.

The seven articles were written by Brother Hernando Sebá López in his role as Secretary of the Lasallian Family in the Education Mission Secretariat which has now been functioning for a year.

Among the topics treated in this issue, we should like to draw your attention to those to do with Blessed Brother Scubilion: the Pope's homily at the beatification Mass; the French Prime Minister's speech, which refers to the Institute several times; and the miracle which was used for the cause.

In view of the impending canonisation of Blessed Brother Mutien Marie, we have included a description of the miracle and extracts from official documents relating to the examination of his cause.

* * *

We should like to remind readers that these articles are intended to be study documents and are meant to spread knowledge of things Lasallian among Brothers as well as lay teachers, ancillary staff, parents of pupils, pupils and others connected with the Lasallian Family. It would be useful if enough copies were made available for each of these groups to be able to benefit by them.

Likewise, all who wish to contribute to our publication, and who wish to share their thoughts and preoccupations about Lasallian matters, will find a welcome in our pages.

To help you find your way around these collections of articles, we should like to remind you once again about our numbering system:

- The first number, 16, is that of the issue.
- The second number, between 1 and 20, is the number of the article in the issue.
- In third position there is a letter which indicates the subject or theme:
  - O. General topics, varia.
  - A. St. John Baptist de La Salle, life, writings, spirituality, doctrine.
  - B The Brothers' Institute, history, present time.
  - C. Educational matters.
  - D. Collaboration between the Institute and lay people, Lasallian Family.
  - E. Personal experiences, various events, celebrations, etc.
- The final number indicates the number of articles already published on a particular topic.

Brother José María Valladolid

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SAINT TERESA AND THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

It is more than likely that when most of us read the "Story of a Soul", we felt a little thrill on seeing the name of Brother Simeon figure in it, a name referred to with affectionate gratitude by St. Teresa of the Child Jesus.

The Saint knew the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Lisieux: she would meet them in the streets, and her father would speak about them at the "Buissonnets"; and so she is part of the history of their religious family. Teresa had promised to spend her time in heaven doing good upon earth; she could hardly forget a spiritual friendship God's Providence brought about with Brother Simeon of the Lisieux community.

A meeting.

If we mention here Teresa's journey to Rome in November 1887, and her brave appeal to Leo XIII to let her join the Carmelites at the age of 15, it is because we think it is likely that the Saint met Brother Simeon in connection with this question.

In her autobiography, Teresa writes: "*My father went to visit the venerable old Brother Simeon, and there he met Father Reverony. He gently rebuked the priest for not helping me in my difficult task, and then went to tell Brother Simeon all about it. The kind old man listened with interest and even took notes, and then said with emotion "You don't see things like that in Italy*".

One may well imagine that this providential meeting with Brother Simeon changed the attitude of the intransigeant Vicar General. It is what Teresa herself thought: "*I think that this meeting made a very great impression on Father Reverony: he was forever afterwards telling me how convinced he was I had a vocation*".

While this meeting was taking place, Teresa was on a trip to Naples. When Celine was asked in 1946 to describe what happened, she said that she remembered going with her father and Teresa to the school, but the Director was not there. On August 31st 1890, he wrote to her, saying: "*I have very happy memories of you and your father*". It is not too far-fetched to suppose that, at least on one occasion, he saw the two sisters who under such circumstances were inseparable.

A friend and confidant.

Even if a meeting in the parlour never took place, it is certain that these two exceptional persons had a close relationship: Saint Teresa meant a great deal to Brother Simeon; and from this time onwards, he was the friend and confidant of the Saint, her sisters and of the Carmelite convent of Lisieux. His strong attachment to them was shown by his constant sollicitude for their needs. Writing to Celine on March 5th 1897, he says: "*If you need anything, don't hesitate to ask me. I am here to serve you and your superior*".

As for Teresa, she has respect, affection and confidence in this religious. She writes in her autobiography: "*A few hours before my profession, through the kindness of good Brother Simeon, the papal blessing arrived. This precious blessing certainly helped me to survive the most violent storm I have ever experienced in my life*". Unfortunately, the holy Carmelite's letter asking for the blessing has been lost. With a touch of humour, Teresa wrote to Pauline: "*I think I ought to thank «holy old man Simeon», and tell him I received his letter. What do you think?*"

Just like Teresa in 1890, Celine too asked Brother Simeon to obtain for her a papal blessing on the occasion of her profession on February 24th 1896. And later, she wrote to him again to ask him to do the same for Sister Stanislas who was celebrating her Golden Jubilee on February 8th 1897: "*Rest assured that your little Carmelite convent in Lisieux has a special place in its heart for you... we will always remember good Brother Simeon, our father's friend; and both of us, my sister Teresa of the Child Jesus and myself, are very proud to know you... We are both trying to become saints and want to go to heaven soon. She is on her way there. She is an angel. Her life is consumed by love. I enclose a short piece of verse written by her*". It is her favourite piece and her best: «Living by Love».

Brother Simeon answered on January 25th 1897: "*I have just re-read your sister's lovely poem. It is a sublime song that is worthy of the great St. Teresa herself. All the Brothers here wish to read it and make copies... Our Holy Father Leo XIII is in good health: his secretary, a very good friend of mine, thinks the poem is very good... Tell your holy sister that I am praying she will recover her health*". He was able to obtain the blessing. The Prioress, Mother Mary Gonzaga, wrote to him "*joining her two little angels in expressing her most respectful gratitude*". Later both Teresa and Celine wrote. Celine described the celebrations in minute detail as one would to a very close friend, ending with: "*it was a perfect day, and without doubt the best present of all was that of our dear, venerable Brother Simeon*".

Brother Martino, the headmaster of St. Joseph's College in Rome, has been good enough to send us a photocopy of a letter which the Saint had enclosed with that of her sister. We reproduce here the complete text which Brother Martino's predecessor had the foresight to keep:

Carmelite Convent, Lisieux
January 27th 1897

Dear Headmaster,

I am happy to join my sister Genevieve in thanking you for the very valuable service you rendered our Carmelite convent.
Not knowing any other way to show you my gratitude, I kneel at the feet of our Blessed Lord, and through my poor prayers wish to show you how much your kindeness to us has touched me...

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My joy, however, is tinged with sadness, for I have heard your health has been weakened: I beg Jesus with all my heart to spare your life which has been so precious to the Church, for as long as possible.

I know that our Divine Master must be eager to give you your crown in heaven, but I hope he will leave you a little longer in exile, to continue working for his glory, as you have done all your life, so that the immense store of merits you have amassed may make up for those souls that come to God with empty hands.

I dare to hope, dear Brother, to be one of those fortunate souls that will share in your merits, as I do not think my life in this world will be very long... When I come face to face with my Beloved Spouse, I will have only my good intentions to offer him; but if you reach our Heavenly Country before me, I hope you will come to meet me and offer on my behalf the merits won by your devoted life. As you can see, your little Carmelites can never write to you without begging for some favour and taking advantage of your generosity!!!

Dear Headmaster, you are so powerful on our behalf in this life; you have obtained for us the blessing of our Holy Father Leo XIII so many times already, that I can't help thinking that the Good Lord will give you great power over his heart in heaven. I beg you not to forget me in his presence if you have the happiness of seeing him before me. The only thing I beg you to ask for my soul is the grace to love Jesus and to make him loved as much as it is possible.

If Our Lord comes for me first, I promise to pray for your intentions and for all the people who are dear to you. I am not waiting till I get to heaven, of course, before I begin praying for you: I am happy to do so now and so prove my deep gratitude to you.

I shall always be happy, dear Headmaster, to be your grateful little Carmelite in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus and the Holy Family, Carmelite

Celine's name in religion was Sister Genevieve. Our reproduction of this letter is faithful to the original in its punctuation: the underlined words are the Saint's emphasis in the original.

The limited scope offered by an article forces us to be too brief. We cannot quote in full all the letters we have in our possession which were exchanged between Celine and Brother Simeon who, with her closest family, was the first to become aware of this person whom the whole world would soon acclaim as "the greatest saint of modern times". On July 7th 1897, Celine wrote to ask him to obtain a papal blessing and an indulgence "in articulo mortis" for Teresa: "*Our dear little Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus is dying... she is slipping away quietly. Her illness is love. She is not dying of anything but love just as she wished so much*".

And so a Brother of the Christian Schools was one of the first to share the intimate feelings and thoughts which revealed the secret of the outstanding holiness of one who would be the inspiration of a unique spiritual movement in the Church. And this Brother realised the importance of this message. He says so in his reply on July 12th: "*The sad news you sent in your letter about the sad situation of your admirable sister is a source of both sorrow and consolation. To die of love for Jesus who died for love of us, what is there more sublime, more heroic and more worthy of our longings!*" In spite of a few difficulties, he obtained what she had asked for: "*I asked for the papal blessing and the "in articulo mortis" indulgence for your sister. The Holy Father has agreed to everything*". Finally, a letter dated October 10th 1897 informs him of Teresa's departure for heaven.

A heritage.

On September 30th 1898, the autobiography of Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus was published, 2.000 copies in all. In the Carmelite convent they were worried. Would they sell even 100? Celine wrote to Brother Simeon immediately and sent him three copies. In her letter dated October 4th which was included in the parcel, she suggests timidly: "*Of course, I don't think the Holy Father will read this book, but couldn't one offer him a copy for his blessing?*" She thinks that his "special friend" might possibly be able to arrange it.

Brother Simeon read the book he had been given and "*thought it would do a lot of good*" and "*all the other Brothers were eager to read it*". He sent the second copy to the Pope's private secretary, asking him, as Celine had asked, for "his impressions of the book in writing". On November 6th a letter arrived at the Carmelite convent from the Brother Director: "*The third copy I am returning to you has been blessed by the Holy Father*".

The Brothers are still working in Lisieux, and are bound by deep bonds of friendship with the Carmelites: the gentle saint has continued to help them as her father had before her, and she extends her kindness to all the Brothers.

A spiritual relationship.

Is the relationship, then, between St. Teresa and our Institute one that is based on chance meetings and on her heavenly protection? Can one not speak of a true spiritual relationship which goes beyond the confines of time and space?

Many Lasallians have been inspired by her ideal which has led them to the only true greatness, that of evangelical insignificance, taught by both saints. Can one not say that it is on this level that the close ties that bind us are most obvious?

Saint Benildus surely followed "the way of the Little Flower" without knowing it by that name and unaware of its lyrical dimension. He surely illustrated the value of even the smallest gesture made through love.

Brother Gabriel Emonnet.

* * *

The author of this article has written a book which was very highly praised by a variety of reviews. It was written with the Brothers especially in mind, and what makes it original is a comparative study –to first to date– between the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle and that of St. Teresa of Lisieux. "*Educateurs et spiritualité Thérésienne*", By **Gabriel Emonnet.** Apostolat des Editions, 46 rue du Four. 75006 Paris. 256 Pages.

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THE PROCESS OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Introduction.

The purpose of this article is to examine the way in which the process of justification is presented in the spirituality of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. To help me in this I shall use as my basic texts the Meditations and the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer composed by the Saint.

Although he was a Doctor of Theology, De La Salle has not left us any systematic treatise on theology. Upon examination, however, his writings are full of teachings about the spiritual life. At first sight, this would seem to pose problems for this present study, but in fact it is a positive factor. While De La Salle did not construct a theory, he was able, and very successfully too, to present in a systematic form the way in which he lived his faith. Before putting down anything in writing, he lived this life of profound faith with his teachers. It was only subsequently that he wrote about it in detail in his Meditations and Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer.

When one analyses St. La Salle's faith journey, it becomes obvious that it was marked by a profound conversion experience. He discerned the call of God in "poor and abandoned children". He was willing to put himself into the hands of Providence so that God's will should be accomplished in him. Finally, he allowed himself to be led by the grace of God in most unexpected directions.

It never occurred to him that, because of his chance meeting with Nyel, God would lead him so far. All he did was to take one step at a time towards the apostolate God was going to entrust to him. In order to be faithful to this call and to better understand the call of God in the person of the poor, he had to give up his comfortable lifestyle. It is in the successive stages of De La Salle's radical conversion to the poor that one perceives his process of justification: he became aware of his sinful condition so that God would justify him. And so, justified by the grace of Christ, he allowed himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit so as to fulfil his mission through the educational service of the poor.

Following the example of their Founder, the Brothers also are called to acknowledge their sinful condition, so that justified by the grace of Christ, they can be efficient instruments of the grace of God in the exercice of their ministry.

* * *

We shall see now how the six stages of the Pauline process of justification are presented in the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

1. Our sinful condition.

The first stage in the process of justification is the acknowledgement of our sinful condition. Our own sins are the result of original sin. De La Salle points out that a Brother should acknowledge his sinful condition before God, because this sinful condition is an offence against the Creator. He suggests Brothers should acknowledge their condition in the following terms:

"Oh my God, I acknowledge that I have greatly offended you, and I am constantly conscious of my sins, because it is against you that I have sinned, and I have done so in your presence. I was even conceived in sin." (Expl. p. 50).

For De La Salle, it is absolutely essential for a Brother to acknowledge his sinful condition, because this is the basic condition for God's grace to appear in his life. But according to De La Salle, it is not enough simply for the Brother to be aware: he must make his pupils aware too. What is more, De La Salle points out clearly the dangers that the spirit of the world represents for one who wishes to respond freely to the grace of God. That is why part of the mission of the Brother is to keep pupils away from sin:

"This is why God has provided children with teachers... to guide children... through all the dangers they meet in the world... This is the main concern you must have for the children entrusted to you. It is the main reason why God has entrusted you with so holy a ministry..." (Med. Time of Retreat No. 5, 3).

Since a Brother must be a model for his pupils, he is under the obligation, in the first place, of acknowledging his sinful condition, and then secondly, as he exercises his ministry, of helping his pupils to become aware of their sinful condition.

2. We are made free by the grace of Christ.

In his meditation for Good Friday, De La Salle writes that the death of the Son of God is the consequence of the sins and the evil which reigns in the world. However, the love of God freely given makes us free through the intermediary of his own Son. And so it is important for the Brother to express himself in the following terms during mental prayer:

"I earnestly beseech Our Lord Jesus Christ to show his goodness to me by applying to me the merits he had the mercy to acquire for me by his Passion and death, which of themselves are very efficacious and all-powerful; so that completely covered by them, sin is no longer apparent in me, and in this way I may be more pleasing to you and better disposed to receive your grace and enlightenment in mental prayer." (Expl. Method. p. 54).

We are made free by the grace of God in Jesus Christ who has redeemed us by his death and resurrection. In the face of this great sign of love, a Brother must:

"render Jesus love for love in acknowledgement of so great a gift". (Med. 26, 3).

The first step in the plan of salvation is always God's:

"It was necessary that God himself through Jesus Christ Our Lord should show us the road we were to follow, and inspire us with the desire of walking in the footsteps of his Son." (Med. 3, 3).

That is why the Brother is merely *"a voice"* of God (Med. 3, 1) as he fulfils his mission. He is simply a voice, receiving from God the grace to exercise his ministry.

The fact that the first step is God's alone is shown clearly in the very vocation of the Brother. It is a call freely made by God to give a Christian education to children and young people:

"Thank God that he has had the goodness to call upon you to obtain such great benefits for children." (Med. Time of Retreat, 2, 1).

3. Made free by the grace of God, we are transformed into the sons of God.

When St. La Salle speaks of mysteries in the second part of the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer, he

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makes an explicit reference to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. In the Incarnation he sees the mercy of God who gave his own Son for the redemption of mankind. By this merciful act of God in the person of his Son and through the intermediary of the Holy Spirit, we receive the grace to be transformed into the sons of God.

"Oh God, Eternal Word, I believe with all my heart that you became the Son of Man in order to win for me the grace to become the son of God your Father." (Expl. p. 64).

By the very fact we have become sons of God, our lives must be guided by the Spirit of God. We must look at things not in the way the world looks at them, but with the eyes of faith, since God's grace lives in us. We are the temples of the Holy Spirit. That is why he says: *"You must live and act only according to the Spirit and by the light of faith"*. (Med. 43, 2).

4. Made free by the grace of Christ, we are now animated by the Spirit.

Since we have been made free by the grace of God, we are now animated, renewed, led and strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Our life is no longer guided by the criteria of the world, but according to the Spirit of Jesus, because we have been justified by the grace of Christ. As St. La Salle says:

"The first effect that the Holy Spirit produces in a soul that has the happiness of receiving him is to make it see things in quite a different light from that in which those who live according to the spirit of the world view things." (Med. 44, 1).

A radical change takes place because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. The way of looking at things changes completely. One no longer looks at things according to the spirit of the world, but according to the spirit of God. Animated and guided by the Spirit, the Brother looks at everything with the eyes of faith. He lives according to the spirit of faith. And when St. La Salle speaks of living according to the spirit of faith, he means that the life of a Brother must be animated, guided and renewed by the Holy Spirit. In fact when St. La Salle speaks of the Spirit of Faith, he speaks of the Holy Spirit. (M. Sauvage & M. Campos: "Announcing the Gospel to the Poor").

5. The process of justification is accomplished by means of the Church.

This mediation occurs through preaching and baptism, among other means. According to St. Paul, *"Faith comes from what is preached, and what is preached comes from the word of Christ."* (Rom. 10, 17).

St. La Salle says: *"It was the spread of God's glory by the preaching of the Gospel that made up all the consolation of this great apostle (Paul), and this must be yours as well, to make God and his Son Jesus Christ known to the flock confided to you."* (Med. Time of Retreat, 15, 2).

As a follower of Christ, the Brother shares in this mission of the Church. By baptism, he is likewise called to be a herald of Jesus Christ. He fulfils this mission especially when he teaches the message of the Gospel to the pupils confided to his care by God.

In addition to preaching, the Church fulfils its mission of evangelisation by means of baptism. Through baptism we die to the world of sin and we rise to new life in Christ. For St. La Salle, the Brother has a duty to communicate to his pupils the basic truths of the faith, since, like him, *"by baptism, (they) are consecrated to the Most Blessed Trinity"*. (Med. 46, 3). As someone who is baptised, the Brother has a duty to announce Jesus Christ, since his pupils too have received the grace of baptism.

In his meditation, De La Salle stresses the Church's role of mediation. The Brother as a baptised person shares in this work. When he shares in this mission he must remain united with the Church. This union will be shown by obedience to the Pope and the Magisterium of the Church. His inssistence on this is understandable in the light of the danger offered by Jansenism, so rife at the time. De La Salle was invited at various times to join the Jansenists. Had he done so he would have received considerable financial aid for his undertaking. He rejected these invitations, however, preferring to trust in Divine Providence rather than in money.

6. Animated by the Holy Spirit, we become capable of doing good.

The good that we do does not come from our efforts nor from our abilities: it comes from God's grace. We are transformed by the Holy Spirit. That is why when a Brother prays he can ask him:

"Come Holy Spirit, take possession of my heart. Animate all my actions so much that it can be said that it is you who are acting and not I; and that I have no life, no movement no action unless it comes from you." (Expl. p. 18).

The Brother becomes capable of doing good works because he has been renewed and justified by grace.

Grace is always a gift and a duty. On receiving this grace, a Brother must *"look upon everything with the eyes of faith, do everything in the sight of God, and attribute all to God"*. In order to do this:

"You must act through grace and show that you are moved by the impulse of the Spirit of God." (Med. 45, 3).

Through the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Brother must seek only God's glory in the accomplishment of his mission. Seeking the glory of God implies also the renunciation of self. By this renunciation, the Brother can complete in his own body what is missing in the sufferings of Christ. For St. La Salle, the true disciple of Jesus Christ is he who shares in the sufferings of the Son of God:

"Like him (St. Ignatius of Antioch) you must bear in mind that you will be a true disciple of Jesus Christ only when you love him, and when you love suffering for his sake." (Med. 102, 3).

Conclusion.

In the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle, it is possible to identify the process of justification described by St. Paul. De La Salle, a Doctor of Theology, had a thorough knowledge of the teachings of St. Paul. In addition to knowing them, he admired them also. There are innumerable references to St. Paul in the Meditations and the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer. By this means, St. La Salle endeavours to help his Brothers to become aware of their sinful state, so that, conscious of it, they can be more attentive to the grace of God, a grace which renews them, justifies them and brings them out of their sinful state to a new life in Christ. Once made free by the grace of Christ, Brothers can live according to the spirit of faith, and not according to the desires of the flesh. And so the Brother must not *"look upon anything but in view of God and must attribute all to God"*.

Through the action of God's grace, the Brother as a person leaves his sinful condition to become *"a minister of Jesus Christ"* (Med. Time of Retreat, 3, 11). As a minister of Christ, he must seek only the glory of God in his mission of educational service of the poor.

Brother Edgar Nicodem.

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BROTHER SCUBILION WAS ABLE TO SEE GOD IN EVERY PERSON

1. *«You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world»* (Mt 5: 13, 14).

In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, these surprising words are addressed to the hearers of the Sermon on the Mount, that is, to all those who have heard the message of the Beatitudes, the law of the Kingdom of God.

It is therefore to the crowd of the poor, the afflicted, those who hunger for justice, the insulted, the calumniated, the persecuted that Jesus comes to say: "You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world».

Such is, in fact, the ideal which Jesus proposes to his disciples and the call that he makes to the People of God as a whole. Such is the vocation of the Church. Such also are the demands of the Gospel for the members of this Church.

«You are the salt of the earth! You are the light of the world!»

Should this be for us a source of self-satisfaction? No, it is the truth when we think of what we are: «See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are» (1 Jn 3:1). And Saint Peter affirms: «But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light» (1 Pt 2:9). The great Pope Saint Leo challenged the faithful in this way on the night of Christmas: «Recognize your dignity, O Christian».

«You are the salt of the earth...» What does this mean? Salt gives flavour to food and preserves it. Salt is precious. When Jesus declares: «You are the salt of the earth: if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltness be restored?», he means: *what you have received makes you precious for the world; nothing can replace what you bring. It is up to you to be the ones here on earth to prevent life from losing its savour.*

Brothers and sisters of Réunion, you who give flavour to the world by your faith, I greet you warmly, and express my joy in being with you to honour your first Blessed, Brother Scubilion.

I greet Monsignor Gilbert Aubry, your Bishop, and I offer him my cordial wishes on this anniversary of his episcopal ordination.

I also greet His Eminence, Cardinal Albert Decourtray, President of the Conference of Bishops of France, and His Eminence Cardinal Jean Margéot, President of the Episcopal Conference of the Indian Ocean, as well as my brother bishops.

I address my cordial greetings to the priests and the men and women religious. In particular, I greet Brother John Johnston, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, together with the members of the Institute present here; I share their joy and I join with them in their thanksgiving on this day when the great family of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle is again being honoured.

To the civil authorities who have come to this liturgical celebration. I offer my respectful greetings, and I thank them for their presence.

And, once again, greetings to you, dear brothers and sister of Réunion!

2. Today, when the Bishop of Rome comes to see you, I would like, before everything else, *to give thanks to the Lord with you for the gift of faith* granted to this country. With a free heart you have adhered to the Good News which was offered you. Evangelization has already produced numerous fruits here, and Brother Scubilion is a remarkable witness of the movement towards holiness inaugurated on this island by the first missionaries.

3. *It is necessary that each one make the faith received from his ancestors grow within him,* by voluntarily rooting it in a parish, in a community, in a neighbourhood team, in a reflection team, in a movement. First of all, the Christian faith must permeate this basic community which is the family. Dear brothers and sisters, may the family be the first sphere of your commitment as baptized, in the firm conviction of the unique and irreplaceable value of the family cell for the development of society and of the Church. Take part in ecclesial activities wherever you are, and consider the deepening of your Christian formation as a priority to which you must dedicate some time. Finally, without limiting your involvement in services which are ecclesial in the strict sense, bring your qualified contribution to the building of a society that is ever more respectful of human dignity, by not being afraid to say «no» to the slavery of material things which could entice you. Be among the authentic elements of civic and moral progress for this island which is yours.

Without imposing your faith, out of respect for others, live «the Christian difference» and let the Catholic imprint appear not only in individual behaviour, but also in the quality of community and collective life: in the family, in business,, in leisure, in politics. There is a manner of being and acting which must influence the structures of society. Do not take refuge in a false humility which would consist in keeping silent about the content of the faith or causing the public expression of it to disappear. Live in conformity with Christian demands, and you will become witnesses of love. With all the others, search for the ways of a human development for everyone, so that the dignity of each person may be recognized.

4. Brother Scubilion bore witness to this care for the dignity of the human person during his years of missionary life. He was born at the end of the 18th century, in metropolitan France, in the present Diocese of Sens-Auxerre which desired to send a delegation here. After entering religious life in the Brothers of the Christian Schools, he offered himself willingly for the apostolate in distant lands, in his desire for a more complete gift of himself. In 1853 he arrived in Réunion and served here until his death.

The love of God and the love of neighbour were inseparable in him. In the eyes of everyone, he shone with a power of love that revealed the God of Love. *He was light, as Christ wished it: «You are the light of the world».* He allowed himself to be enlightened by Jesus Christ and he enlightened others in the light of Jesus Christ by this example and in particular, by his catechesis among the slaves.

As a good educator, Brother Scubilion loved to catechize. Enthusiastically, he made up delightful catechism lessons. His love for young people and his joviality urged him to take

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his pupils of Sainte-Marie to explore the Heights of the Ravine-des-Chèvres or the caves of the Trois-Trous; he even attempted to scale Charpentier's Peak with them. These excursions were also pilgrimages: they visited the Church of the Rivière-des-Pluies or Notre Dame de Bel-Air or Notre Dame de Bon-Secours. In the light of the world, Brother helped people to discover the light of the soul, the light of Christ.

5. Brother Scubilion understood and lived the love of neighbour in its evangelical dimension. He knew how to see God's image and likeness in every person. He loved in the way God loved. Following the example of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, he showed great tenderness towards those who were entrusted to him. He helped them to have confidence, to forgive one another, to give meaning to their life, to walk in hope; he distinguished himself in the service of the sick, showing great compassion to his brothers and sisters in distress. *He practised the charity of which the Apostle Paul made himself the wonderful herald in his Letter to the Corinthians* to which we have listened together: «Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things» (1 Cor 13:4-7).

6. The greatest commandment of the Law is to love God with all one's heart and one's neighbour as oneself. Christ made this law of love his personal commandment. It is the newness of the Gospel, which fulfils and completes the former Law: «Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the prophets, but to fulfil them» (Mt 5:17). And Jesus continues, praising in advance all educators of the type of Brother Scubilion: «Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and *teaches* men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But he who does them and *teaches* them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven» (Mt 5:19).

7. Dear brothers and sisters, the beatification of Brother Scubilion is like a founding event in the history of your diocesan Church. It emphasises at the same time that this part of the world, this region of the Indian Ocean, your island, has a vocation to raise up examples of holiness for the whole Church. Father Laval in Mauritius, Victoria in Madagascar, and Brother Scubilion in Réunion join hands together to bring your peoples into the community of the children of God; as other great figures of your country also do: Father Monet, «apostle of the Blacks», Father Lavasseur, companion of Libermann, Aimée Pignolet of Fresne, foundress of the Daughters of Mary. *You already have a spiritual patrimony which it is important not only to keep but to know well in order to live it and in order that apostles with hearts on fire will always rise up.* Accept your history and play a major role in it. While living the Gospel as these great servants of God have done, bring your own culture more and more to life. You will want to be more human in the measure of the love of Jesus Christ for the men and women of Réunion.

8. On your island, you enjoy relative abundance. However, consumerism can turn people away from the true evangelical way of human success. Among you, as in the home country, *there are without doubt lifestyles to be changed so as to know the happiness of simple people and preserve the quality of human relations.* Moreover, together with many other countries, you are unfortunately experiencing unemployment and you will have to try to reduce it. In the same way that you were able to take up your life again after the hard trial of the cyclone Firinga (28-29 January 1989), I desire that your fraternal solidarity will reach all those who are without work and suggest to you the necessary local initiatives so that all may share in a worthy, responsible development.

9. As for you, dear *young people* who are listening to me, I know how sensitive you are to success of life in peace. Your heart knows no boundaries and you desire to love. You wish to give yourselves entirely in order to love and be loved. You are right, for without love life does not attain its goal. However, be careful of caricatures of love! Saint Paul has given us today distinctive signs of true love; build your life on this type of love. Let Jesus Christ lead you by the hand. He will not let you go, for he wishes to go with you to the very limit of love. Search for your vocation: to Christian marriage, religious or priestly vocation. Learn to respect yourselves, to sustain one another in order to build a world in which you will bring about the triumph of the values of the praise of God and the service of people, values of tenderness and sharing, of justice and peace, of solidarity and responsibility. Do not be afraid of sacrifices in order to improve yourselves from day to day and make your talents fruitful. The way of perfection, the way of effort, is also the way of joy. Good luck for today and for tomorrow! The Church and the world count on you: become the champions of your future in solidarity.

10. Jesus says to all of you who are here, to you who are listening to me on the radio and television: *«You are the light of the world».*

Let me say to you in Creole: «Do not remain in the darkness; come to the light. Leave aside what is not good and go straight forward with a good conscience. The sun rises and then it sets: the moon rises and then it sets; but you are the light which is not extinguished».

With your Bishop and all your pastors, continue to build your Church and develop your country, striving to drive off the slaveries which dehumanize existence.

According to the example of Brother Scubilion, learn to become saints. Like him, build your lives on the mystery of the cross, on the lifegiving power of the Eucharist, on devotion to Mary, Queen of the Apostles.

May this very loving Mother protect you and lead you in peace towards her Son Jesus!

To him be honour and glory forever and ever!

(L'Osservatore Romano, May 29th 1989).

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SPEECH MADE BY MICHEL ROCARD, THE FRENCH PRIME MINISTER,

in the presence of the Holy Father,

on May 1st 1989, on his arrival on the Island of Reunion.

Holy Father,

This is the second time in less than a year that I have been called upon in virtue of my position as Head of Government to welcome and greet You Holiness on the territory of the French Republic. For me this is a source of heartfelt joy, as I see this as a sign of the interest and friendship you have for our country. I am pleased also to greet His Eminence Cardinal Casaroli, the Secretary of State, who is with you, and to thank His Eminence Cardinal Decourtray, President of the Bishops' Conference of France, and the Papal Nuncio to France, Monsignor Antonetti, for having made the long journey to meet you here and to accompany you on this apostolic visit.

I am pleased to greet you, Holy Father, in this part of France in the Indian Ocean, the Island of Reunion, whose very name suggests harmony and peace. You will find that the population here is young, enterprising, varied, tolerant, and for most part Catholic.

The visit of Your Holiness to beatify one of the evangelisers of this island, Father Scubilion Rousseau, cannot fail to receive a warm welcome here, accompanied by the fervour and devotion you have already noticed since your arrival at the airport.

Quite apart from any reasons of protocol, the French Government was anxious to be associated with your act of recognition of this son of Burgundy who for 35 years worked for the good and the emancipation of Reunion, and through him, of the Brothers of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Our country is proud to have given to the world in the XVII century a great benefactor to humanity in the person of John Baptist de La Salle. If he was one of the great educationalists of modern times, because he reformed teaching methodology and replaced individual by group teaching, his great achievement was that he understood the importance of educating the children of the working classes. He involved himself personality in this and in 1682 founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools for this purpose also.

It is thanks to him and to them that the work of combating illiteracy began in pre-1789 France. His approach and his humanitarian concern opened the way for compulsory, free primary education, which successive French governments would subsequently proclaim (for the first time in 1793), and which Jules Ferry would finally introduce in 1881, upholding, as you are well aware, the principle of the freedom to teach, and the non-denominational character of State education.

The Brothers of St. John Baptist de La Salle did not restrict their love of the poor to mainland France. In the space of a short time they had spread throughout the world, and now there are more than 10.000 of them in 80 countries. It is as a part of this missionary work that we find the warm personality of Father Scubilion Rousseau.

This son of France, born, Holy Father, close to the famous historical and spiritual centre of Vezelay, added a new dimension to the wok of the Brothers on this Island of Reunion. As I mentioned earlier on, Brother Scuibilion Rousseau came to the Island in 1833: at the time it was still

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called Bourbon and was governed as a colony. His role in its history was to be of crucial importance and would break new ground.

In fact, what he wanted to do was to gather on the same school benches in the primary school all children, irrespective of the colour of their skins, or whether they were the children of free people or slaves. This was not done without much opposition. By persevering, however, in his determination to achieve this, and by basing his teaching on the values of the Gospel that set people free, he prepared the slaves for freedom which the Second Empire granted them in 1848, thanks to the efforts of Victor Schoelcher.

The most recent biographer of Brother Scubilion in a book with a preface by Monsignor Gilbert Aubry has pointed out, and I quote: "*a surprising and staggering area of common agreement between the atheist mystic, Victor Schoelcher, and the holy Brother Scubilion*". The autor goes on to say: "*These were two lives devoted to the same cause, completely free of self-interest, and in my view, each one complementing the other in its concern for freedom, on a moral and spiritual plane as well as on that of political freedom. One obtained from the newly proclaimed Republic a decree abolishing slavery, and a declaration in the constitution that slavery could no longer exist in any territory held by France. The other, here, prepared the slaves to take up their responsibilities as free men and citizens, helping them to live through the initial excitement of a new situation as responsible adults*". He contributed in this way to the present day situation, which rejects all discrimination between the citizens of this Department, whatever their origins. Victor Schoelcher has his place in our national Pantheon, a fitting tribute to the high regard in which he was held by all. Brother Scubilion lies here on this Island of Reunion to which he devoted his life and where he is held in veneration by everyone. Tomorrow, Holy Father, you will consecrate him as one of the Blessed to be an example for the Catholic faithful throughout the world. This cannot but be a source of rejoicing for France.

In my own name, in the name of the President of the Republic and in that of the French Government, in the name of all the men and women present here, in the name of the people of Reunion, I wish you, a very happy stay on this splendid corner of France in the Indian Ocean, the Island of Reunion.

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THE MIRACLE ATTRIBUTED TO BROTHER SCUBILION APPROVED FOR HIS BEATIFICATION

Instantaneous and complete cure of Marie Therese Hoareau of a «serious infection of the wall of the abdomen following a hysterectomy operation due to fibrosis of the uterus, with a clinical gangrenous development, complicated by evisceration, heavy haemorrhaging and hipovelemic shock».

* * *

Marie Therese Losandiere was born on the Island of Reunion on June 10th 1928. She married Claude Hoareau and had seven children. Her medical records show no history of hereditary disease, if one discounts the premature deaths of some brothers and sisters at an early age. Her parents died at an advanced age (her mother was 87 and her father 98).

In 1965, Madame Hoareau had a gynaecological operation, and the operation wound healed perfectly. In 1967, she went for another operation for a slipped disk in her lower back. She was badly overweight and suffered a little from blood pressure: she had been suffering recently from various ailments: loss of appetite, constipation, pains in her right iliac fossa, metrorrhagia and leucorrhoea.

When she went for an X-ray and a gynaecological check-up, it was discovered she had an enormous uterine fibroma which had to be operated upon. She went into hospital on October 20th 1975 at the Clinique de la Pointe, and was operated upon by the chief surgeon, Marc Zourgane. A complete hysterectomy posed no problems and the post-operative stage was normal.

However, on the sixth day. October 26th, her temperature rose to 40° as a result of infection which grew worse in the days that followed. Doctor Zourgane discovered the cause to be gangrene. He began treating it with sulphamides, antibiotics and cortisone. He operated on her again to drain and clean the infected area. In spite of all this and blood transfusions, her condition did not improve.

On the contrary, on November 1st, at one o'clock in the afternoon, there was a heavy external haemorrhage, followed by a massive cardio-vascular collapse, which destroyed any hopes of recovery. Doctor Zourgane informed her husband. Transfused blood was ejected through the tubes serving to drain off purulent discharges from the abdominal cavity.

* * *

Another patient in the clinic, a certain Madame M. J. Buichard, seeing the terrible state of Madame Hoareau, went up to her on October 30th and suggested she invoke the help of the Servant of God, Brother Scubilion, and she left her a holy picture of him with a relic.

It was on the evening of November 1st, when the state of the patient was beyond hope of recovery, that her husband who was beside her, took the picture of Brother Scubilion into his hands and filled with confidence asked him to cure his wife.

After a short while, an obvious and spectacular change took place in the patient and her condition improved. After two or three hours, her condition had returned to normal and the danger of death had disappeared.

The doctors could not believe what they saw. They decided to keep Madame Hoareau in hospital for examination for a month, and on December 2nd 1975, they allowed her to go home completely recovered. As far as the doctors are concerned, what happened on November 1st could not be explained and still cannot be in the light of our present knowledge of science.

* * *

This miracle was approved on June 1st 1987 and was used for the beatification of Brother Scubilion.

(Information taken from the Cause of Beatification documents kept in the archives of the Postulator General).

Br. J.M.V.

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MIRACLE ATTRIBUTED TO BLESSED BROTHER MUTIEN MARIE APPROVED FOR HIS CANONISATION

This miracle which was accepted by the Church for the canonisation of Blessed Brother Mutien Marie took place on February 22nd 1977 in Malonne, Belgium. The person cured was Brother Madir.

Brother Madir, whose secular name was Franz Verstraelen, was born in 1900. As early as 1929, he had a cholecystitis which had been treated by cholecystectomy. In 1930, he had to go back to hospital for a local operation for costal osteitis, the result of a previous operation.

However, the first symptoms of the illness which was cured miraculously go back to 1969, when he suffered a fracture of his spine which was thought to be simply lumbago. Subsequently, X-rays at the time showed that the second lumbar vertebra was also affected.

His pathological state grew worse. X-rays taken on December 21st 1970 showed fractures also in the 12th dorsal vertebra and the 3rd lumbar vertebra. The condition grew worse and Brother Madir had such pain in his back that he had to be put into plaster and lie still.

On January 4th 1971, a fracture was discovered in the 9th dorsal vertebra, and on June 1st of the same year, on the 10th and 11th dorsal vertebrae. Neither medicines nor physiotheraphy proved to be of any help.

When he was in Anvers in 1976, he suffered another fracture, this time in the neck of the right femur.

A medical examination on January 13th 1977 confirmed the existence of extensive and generalised senile dorso-lumbar osteoporosis. The patient was in great pain and could walk only with the help of two sticks or crutches.

* * *

On November 13th 1976, the decree was published approving the miracle of Brother Mutien Marie for his beatification. The next step was to officially identify his remains, and this ceremony was due to take place on February 22nd 1977.

Brother Madir, who had been infirmarian at Malonne, asked to be allowed to help with the ceremony. Both the doctors and the superiors agreed to his request, knowing full well that he could not give much help with the ceremony, since if he let go of his stick he would fall down. Brother Madir, however, was confident that Brother Mutien could cure him.

At one point during the process of identification of the remains of the Servant of God, Brother Madir began to help the doctors and the other people present. To do this he needed to use both hands and so had to let go of the stick he needed to support himself. By the end of the ceremony he no longer needed either sticks or crutches. And this continued to be the case as long as he lived. He died on May 7th 1986 of a pulmonary oedema.

There still exist numerous photos of the ceremony. In the first few one can see Brother Madir leaning on his stick as usual and forced to do so by his illness. In the others he can be seen without any support at all.

* * *

Henri Podor, one of those present at the ceremony, gives the following testimony: «... on February 22nd 1977, as the one in charge of the staff at the Institute, I was called to take part in the opening of the grave and coffin, having first sworn an oath in the presence of a number of dignitaries. Just then, Brother Madir comes into the parlour, leaning as usual on his crutch. We open the coffin: at that point the doctors come forward, as does Brother Madir who puts the crutch aside in order to help. When all was finished you can imagine my surprise on seeing Brother Madir walking now without any support. He said to me: "I think Brother Mutien Marie has granted me a great favour"».

Numerous other persons who were present at the ceremony or who had lived with the Brother before and after the cure gave similar testimonies.

In the official process of the Cause, the miracle is described as follows: «Instantaneous and complete clinical cure, with the disappearance of painful symptoms and the recovery of the ability to walk normal for his age, from a serious form of senile osteoporosis, accompanied by multiple and repeated fractures, a serious pain syndrome and serious functional locomotor disability.»

(Extract from the official Process. Archives of the Postulator for the Cause).

Br. J.M.V.

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THE «CATHOLICITY» OF THE SCHOOL

Educators, I feel, often make professions of faith to themselves. They develop a belief that there is a certain way to do things in order to bring about the best results. It is a conscience of craft which tells the teacher when he/she is doing mediocre work and when he/she is nearing perfection.

I am now ready to proclaim another profession of faith and this one concerns the nature of a Catholic school. I am speaking of the «Catholicity» of the school and not the more generic characteristics such as «religious» school, «Christian» school, or «nonpublic» school.

The Catholicity of a school must be rooted in three specific areas of school life this profession of faith tells me. (A) The Religion teachers and their influence on the school. (B) The Faculty and part that each one plays as a Catholic role model. (C) The School Environment, including school culture, activities, rituals, and facilities.

* * *

(A) RELIGION TEACHERS. «THE MISSIONARIES TO A TEENAGE CULTURE»

The religion teacher is the key, the vital component, if the educational goals of the schools are to be achieved. But the effectiviness of religious instruction is closely tied to the personal witness given by the teacher. This witness brings content to the lessons of life.

Students need to recognize authentic, human qualities in their teachers. They are teachers of the faith; however, like Christ, they must also be teachers of what it means to be human. This includes culture, but it also includes such things as affection, judgment, patience in listening to others, prudence in response, and finally availability for personal meetings and conversations with students. (1)

ACTION PLAN FOR RELIGION TEACHERS

(1) Meet as a department to discuss, but only after each has read, «The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.» This paper, released for publication in June, 1988, was written by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education. This is a basic document for teachers of Religion. (*See endnote #1*).

(2) Build up a department resource center – tapes, books, current readings. I suggest that each teacher have a personal copy of : *Missionaries To A Teenage Culture,* and *Teaching Religion in Catholic Schools, Theory and Practice,* both by Marisa Crawford and Grahm Rossiter. St. Mary's Press Publications.

* * *

(B) THE FACULTY – «THE CREATORS OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY»

It was a Hindu leader, Mahatma Gandhi, who believed that teachers educate themselves not to be separate from their students but to become one with them. He realized that the students' best textbook is the life of the teacher and that the

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student will never learn to seek harmony, appreciate beauty, and desire spiritual energy unless he/she sees these exemplified in the lives of his/her teachers. (2)

ACTION PLAN FOR ALL TEACHERS

(1) Study the enclosed Opinionnaire and give it your best effort. These data will be helpful in planning the forms of support that may be needed by our faculties. We often speak of our teachers' responsibilities – now we are asking how the school may be of help to teachers to carry out these responsibilities.

(2) Review your own subject content. In checking to see if your lessons are really part of Gospel territory, note if you have an interdisciplinary dimension to your work, if multicultural concerns are addressed and if global issues are discussed, and if the students become familiar with Catholic social justice teachings.

* * *

(C) SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT – FACILITIES, RITUALS, ACTIVITIES

Airports have chapels. The US Congress begins its sessions with a prayer. Public schools have service clubs. Companies treat clientele cordially. All of these are nonsectarian in approach. Yet, sometimes it is heard that prayer, service, respect, and a place to worship help to make our schools «Catholic.»

ACTION PLAN FOR ADMINISTRATORS AND CAMPUS MINISTER

(1) Students are evaluated daily. Teachers are evaluated regularly. Curriculum is evaluated periodically. When was the last time that the «periphery» was evaluated? Each school should review its activities, its school symbols, and the values that it celebrates to see if these fit into the Catholic environment. This could be interesting work, even if the only immediate outcome was that the words of the «Old Testament School Fight Song» are tempered. Maybe even the school's Yearbook will become a more authentic diary of life in a Catholic school!

Bro. Terence McLaughlin

(1) Congregation for Catholic Education Paper entitled: "*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.*" Origins, September 5, 1988.

(2) "*Contemporary Response Within Catholic Secondary Education,*" Fr. Henry Frascadore, Director of Education, Hartford, CN Diocese.

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A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

An article in the Education Section of the Sunday, June 12, 1988 *Providence Journal* excited my imagination. The article is by Edward B. Fiske of the *New York Times*. With today's attention to and scrutiny of teachers and schools I am sensitive to both criticism as well as assistance.

I wrote this essay after reading the article, then I let it sit in my desk since late June. After the retreat this past summer on our new *Rule* and after many experiences with study, teachers and students, I have taken it out, made some adjustments and now present it for your thoughts and stimulation.

The article details the research going on into successful methods used by teachers and the different learning capabilities of students. The teacher who does not stick adamantly to the same method – if it is not working – is praised. Of course we are dealing with the challenge of the classroom, the challenge from the student, the challenge of the day-to-day "business" of teaching. This "business" forces us, not only in the classroom, but wherever and whenever we attempt to put our vocation, our apostolate into effect, to adapt our methodology and message.

Fiske opens his article by stating that most teachers have only «one arrow in their quiver.» If the arrow doesn't «stick» in certain students then those students are blamed for the failure of the school. Possibly, Fiske says, the «teacher was not teaching the best way for that child.» The teacher should have shot a second arrow, or discarded the quiver altogether and used some other arsenal.

John Dewey, says Fiske, was of the first to recognize that students learn in different ways. Research is progressing on ways of learning:

«As a group, boys learn somewhat differently from girls. Some students learn best by using their senses, feelings and intuition, others by watching and reflecting. Some students need logical sequences, others thrive on trial and error.»

To activate our usage of various devices, to encourage us to go to our bags of tricks, to force us to look for various schemes and methods we also yield to the students' responses to them through our knowledge of them. John Dewey may have been a proponent of different learning capabilities, but I can't help thinking of the Founder's very penetrating passage in his meditation for «Good Shepherd Sunday,» the former Second Sunday of Easter:

«Jesus compares those who have the care of souls to a good shepherd who is careful of his sheep. One of the qualities which Our Lord says distinguishes him is that he knows them all individually. This is also one of the essential qualities of those who instruct others, for they must get to know their pupils, and discern the manner in which to act towards them. Some require great mildness, while others need to be directed with firmness. Some require much patience; others need to be goaded on. It is necessary to punish and reprehend some, in order to correct their defects, whereas others need to be continually watched lest they should wander and perish. This varied conduct must depend upon knowledge and discernment of character, and this grace you must beg of God most earnestly as being one of the most essential for you in the direction of those over whom you have charge.» (Pg. 115, De La Salle Meditations, Longmans, 1953).

In his comment upon this meditation, Battersby gives this wise comment:

«...It is clear that although he (De La Salle) adopted the simultaneous method... he nevertheless realized full well the drawbacks inherent in it, namely, that the individual may be obliterated in the mass, and he recognized that the only true education is individual. Thus this Meditation... is a remarkable effort to attenuate the evils of the class system of teaching by inducing the teacher to give as much individual attention to his pupils as is possible.» (pp. 116-117).

Reading over these passages again, and reflecting upon the *Management of Schools* I find it hard not to feel "Our Founder said it all," or that "We (Brothers) knew that all the time." I continue that by asking myself how I put these ideas into my own dealings with students – if indeed I do accept them! Obviously the Founder is speaking from a spiritual point of view, but aren't the problems of education ultimately of the spirit and spiritual?

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Whether or not the Founder "had it all," he was on to something.

Look at the organization of the schools according to the *Management* and the concern for many and various methods and procedures in the classroom. In the furor today over the graduation of students who are poor readers yet are routinely promoted because they should "stay with their class," or simply that the system cannot do anything for them, I recall one of my early impressions from the history of our Institute, namely that a student would not be promoted until he had mastered the material for that level or was otherwise ready. Of course monitors assisted in dealing with individuals. We still use them but call them tutors today.

Getting back to somewhat of the Founder's implications, I think that other than the methods we actually use at whatever level or in whatever arena of education we are engaged, we all make it a point to get to know our students. In that actual process we all have a variety of approaches depending upon our students' response to us from day to day. More informally we try to talk to our students whenever or wherever we see them, call them by name, show interest in and support of their talents, their activities, their pursuits, other likes and dislikes. Nowadays, particularly, we try to know their home and family situation which has such a bearing upon their performance and well-being.

Summarizing this is a passage from *General Introduction to the Management,* a St. Mary's College Press publication of 1965. From Chapter IV on "Motivation" on pages 25-26 we read:

«The teacher, if he is to be successful in motivating his students to fruitful activity, must be vividly aware of the needs and desires of human beings in general. But more specifically, he must have a definite appreciation of the attitudes existing in the group before him. For this purpose, he has to be well aware of the type of home from which these students come, the social strata in which they live, the type of environment which conditions their thinking and acting. We should, likewise, know as much as possible about the individual students, their temperaments, mental and physical characteristics, problems, interests and aspirations. Such knowledge is essential to any realistic effort to lead students to higher levels of motivation.»

This is a great task for an educator, but history, research and our own experience tell us that this must be part of our very being. Whether or not we use all the devices put at our disposal critics countered that the system discourages us. A researcher, William Rioux, quoted by Fiske in his article, observes:

«Students have to be batch processed. If you are alone in a classroom with 30 kids, how do you figure at five different experiences for every lesson? Teachers have to cover a certain amount of material. So you can't pause to help students who aren't keeping up.»

A school or classroom with a diversity of learning styles going on would be a busy place, seemingly disoriented, and noisy. Peoples' image of what a school should be would be shattered. People don't like their images being shattered.

Possibly the subjects in which a student is proficient are those not always offered or highlighted in some of our schools, for example the Fine and Performing Arts. Often a student can express himself/herself non-verbally, by manipulation of color, of movement, of sound, or of some material. The eyes, the voice, the hands, the ears, the limbs are important in the complete person. All learning may not be book learning, nor is all learning done by the head.

Not only may some teachers fail using less effective or only one or two methods, but our systems may be less effective by our having only one or two views of what education is. In today's world of patent success, of heady achievement, of preconceived notions of "the man or woman of the 21st Century" we may be forgetting the total human organism which is composed of limbs that move, voices that sing, eyes that see, hands that mold, and hearts and feelings which operate without words or calculations.

It is frustrating to realize "I don't have it made" regarding teaching. On the other hand, it is exciting to look for ways and means in the midst of students and the events of each day.

Brother James Loxham

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THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

("Integração", District of Porto Alegre publication, Nº 51, December 1988, p. 43)

	ATTITUDE OF THE TEACHER TOWARDS GOD	TOWARDS YOUNG PEOPLE, HIS PUPILS
1.	Accept the action of the Holy Spirit: the gift of faith and of the apostolic ministry of education	to touch the hearts of the young people who are furthest from salvation and to provide for their most urgent needs.
2.	Share in God's plan to save all men especially poor young people.	to collaborate in God's work for the poor and so act that they learn the will of God.
3.	Imitate God who, in Jesus Christ, became man so that mankind could benefit from salvation.	to be the presence of Christ in the midst of young people and make them share in God's plan of salvation.
4.	Pray to God who calls him and sends him to do his work	to reveal to young people the signs of the love he has for them.
5.	Offer himself to God	to communicate to young people the knowledge of the truth about God and man.
6.	Live the life of the Spirit	so that young people likewise enlightened by the Spirit will come to lead a truly Christian life.
7.	Clothe himself in Jesus Christ	to clothe young people with Jesus Christ himself and the Holy Spirit.
8.	"Ask God for the grace to watch over his pupils zealously and to be their guardian angels",	to discern whatever could be an obstacle to the salvation of young people and to steer them clear.
9.	Become aware that God has chosen him "to be his minister and the ambassador of his Word",	to put the means of salvation within the reach of young people by proclaiming the Word.
10.	To be faithful to God's grace	to change the hearts of young people through love and disinterested service so that they are faithful to the Gospel.
11.	To love the Church as Christ loved it	so that young people love it also and share in its life.
12.	To thank God for the grace of being able to share by his ministry in the mission of the bishops and of the Church.	to carry the Gospel to young people by the apostolic ministry of education.
13.	Live in the presence of God	so that his pupils also live in the presence of the Lord.

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VALUES CHARACTERISTIC OF THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

("Integração", District of Porto Alegre publication, Nº 51, December 1988, p. 91)

	Values	Pedagogical synonym	Pedagogical influence on the pupil	Behaviour which weakens this pedagogical attitude
1.	**Piety**	**Capacity to relate with the transcendant**	The teacher must live according to Christian values both in his private life and at school. He teaches by example.	Weakening the principles of the Christian religion and not giving religious practices the value that is their due.
2.	**Zeal**	**Responsibility**	The faithful accomplishment of one's duties as a teacher despite difficulties that may occur.	Not much interest in improving oneself. Routine. Lack of class preparation. Lack of interest. Passivity. Letting oneself be depressed by personal difficulties.
3.	**Prudence Discretion**	**A balanced view of reality**	The ability to see, judge and to act appropriately. The ability to strike the right balance. Balance. Self-control. Reflection and analysis.	Haste, lack of thought, negligence, lack of trust.
4.	**Patience**	**Ability to control oneself**	An open and accepting attitude. Knowing persons individually.	Lack of politeness. Offensive words and attitudes. Unjust punishments. Acting on impulse. Indifference with regard to the needs of the pupils.
5.	**Humanity**	**Adult self-assessment of personal qualities**	The assessment of personal qualities leads to efficiency in work. It leads to esteem, friendship and kindness.	Selfishness. Not relying on others. Pessimism.
6.	**Gentleness**	**Ability to keep oneself in check**	This is the exterior manifestation of charity. Strength: overcoming difficulties and unpleasantness.	Anger and bad humour. Brusque and insensitive manners.
7.	**Firmness**	**Moral strengh**	It presupposes the courage to direct activities with a firm and steady hand. Giving way without hesitation. Doing what one has promised.	Repression. Lack of flexibility. Intimidation.
8.	**Constancy**	**Perseverance in undertakings**	To be able to keep on going in spite of difficulties.	Instability. Changing constantly without justification.
9.	**Gravity**	**Serenity**	Confidence, respect, esteem.	Lack of self-control. Fits of anger. Shouting.
10.	**Silence**	**Self-discipline and availability to listen.**	Ability to converse. Careful use of language. Keeping silent when one should not speak, and vice versa. Obtaining information before making judgments.	Garrulousness. "The teacher who speak a lot is not listened to much". Making innumerable remarks and recommendations.
11.	**Vigilance**	**Life with the pupils**	Being generally aware of pupils' behaviour under all circumstances, at all times, and in all places. Preventive attitude in and out of class. Paying special attention to pupils with most need of it.	An attitude of mistrust, unease, suspicion and impatience. Not being with the pupils at the right time. Being naive or over scrupulous.
12.	**Balanced judgment**	**Being able to judge things at their true value.**	A balanced attitude when dealing with people and events. An attitude which gives a teacher balance and moderation as a person, and likewise affects his action. Presupposes good judgment and ability to weigh up things.	Prejudices and bias with regard to pupils. Volatile disposition. Speaks and acts without thinking.
13.	**Wisdom**	**Knowledge, critical sense, discernment**	Constant updating in all areas of knowledge, culture and pedagogy. Search for truth. Creating a hierarchical set of values and opting for a system of education that teaches them.	Routine. Lack of reading. Giving too much time to leisure activities and rest. Ignorance in some areas of education.
14.	**Generosity**	**Availability to work and to work with others**	Love and esteem for the educational mission to which one has been called. Disinterested devotedness to educational work. Sacrificing personal interests for the good of one's neighbour.	Leading a life which relies on praise and applause. Keeping grudges. Seeking one's own interests to the detriment of the good of the pupils.

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PRAYERS

OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER

* * *

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER

Being a Christian teacher does not consist so much in winning over the complete trust of the pupils as in making them discover ways of being themselves.

Being a Christian teacher means leading a pupil to know himself and discover his role in society and in the Church.

Being a Christian teacher is a gift from God, a marvellous choice on the part of the Father; but it also means searching and striving: it is a dialogue; it is an undertaking which is forever new and forever old.

Being a Christian teacher is to make God the prime mover in a life which is prepared to make a new start: each person receives a unique plan as a free gift. A teacher accompanies a person on his journey without taking his place nor substituting himself for him.

John Baptist de La Salle experienced what it means to be a teacher and a teacher of Christian teachers. The process was a slow and painful one: it brought him into opposition with his family, society, various members of the clergy, and it ended on his own Golgotha.

Towards the end of his life, he gathered all his theological and pastoral teaching intended for Christian teachers in a work called "meditations for the time of retreat".

The present article attempts to present the same teaching but in the form of prayers.

The Christian teacher who bases his life on God will find light and guidance here for his work.

* * *

1

TEACHERS, WITNESSES, MESSENGERS...

Lord our God,
You created man
And you wish us all to know the Truth,
The Truth that is you,
Revealed by Jesus, announced by the Apostles,
and proclamed by the Church.

Lord, you wish
All human minds
To be enlightened by the light of faith.
How can they believe
If they have never heard anyone speak of You?
How can they hear about You
If there is no one to speak of You?
Send preachers and teachers
to announce your Word.

Lord,
You spread your goodness
Through the ministry of men;
You have made the light shine
In the midst of darkness;
You enlighten the hearts
Of those you choose to be teachers of children,
So that they can share your glory with them.

Lord,
You who entrusted to us
The ministry of Christian education,
Enlighten us so that we announce your Word
And not our own;
So that we make known your Truth
And not out own,
For we are your ministers
And the dispensers of your mysteries.

You are a marvellous Father
And you wish children and young people
To come to know and live their faith in Jesus;
When parents, through ignorance,
Through business worries,
Neglect their work as educators...
You send Christian teachers
To share your Truth.

Enlighten us, Lord,
So that guided by the example of Jesus,
We may lay the firm foundations
Of faith and piety
In the hearts of children.

You have chosen us, Lord,
To instruct, to teach, to exhort,
And to touch the hearts and wills of pupils
So that they follow Jesus.
Help us to complement,

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As brothers and friends,
The educational work of parents.

Lord, you wish all men
To know the Truth
And to be saved.
To bring this about, You continue
To send Christian teachers
To accomplish this mission among children.

You, Lord, are the ploughman
Working in the field.
You, Lord, are the architect
Building the house.
We are your gardeners and your masons
Whenever we proclaim your Gospel,
Whenever we share your Truth.

Thank you, Lord,
For calling us to announce
The Gospel message that never grows old
To young children,
And so helping them to find salvation.
With simple words,
We wish to teach them about the crucified Jesus,
The source of salvation.

We, Lord, only sow,
But You, Lord,
Make the seed sprout,
And make the plant grow
And bear fruit.
Our mission,
Is to teach with simple words.
That is why, Lord, we beg you
To teach us to be good teachers
And to help us to be your witnesses.

* * *

2

FATHER, BROTHER, FRIEND

The mission of the Christian teacher
Is to work with parents
To educate their children:
Some parents want to help but cannot:
Others could but don't want to:
They are too lazy, not interested,
Selfish, don't see why...

Lord,
We wish to be the parents of those who have none,
The elder brothers and sisters of those
Who are alone,
The true friends of those who
Have no one to guide them,
And teachers for all.

Lord,
Bad habits acquired
In childhood and youth
Are difficult to correct.

And You, Lord?
You inspired and urged John Baptist de La Salle
To found the Christian Schools;
We, Christian teachers,
Wish to continue teaching knowledge and religion.

Thank you, Lord,
For wanting to continue your work of salvation
Through our work in schools;
To teach selflessly is a path to salvation.
On completing our mission,
We say: "Thank you, Lord".
To be a Christian teacher,
Is to educate the whole person;
It is to teach in the spirit of Christianity;
It is to strengthen the will to do good.

Lord,
We wish to consecrate our whole life
To the education of children and young people;
We wish to inspire piety
By example and by word.
For all the times we have failed,
For all the times selfishness overcame us,
For all the times we were impatient,
Forgive us, Lord.

Not to make a distinction
Between work in school and saving our souls,
Is to be a good professional teacher
And a living witness to Jesus of Nazareth.
To integrate faith with culture,
And faith with life, is to be a Christian teacher.
"Faith without works is dead".
"All knowledge, all faith,
are nothing without charity".

Lord,
Give us the strength to teach the truths of the Gospel.
Help us to be other Christs,
For children and young people
Need teachers who are also witnesses.

Lord,
Enlighten the minds of children and young people;
Move their will
So that they discover you
And respond to you with generosity.

Lord,
We offer you our words,
We offer you our life,
Do your work through us, Lord.

Brother Celestino Hernando

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A RELIGIOUS AND A EDUCATOR: TO LEAD THE YOUNG INTO A WARMER AND A GENTLER WORLD

On my desk is a quotation that goes like this: «If you really asked me why I do what I do, the answer I would give is that I do what I do for God. But sometimes, God has a kid's face» (Rev. Bruce Ritter, OFM). If I may, I would like to share a few of those faces with you as a way of explaining what it means for me to be a De La Salle Christian Brother.

*

The first of thse faces is Donna's. She was sixteen when I taught her English. She was intelligent and attractive, and she was dating a thirty-five year old divorcee. I was anxious and afraid that I would fail to get through to her, and I still recall how overwhelmingly relieved and grateful she was to be helped out of the destructive web in which she was entangled. Some three hundred years ago, Saint John Baptist de La Salle wrote of pa-rents (especially working class and poor parents) who were caught up in the religious confusion of their Age and were so preoccupied with «the constant concern of earning the necessities of life» that they were in need of assistance (MTR 1.2); and he wrote of children too frequently left on their own and so being formed primarily through «the bad example of companions they meet while wandering the streets» (MTR 2.1). Divorce and the disintegration of authority, conflict and dissent within our Church, nuclear proliferation and substance abuse, and a reckless acquisition of possessions, pursuit of pleasure, and preoccupation with the self mark our present Age. In these troubled times of ours, it has been my experience that many parents (some of them single parents like Donna's mother) still continue to seek the assistance of religious Brothers in the education and the formation of their children. Because they care, they entrust their children to us in the hope that we can help them in the awesome responsibility which is theirs as parents.

*

It was on a college retreat that I met Ron. He was nineteen. Like so many of the fine young people today, he is an «impossible dreamer.» A peace activist, a soup kitchen volunteer, a simple man of obvious goodness... Over the years in which I have known him, we have worked together; and we have recreated together. After he became a Brother five years ago, we lived together in Community. Of the things that I have been able to help him with, I am most proud of having helped teach him how to pray. For me, that is at the heart of what it means to be a Brother. Saint John Baptist de La Salle urged our first Brothers to really commit themselves to meriting the esteem and the care of the young people with whom they worked. And once they care for you, he wrote, use the love that they have for you to lead them to God (MSF 115.3). Remember..., he wrote, you are God's ambassadors... God's ministers... (MTR 3.2). It seems to me that this is a vocation not so different from that of parents. We

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use love that they have for us to bring them to God.

*

Now I know that the word miracle conjures up, for many of us, images of walking on water and multiplying bread. But, I ask you, is it any less of a miracle to help youg people know that they are both loved by God AND good? Is it any less of a miracle to help a young person grow in self-knowledge, self-discipline, and self-worth?

The final face I would like to share with you is that of Adam, a former student, who wrote me recently of realizing that while in school he «was untouchable and rather comfortable with that. I was smart, and I was a track star, and I was wild: but I wasn't deep at all. I was well-liked by others, but I couldn't like myself.» He wrote to thank me for not giving up on him. He said: «And then you entered my life and convinced me that I was good. At first, I thought that if I didn't respond to you you'd leave me alone. But you didn't give up on me... You... led me into a warmer and gentler world. I say this from my heart... Whenever someone tells me how good I am, I thank you.» And I suggest to you that this is the miracle that we Brothers hope to help perform in the lives of young people. We hope to be able to assist the Bishops of our Church and parents of children lead the young people of our society into a warmer and a gentler world. We remain committed to this work in the schools because it is our experience that the need for this ministry in the Church continues to be very great.

Brother William Mann

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (1)

1 - KEY CONCEPTS TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN READING THE LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (1)

1. THE NOVELTY OF THE LETTER

> «We are aware that we are participating in a new historical fact in the Institute and which is going to identify us as "the Body of the Society", as "the Lasallian Family".» (Circular 422, p. 19)

We should stress first of all the fact that this *is the first time an important document* drawn up by the superiors in Rome is addressed at the same time to the **Brothers** and to the **lay people** who, throughout the world, work in Brothers' schools or are in contact with them.

The Letter is addressed to the **Brothers** as the *"principal heirs of Lasallian spirituality"* since the Brothers are "the mainstay of the Lasallian experience." (Circular 422, p. 13)

There are consequently important conclusions to be drawn from this:
- There is a challenge to be true sons of St. La Salle: after all, "noblesse oblige!"
- There is a moral obligation to offer guidance to Lasallian movements and associations.

The Letter is addressed to **lay people**, whether associated or not, who, *thoroughly imbued with the spirit of St. La Salle, pursue their commitment* to the Lasallian educational apostolate and contribute to its vitality.

Secondly, the Letter was written at the formal request of the 41st General Chapter of 1986. This request is contained in **Proposition 6:**

«That Brother Superior General and his Council address our lay teachers and the Lasallian Family by means of a Declaration or Circular Letter, expressing all that they envision for the present and future of our Educational Ministry.» (Circular 422, p. 14)

> «The Brothers as members of the Church live in this world and are necessarily sensitive to the problems which arise in each successive period of human history. They experience the same desires and anxieties as the rest of men. It is important for them to recognise that the signs of the times stress the urgency of their mission in the world today, the necessity to renew their religious life, their apostolic ministry, their presence among men.» (Declaration 8, 1)

2. KEY CONCEPTS TO BEAR IN MIND ON READING THE LETTER

> «The Lasallian Family... is a new phenomenon that over these past decades has been developing in the Institute with ever increasing strength and creativity.» (Message of the 41st General Chapter to the members of the Lasallian Family)

1st CONCEPT: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

First of all, the Letter to the Lasallian Family must be read in its historical context.

Just like the Church, the Institute also has become more and more aware over the past few years of the crucial role of lay people in the life and apostolic mission of Lasallian establishments.

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We have moved on from a situation in which "we considered ourselves as the proprietors of our work and mission" (Circular 422, p. 13) to one in which a great many lay people share our educational apostolate and make a considerable contribution towards the vitality of our work in the Church. «There has, therefore, been a considerable evolution from the not too distant past when we had to employ lay people because of the difficulties of the times and considered them simply as auxiliaries.» (Circular 415, p. 24)

As far back as 1975, Brother Charles Henry had already spoken about the *Lasallian Family*, in the prophetic way that characterised some of his utterances, and in the same terms as we use nowadays: «We are becoming more and more aware of the importance and necessity of joining forces –Brothers, former students, parents and young people– and forming a Lasallian family. This family group which is very close to our heart springs from something that is equally close – the Christian school which has such great potential and is so rich in possibilities.» (Speech to the Italian Lasallian Congress, Bolsena, September 15th 1975).

Brother Pablo Basterrechea, when he was Vicar General, spoke in the same vein and went into greater detail about the *Lasallian Family:* he considered the various groups of Lasallian lay people «as being very closely associated with the Institute of the Brothers, sharing the same apostolate and the same love, and inspired by the same hero. This close association does not blur the distinction between different charisms and vocations; but it integrates these dynamic elements in a single apostolate, which is perceived and pursued in common.» (Speech to Spanish Lasallians, Valencia, December 8th 1975)

The 40th General Chapter had the following to say in its Proposition 6 on the Mission of the Institute: «The Brothers will share their Lasallian spirituality and the leadership of their works with all the members of the educational community. They will be concerned with the continuing formation of those persons and will make them aware of the different degrees of belonging to what is called the Lasallian family.» (Circular 403, p. 76)

In 1981, the Visitors who were taking part in the intercapitular meeting examined the question of "openness to lay people". At the outset they stated that «the increasing number of lay people working with us in schools is a sign of the times which *the Brothers must be able to interpret*.» (Circular 415, p. 23) (Our italics)

They were careful to point out also that «the very nature of our work makes us one of the groups in the Church which has most to do with laymen and that in anything but a superficial way, since we have to form an educational community and even, given the right conditions, a faith community... We are called upon to fulfil a new role, that of sharing our spirituality with lay people whom we look on as our equals.» (Circular 415, p. 24)

Finally, between December 28th and 30th 1985, there met in Rome the Combined Institute and Lasallian Family Commission. The commission included 6 Brothers and 6 laymen, and Brother Patrice Marey, General Councillor, was chairman. They drew up a report for the 41st General Chapter. The document had the following to say about the importance of the lay movement in the Church of today: «This movement should not be thought of as a threat or as competition with regard to the work of the Brothers. It should rather be looked upon as a grace from God, whose historical importance and significance we have to learn to understand: it is for us a sign of the times.» (Document, p. 9)

2nd CONCEPT: THE CALL TO CONVERSION

The Letter must be read also in the same spirit as that which characterised the 41st General Chapter of the Institute, a spirit that can be summarised in two words: **conversion** and **renewal.**

The Chapter called upon the Brothers, in terms I would call moving, to become converted, that is to say, to undergo a profound and serious spiritual transformation, a radical change of heart and to breathe new life into our apostolate.

That is why when we read, study or meditate on the Letter, we should constantly bear in mind the Pastoral Letter of Brother John Johnston, Superior General, written on January 1st 1987, and especially pages 11 to 32.

Let us quote for the moment just the following paragraphs which offer a good summary of the wishes of the General Chapter:

> «Now is the time, we believe, to state loudly and clearly, that the Lord calls us, as Brothers of the Christian Schools, to live a life in the Spirit which is genuine, profound and focussed on our mission. That call is addressed to every single one of us.» (Message of the Chapter to the Brothers, p. 21)
>
> «The Message calls us to BE Brothers of the Christian Schools in and in relation to this world. It calls us to let go of whatever is holding us back and to follow Christ without reserve and without looking back.» (Pastoral Letter 1987, p. 15)

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (2)

1 - KEY CONCEPTS TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN READING THE LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (2)

3rd CONCEPT: ECCLESIAL COMMUNION

We have to read the Letter also from the point of view of a renewed Church as revealed to us by Vatican II. It is not an ecclesiology based on authority or hierarchical power, that is, on the superiority of certain members of the Church vis-a-vis others. On the contrary, it is an ecclesial communion, based on the service and participation of all the members of the People of God. (Cf. Lumen Gentium, Chapter 2 especially, and Christifideles Laici, No. 18-22)

The following words of John Paul II explain clearly what is meant:

> «Ecclesial communion is more precisely likened to an "organic" communion, analogous to that of a living and functioning body. In fact, at one and the same time it is characterised by a *diversity* and a **complementarity** of vocations and states in life, of ministries, of charisms and responsibilities.» (Christifideles Laici,. No. 20, p. 51)

And so, the Lasallian Familly is characterised by **communion and sharing**. In it there come together in the charity of Christ and by virtue of the charism of the Founder «all the inspiration in the educational approach and spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.» (Letter, p. 6)

And so, «Our common source of inspiration and strength is felt ever more clearly and strongly to be St. John Baptist de La Salle. As Lasallians we are his disciples. As his disciples we form one educational and spiritual family.» (Letter, p. 6)

4th CONCEPT: THE DECISIVE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH

For some years now, the Church's thinking about the decisive role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church has been fortunately gradually evolving. There exist some excellent theological works from both before and after the Council, as well as documents prepared by the Magisterium of the Church, reports on the Congress on the apostolate of the laity at a variety of levels, and so on. The document, however, which completes this process of evolution is the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici by Pope John Paul II.

I think it is absolutely necessary to understand this long document if one wants to really benefit from reading our Letter. Moreover, not to understand this present trend in the Church is to deprive the Letter to the Lasallian Family of its value as a call to action. The Pope's Exhortation quotes a speech by Pius XII which sees into the future and which we should bear in mind:

> «The faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness *not only of belonging to the Church*, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the bishops in communion with him. *These are the Church.*» (Christifideles Laici, No. 9, p. 23)

The members of the 1986 Chapter were obviously thinking along the same lines when they wrote: «We are not indifferent to those many men and women who, in one way or another, claim a share in the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle, and who wish to be more intimately involved in our ministry and heritage... We want to work together with them so that, through our works, there may be a greater participation of the laity in the mission of the Church.» (Message of the 41st General Chapter to all the Brothers of the Institute, p. 27)

This "insistent call" made by the members of the Chapter is enshrined in our Rule (article 17) which reads as follows: «Ever since the time of their foundation, the Brothers have contributed to the promotion of the Christian laity, especially among those educators who want their professional work to be a form of Gospel ministry. The Brothers gladly associate

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lay persons with them in their educational mission. They provide for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit.»

And so the Letter to the Lasallian Family presents a great challenge to the Brothers: they are called to share their Lasallian identity with others so as to bring about a marvellous expansion of their educational ministry.

5th CONCEPT: THE CALL FOR A NEW EVANGELISATION

It seems we are faced with a new kind of world, for which there are no precedents. But who could have failed to be impressed by the constant and insistent calls of John Paul II in all his speeches and interviews for **a new evangelisation** in the Church?

We include, from among many others, two examples of such calls:

> «Yes, there faces us now the gigantic task of evangelising the modern world, a world with a new set of definitions. The world has moved into an era of tremendous upheavals, due to the mind-shattering inventiveness of modern man. Unless he manages to integrate what he has created into an ethical and spiritual framework, what he has produced will destroy him. We have moved into a new phase of human culture which offers Christians a tremendous challenge.» (Speech to the Pontifical Council for Culture, January 13th 1986)
>
> In many places in our modern world, the biggest problem is not that of preaching the Gospel to those who have never heard it, as the Apostles had to. Nowadays it is the problem of preaching it to those who have heard it already, but who *no longer respond to it*.» (Homily at a Mass in Sydney, Australia, November 26th 1986)

The Letter to the Lasallian Family invites us (and points out practical ways of doing so) to direct our efforts towards *a new evangelisation* of **young people** and **adults**, and gives us as a target date the beginning of the third Christian millenium. The members of the 1986 Chapter were very conscious of the enormous challange that faced the Institute and said: «At times we have the feeling that all must being again, so numerous and pressing and new are the needs of our world and our Churches.» (Message to the Lasallian Family, p. 33)

The only way in which we will be able to respond to the Pope's call for a new evangelisation will be by an intelligent and fresh approach in cooperation with all the lay people who work with us. This is how John Paul II ends Christifideles Laici:

> «A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church – that of *re-evangelisation*, which is so much needed by the present world. The lay faithful ought to regard themselves as an active and responsible part of this venture, called as they are to proclaim and to live the Gospel in service to the person and to society while respecting the totality of the values and needs of both.» (No. 64, p. 192)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDY GROUPS

Our intention in this first article (two sections) was to introduce some **key concepts** to help in the reading of the Letter to the Lasallian Family. Bearing these concepts in mind helps to *understand the message* of the Letter. The message is spread over quite a long text: our study scheme is intended to help the reader to grasp the message more easily.

1. Have you found anything new in the Letter which strikes you with regard to your **identity** as a Brother and about your community. If so, what questions has it raised?
2. When you think about the school where you work, what specific things or situations could justify your calling it a place where there is **communion and sharing**? What could be done to move in that direction.
3. What difficulties have you encountered as a result of the **call to conversion** made by the 41st General Chapter? What could you do on a personal, community or group level to promote its implementation?
4. Does the Letter suggest to you the need to make certain changes in **your relations with others** in your school or in your group?

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (3)

2 - AT THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT IN HISTORY

1. THE END OF THE 20th CENTURY

> **«St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first disciples were acutely aware of the social problems of their times. Struck by the educational needs of the society around them, their response was to found schools» (Letter, p. 8).**

In many parts of the world today, one gets the impression that one world is coming to an end and another is being born. That is why our is an age that is full of great contradictions and of changes in social structures with all the confusion and ambiguity that this implies. It is an age that has its share of discouragement and pessimism.

Each period of history has offered its own challenge to the People of God, and the last few years of the second millenium are no exception.

In his recent speeches, John Paul II has called upon us to take a serious look at the situation of present day society. If we glance through his numerous declarations we will find the following statements which paint a somewhat grim picture of the world in which we live:

> «We are faced with:
> – **growing secularisation** which seeks to exclude God and religious truths from human affairs;
> – **threatening relativism** which undermines the absolute truth of Christ and the truths of faith, with the result that believers are tempted to think the latter are merely a collection of beliefs and choices among many others;
> – the **materialistic mentality of consumerism** which makes superficial promises that are attractive but hollow, and provides material well-being while creating an interior void;
> – **seductive hedonism** which offers a whole panoply of pleasures none of which can ever satisfy the human heart.»
> (Speech to the representatives of the Catholic Laity of the United Satates, San Francisco, September 18th 1987)

> «The influence of secularisation resulting from well-being and religious indifference is on the increase also among you, in the life of individuals, in family life and especially in public life. Faith has lost its power in the concrete circunstances of everyday life.» (Allocution to the Austrian Bishops, June 24th 1988).

> «In your region, as in other places, the faith of many Christians has reached crisis point; and many have ended up by adapting their ways to lifestyles that have little to do with the Gospel. An awareness of this should not lead, however, to surrender to discouragement or pessimism. It should rather encourge Church organisations to bestir themselves to take all legitimate means and generously renew their commitment to a new evangelisation.» (To the faithful of Bovino, Italy, May 25th 1987)

2. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MEDAL

> **«It is noticeable that many teachers these days share the spiritual ideals, aims and educational approach of De La Salle». (Letter, p. 8)**

By contrast with the picture we have just painted, which to some may have seemed rather gloomy, we have found in all parts of the world a resurgence of genuine spiritual life, both among groups of religious and lay people. One could even say that there was a noticeable spiritual hunger among certain groups of lay people, as if they sought that "supplement d'ame", as one philosopher called it. It is an intense search for God which in various prayer groups takes the form of increased reading of the Word of God, commitment to missionary work, concern for the outcasts of society, etc.

Our own Lasallian world has been affected by this movement which comes from the laity. Each day, increasing numbers of teachers, parents, young people and former students challenge us and seek spiritual guidance from us Brothers. They ask us to delve into our Lasallian "spiritual wealth" and give them the support they need in order to make a clear-sighted and creative response, as men and women of faith, to the pressing challenges of present day society, challenges which take on such complex forms in the various areas of family, social, political, economic and religious life, etc.

And at the same time this is a *challenge for the Brothers* too, as they see opening up before them this "new road". Brother Superior summarised this challenge as follow:

«In the years to come, we shall have to continue deepening our charism and developing our spirituality. Thus we shall be disposed to accompany, sustain, and educate numerous groups of Christians –above all, Christian educators– who wish to derive their inspiration from De La Salle to grow as men and women of faith, at the service of the local Church, and as people particularly committed to the field of education». (Circ. 422, p. 13)

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There are, therefore, quite clearly two things we must do:
— DEEPEN our charism
— DEVELOP our spirituality
In order to be able to SUSTAIN and EDUCATE groups of Christians.

In this way, the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle will become increasingly that of a **spiritual father** for a great number of Christians who seek nourishment in his teachings so as to live –like him and in union with the Brothers– their baptismal commitment to the full, accepting Jesus Christ unconditionally in the service of those who are furthest from salvation.

3. REDISCOVERING THE FOUNDER TOGETHER

«The Holy Spirit gave Founders the ability to create a body of teaching which could be adapted to any age. This is true also of John Baptist de La Salle; and in his spirituality we can find an appropriate and imaginative response to the educational and moral problems of our day». (Letter, p. 11)

For more than 30 years now, the life and work of the Holy Founder has been studied systematically and scientifically by the Institute. As a result, there are now in existence 50 "*Cahiers Lasalliens*", a "*Lasallian Vocabulary*" in 6 massive volumes, as well as a host of excellent works produced by the Brothers in a variety of languages. All this work and its fine results bear witness to the wealth of our Lasallian spiritual heritage.

The result of all these efforts? A Founder who is better known, more admired and more loved. A Founder who is seen to be very human, in touch with the reality of his times, who is enterprising, daring, imaginative, innovative, a spiritual Father.

A Founder who is not only the pride of the Brothers, the "principal heirs", but who also fills lay people with enthusiasm and inspires their commitment when they receive the grace to draw near to the fountain-head of his life and teachings.

A Founder is revealed who has much to say to present day teachers, a Founder who invented an approach to education whose main characteristics are of great relevance at the present time. His educational charism is able to furnish answers to a great many young people who seek to work among the poor and to promote justice.

A Founder is revealed who, «by his words and actions, pioneered the concept of the Christian teacher, perceived as the "minister of God", the "ambassador of Christ", the "builder of the Church", fully involved in the educational apostolate of the school pursued in faith and with the support of a community». (Letter, p. 10)

But there still remains some way to go. Brothers and Lasallian lay people *have now reached a new stage*. We can, perhaps, summarise it as follows:

1. Brothers, we must learn to accept the lay people who work with us as equals who have deliberately chosen to commit themselves to education, and not simply as paid employees who are better than nothing.

2. Brothers, we must feel the urge to involve ourselves fully in working with adults –teachers, parents, former pupils and others– who come to us daily, asking for guidance in their search for God, for support and encouragement in their life of faith and Christian commitment.

3. Brothers, as part of a process of continuing formation, we must find the right formula and the best means to share more and more our understanding and deep convictions concerning Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy with groups of lay people. This is new territory for many of us, but crucial as the springboard for a surge of apostolic energy, and for breathing new life into vocation prospects for the Institute.

4. Lasallian lay people, for their part, must feel the urge to ask the Brothers and their communities for the witness and spiritual guidance they need in order to be able to deepen and increase their knowledge and practical application of the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

5. Lay people must make an effort and re-read, this time from a lay person's point of view, the life and works of the Founder, or other areas of his teachings which Brothers up till now have not developed very much.

6. Lay people must play a much more important part in the renewal of the Lasallian school, so as to be truly light, salt and leaven by the irreplaceable contribution of their knowledge of the world, and of family and civic life.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP STUDY GROUPS

This second article (3rd section) aims at making us even more aware of the "signs of the times", of the light and darkness of the social milieu where we work, and which affects equally both young and old. It aims also to make us react and become more committed.

1. Which are the areas of darkness which exist in the place where we live and which weigh down or hinder most our work as teachers? Which areas paralyse the spiritual and moral growth of the young people?
2. In our own setting –that of a religious community or an educational community– what signs or indications are there that there is interest in the deepening of faith in the light of our baptismal commitment, or a wish to learn about the Founder or to know him better?
3. In which one or ones of the 6 points of the new stage mentioned at the end of the article, have we made most progress in our own area? In which one or ones do we need to make more effort, and what practical means would help us to make progress?

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (4)

3 - JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE: A RESPONSE (1)

1. DE LA SALLE: TEACHER, FATHER, SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

> «De La Salle's thinking has lost none of its astonishing relevance: its influence extends beyond the Brothers' communities; it reaches out to all who wish to work, guided by his inspiration". *(Letter, p. 14)*

St. John Baptist de La Salle is very well known the whole world over because of his educational work and his innovations in the teaching of the common people. However, there is one aspect of this genius which was somewhat neglected initially, and which is becoming more and more evident and signifiacant as time goes on, and that is that of St. John Baptist de La Salle as a Master of the Spiritual life.

This has become increasingly recongnised in the last 20 or 30 years not only within the Institute, but also in other religious and ecclesiastical circles, and more recently among lay people in contact with the Brothers.

But if we speak about St. La Salle as a master of the spiritual life, we must speak also of Lasallian spirituality and by logical progression of the spiritual life. These terms are used fairly loosely, and it would perhaps help to define them a little.

We use fairly commonly such expressions as cultivating spiritual life, not neglecting spiritual life, deepening spiritual life. We speak even about revitalising it. Obviously this spiritual life we are talking about is Christian and it can be so only to the degree to which we realize therein a life of personal relationship with God, this already implies that our spiritual life must be constructed on the basis of the Word of God and of faith: the Word by which God calls man to Himself the faith by which man recognizes, accepts this call» (1).

This leads us quite naturally to speak of the existence of Christian spirituality. «No Christian spirituality worthy of the name can exist where the conviction has been weakened that God, in Christ, has made Himself known to us by His own words, this own acts, as Some One. The whole spiritual life of Christians is aroused and formed by the fact that, as they believe, God has spoken to us and that his living Word has been made flesh amongst us. In other words, in Christianity the spiritual life does not start from a certain conception of God, not even from the idea that He is a personal God, but from faith, the faith which is proper to Christianity: that is, the assent we give to the Word of God, to the Word which is made known to us, which is given to us in Christ Jesus.» (2)

> «Spiritual, in the Christian vocabulary means "what has to do with the HolySpirit", "what is inspired by the Holy Spirit", "what the Holy Spirit transforms within". Spirituality is, therefore, the religious, or divine or Christian or spiritual dimension of the moral sphere. In biblical terms it is expressed as Covenant or Kingdom; in theological (or catechetical) terms as grace. Whatever words are used, it is a plane of divinisation». *(The Spirituality of Lay People and of Religious Life by P. Varillon, SJ, p. 6)*

2. LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY

> «For all those that lay claim to his name, Brothers and lay people alike, John Baptist de La Salle is now, even more than in the past, a teacher and a source of inspiration». *(Letter, p. 20)*

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First of all, let us ask ourselves if we can really speak of a Lasallian spirituality. Yes, without the shadow of a doubt we can. There are, of course, some writers who are somewhat loath to speak about specific spiritualities, especially those which originate in religious congregations or other religious movements. They prefer to insist on one single Christian spirituality, followed by all Christians without distinction, whatever the period of history or culture. The unwillingness to recognise diverse spiritualities in the Church stems from the fear sometimes that they will become esoteric systems, leading possibly to absurd competition or senseless rivalry, and forgetting one essential thing: all spirituality is firmly rooted in the Gospel.

The history of Christianity shows us quite clearly how the Gospel of Jesus has been lived and applied to everyday life by Christians, in a variety of ways, with a variety of stresses according to historical periods and different social and cultural settings. This has given rise to different "spiritualities", and consequently, to different "schools of spirituality". It is like a bunch of flowers from the same garden,. There are many different ways of arranging flowers to produce a harmonious and attractive general effect. In the same way, in the Church, all the various "spiritualities" taken together reveal the immense wealth of the single Gospel message of Jesus.

On the other hand, it is sufficient simply to listen to the Magisterium of the Church when it speaks to religious and other groups of committed Christians to realise how much its pastors and especially the Pope encourage them to live fully and with complete fidelity according to the spiritual teachings left by Founders to their sons and disciples.

One question arises quite naturally as a result of what we have just said: What is the reason or what are the reasons for this diversity of spiritualities? We must begin by saying that it is God who chooses men and women in the Church and at different times in human history, and especially at certain critical moments, to face up to and meet the specific needs of the Perople of God. Normally, most of them have a very strong and distinctive personality and the gift of being able to create a following. They are quite clearly persons who have been conditioned or influenced by the milieu in which they have lived, by the education they have received, and by other factors of an historical or cultural nature.

There are two main factors which, combined, bring about the birth and consolidation of a spirituality in the Church: in the first place, there must have been at one point or another a unique experience of God, coloured more or less by the particular psychological make-up of the Founder; and secondly, stemming from the above, his first disciples must have undergone a process of profound spiritual training.

The experiences of the Founder and his first disciples which lie at the root of this birth and consolidation took place in a specific spiritual climate and in the context of specific spiritual needs at a particular historical period. The fruitfulness of a spirituality depends on the fidelity and inventiveness of its disciples in the course of time. By fidelity we do not mean the mechanical and slavish reproduction of the initial formula, but a fresh response, inspired and nourished by the intentions and attitudes of the Founder and his first disciples, in other words, "fidelity to his spirit and specific intentions".

The case of De La Salle is typical: the reason why our Founder has been given the title of Master of the Spiritual Life is because of the influence of his life as "a man of God", both on his disciples as well as on his contemporaries.

His spiritual teaching, based on his own experience, was certainly first and foremost directed towards the training of his followers, the first Brothers. However, it was not long before others came to him –priests, religious, lay people, even heretics and public sinners– to benefit from his spiritual wealth, his guidance and the sanctity of his life. We can see in this, as it were, a foreshadowing of what is happening now, 300 years later, in the Lasallian Family.

We should not forget that he composed the "Meditations for the Time of Retreat" «for the use of everyone involved in the education of young people, and in particular for the retreat made by the Brothers of the Christian Schools during the holidays».

> «The Brothers are convinced that in the life, work and writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the Holy Spirit is revealed in a privileged manner, and that they will find there even today a living principle for their guidance» *(Decl. 5, 1)*
>
> «Fidelity to the present moment of history and fidelity to the Founder, far from opposing or excluding each other, are closely related, provided that we do not expect St. John Baptist de La Salle to have known in advance all our problems and the answers to all our questions». *(Decl. 6, 1)*

(1) Louis Bouyer, *Introduction to Spirituality*, Desclee Company, Tournai, 1961, p. 25.

(2) Ibid. p. 6.

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (5)

3 - JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE:

A RESPONSE (2)

3. ALL HEIRS OF THE SAME FATHER

> «We are the heirs to a rich spiritual patrimony left to us by St. John Baptist de La Salle which we must preserve and cause to grow each new day» *(Message of the 41st General Chapter to the Lasallian Family, p. 34)*

This article does not aim to set out the main outlines of Lasallian spirituality: the Letter has already done this in summary form. What is important, however, is to point out how the knowledge and especially the practical application of this spirituality which inspires Lasallians in "their mission manner of acting" has a bearing on the future vitality of the Institute.

In spite of the interest shown by Brothers, especially since 1966, in the teachings of the Founder, we are still a long way from the real renewal one would expect from a direct contact with his spiritual teaching. That is why, following the 41st General Chapter, the Institute is once again trying to promote renewal:

1. It calls for the conversion of the Brothers in two areas: conversion to God and conversion with regard to people; and it sets before us the challenge of the apostolic ministry of the Brother today: the renewal of the school, and a determined openness to lay people.

2. It appeals also to all Lasallian lay people, whether assocciated or not, to join forces with the Brothers, to strengthen the commitment of their faith, and to be prepared to meet the demands of society and of the Church.

All this must take place through direct contact with the source: the Founder. The Rule expresses this idea very clearly: «As they (the Brothers) contemplate the history of salvation unfolding in their own lives, they find in the Gospel journey of the Founder a call to conversion, constancy in adversity, and the strength to begin anew.» (Rule, 144) What is written here can serve equally as a source of inspiration for lay people.

And so what is called for is an increasingly thorough knowledge of our Founder, of his life, his writings, his teaching. We recommend you read and study the book entitled "Announcing the Gospel to the Poor" by Brothers Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos. This work has the double advantage of offering a wide panorama of the whole of Lasallian spirituality, while keeping us in close contact with the Founder's own writings to which they constantly refer.

According to these authors the spirituality of the Founder has an existential character and a dynamic unity, two qualities which make the spiritual message of De La Salle very relevant. In addition, «De La Salle does not offer us an abstract and deductive spirituality. His starting point is the life of his disciples: the circunstances of their daily life, their everyday worries, the lack-lustre duties of their profession, their limitations and their weaknesses. His teachings take form through his dialogue with them, as his writings show by the frequent use of the second person». (Ibid. p. 11)

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It has been said that De La Salle owes much of his spiritual teaching to the French school of spirituality of the XVIIth century, or more especially to Berulle, as others say. He was subject also to other influences those of St. Ignatius, St. Francis de Sales, the Carmelites and others, because De La Salle was someone who borrowed whatever he found useful. This characteristic of De La Salle led G. Rigault to write: «Nowhere does De La Salle seek to be completely original. Where he happens to be so, it is the result of an extraordinary ability to make syntheses and an ever watchful capacity for assimilation; it is because he is eminently practical and able to adapt. All this he raises to the heights of asceticism and mysticism. At these heights he becomes one of the masters. He is no longer the pupil of any one of them. He creates for the use of a new religious family, very much different from those that came before, a spirituality which has a particular slant, and forms and formulas that make it distinctive». (History of the Institute, Vol. I, p. 466)

It is in this "particular slant" that we are invited to share, to understand more deeply, experience more intensely, in a word, to live.

«What makes us one is that we are sons of the same father: John Baptist de La Salle. We are Brothers because we have his life, his spirit flowing through our bloodstreams» *(Closing Address 41st Gen. Chap., p. 36)*

«Brothers, so much has been said already about this essential theme the last few days, that I need do little more than declare my firm belief that the invitation to share our Lasallian heritage is a call from the Spirit in our day. This call requires us to rethink not only the role of those who collaborate with us, but our own role as well». *(Closing Address 41st Gen. Chap., p. 42)*

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP STUDY GROUPS

The intention of this third article (4th and 5th sections) is to centre attention on the Founder as a Father and Master of the spiritual life, whose sons, as Lasallians, we all are in the measure in which we follow his footsteps with fidelity and creativity.

1. What importance does the Word of God have in our "spiritual life"? Do we read it assiduously and meditate on it every day?

2. What do we know about the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle? Which aspects or moments in his life touch us most and have had most influence on our spiritual journey?

3. Which writings of the Founder are we most familiar with? Which of them have we read most or consulted? What scheme as an individual or as a member of a group could we draw up for personal development with a view to coming closer to De La Salle?

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (6)

4 - ON BEING A LASALLIAN NOWADAYS: A FEW PRACTICAL GUIDELINES (1)

In chapter 4, the Letter turns to practical considerations and describes six measures that can be taken. It is not an exhaustive list, but nevertheless, it lists some priorities for the Institute today. These are not set down by order of importance. They complement each other, they represent the demanding array of Lasallian commitments for this fascinating period of history in which we live –the final years of the 20th century and the beginning of the third Christian millenium.

As a means to understand these measures more fully, we have collected together a selection of extracts which we hope will help us in our thinking and will serve as a basis for action.

1. SHOW CONCERN FOR THE YOUNG

The young: these are the future hope of the Church and the reason why the Institute exists. Numerically, this is the largest group in the Lasallian Family. On their education depends the future of mankind:

«What awaits young people nowadays is something new, full of unforeseeable opportunities, for good as well as for evil. The Church of today cannot fail to realise that it is called upon to be the mother of a generation whose fate it is to face up to and win the challenge posed by civilisation: one of the most daunting trials of human history. The education of young people nowadays is very demanding. They live in an age of computers, satellites, highly sophisticated technology, very complex economic and social structures and shocking contrasts between ideals and permissiveness, and between boundless wealth and abject misery. Faced with this situation, the educational mission of the Catholic community takes on an urgency as never before, so much so, in fact, that it is absolutely essential that the community's best resources –spiritual, pedagogical and economic– should be made available to it.» *(Pope John Paul II, Speech to Italian pilgrims from Romagna, Oct. 11th 1986)*

«Brothers, we are called to be experts on youth. We have to know how to respond to them in their search for meaning. We must be able to stand with them as loving Brothers as they wrestle with doubt, fear and frustration. We must know how to help them to find structures that will enable them to pursue their ideals and channel their energies. *(Brother John Johnston, Closing Address, 41st General Chapter, Circular 422, p. 41)*

«The educational policies of Lasallian institutions are centred on the young, adapted to the times in which they live, and designed to prepare them to take their place in society. These institutions are characterised by the determination to make the means of salvation available to young people through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.» *(Rule 13)*

2. DRAW UP A LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL PLAN

During the course of the General Chapters held in 1966/67, 1976 and 1986, the Institute reaffirmed in explicit terms the validity of the Catholic school. One has only to read the Declaration and the Rules of 1976 and 1986 to see how true this is. At a time when the validity of Catholic schools is being questioned, the Institute has not wavered in its conviction that the Catholic school "has a full part to play in the salvific mission of the Church, and especially in the area of teaching the faith."

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«For more than a year now, and in a great many places, you have been celebrating this jubilee, meditating all the while on fidelity to the charism of the Founder. This charism, it hardly needs saying, consists of seeing the school, available to all and especially the poor, as an educational community, inspired by Christian values, that is, based on love, able to educate the hearts and minds of children and adolescents, thanks to well-trained and competent teachers who are consecrated to God, prayerful and living together as brothers at the feet of their only Master, Jesus Christ. It is here that the Catholic school finds its inspiration and model.»

(Pope John Paul II, Speech in the Chapter Hall, Rome, Nov. 21st 1981)

«In order that the notion of the Catholic school should not be relegated to the land of dreams, we are asked to ensure the following:
– that the educational plan that defines its identity is actually acted upon and find its inspiration in the Gospel;
– that all those that are involved in it –teachers, parents, pupils and ancillary staff– form a true Christian community.
– that this community should proclaim its evangelical authenticity by its openness to the world in which it lives, by its promotion of awareness of those who are less privileged and by its concern for them.
– that in this way its whole life and organisation constitutes "complete and constant catechesis", which is not confined to religion lessons, but extends to and is an integral part of the whole life and all the activities of the school, in an atmosphere of "solidarity, like-mindedness and service", shot through with the spirit and teachings of Christ."» *(Brother José Pablo Basterrechea, Address to the 7th National Study Week for religious, Madrid, Easter 1978).*

3. EXERCICE A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

De La Salle's Gospel journey was a steady and determined process of drawing close to the poor, the "living images of Jesus Christ". At the same time, there took place the equally steady process of discovering the plan God was asking him to implement: the training of teachers and the foundation of the Christian Schools to "counter such a great evil".

«Never cease to make known the social doctrine of the Church in all its fullness, so that it can be of help when problems have to be examined according to genuine Christian criteria. The Church relies on its heritage of faith and life with more than enough light and strength to bring about this transformation of all things in Jesus Christ. All recourse to ideological systems not bassed on the Gospel, or to those which are materialistic, either in the way in which they view the world or put forward schemes for social action, is fundamentally closed to Christian truth: it is inadequate, as its vision is limited by the boundaries of this world. It is diametrically opposed to the mystery of unity in Christ. A Christian cannot accept planned class struggle as the dialectical solution of conflicts. Neither can he confuse the noble struggle for justice, which is the expression of respect and love for man, with a plan "which sees in the class struggle the only way of eliminating class injustice in society, as well as the classes themselves." (Laborem Excercens, p. 11)» *(Pope John Paul II, Allocution to the Episcopal Conference of Chile, April 2nd 1987)*

«The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide.

This concern of the Brothers for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favourable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims.» (Rule 14)

«The service of the poor requires that a Brother use the oppotunities of his apostolate to oppose all forms of poverty of frustration, to maintain a special concern for the full human development of those who suffer poverty, which they live. Sensitivity to the needs of individual persons and a preference for an apostolate to serve the poor can never dispense with efforts to establish a more equitable social order which is aimed at the elimination of poverty.» *(Declaration, 30, 3)*

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (7)

4 - ON BEING A LASALLIAN NOWADAYS: A FEW PRACTICAL GUIDELINES (2)

4. EVANGELISE CULTURE

The question of the inculturation of the faith is becoming more and more important in the Christian world, and the Magisterium of the Church has began to lay stress on it, especially since Vatican II (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 53-62). Our own Institute, which has spread to all corners of the globe to proclaim the Gospel to the poor through education, now spearheads the Church's response to the challenge posed by the evangelisation of cultures.

«The recent synod of bishops devoted to the vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and the world, twenty years after the Vatican II Council, stressed the importance of training lay people to make the Gospel come more alive in the living fabric of culture, in social circles which will influence thinking and behaviour, in *the family, work, school, university, social communications.*

...In order that the Gospel can inspire the various ever-changing cultures of this world, there has to be a new powerful effort from each element of the Church, as well as from the various organisations of the Holy See, Bishops' Conferences, international Catholic organisations, religious communities, secular institutes, lay people committed to one or other of the many apostolic movements, and from civic bodies. *(Pope John Paul II, Speech to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Jan. 15th 1988)*

«Every culture needs to be evangelised. The Brothers make every effort to get to know, to respect and to assimilate the positive values of the cultural heritage of the people where they are located and whom they are called to serve. With joy and hope the Brothers discover there the signs of the presence of the Spirit. They ensure that the ferment of the Gospel renews and enriches this cultural heritage.

This effort at inculturation is equally necessary and applies as well to youth culture as to the rapidly evolving culture of contemporary society.» *(Rule 18)*

«Every Lasallian foundation is embodied, together with the local Church, in the culture, the language and the life-style of the place where it is located. Such embodiment ought to be accomplished in keeping with the charism proper to the Institute.» *(Rule 18a)*

5. CATECHISE AND ENGAGE IN PASTORAL WORK

According to the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle, Christian education is an essential part of the educational ministry of the Brothers. That is why «The Brothers make known the divine mysteries by exercising the ministry of the Word of God. The Brothers are catechists by vocation; this is their "principal function." (Declaration, 38, 1)

Catechesis, as *a process which must first and foremost* make possible a *life-giving encounter with the person of Christ* through faith, involves in a special way the teaching of the doctrine of Christ, so as to initiate its listeners –children, young people and adults– into the life of a Christian, and to its riches. If it is true that to be a Christian means saying "yes" to Jesus Christ, we must point out that this "yes" has two levels: it consists in abandoning oneself to the Word of God by basing oneself on it. But it also means, in addition, trying to fathom more deeply the profound meaning of this Word. Catechesis is necessary, as much for the growth of faith among Christians as for their witness to it in the world.» *(Pope John Paul II, Letter to the faithful in Hungary, April 6th 1980)*

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«From the beginning, the Institute recognised the central place that catechesis has in the apostolate of the Brother. However, this never led the Institute either to dissociate the teaching of religion from the rest of education, or to devote itself to catechesis alone. Almost by instinct, the living tradition of the Institute has integrated faith in Jesus Christ into the daily lives of the students. There has always been this concern to tie together the work of evangelisation with growth in education and culture.» *(Declaration 40, 2)*

«By its organisational structure and the climate that it engenders, the Christian school makes catechesis possible. This catechesis should be lively, centred on the person of the student, in touch with life as it is, based on Scripture and the liturgy, attentive to the teaching of the Church, and concerned with an integral presentation of the Christian message.» *(Rule 15 a)*

6. FORM COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

All Lasallian groups should aim to form communities of faith – communities where one's experience of God is shared, where there grows brotherhood "through the joyful gift of oneself to others", and where one's apostolic commitment to the Church is rekindled.

«The educational community must aim at becoming a Christian community within the Catholic school, that is to say, a real community of faith. This cannot happen, and cannot even begin to happen, if Christian commitment is not shared by at least some of the main sections, that is, parents, teachers and pupils, of the educational community. It is most desirable that Catholic lay people, and especially teachers, should be prepared to make this commitment, by taking part in pastoral care groups or others capable of promoting Gospel values.» *(The Catholic Lay Person, Witness to the Faith in School, 41)*

The Brothers' community makes known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition. The Brothers offer to those who desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality, encouraging such persons to make a more specific apostolic commitment. The Brothers join in the formation of faith communities which are witnessing to the truth of what the Brothers profess.» *(Rule 17 c)*

THE METHOD TO FOLLOW FOR GROUP WORK

This 4th article (sections 6 and 7) is meant to help you think about the 6 measures mentioned in the Letter, either by yourself or as part of a group. It attempts to do this by providing you with some extracts from texts found in papal pronouncements or Institute documents.

You can, for example:

1. Choose a text and read it by yourself or with the group.

2. Have a discussion about what you have read, saying:
   - what struck you most forcibly
   - what you think is most important
   - what is most relevant to local problems

3. To end with, suggest something specific as a way or doing something practical about what you have discussed.

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THE LASALLIAN TRAINING OF THE LAY TEACHER

I. Three facts.

1. *The Institute has made a very clear choice: to make lay teachers working in Lasallian schools an integral part of its apostolic mission.*

Article 17 of the Rule states: «The Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission. They provide for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit».

In his Letter on the Destiny of the Institute, the Superior General, Brother John Johnston, speaks of a "shared mission" and says the following: «They take their place as "full partners" – and we Brothers gladly associate them with us in our mission. We accept that from now on our schools will not be "Brothers' schools", animated by the Brothers' community with secondary collaboration of lay teachers, parents, students. They will be instead "Lasallian schools", schools animated by Lasallian educative communities of faith "within which the apostolic activity of the Brothers takes place» (page 32).

The Institute and each individual Brother is beginning to realise something that lay teachers have hardly been aware of up to now: that they are associated with the Institute, not only as teachers, but also as "apostles" in the mission of the school in the Church.

2. *In order to understand this new way of thinking, each Brother has to undergo a sort of "conversion" which involves his:*

— welcoming the co-worker and his collaboration;
— enabling him to share in the wealth of Lasallian pedagogical teachings and spirituality;
— making him share Lasallian life;
— sharing work and responsibility with him.

3. *Normally, when a lay teacher joins the staff of a Lasallian school, he knows nothing or very little of its approach to education.*

It is quite likely that he is very competent to teach the subjects he has specialised in and to work in a school, at least at a basic level. During his studies, he acquired knowledge and teaching skills. But he had no training which took into account working as a teacher in a Lasallian school.

When a young Brother is sent to teach in a school, he comes equipped with the appropriate qualifications and training as a teacher... but also and especially, with a spiritual and apostolic background which he has gradually built up in the course of his years in formation. A lay teacher too comes trained in the first two areas, but not in the third.

* * *

II. Two Consequences.

1. *The teacher needs spiritual and apostolic training.*

He needs it just like a Brother. The latter gets it during his novitiate and scholasticate. It is only after that that he is entrusted with an apostolic ministry in teaching.

Apart from a few exceptions, a lay teacher takes up his work as a teacher without the spiritual and apostolic training received by a young Brother. And yet he needs it just as much as the young Brother to do his work in the educational stting of a Lasallian school.

The Lasallian school is committed to give a Christian education: it will achieve its aim if the teachers are involved in this aspect of the apostolate. The school is "less Christian" to the extent that a section of the staff does not take an active part in this apostolate.

The lay teacher who works in a Christian school is called just as much as the teaching religious to be a means of evangelisation for his pupils.

A Christian school that loses sight of this fact, and which takes lay teachers onto its staff solely on the grounds of their professional competence, runs the grave risk of destroying the very reason for its existence.

This spiritual and apostolic training must take into account the vocation proper to a lay person, and consequently must be adapted with this in view. Their spirituality will not be that of a consecrated religious, but it will be nonetheless evangelical.

2. *The Institute must offer its lay teachers an opportunity for spiritual and apostolic training.*

The Institute takes great pains to trains its members, the Brothers, and makes sure it sets aside several years for this purpose. Should it not take responsibility also for the training of its lay teachers in areas in which they have never been able to obtain training?

A Brother is trained so that he can then undertake a ministry entrusted to him in line with the aims of the Institute. Is this not the same ministry that will be entrusted to a lay teacher? In a Christian school it would be a great pity to think of him simply as a communicator of knowledge, a teacher of secular subjects, and not take into account the aim of providing integrated education.

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And so, if the lay teacher is to play his part in fulfilling the mission of the Institute, is it not reasonable to expect the Institute also to take in hand his spiritual and apostolic training?

There is no doubt this implies changes in structures and systems which have been traditional up till now. A great deal of effort will be needed, but then, are we really serious or not about shouldering this responsibility?

It is clear that much has been done in the Institute with regard to offering this training. It is equally clear, however, that this has to become more widespread and intensive. There must come a time when this will be no longer a free service offered by the Institute, or an offer accepted for the best of intentions by the teacher, but a specific stage undergone by all those who wish to belong to an educational community which has very clearly set up and adopted an educational approach which it offers as a model to society.

* * *

III. In Practice.

— *What spiritual and apostolic training are we going to offer the Lasallian lay teacher?*

1. Above all, it must be a spirituality and a call to the apostolate which takes into account his lay character. It must be distinct from those aspects of spirituality which are specific to the Brothers, who are religious.

2. It has to be a spirituality which is in line with "the spirit of the Institute", with what inspires each Brother and enables him to fulfil his vocation and ministry, and without which "they (the Brothers) should be looked upon as dead members, and they should look upon themselves as such".

The spirituality of a lay teacher must be substantially identical with that of the Brothers, that is, must be one of faith and zeal.

Faith will make him judge everything according to criteria based on the Gospel, that is, on the teachings of Christ. In order to assimilate these criteria and learn to put them into practice, he will have to read and meditate often on the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures.

Zeal will be the outward sign of his lively faith, a zeal that will lead him, through Christian education, to evangelise others, especially children and those young people for whose education he is responsible.

3. Faith and zeal will make him feel part of an educational community in which a commitment has been made to run "together and by association" a Christian school which offers human and Christian education to children and young people.

* * *

— *What form will the Lasallian training of lay teachers take?*

1. Above all, it cannot and should not be like a coat of varnish or a veneer applied to his personality. Time is needed for this spirituality to be assimilated intellectually and to be put into practice spiritually.
— A series of weekend courses can be useful; and so can longer periods of time, organised in such a way as to create an atmosphere sufficiently quiet to be conducive to this assimilation.
— Why not consider organising something much longer, lasting several months even, completely devoted to this spiritual and pedagogical training?
— All this calls for persevering effort, that is, not simply a few days here or there, but constant effort to live what has been understood and assimilated. What are needed also are times for assessment and recourse to spiritual reserves.
— It calls also for follow-up and support, that is, someone to direct things: someone to help you discern whether your life matches up to your commitment.

2. It must include certain topics for study and reflections, so that these can be known and assimilated, and can enable one to fulfil one's vocation more fully as a Lasallian teacher:
— Getting to know the Founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle: his life, his virtues, his charism, his teachings, his achievements... and how they should be interpreted nowadays.
— Getting to know the Lasallian Institute: its mission, its commitment, its aims, how it functions, its organisation.
— Getting to know the pedagogical and educational traditions of Lasallian schools, and how they adapt to the situations and needs of the modern world.
— Getting to know (in order to be able to practise them) the characteristics of a good Lasallian teacher interpreted in the light of modern day conditions.
— Getting to know and studying thoroughly the meaning of a vocation to be a Christian teacher, a mission entrusted to him in the Church.
— And especially, getting to know the faith and living by it, since he must educate his pupils according to it.

Such a task is so delicate and complex that in many cases it is the District or Region that will have to assume responsibility for it.

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THE DE LA SALLE SISTERS OF GUADALUPE

310 years later.

— March 1679: John Baptist de La Salle met Adrien Nyel in front of the house of the Sisters of the Divine Child on rue Barbatre. This marked the beginning of a long journey which was to lead to the foundation of the Christian Schools.

— March 3rd 1989: The Holy See approved the new constitutions of the La Salle Sisters of Guadalupe, which had been recast in the spirit of Vatican II and brought into line with the new Code of Canon Law. This was a new strong and flourishing offshoot of a tree planted by De La Salle 300 years previously.

Who are the La Salle Sisters of Guadalupe?

It is a religious institute of pontifical right, founded in Mexico 45 years ago, and is a form of consercated life for women, inspired by the Lasallian charism.

Origins and Aims.

«The Institute of the La Salle Sisters of Guadalupe owes its origin to the inspiration and apostolic zeal of Brother Juan Fromental Cayroche, of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. About the year 1944, after some twenty years of dedicated apostolate in the Archidiocese of Mexico, Brother Juan realised the need to found an institute for women which would be able to work in conjunction with the Brothers in their educational mission with young people. This Institute would be placed under the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe and would take St. John Baptist de La Salle as its source of inspiration and guidance, and St. Joseph as its special patron.» (Rule, 1989, art. 1)

«Seeing in these circumstances a providential sign, the Sisters consecrate themselves to God in order to devote themselves to the apostolic ministry, according to the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.» (Rule, 1989, art. 2)

«The purpose of this Institute is to ensure the human and Christian education of children and young people, especially of the poor. This is done either in establishments directed by the Institute itself, or in institutions where they can offer their services with the same purposes in mind, or in apostolic work in parishes and, if circumstances so require, by giving domestic help in the houses of religious or priests.» (Rule, 1989, art. 3)

Brother "Juanito".

This is how the Sisters call their Founder. Brother Jean Fromental Cayroche was born in Servieres (Lozere, France) on June 27th 1895. When he was 13 he went to the Brothers' Juniorate at Vals, which was not far from the village where he was born, and he stayed there a few months. Because of the Combes Laws which were voted in at the beginning of the century, Juanito's Lasallian formation had to take place outside his own country. He went successively to Premia de Mar (Spain) where he got to know St. (Brother) Miguel and took the habit, then to Lembecq lez Hal (Belgium) where he made his scholasticate. When he was 18, he left for Cuba, arriving there in January 1913. In 1921, he made his perpetual profession. In 1925, he arrived in Mexico.

Brother Juanito arrived in the country at a difficult time. The country was governed by Plutarco Elias Calles who, between 1926 and 1929, unleashed a vicious persecution of the Church. It was not till 1940, with the arrival of General Avila Camacho, that Lasallian schools were able to emerge from a situation closely resembling that of life in the catacombs, and which had been their lot for 20 years.

Brother Juanito's zeal, which even during the clandestine years had never wavered, was now able to be given free rein. While continuing his work as a catechist, teacher and bursar, he gave new impetus to the federation of former students which he himself had founded, and he brought out a magazine called "Indivisa Manent" which served to popularise cultural and religious matters.

It was in the midst of all these activities, based on the Simon Bolivar College, that the idea was born of founding a Lasallian form of consecrated life for women, who would devote themselves to backing up the work of the Brothers. Brother John made the idea reality.

The various stages of the process of foundation.

After obtaining permission from his Superiors, given on the condition he would not be the superior of the future community, Brother John set to work.

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— **January 15th 1944:** a first group of 5 young women is formed. By the end of the year there is no one left.
— **June 28th 1945:** another attempt is made, this time with the help of three women religious from the Franciscan Tertiaries of the Immaculate Conception. By December of that year, the group is reduced to two aspirants and one Franciscan Sister.
— **January 11th 1946:** the third attempt is successful! A new group is brought together, with new aspirants and new Franciscan formation personnel.
— **September 8th 1946:** the group is constituted as a "Pious Union" and calls itself: «Sisters of the Christian Schools of St. Mary of Guadalupe».
— **March 18th 1947:** 6 postulants receive the habit of the "Pious Union".
— **September 15th 1947:** new taking of the habit; 11 postulants.
— **March 19th 1948:** the first six novices make their first vows. The first religious community is formed, still under the guidance of the Franciscan Sisters.
— **July 1948:** Brother Athanase Emile, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, visits the Sisters. He gives his blessing and encouragement to the Pious Union, which from that time onward becomes known as the "Lasallian Oblates of Guadalupe".
— **September 1948:** it is decided that the religious habit of the Sisters should be based on that of the Brothers, and consist of the black robe and white rabat.
— **May 15th 1950:** in an official letter from Brother Athanase Emile, the Sisters are affiliated to the Brothers' Institute. In the course of the same year, the first Rules are published, based on the Brothers' own Rule of 1947.
— **May 12th 1952:** the Franciscan Sisters, who have guided the Institute from its earliest days, withdraw from it as it is now sufficiently well established. The Superiors order Brother Juanito back to France and tell him to cease all contact with the Sisters, much to their regret. However... "If the grain does not fall into the ground and die..."
— **1955:** first foundations abroad: Cuba and the United States.
— **1958:** 1st General Chapter. The Institute spreads to Spain, and new houses are set up in the United States.
— **1959:** the Sisters set up a community in Rome, in the Brothers' Generalate.
— **September 12th 1962**: the Pious Union is recognised as an Institute of Diocesan Right by the Archbishop of Mexico. 48 Sisters make perpetual vows, and 60 others renew their temporary vows.
— **1968**: 2nd General Chapter. The name of the Institute is changed and becomes the "La Salle Sisters of Guadalupe" as at present, and an official request is sent to the Superiors of the Brothers' Institute to allow the return of Brother Juanito to Mexico.
— **September 4th 1971**: after 19 years in exile, during which he never ceased to edify the Brothers in France, Brother Juanito returns to Mexico. The Sisters welcome their Founder back with great jubilation, and he continues to live his edifying life in their midst till his death in 1978. In 1971 also, the Sisters set up a house in Colombia.
— **1974**: 3rd General Chapter: a decision is made to ask the Holy See to approve the Institute as one of Pontifical Right.
— **April 15th 1976:** "Decretum Laudis" granted by Pope Paul VI.
— **1979:** 4th General Chapter, brought forward a year because of the precarious health of the Sister Superior General.
— **1982:** after a period of crisis caused by differences of opinion in central government about the mission of the Institute, the Holy See intervenes and appoints a new central government team.
— **1986-1988:** 5th General Chapter, in two stages, during which there takes place a revision of the Constitutions prior to their submission to the Holy See for approval.
— **March 3rd 1989:** definitive approval by the Holy See of the revised Constitutions.

Future Prospects.

As a consequence of the introduction of mixed education into Brothers' schools, there has arisen over the past few years in a variety of places, a wish on the part of girls to consecrate their lives to the apostolate of education within the framework of a form of consecrated life for women, inspired by the Lasallian charism. This is a challenge for the Brothers as well for the Sisters:

— The Sisters have to come to terms with their Institute becoming international, as well as with greater direct involvement with the apostolate of education;

— The Brothers, for their part, will have to learn how to direct and encourage vocations that come to light among the girls they teach; and how to help the Sisters in their efforts to intensify the Lasallian and professional training of their members.

At present, there are about 160 Sisters and 22 communities. These latter are to be found in Mexico (13), United States (5), Colombia (2), Italy (1) and Philippines (1).

Brother Felix del Hoyo

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THE PASTORAL CENTRE

at the Abbey of Fontaine Andre, Neuchatel, Switzerland

Almost 1.000 years of history

The Abbey of Fontaine Andre stands in the north-eastern part of Neuchatel, half-way up the southern slopes of the Chaumont Massif and owes its name to a spring which is still in existence.

The Abbey was founded in 1143 by the Premonstratensians. It has had an interesting history; it was burnt down to the ground in 1375, reoccupied by the monks and then abandoned again after the Reformation. Finally it became the private residence of the Prince of Neuchatel, having gradually lost its religious character. Over the course of the last three centuries, the buildings have undergone considerable alterations.

An annexe of the Brothers' Neuchatel Catholic Institute

The Fontaine Andre property was bought by the Swiss Brothers' Association in 1954. This purchase was considered necessary because of the big increase in the number of Catholic Institute pupils in the 1948-50 period. One result was the need for extra teaching space and, especially, provision of recreational and sports facilities. What was needed was somewhere that was quiet, spacious and restful, both for pupils and for Brothers.

In 1951 and in 1953, bids were made for properties but they were unsuccessful. Finally, the Brothers succeeded in buying the property and buildings known as the Abbey of Fontaine Andre. The property, part of which consists of meadows, is completely surrounded by forest, and has one of the best views in the area. The property covers an area of about 50 acres and contains some woodland and arable land: as such, therefore, it can serve both as a farm and a place for people to come and stay. The buildings are sufficiently spacious, modern and comfortable to accommodate 40 or 50 persons.

From 1955 to 1965, it was used mainly to lodge 50 or so boarders annually. Maintenance work and improvements done mostly by the Brothers themselves made the premises even more attractive.

In the period around 1966-67, following the 39th General Chapter, Brothers branched out into a variety of apostolates and there were noticeably fewer available for work in the Neuchatel boarding school. This and other reasons stemming from a change in the mentality and needs of young boarders, and the desire to improve their facilities, led the Brothers to cut down the number of boarders. Numbers were reduced from 180 to the present figure of 90, and this makes it possible for all the boarders to have accommodation in the Catholic Institute in the city centre.

And so the Fontaine Andre premises became available for other uses.

What should Fontaine Andre be used for?

From 1973 to 1983, Fontaine Andre, with its peace and seclusion, served as a rehabilitation centre for young drug abusers. These were lodged in the Abbey, and were offered guidance and help by Brothers who had chosen this kind of work as their apostolate.

In 1983, the Association of Swiss Brothers closed the operation down: after examining all the pros and cons, they decided it was no longer possible to provide sufficient numbers of qualified personnel to ensure its success.

And so, some other use for the property had to be found. It was then that it was decided, with the agreement of the Visitor of Besancon to whose District Swiss communities belong, to turn the Abbey into a pastoral centre.

Such a decision entailed the appointment of a director and a community. It took two years in all to train a Director, form a community, and make all the necessary alterations. While this was going on, the house was used as a half-way house for released prisoners, and for other groups on a one-off basis.

July 1985: the Pastoral Centre begins its work in earnest.

Finally, in summer 1985, after two years of transition, Fontaine Andre was ready to offer its facilities to groups on a regular basis. People had known about the Abbey for a long time, so there was no need to advertise, and bookings came in gradually.

From the very start there has been a policy to put no restrictions on the types of groups or activities the Centre would cater for, provided their intention was serious.

And so all kinds of groups come to use the Centre – a state of affairs approved by the three General Councillors who came to visit us at the end of 1985.

The Centre is used by a great variety of groups

In the beginning, it was mostly Youth Movement groups that came, looking for somewhere quiet to meet and have retreats and days of recollection. Very soon, groups started coming from outside the Canton of Neuchatel. In fact, we never know where the next group will be coming from nor what it will be. Among the groups we have catered for there are the following:

– A group of cancer patients, some of them recuperating, accompanied by a lady organiser. During their meetings, patients were invited to speak freely to one another of the problems caused by their illness, how they felt about it, what their fears were, how they manage to cope and what the problable outcome will be. It was all very moving. At the end everyone agreed the meetings had been very thought-provoking, and said that the prayerfulness, simplicity and

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thoughtfulness of the hospitality offered them by the Brothers' community had impressed them greatly.

– Several groups of school-leavers have come on retreat with their teachers and chaplains.

– Parents have come with their children to spend time relaxing, praying and taking part in religious celebrations. Occasions such as this offer the opportunity also of simply talking together, something that day to day family life, working hours and certain jobs make sometimes almost impossible.

– On several occasions Protestant persons have come with their Parish Council for a day's recollection. On other occasions, Catholic parish priests have brought their Council along.

– On one occasion a group of housewives came, wishing to spend some time reflecting on their lives and the work they did. They were glad too not to have to do their daily round of cooking and washing-up just for a change. And for once they were the ones waited on at table... by the Brothers.

– We played host to a group of State primary school teachers from the Canton of Berne, who came to follow a series of adult education courses.

– There was also a training programme which lasted 400 hours in all, spread over 10 months, and which dealt with sexuality. It was aimed at preparing experts in this field who would subsequently work with children in schools, and possibly also with parents.

– We have had Christian Charismatic groups.

– Various healing communities or groups have stayed with us.

– And, of course, we have to mention the Brothers teaching in Zurich, or here in Neuchatel, in the primary and boarding schools. These come to use our facilities at Fontaine Andre on a regular basis for celebrations or for more specifically religious reasons, like preparatory courses for first communion or confirmation, and for days of recollection.

These are just a few examples to illustrate the wide range of groups that we cater for. It can be seen that not all groups come for a religious purpose; but we are often told that everyone who comes is struck by the atmosphere of prayer and recollection which is the hallmark of Fontaine Andre and contributes greatly to its influence.

A successful undertaking

When we first started, Brothers told us we could consider ourselves successful if we were booked up for 40% of the time. In fact, in 1986, we passed the 60% mark, which represents more than 2.000 persons staying with us in the course of 12 months. Short term forecasts are encouraging: we are booked solid for the next few months and especially the summer period.

Groups staying at the Centre can have either full board and lodging, or be self-catering, using the facilities available. This latter option is often preferred by youth groups because it is cheaper.

Prices at the Centre vary according to the income of applicants. The price for one day's full board and lodging can be anything between 50 and 30 Swiss francs, depending on whether the person is an apprentice, a student or a wage-earning adult. The question of payment and prices is discussed with group organisers, and people are openly asked to show solidarity with this approach. Up till now, we have been able to stay within our budget while operating this variable price system.

The role of the Brothers at the Centre

There are three Brothers at present working full-time at the Centre, and two others who have other jobs are members of the community. Up till now, the three Brothers have been able to run the Centre between them without any outside help. They are responsible for the general administration of the Centre, preparing accommodation for groups, running the finances, catering, cooking and maintenance.

The only influence they exert on groups is that of their devotedness, their warm hospitality, their willingness to be of service and their prayerfulness. And they do exert an influence, there is no doubt about that, and many people are impressed, judging by what people say and write to us on numerous occasions.

What, then, is the way forward? At present, we seem to have three choices:

– Stay as we are, and count on exerting an influence through the witness of devoted service, fraternal love and prayer.
– Hand over the running of the material side of the Centre to lay people who would be paid a wage, leaving the Brothers free to involve themselves directly in working with groups. This option is very attractive, but entails financial risks for the Centre, and would inevitably lead to an increase in prices of board and lodging.
– Combine both activities, some Brothers running the material, others the spiritual side of the Centre. This depends somewhat, of course, on the qualifications of Brothers, but is something worth going into. It could happen only if the community increased in size.

Brother Francois Riechsteiner

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N° 17

INTRODUCTION

ANOTHER YEAR FOR LASALLIANA

LASALLIANA begins another year, the seventh of its existence, during which issues No. 17, 18 and 19 will appear. We thank our many readers for telling us how much they appreciate our publication and for their encouragement. We hope that LASALLIANA will remain faithful to its aims and provide the various sections of the Lasallian Family with information concerning everything that has to do with our Founder, the Institute, our vocation and apostolate, and our work.

LASALLIAN LAY PEOPLE WISH TO HAVE ACCESS TO THESE ARTICLES

We must insist on this: LASALLIANA is intended for the Lasallian Family. Some Districts realise this and distribute copies of each issue not only to Brothers' communities, but also to schools and to those in charge of various Lasallian movements –to teachers, parents, young people, as well as to other persons more closely linked to the world of St. La Salle.

It very satisfying to meet a lay teacher who says to you: "Do you know? I read an article the other day which said that I was an apostle too in school. And he quoted excerpts from St John Baptist de La Salle. It was a real discovery for me". Or then there is the university student who says: "In my last school, I came across a collection of articles, including one which spoke about ‹Lasallian Volunteers›. I found it interesting and it made me think. I didn't know the Brothers organised things like that..."

In fact, the articles we include in LASALLIANA are meant to arouse interest, and this interest will be satisfied if lay teachers have a copy in their staffroom, parents in their meeting rooms, pupils in their library... and if there are copies wherever they are likely to be read.

This explains probably why quite often we are contacted by lay teachers, parents on management committees and former students, who wish to take out a personal subscription to LASALLIANA. It's a good sign.

A NEW SECTION. CORRESPONDENCE

Included in the voluminous correspondence received by LASALLIANA, there have been suggestions from four different quarters –France, Spain, Mexico and Italy– that we should start a correspondence section. This section would enable readers to discover the reactions of other readers to articles published, suggest new ideas, complete information, ask for explanations, and so on. We welcome this suggestion and can make a start straightaway. Readers who wish to contribute to this section may do so, but we make a plea for brevity so that we can satisfy all our customers.

HOW ARTICLES ARE CLASSIFIED

Each article is identified by 4 numbers/letters. E. g.: 16 - 14 – D -34.

- the first number indicates the number of the issue.
- the second, the number of the article in the table of contents.
- the letter indicates the nature of the subject matter.
- the last number indicates how many articles exist already on subjects of a similar nature.

The example given above indicates that the article in question appears in issue No. 16; that it is No. 14 in the table of contents of that issue; that the subject matter relates to lay people and the Lasallian Family; and that 34 articles already exist on related topics.

Subject matter is indicated by letters as follows:

O. General subjects, miscellaneous.
A. St. John Baptist de La Salle. Facts, writings, spirituality, teachings, etc.
B. The FSC Institute: history and present day.
C. Thoughts on education.

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17 - 1 – A - 67

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS!

FOREVER!

I should like to say a few things about these 6 words we use so often. My point of view will be both historical and practical. This article does not seek to be an exhaustive treatment, but simply to examine this invocation against the background of Lasallian spirituality.

1. This short invocation is one of the Lasallian devotions.

Starting with the Trinity (formula of vows) and going on to Mary (Liesse...), St. Joseph (1719 Mass...), the Guardian Angels (Med. 172, 197, 198...), St. Cassian (at the Grande Maison), we see that De La Salle has a special devotion to Providence (God who leads...), the Holy Spirit (By the movement of the Spirit), and especially to Jesus Christ.

John Baptist de La Salle encouraged his Brothers to meditate on the principal mysteries of the life of Christ, on the Eucharist, the Passion, and the Child Jesus. (Cahier Lasallien 8, p. 484).

2. Where did De La Salle find his inspiration for it?

According to Blain (C.L. 8, p. 493): «It was partly to imitate this great saint (St. Ignatius, martyr) that he established in his Institute this pious custom of saying "Live Jesus in our hearts – Forever!" at the end of all community activities. It is like a password for the Brothers».

We find a parallel in Abbe Condren's prayer: «Come, Lord Jesus, and live in your servant...»; as well as in that of Jacques Olier: «Oh Jesus, living in Mary, come and live in your servants». Olier also heads a letter to Mme. Rousseau with the words: "Live Jesus in our hearts". Other letters of his begin with: "God be blessed, forever".

Grignon de Montfort's motto during his missions was: "Long live Jesus, long live his Cross" (R. Laurentin, "Dieu seul est ma tendresse", p. 83).

It can really be said that we inherited it partly from St. Sulpice and the French school of spirituality. Rigault says (Vol. I, p. 466): «At no point did De La Salle seek to be entirely original: he synthesised, assimilated, adapted... created formulas specifically for the use of a new religious family, and whatever its origin, the invocation was adopted by the Brothers as their watchword or password..»

The Abbe Deville sees this invocation for the use of the Brothers as yet another example of the mystical Christocentric character of the spirituality of Berulle.

3. Its use in the early days of the Institute.

In the Practice of the Daily Timetable (C.L. 25, p. 95, 96, 101, 102), it says that «when it is time to get up in the morning, a Brother says "Live Jesus in our hearts" and the Brothers in the dormitory reply, "Forever". It is the community signal». The Director uses the same invocation to tell the Brothers in the Common-room to stop reading the Imitation and go to the oratory. In the evening also, the Director uses it to start spiritual reading, and to indicate it is time to go bed.

The copy of the above publication which we have is dated 1713. We know, however, that it was composed before 1705, a time when the so-called Avignon Rule already existed in manuscript form. De La Salle had already written Regulations of a simpler kind at Vaugirard and Rue Neuve, and the invocation could very well have been in use even then.

It would be useful perhaps also to mention that, in a manuscript dated 1738 and found in Chartres in 1905, it can be seen that Brothers use this invocation to start mental prayer and after the O Domina Mea and the Angelus which follow it.

4. The continuation of its use in the history of the Congregation up the present time.

During the Generalate of Brother Agathon, for the first time an indulgence was attached to a prayer expressly for the use of the Brothers. There was an annual plenary indulgence to be gained, and 40 days each time the Brothers used it on meeting one another. (Collection of Bulls, p. 48; Pius VI in 1786).

To maintain uniformity in the various communities, Brother Anaclet decided that all recreations should begin and end with the invocation.

As De La Salle's cause progressed to Venerable, Blessed and Saint, he was invoked as such, but the final invocation was always the "Live Jesus in our hearts – Forever".

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In the 1946 Rule, at the time of Brother Athanase Emile, the use of the invocation remains more or less what it was in the Practice and the Rules that followed. There are three references to it in the Rule: (ch. 29, art. 1, 3, 5).

Under Brother Nicet Joseph, a Latin version was tried out: "Jesus in cordibus nostris vivat! – Semper!" but it never caught on.

In the Rules "ad experimentum" produced by the Chapter which elected Brother Charles Henry, there is one mention only of the invocation, and it is added that it is the community signal (ch. 10, art. 13). Under Brother Pablo, the same text reappears.

Under Brother John Johnston, the new Rule was approved by the Church. In article 68a, the use of the invocation is linked to a way of thinking dear to the Founder: "Live Jesus in our hearts" Forever! is the usual invocation in the community; the Brothers see in it a reminder of the presence of the Lord who lives in their midst."

5. It is still in the chapter on prayer.

This is so because, although very short and succinct, it is still a prayer. As Deville says in his "Ecole Française de Spiritualité, p. 133, this invocation is "a cry of love and desire", "a living summary of a whole range of teachings on mental prayer which the Founder left his Brothers."

Insistence on the presence of God takes a concrete form in the presence of Jesus in the midst of his Brothers, «like the sun... so that all their actions should be directed towards him as their centre, and draw all their strength from him as the branches of a vine draw it from the stock» (C. L. 14, p. 10).

6. It is considered to be the invocation of the Lasallian community.

De La Salle wanted all the Brothers to have the same spirit. This spirit is the spirit and life of Christ in the heart of each Brother. It is a part of community relationships and of apostolic undertakings.

If for the followers of St. Francis a way of expressing the fact they belong to the Friars Minor is the use of the motto "Pax et Bonum", so for the Brothers, their invocation has a similar role.

To the Brothers who have been formed by mental prayer on the maxims, virtues and sentiments of Jesus Christ, De La Salle says the following: «Ask therefore the Lord of all hearts to make yours one with those of your Brothers, in that of Jesus.» (Med. 39, 3).

7. In his life, De La Salle shone with Jesus living in his heart.

He was image of Jesus Christ (C.L. 7, p. 113). His heart was modelled on that of Jesus Christ (C.L., 8, p. 373). He summoned his remaining strength on his death-bed to answer "Forever!" to the invocation.

The fire which Jesus Christ kindled in his heart was apparent to all (C.L. 8, p. 485). He begs Jesus Christ to answer in his place when someone comes to him for advice (C.L. 8, p. 318).

8. One can say the same of his disciples.

The Brothers are called children engendered in Jesus Christ (C.L. 8, p. 358). The Spirit of Jesus Christ reigns in the community (C.L. 7, p. 434). Jesus Christ seems to be in the midst of the Brothers during recreation (C.L. 8, p. 138).

The Institute spreads everywhere the good odour of Jesus Christ (C.L. 7, p. 357). Young teachers are... the good odour of Jesus Christ (C.L. 7, p. 279).

9. In conclusion, by way of suggestion...

a/ Every time we use this invocation in community, we should make it a real prayer.

b/ Those who are more in tune with the Russian Pilgrim method will find in our invocation the finest prayer of the heart a Brother could want.

c/ In the Office Book, the expression "your name" returns frequently. It is true it refers to the name of God, Yahweh, but this name "in our midst" is also that of Jesus (Ieshoua). And outside the psalms, there are various passages where the actual name Jesus figures (Phil. 2, 9-10; Apoc. 15, 4). We all know the power of a name in Jewish thinking: to say his name is to make him present, make him come alive, not separately, but in us, on our lips, in our lives, "in our hearts".

d/ According to M. Olier, who indirectly was De La Salle's teacher, "the Brothers should learn to look at Jesus, unite themselves with Jesus, act as Jesus". This means that, when we are with our pupils, this invocation will help us "to have Jesus in our eyes, in our heart and in our hands" (Olier, Introduction à la vie et aux vertus chrétiennes, p. 24). In this way we will be able to instil the love of Jesus in the hearts of children so "that they think often of Jesus... speak frequently of Jesus, aspire only after Jesus, and live for him alone" (Med. 102, 2).

Brother Antonio Temprado

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CHALLENGES FACING THE BROTHERS' COMMUNITY: END AND SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE – MISSION

These few thoughts on the challenges facing the Brothers' community which are contained in the Rule were put together by the Colegio del Carmen community in Caxias do Sul in Brazil. Through lack of space, we have omitted the introduction and the conclusion of their contribution. References to the Rule are limited to chapters 1 and 2. (Extract from issue No. 100 of Comunicação, pp. 12-18, September 1988).

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Foundation

Three sources are sufficient to throw light on the "challenge" facing Brothers within the school in which they work and in which they are called upon to be "witnesses": St. Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12, the Letter of our Superior General, Brother John Johnston, and the talks he gave us during his visit to our Dictrict. In those talks he explained and reaffirmed in ringing tones what he had written in his Pastoral Letter, "The Destiny of the Institute: our responsibility".

In the light of the authoritative teaching of St. Paul on the mystical body, we can see clearly the role of the Brothers' community within the educational community of the school, and this latter's role in the universal Church, the mystical body of Christ in all its fullness. At this stage, one is looking beyond the individual, a primary cell in the Church, and beyond the family, the domestic Church.

A religious community also is a "small Church" which is a part of that slightly larger Church, the educational community of the school.

The Apostle Paul teaches that there is a diversity of spiritual gifts, ministries and works, but it is God who works through all of these. To each one the Spirit is given in some particular way. He speaks of preaching with wisdom, preaching instruction, the gift of miracles, prophecy, the discernment of spirits, the gift of tongues, and the gift of interpreting tongues. All these gifts the Spirit distributes as he chooses. And then he takes the body with all its different parts as an analogy. Each part has to remain as it is and not want to be some other part. Nor should it feel less important by being what it is. He concludes by saying that what is essential is charity, and he develops this idea in later chapters.

In his **Pastoral Letter**, Brother Superior John Johnston promises a circular letter for the end of 1988 intended for lay teachers and members of the Lasallian Family with a view to explaining clearly the intentions of the Institute with regard to the "present and future of our educational ministry" (p. 30).

The **Rule**, for its part, states: "The Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission" (17); and "The Brothers' community is ever mindful that its apostolic activity takes place within an educational community in which all the functions, including positions of responsibility, are shared" (17a); and "the Brothers foster a spirit of collaboration and mutual enrichment among all the members of the educational community" (17b); and "The Brothers' community makes known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition" (17c).

Brother Superior also points out that the Rule lays great stress on the links between the Brothers and the lay people that are associated with them. He refers to the extraordinary changes that are going on in the Institute in the context of the evolution of the role of the laity in the Church. The Institute has accepted that from now onwards our schools should no longer be "Brothers' schools", run by Brothers' communities helped by lay teachers, parents and pupils. Instead, these schools will be "Lasallian schools", run by Lasallian educational faith communities, within which the Brothers' community exercises its apostolic activity. He says also: "What these radical changes mean is that Brothers now have a different role, and those who work with them also have a different role. I am really heartened by the rapid and even enthusiastic evolution, which can be seen taking place in many parts of the Institute, in the way in which the idea of a "shared mission" is being implemented".

In his **talk** to the Brother Directors and lay heads of schools, Brother Superior spoke also of the following changes in models: "From the *triangular or pyramidal model*, with the Brothers at the apex, we have moved on to a *circular model*, in which the Brothers are one of the elements in the circle. This implies a change in the roles of Brothers and lay people".

And so, the *challenge for the Brothers' community*, which is a part of the educational community, is to be true *witnesses to the presence of God*, to the possibility of creating true brotherhood between people and nations, to their consecration to God, and to their commitment to the apostolic ministry of evangelisation through education.

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This is what the community sought to state more specifically by identifying the challenges contained in the Rule. It was a long process, and yet our list of quotations is not an exhaustive one. There are many others in the Rule which are also challenging. It was gratifying for us to discover the extent to which there was agreement between our Rule on the one hand, and Church documents and those of the Bishops Conference of Brazil, including recent ones, on the other. Here, then, are the challenges contained in those articles of the Rule we examined:

Art. 1 & 11. The *challenge* of continuing to make a practical response to human and spiritual **neglect**, and to the needs of especially poor pupils. As the number of Brothers diminishes, there appears the new challange of becoming associated with lay people who need to be trained so as to be able to commit themselves fully to Christian instruction and education.

Art. 2. The *challenge* of **fidelity** to the call of the Holy Spirit and to the charism of the Founder, by living one's consecration to God in such a way as to pursue one's apostolic ministry of Christian education and evangelisation in association with others.

Art. 3 & 11. The *challenge* of remaining exclusively **lay religious** and as such fulfilling a ministry entrusted by the

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Church. As consecrated religious, accepting the challenge to ensure the constant **renewal** of the school, considered to be a **privileged instrument**, making it accessible to the poor, and proclaiming it to all who come as a sign of the Kingdom, of God and a means of salvation.

In these modern times with their various "cultures", the challenge of opening the school to other forms of teaching and education adapted to the needs of the time and place; of creating, renewing, diversifying types of work according to the present spirit and to the most urgent needs.

Art. 4. The *challenge* of **Lasallian identity** and fidelity to the original inspiration (to be found in the Founder and the history of the Institute). Once known and assimilated, these two elements should lead to conversion and to the sharing of their riches with the educational community.

Art. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12. The *challenge* of **acquiring** and **living according to the spirit of faith and of zeal**, this Institute spirit without which we would be dead members or not true members. The spirit which is characteristic of the Brothers' community must be acquired, nourished, studied, meditated about and shared. Daily prayer which is implied in all this should transform one's life.

Art. 9 & 10. The *challenge* of **brotherhood** which goes beyond being simply called "Brother", but which must be translated into perceptible feelings, specific attitudes, concrete proofs... of Christian brotherhood.

Art. 12. The *challenge* of uniting one's efforts with those of others to promote **cultural progress** and **to proclaim the Word of God**, and to provide within the educational community an education which respects the individual, makes possible an openness to grace, and predisposes him to accept the gift of faith.

Art. 13. The *challenge* to **found schools** and to take part in the running of educational communities inspired by De La Salle, and of establishments for young people, adapted to the times in which they live, trying to prepare them to take their place in society, and combining an excellent human education with the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.

Where necessary, also providing adult education.

The *challenge* of considering one's **profession** as a **ministry**, offering brotherly guidance to enable others to discover, appreciate and assimilate human and Gospel values.

Art. 13a. The *challenge* of **respecting conscience** and integrating culture and faith.

Art. 13b. The *challenge* of making pupils and auxiliary staff **undertake their own education** by taking an active part in the educational community.

Art. 13 & 13d. The *challenge* of promoting a **critical attitude** vis-a-vis contemporary society with its mass media and technological resources. This implies giving teachers a chance to follow courses.

Art. 14. The *challenge* of promoting **Justice and human dignity**, especially in the more developed and well-off sections of society.

Art. 15. The *challenge* for the Brothers' community **to let itself be evangelised** by those whom it serves, considering the work of evangelisation and catechesis as its principal work.

Art. 15a. The *challenge* of **promoting an organisational framework and general atmosphere** that is favourable to integral catechesis which consists in encouraging a frequent turning to God, finding time to pray, and bearing visible witness to a faith community made up of convinced Christians whose hearts are filled with the Spirit who teaches all truth.

Art. 15b. The *challenge* of **sharing in the pastoral work of the local Church**, either personally or through the intermediary of catechists and lay volunteers.

Art. 16. The *challenge* of an apostolate pursued **"together and by association"** by members who are approved, sent and supported by a community with which they must remain closely associated.

Art. 16a. The *challenge* of **maintaining apostolic works** which are in accordance with the aims of the Institute, and of submitting them to the discernment of the community in union with the Superiors and the District.

Art. 16b. The *challenge* of **making oneself known as a Brother**, especially if one is working outside the community.

Art. 17, 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d. The *challenge* of **promoting the development of Christian lay people** associated with the educational community, and of collaborating in the training of Christian teachers, so that they may become more and more competent, and commit themselves more to the Church and education.

Pastoral work takes place nowadays within the educational community and tasks and responsibilities are shared. It is important therefore to encourage the cooperation and self-improvement of the members of the educational community – the young people, parents, priests, former pupils, friends... One needs therefore to pass on the Lasallian message and to offer the possibility of sharing its spirituality by helping to set up faith communities.

The *challenge* of **collaborating** with organisations with similar aims.

Art. 18. The *challenge* of making the effort to know, respect and assimilate the **positive values** of the culture and tradition of the place in which the Brothers are working.

Art. 18a. The *challenge* of **becoming part of the local Church**, of adopting the **language** and **lifestyle** of the area in which the Brothers work.

Art. 19. The *challenge* of **sharing in the missionary work of the Church**. This is the only way in which the school will achieve maturity in the Church. This supposes even the availability to accept missionary work "ad gentes".

Art. 19a. The *challenge* of **volunteering to be sent** to areas of chronic need, in response to the missionary call of the Church.

Art. 19b. The *challenge* of being concerned about **fostering vocations.**

Art. 20. The *challenge* of **living one's life of faith as a gift** to the ministry of Christian education.

Art. 21. The *challenge* of putting one's **time, gifts and energy generously at the disposal** of those whom the Lord entrusts to the Brothers, who are spurred on by the zeal and attitude of Christ the Servant. This challenge involves an effort to improve constantly one's competence, the quality of one's relationships, the witness of one's life and the vigour of one's faith.

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In a word, the Brothers' community will bear **witness** within the educational community that it is one of its true **members** when the entire life of each of the Brothers is transfigured by the presence of the Lord who called them and continues to call them, who consecrates them, sends them and saves them.

The Colegio del Carmen Community,
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FROM GRAND BIGARD AND BOKRIYC (BELGIUM) TO THE REGIONAL NOVITIATE OF KINSHASA. THE LASALLIAN VOCATION IN AFRICA

While a number of Districts in Europe and North America are alarmed, and with good reason, at seeing their houses of formation emptying and closing down, in Africa and Latin America, it is quite the opposite which is a potential source of worry: the number of candidates for religious life and the priesthood is very impressive.

Likewise, according to the most reliable forecasts, in two generations at the most, the African Churches will have the greatest number of faithful in the world after Latin America. It can be thought, then, that the future of the Catholic Church no longer depends on the west.

From now onwards, how could it be possible not to take these facts into account and to see the resulting changes?

As for us, involved as we are in this phenomenon in the Church, we wish to make our contribution by reflecting a little on the position of the Lasallian vocation in Africa. Such reflection must include an analysis of the determining factors, conditions and requirements of initial formation.

To begin with, we should perhaps recall the main stages of the Brothers' settlement in Africa, and in particular, in Zaire, "the most vigorous Christian community in Africa" (MISSI, February 1989).

* * *

1. Beginnings.

On October 7th 1909, five Belgian Brothers of the Christian Schools arrived in Boma (Zaire), coming from Belgium at the express wish of King Leopold II.

That year marked the beginning of the missionary activities of the Brothers in Zaire. The Brothers settled in and gradually spread their apostolic activities to Boma (1909), Kinshasa (1910), Tumba (1921), Bamanya (1929), Mbandaka (1930), Kangu (1930), Gombe Matadi (1936), Matadi (1938). This expansion ended with the outbreak of the Second World War.

As soon as the war ended in 1945, the District received reinforcements: 14 Brothers arrived from Belgium, and new houses were opened in Itipo (1949), Bikoro (1953), Konzo (1953), Kilwa (1956), Lubumbashi (1964), Gbadolite (1969) and Mbanza Ngungu (1972).

In 1953, the Brothers went to Rwanda, opening houses in Byumba (1953), Nyuondo (1955), Ruhengeri (1957), Shungungu (1963) and Butare (1968).

This long chronological list of school foundations gives no idea of the efforts involved. To do this one would have to describe how these establishments grew and flourished. Wherever the Brothers settled, they set up schools which provided education at a variety of levels from primary to university.

At secondary school level in particular, the Brothers prepared students for a career in administration, crafts, teaching, professions, commerce and other specialised areas.

It is worth pointing out also that in Boma the Brothers were for a time involved in paramilitary training; and in Kinshasa, they were instrumental in setting up a school of river navigation.

This apostolic expansion came to an end in 1974, when the State nationalised the schools, and the number of Brothers was cut down, with 24 Belgian missionary Brothers returning to Belgium for good.

As the result of an educational agreement signed by the State of Zaire and the Churches on February 26th 1977, the Brothers agreed to take over the administration of some of their former schools in Kinshasa (7 schools), Matadi (2), Tumba (3) and Mbandaka (3).

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2. Recruitment and formation of Zairean candidates.

a/ From 1920 to 1972.

In 1920, the De La Salle Brothers were the first religious in Zaire to be able to integrate completely indigenous vocations in their congregation.

This generous and far-sighted step was very daring, when one recalls the socio-political situation of the time.

In that year, two young Congolese were sent to Belgium to make their novitiate at Grand Bigard. A third one followed later and made his novitiate in 1928 at Bokriyck.

As for Zaire, Brother Veron Ignace, the Visitor and a Belgian, opened the first house of formation in the educational establishment in Boma. There followed the opening in Tumba of a juniorate (1928), novitiate (1929) and a scholasticate (1930).

In 1932, the novitiate was transferred to Bamanya (Equatorial Region) and stayed there till 1954. After that it moved to Gombe Matadi (Lower Zaire Region), where it stayed till 1966.

The novitiate remained closed for two years (1967/68) and then re-opened in October 1969, still at Gombe Matadi. It closed again in 1972 and remained so till 1977. From that year onwards, the work of recruitment has continued uninterrupted.

From 1930 onwards, the Brothers had no difficulty in attracting indigenous vocations, but the peak was reached in 1958/59.

There were at that time 60 black Brothers in community and 30 novices in formation.

b/ The increase in the number of vocations in the last ten years.

On September 1st 1977, 8 youngsters who wanted to become Brothers joined the Brother Veron Ignace Postulancy in Kinshasa. On september 16th 1978, 4 young Zaireans (out the 8) took the habit of the Brothers at a prayerful eucharistic celebration.

This was a memorable and blessed day after so many years, and in many it reawakened hope for the future.

In 1978, in a third move, the novitiate came to Kinshasa. At the same time, the juniorate and the scholasticate were transferred there also. They are now called the "Brother Veron Ignace Postulancy" and the "Mary Immaculate Scholasticate".

In 1983, there were some internal changes in the novitiate: it became pan-African first, and then was extended from one to two years.

For this canonical year, 1988/89, our numbers in the novitiate are as follows: from Cameroun (1), Ivory Coast (1), Equatorial Guinea (1), Nigeria (3), Rwanda (5), Togo (3), Zaire (10).

c/ Changes in numbers of novices since 1920.

Year	Number of novices
1920-1929	9
1930-1939	27
1940-1949	43
1950-1959	72
1960-1969	27
1970-1979	12
1980-1989	38
Total	**228**

As the figures show, numbers rose steadily from the beginning of recruitement and reached a peak in 1959.

The ten years from 1960 to 1970 were disastrous: 60 Brothers left during this period at a rate of 6 per year.

From 1970 to 1979, 12 joined but 22 left. The upward trend begun in 1980 gives us all hope, but Brothers continue to leave and slow down the upward trend.

It cannot be said too often: statistics are dangerous. The most critical say they are dangerously misleading, especially since we are dealing with an area which depends first and foremost on the free gift of God's love and not on human calculation.

All the same, these figures are enlightening and can (and ought to) make us think.

This is all the more true when one realises that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is one of the few international congregations whose apostolic experience now exceeds 300 years, 80 of which in Zaire.

That is why we think that the time has come for a common effort to improve, with God's help, our system of formation.

And so it is a source of great joy to see the administrative centre of the Institute and the various sectors in Africa giving priority to the fostering of vocations. The effort made in this area over the past 10 or so years, both financially as well as with regard to personnel, is quite considerable. It is already noticeably bearing fruit, although in some sectors results have not yet come up to expectations.

Brother Kulwikila Mbala

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THE MARTYRDOM OF THE BROTHERS OF TURON

Article 15-7–B-76 gave the biographical details of the 8 Brothers and the Passionist priest martyred in Turon. In view of their approaching beatification, we should like to devote this article to giving some details of their martyrdom.

* * *

The political and social situation in Spain in 1934.

1934 was an eventful year in Spanish political life. For many groups that were anxious to seize power, the Russian Revolution provided a model. Socialism and communism were spreading rapidly, and meetings and publications openly incited the masses to revolt and wreak their vengeance on all their oppressors. Hatred and the spirit of revolt were stirred up by many politicians and the leaders of leftist movements. Their utterances were generally characterised by attacks on religion and religious symbols.

The atmosphere was such that it was obvious that, sooner or later, revolution would break out and an attempt would be made to seize power. It was felt also that included in this there would be a fierce attack on Catholics and especially on priests and religious. The leaders of this revolution decided they would have a trial run in Catalonia and Asturias: if this proved successful, the revolution would be extended to the whole of Spain. Asturias, in the north of Spain, was a mainly mining area with a large population of immigrant workers who had been uprooted from their native provinces. In such a setting leftist groups were solidly organised.

The revolutionary trial run

The beginning of the Asturias Revolution was planned for the month of October, and would start with the proclamation of a general strike. Plans that had been prepared at a national level by the groups and movements concerned had been implemented: revolutionary committees had been set up in each locality, and weapons had been secretly distributed to their members.

On October 5th, a national general strike was launched and with it, in Catalonia and Asturias, the revolution. It was hoped their example would be swiftly followed by other regions.

In Catalonia, however, the attempt at revolution lasted only a few hours. In Asturias, on the other hand, it went on for a fortnight. Its beginning was timed for midnight and it would be announced by a certain number of dynamite explosions in various places. Such explosions would not arouse suspicions as dynamite was regularly used by miners.

The Asturias Revolution

When the signal was given, each committee put into operation what had been planned: they took over the barracks of the forces of law and order, confiscated weapons, occupied the principal buildings, took charge of the population, assumed responsibility for food supplies, and imprisoned all the dangerous people which included priests, religious and leading Catholics.

Although in general the revolutionary leaders tried to control the situation, things got out of hand and many crimes and excesses were committed. They probably had not intended to go so far as to put consecrated people to death, but local groups in many cases took things into their own hands.

The fact remains that, in the course of the 15 days that the revolution lasted, 33 priests and religious were executed in Asturias. Of these, 10 were secular priests, 6 seminarists, 8 Brothers of the Christian Schools, 3 Passionists, 3 Paulists, 2 Jesuits and 1 a Carmelite. The oldest was 71 and the youngest, a seminarist, only 16. Most of these murders were premeditated, and in certain cases, were carried out in an incredibly cruel way. Numerous priests and religious, including Brothers from other communities in Asturias, were able to escape and take refuge with friendly families or flee to the mountains. In addition to this, 17 churches were destroyed, 7 of these at Oviedo, the regional capital, and 10 in various other places.

The Brothers of Turon

Turon is a small mining town near the valley of the Aller, some 20 kilometres from Oviedo, and 6 kilometres from Mieres, another mining town, but much larger. For some time, the Brothers had been running 12 free schools in the area. Of these, some –those at Mieres, Ujo and Bustiello– were very near Turon. Most of their pupils were the children of miners. At Turon, there were 8 Brothers, one of whom worked in the kitchen. Four of them were under 26 years old. The Director, who was the oldest, was 46. Six of them had been at Turon for a year, one 6 months, and another only 20 days.

The local socialists, communists and Freemasons had already attacked the school on several occasions because of the apostolic work and the Christian training that the Brothers were giving to the children and young people, not only during class but also after. It was their greatest ambition to destroy this good work.

Imprisonment of the Brothers

The Turon revolutionary committee began its work at midnight, October 4th. By 5 o'clock next morning, the manager and the management personnel of the Turon coal mine were all in detention. At 6 o'clock, the three local priests were arrested, and shortly afterwards a number of persons whose Catholic convictions were well known.

The Brothers had got up and were getting ready to start their community prayers. With them there was Fr. Inocencio,

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a Passionist from Mieres, who had come the day before to hear the pupils' confessions and to prepare them for the first Friday of the month. The sister-in-law of one of the arrested priests ran over to the Brothers immediately to warn them that the revolution had started and that they had imprisoned the priests. Her advice to the Brothers was to leave as soon as possible, as they would be coming for them also. That is what she said to the Brother who was preparing the altar in chapel for Mass. He went up immediately to warn the other Brothers. Somewhat scared, they decided to have Fr. Inocencio say Mass immediately, and to do whatever was necessary afterwards.

They had reached the offertory when they heard shouting at the school entrance. A group of revolutionaries, armed with rifles, were banging on the door, demanding to be let in. Seeing what was happening, the priest suggested they consume the sacred species in the tabernacle so as to avoid any profanation, and this they did. Meanwhile, the shouting and the banging was still going on. One of the Brothers went to open the door, and the leader of the group said they wanted to search the house for weapons. The Brother replied that he would go and speak to the Director, but the whole group pushed its way in and began searching all the classrooms. Then they went upstairs to where the Brothers were already in their rooms. They made them come out and searched everything thoroughly. They did not find any of things they were looking for, but only the list of members belonging to the Catholic Youth group which met at the school. This did not prevent them from doing a fair amount of damage during the course of their search. When they had finished, they told the Brothers they were under arrest, and without allowing them to take anything with them, led them off to what was called "The People's House" where they met other people who had been arrested earlier.

Their imprisonment lasted four days. The first day, they were left alone in a room and were given nothing to eat. The following day, food was brought to them: it had been prepared outside at the expense of the Director of the "Hulleras" factory. The three priests joined them in their room. From the very outset, the Brothers had realised they were going to be killed. There were moments, however, when they still hoped they would be set free.

They spent their time in prayer, either together or by themselves. On the third day, convinced they were going to die, they made their confession to the priests. In the meantime, close by, the revolutionary committee made the decision to kill them. One of the leaders, who got on well with the parish priest, objected to killing the local priests. The sentence was to have been carried out the following day, but various revolutionary activities prevented this, and they had to wait an extra day. That evening, two revolutionary leaders came to "see how the prisoners were getting on". Among other things, they wanted to know if the Brothers' cook was also a religious or only an employee.

The martyrdom

October 8th came to an end and they lay down to sleep on the ground as they had done the previous nights. The Brothers had kept their serenity much to the astonishment of their guards. At one o'clock in the morning, two leaders came into the room and ordered them out so they could be taken to the front. However, they made them leave all their things behind. They took them out into the street, and they found themselves facing a group of revolutionaries with their rifles trained on them. They were joined by two other prisoners, policemen from Oviedo. The leader of the revolutionaries, Silverio Castañon, asked them if they knew where they were going. One of the Brothers answered: "Wherever you like. We're ready for anything." "Well, you're going to die", the leader replied. He ordered them to start moving, and they made their way to the cemetery. The two policemen went first, then the Brothers followed by Fr. Inocencio. The execution squad followed behind.

The evening before, a trench had been dug in the cemetery. It was nine metres long and quite deep. There had been rain on the preceding days. That night it was quite cold. On their way there they did not talk: they prepared themselves for the sacrifice. It took them ten minutes to reach the gates of the cemetery. They were locked. The leader sent someone from the village to go and find the gravedigger who arrived a few minutes later with the key.

The squad leader told the Brothers to line up in front of the trench. Facing them stood the squad of armed men with their weapons aimed at them. The order to fire was given. There were two volleys, and then the leader and his second-in-command went around finishing them off with their pistols. Someone finished the Director off with a sledge-hammer and his head was separated from the body. The corpses were thrown into the trench and the gravedigger was forced to fill it in with earth. Then the group of revolutionaries returned to the village.

The other prisonner heard the volleys and realised the sacrifice had been offered. It was the morning of October 9th 1934.

Witnesses to Christ

From the very beginning, everyone considered the Brothers and Fr. Inocencio to be true martyrs. The only reason why they were murdered was because they were religious. Everyone was quite clear about this, including their murderers.

The evidence gathered for the beatification cause is incontrovertible. The revolutionary leader who was arrested after these events said, when he was in prison, that, when they were being taken to the cemetery, "they walked with much recollection and prayed to prepare themselves for their sacrifice", and that "they showed much determination and courage". An eye-witness of the execution and a fellow prisoner made a written statement, saying: "he did not hear them complain at any time or say anything, both on the way from the People's House to the cemetery as well as during their execution by firing squad or while waiting for the coup de grace". He added that "their death was the work of a number of villains, because the local people would never have allowed their children's teacher to be murdered, and that is why they did it at night, forcing those who had to execute them".

Here are the names of the martyrs: Brother Cirilo Beltran (46), Marciano Jose (33), Julian Alfredo (31), Victorino Pio (29), Benjamin Julian (25), Augusto Andres (24), Benito de Jesus (23), Aniceto Adolfo (22) and Fr. Inocencio de la Inmaculada (47). The remains of the Brothers were transferred to Bujedo on February 26th 1935.

The District of Valladolid has recently published a detailed account of these events as well as a biography of these martyrs in a very well documented book entitled "Testigos de la Escuela cristiana - Mártires de la revolución de Asturias". It contains 487 pages of text and illustrations and is the work of Brother Pedro Chico González. Copies of the book can be obtained from the Valladolid District Secretary, Arcas Reales s/n, 47008 Valladolid. Spain.

Brother José María Valladolid

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OUR WORK OF FOSTERING VOCATIONS

As the one responsible for fostering vocations in the District of Quebec, I should like to tell you what the vocations situation is like here, describing some of the difficulties we experience, and the efforts we make, with faith and hope, in spite of the lack of candidates.

Fostering vocations in a difficult situation.

Because of our social and religious situation we feel a certain unease when it comes to recruiting vocations. Families in Quebec, ever fewer in number, are being destroyed as they struggle with separation and divorce. The fall in birth-rate is becoming more and more noticeable. Religious practice has its ups and downs, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of charismatic groups and others, and spiritual renewal centres. Our young people are the victims of our society and live in a difficult situation dominated by unemployment, suicide, and selfishness. As for us Brothers, our average age is high, and fewer and fewer of us work in schools. And so the age gap between us and students grows steadily wider, and the reality is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to establish contact. Perhaps we no longer dare to offer them a challenge. At times we feel incapable of speaking about ourselves, of suggesting to others the ideal which has inspired our own lives for so long. In short, we are asking ourselves questions about our visibility, our witness and our presence among young people. The least one can say is that fostering vocations is for us a very complex business, difficult to come to grips with and assess in our Quebec context.

Are we then in a hopeless situation?

In the depths of our heart we all ask the same questions: Lord, what do you want me to do? We know that prayer is a priority, and we are making a great effort in this area. At the level of our local communities, we notice that the novena for vocations from the 16th to the 25th has returned. Several Brothers say the rosary privately for the intention of good vocations. In our own community of St. Joseph's, sick and retired Brothers join together in their prayers and sufferings for this same intention. During the course of the year many Masses are said.

We have to remember that the Lord's call comes by way of intermediaries, through us. Our apostolic work, in all its diversity, produces no vocations: inter-District secondary schools, remedial work centres for truants, pastoral centres which work with thousands of youngsters each year seeking to strengthen their faith, halfway houses for young people and families in trouble, etc. What is there still missing in what we do? We must find a solution. Yes, but what solution? Should we consolidate or try out something new? These questions are a constant part of our lives. And we cannot ignore the call to conversion made by our Superior General (January 1987).

The contribution made by our District.

The contribution made by our District in the area of fostering vocations is quite remarkable:

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last July, a two day special Chapter was held, devoted to the fostering of vocations in our District, and to which outside speakers came to share their experience and suggestions. Of the 30 or so who took part, a good dozen were prepared to express their views in a short talk lasting between 5 and 10 minutes. Workshop sessions enabled all to say what they thought and to speak of their involvement. Of the decisions reached, the following are worth noting:

«That the inter-District school of Mont Benilde be a special place where young people have suggested to them the idea of following a vocation, especially the vocation of a Brother of the Christian Schools».

«That a team of Brothers, based on the community of Villa des Jeunes (a pastoral centre), be entrusted with the task of running youth groups with a view to forming a group of young people committed to a deeper spiritual involvement».

«That all Brothers, associating themselves with the efforts being made to find vocations for the District, show their solidarity by prayer, by the proclamation of the Word, and by the personal witness of a successful life».

A vocations committee, made up of 8 Brothers, with the Vocations Director as chairman, holds regular meetings for the purpose of thinking about the needs of young people, about how to make contact with them, about how to make Brothers more aware of their mission and make them concerned about vocations. The committee also seeks to make concrete proposals. The main concern of the committee is on the witness level: young people need guides and witnesses; they need someone to introduce them to a Jesus who is close and personal. Our communities must open their doors to these youngsters and welcome them, because it is by showing them the way that we will find ours.

I should like to mention also the contribution made by the Vicar General, Brother Genaro, and General Councillor Brother Martin Corral, at a meeting with the members of the District vocations team. After a general survey of our vocations situation, our own study of it and our commitment, our distinguished visitor said they were edified by the serious efforts made in our District, taking into account the social and religious situation in Quebec. «The wealth and easy-going ways of Quebec society do not encourage your young people to make personal, Christian or vocational commitments», they said. In conclusion, they invited us to challenge the Brothers, to make them more aware of the mission of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, to make specific appeals to young people, and to continue to pray, because it is all God's work.

One final word.

«We are therefore convinced that, if you are full of zeal to work with these young people, if you are available to help them organise themselves, then God will have some really astonishing results in store for you». (Br. Superior General, Reunion, April 1987).

May Blessed Brother Scubilion obtain labourers for the harvest!

Brother Marcel Deshaies

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PERSPECTIVE OF A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR IN A SCIENCE CLASSROOM

The perspective that I'm going to take on this topic is a Lasallian perspective. What would it have meant to the Founder to be a religious educator? First, he had a very strong belief that God was at the center of who he was and what he did. As evidence of this, he wrote:

«The spirit of the Institute is first a spirit of faith which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God and to attribute all to God.»

This is a fundamental thing that comes to us from the Founder, that all depends on Divine Providence. It's all God's plan. He writes:

«God is so good that he not only brings us into existence by His act of creation, but also desires that all of us come to the knowledge of truth.»

If God is at the center of my life, then all of my activity should be an opportunity for knowing Him better. It should be contemplative. This is one of the things that the Founder saw about the school which we sometimes tend to forget, that a school can be a place where contemplation is possible.

As evidence of this, we see that the Founder insisted that meditation was essential to the Brother's life. Also, the Founder had classes stopped every half hour so that students could remember that they were in God's presence by one student announcing. «Live Jesus in our hearts, forever.» This half-hour reminder stressed the concept that God is the center of all things.

From the **Management of Christian Schools** we read:

«It is the duty of a good master to inspire his pupils with a relish for and a habit of prayer and to induce them to form the custom of having recourse to God in the different circumstances of life and above all, in their personal trials and family afflictions. Every half hour a pupil should say aloud, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God." The exercises will be immediately suspended and the pupils and masters should recollect themselves for the space of an "Ave Maria". These prayers are useful to the master by helping him to renew to attention both towards himself and to the presence of God. They are useful to the pupils by habituating them to think of God from time to time during the day.»

* *

The next thing that was a fundamental belief was that in promoting the dignity of persons and the pursuit of truth, the Christian School can be a place where God is experienced. Where human persons are the center, where truth is the center, God is experienced. There is no separation or division there. The **Declaration** states:

«The day-to-day human experiences and the discovery of the secrets of the universe are presented there with their own inherent values. This, in turn, gives rise to question about the ultimate meaning of things that are charged with hidden and unnoticed potential. In their educational activity, the Brothers seek to integrate the effort for human development with the announcement of God's word. They are convinced that any education that respects the human person is a way to open people to God's grace and so dispose them to accept the faith.» So there is that connection between the human and the divine and where human persons are respected, there God can be found.

It is important to realize that the founder did have a kind of conversion experience that led him to the schools and it may be very different from our reasons to come to the schools. Because you decided you wanted to be a science teacher you looked for a school that would hire you and now you are at this place to talk about what that school is about and what it is like. However, the Founder set up a whole life-view which

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had to do with the fact that God was the center of it. From there, he took the natural step to found the schools. Although we come to the school for different reasons, once we are here some important things can happen if we reflect on some of the truths and traditions that precede us.

These truths and traditions are what distinguish a Lasallian school. For an educator, at least for the religious educator teaching in a Lasallian school, it is important to realize what it is that is different about our schools.

The Founder talked from the very beginning about the fact our schools were conducted together and by association. This is an important value. The Brothers were to work together and assist each other. The schools were even built in such a way that the Brothers could look down at any time and see the other Brothers teaching. The highlight of my teaching, over the years, has been the times when I have worked with other people for the students. However, often our schools are divided into all sorts of ways that isolate teachers.

* *

Another characteristic was the special attention given to the poor. The Founder writes:

«You know that your duty requires you to instruct the poor. Endeavor to imitate this same kindness towards them and strive to overcome the promptings of nature when they suggest that you should more consideration for the rich than for the poor.»

Many times, it is the rich student, the one who has a little more intelligence, the one who looks better or is more talented, to which we gravitate. But it is the poor student that we need to give the special attention since this is a characteristic of our schools.

* *

A third characteristic was that the schools were gratuitous. The reason for this comes from the Founder's understanding of the gospel. When the students came to him they were all to be equal. There was to be no preference for anybody who had more money.

Obviously we cannot run free schools today. But we must not look like we are favoring the rich because they can pay tuition. We cannot have activities in the school that cater only to the rich. The Founder's way of dealing with this problem was to take money from anyone except those he was teaching.

* *

Another characteristic of the early schools was that the Founder perfected the simultaneous method of teaching. But there was an emphasis on the individual. The Founder emphasized having knowledge about the individual and developed a system whereby detailed files were kept on each student. From the very beginning, there was to be an emphasis on the individual's needs, his special ways of learning.

Also, the school was to be a formative place. It was not just a place to teach reading, writing, or religion, but it was where the whole student was formed.

The school was to be counter-cultural in the sense that it was based on the gospel. Then, as today, the school was to stand for real values and not values simply gleaned from elsewhere.

* *

Finally the school was characterized by a spirit of faith and zeal. The **Declaration** states:

«The Brother is totally immersed in the life of the students. He shares their interests, their worries, their hopes. He is not so much a school-master instilling a set of teachings as he is an older brother or sister who helps them to be aware of what the spirit is speaking within themselves, what their own abilities are, and little by little, how they may discover their true place in the world.»

In the Lasallian school the teacher is a sister, a brother, to her/his students and that is the kind of thing that characterizes her/his relationship with them.

As science teachers it is important that you know your subject matter very well and that you know the Church's stand on issues such as biogenetics, etc. You also have to be able to tell students when you have a problem with an issue; when you, yourself, have not completely resolved or sorted through an issue. I think it is legitimate to tell students that, «This is not something I have the answers to yet either». Since you are leading students to make informed decisions based on their consciences, you have to make available to them appropriate information, such as the Church's teachings.

One of the mistakes that young people make is that they want easy answers to everything. I don't think that is possible, especially in the world of science. But, you have to be able to tell them clearly what the Catholic Church teaches.

Brother Thomas Jones

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LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY,

A LIBERATING PEDAGOGY (1/2)

Introduction.

As a point of information before starting to examine this subject: while one can consider pedagogy on three levels –as an art, as a science and as a philosophy– it is only as a philosophy that it will concern us in this article.

What we wish to do, then, is to consider its aims in all their principal forms.

It is obvious that every philosophy owes much to its historical context. It is consequently hardly surprising to find that the writings of De La Salle in themselves do not provide answers for all the questions which arise at the end of the 20th century.

Our task, therefore, confronted by a constantly changing world, will be to examine closely the spirit and intentions of De La Salle so as to be able to determine what Lasallian pedagogy should be at the present time.

We might perhaps summarise it by the three letters of the alphabet by which we are known in the Church: F.S.C.: Faith, Service, Communion.

We see a connection between "Service" and "Purpose", between "Communion" and "Means"; and finally we see "Faith" as leading to "Witness" and an "Ecclesial Dimension", and being connected with "Basic Foundation".

I. PURPOSE:
Service, Mission of the Lasallian school.

"The purpose of this Institute..." (Rule 1, 3) is the Lasallian way of expressing the basic message of the Gospel: "Proclaim Jesus Christ".

On analysis, this purpose has four main characteristics: human education, Christian education, for young people especially the poor, as a part of the Church.

A. Human education.

This can be viewed from various angles. Eighteen years of my life spent among impoverished immigrants from North Africa and Turkey have made me aware of its "liberating" aspect.

Without going any more deeply into the "why", let us limit ourselves to some brief comments which answer the question "how" and which pinpoint some of the characteristics of a Lasallian school.

1. A Lasallian school should be characterised by the fact that it makes its students actively **responsible** for their own development. They have to learn how to be involved in their own education and develop social responsibility. To achieve this, they should be given an active role to play in class. (cf. Rule 13 b)

The pupil is not an **object** which receives, which is someone's idea, which is ignorant of everything. He is rather the one who thinks, who searches, discovers, creates, plays an active part in his own development. (cf. Paolo Freire)

All this necessarily implies a certain teacher-taught relationship: it is not one between someone who knows everything and badly misunderstands the idea of authority, and another person who knows nothing: it is a relationship of communion and brotherhood. (cf. below)

2. With regard to what is taught, a Lasallian school takes care to prepare its students to take their place in present-day society and in that of the future. (cf. Decl. 45)

This implies constant adaptation to society as it evolves but without losing a critical spirit.

Moreover, we should remember that what is taught is not simply a body of knowledge, but also and perhaps principally, values that are the foundation of the education of the whole person.

3. A third aspect of this human education, which is more rarely stressed, is that a Lasallian school is where pupils are taught to be active agents not only in their own education, but also in "social transformation".

School has a political role to play in the sense of "acting on society". As Maurice Bellet wrote: "Educating people is what, in the final analysis, changes the course of things most profoundly".

This reflects the nature of the Lasallian school. There are numerous passages in Chapter documents which support this same idea. (Cf. Decl. p. 48, 3; 45...).

De La Salle himself challenged the society of his day by actions which appeared revolutionary at the time.

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The school will contribute to the transformation of society by promoting and defending certain values, even if they go against those of contemporary society.

We can give a few examples of this: respect for the poor; solidarity rather than competitiveness and rivalry; team-spirit rather than individualism: promoting the good of the group rather than that of the individual, for this latter course closes a pupil in on himself and prevents him from being open to others, by encouraging his greed for goods and power (cf. Michel Sauvage, p. 354); a critical spirit. (cf. Rule, 13 c)

This last value deserves special mention. We must realise that, unless we are careful, the school becomes part of society: it begins to reflect it and its current models of behaviour.

These latter, however, are not always compatible with Gospel values, which are the only valid criteria for a Christian and, therefore, a Lasallian school.

Another value that needs to be promoted is justice. While the 1966 Chapter stated that being faithful to the specific intentions of the Founder clearly meant adopting a preferential option for the poor, the 1976 Chapter spoke of "fighting for justice", and the 1986 Chapter, in article 14 of the Rule, says that Brothers should "become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide."

B. Christian education.

We are dealing here with something that is absolutely fundamental to our mission.

"Christian education" immediately makes one think of prayer and religion lessons, and this is as it should be.

The Christian school is a school where Christian doctrine is taught, where people pray or, rather, are taught to pray, that is, to live intimately with a person, that of Jesus Christ.

The Christian school and, therefore, the Lasallian school is a school whose whole life, at every moment of the day, should consist in living out the teachings of the Good News in the presence of Jesus. And this Good News is that we are all certainly saved and risen with Him, and that its key-word is love.

If we do not love others, all our prayers and eucharistic celebrations are nothing more than lies.

– A school is not Christian if it shunts to the back of the class the child that hasn't the first clue about anything, or one who is a thundering nuisance and who gets on our nerves.

– A school is not Christian if people are prepared to live in a state of conflict: pupils with pupils, pupils with teachers, teachers with teachers, teachers with the headmaster, etc.

– A school is not Christian if it automatically expels a pupil for some infringement of school regularions, without trying to discover the reason for it, and without caring about what will happen to that pupil.

– A school is not Christian if it does not respect the personal dignity of others.

C. Especially of the poor (cf. Med. 80, 3; Announcing the Gospel to the Poor, p. 44-45).

If the Founder was adamant about making his schools free, and so changing the schools of his day, it was to ensure they would be accessible to all children, not only to children of well-off families, but to the "children of the artisans and the poor".

The question as to who are the poor today is answered in Circular 412.

There are perhaps two categories of underprivileged persons we should look at more closely.

There are those we dismissively call "dunces": a teacher who really loved them would find means to help them to make the most of what abilities they had.

And then there are in industrialised countries the social misfits, among whom we must include the children of the most recent immigrants, the refugees. This area deserves some serious study but is beyond the scope of this article.

We can conclude by making the following observation: a lot is said about the "democratisation of teaching", but to talk is not enough: we must act. Solutions do exist but they are not always made use of.

Brother Philippe Stienlet

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LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY, A LIBERATING PEDAGOGY (2/2)

II. MEANS: Communion, Association, Brotherhood.

Another aspect of the Lasallian school is that of communion, which implies association and brotherhood.

A. Association.

The Lasallian educational programme is implemented "together and by association" by Brothers and lay people, who are aware of the historical inspirational qualities of the legacy of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

From the very first years of working with his teachers, De La Salle realised that, to meet the needs of poor children efficiently, there had to be total commitment on the part of the teachers, and all had to work together, thus ensuring continuity of schooling.

For Lasallian teachers, working together and by association means not only following the same educational programme, but considering themselves partners in its implementation, responsible for its success and personally committed to its fulfilment.

This willingness to be associated is translated into concrete terms by a common acceptance of human and evangelical values, a desire to live according to them, and to encourage others to do so also.

It is shown by behaviour and attitudes in everyday life. Conflicts can arise. This is human and fortunate, because it is a sign of life. Conflict is enriching as long as it is faced up to and resolved.

B. Brotherhood.

The second aspect of communion is the atmosphere of friendliness or brotherhood to be found in a Lasallian school.

Whereas in French schools, before the 18th century, personal relations were strongly influenced by authority, discipline and recourse to punishment, in his schools, De La Salle seems to have tried to change this situation by reconciling the need for order, so that work can be done, with respect, amiability and friendliness in relations.

The Meditations often speak of "touching the hearts of pupils", and of "loving them tenderly".

The Lasallian school, faithful to its origins, tries to create and promote an atmosphere of friendly relations among all the members of the educational community.

Is it not this atmosphere that makes people return again and again to Lasallians schools?

III. BASIC FOUNDATION: Faith.

How can we live according to our faith as Christian teachers?

If founders of orders based their spirituality on some specific virtue, for De La Salle this virtue was the Spirit of Faith.

Based on the Spirit of Faith and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Lasallian spirituality is christocentric.

We have now moved into the area of Christology. This can perhaps be seen from different points of view depending on geographical location, historical period and sociological context. Most recent writing on the subject tales into account a whole range of complementary factors which enable us to gain some idea of what Jesus did.

This brings us to the idea of a "liberating" Jesus:

«Too often we would look for a comforting tranquilliser in a personal image of Christ. This enables us to put to one side questions affecting common humanity, while all the while surrounded by a sea of misery and massive unemployment, and to find a sense of security in our religious practices». (Tissa Balasuriya, "Jesus-Christ et la libération humaine")

No one can deny that Christ opted for personal freedom.

In a Roman society that was sick, full of inequality and exploitation, he preached personal human dignity. There are innumerable situations in the Gospel where there was a clash of values, and where he chose those that promoted the dignity and freedom of the individual.

But if Jesus came to promote personal freedom by freeing people from all their interior blockages and their source, personal sin; he showed by his actions that he was likewise opposed to another type, namely, collective sin.

In a society in which social conformism was the rule, he had the courage to question values that held sway and which crushed poor and unimportant people.

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Jesus called upon people to make a clear choice of God and justice rather than money and greed. (cf. Lk. 16).

Henceforward, witnessing to the Gospel is not possible without at the same time undertaking to remove the obstacles to the values preached by Christ. This brings us back to the Rule, article 14.

IV. WITNESS.

If our communities are communities of faith, they will quite naturally bear witness to this.

If the sociological context of past centuries explains why evangelisation came to be thought of as active transmission of propaganda, even as external pressure, the pluralist world in which we live must make us revise totally our ways of thinking in this matter.

While we do not have to create separate religious groups for their own sake, we do have to remain within the human community, within a specific Christian community.

The question is to know how to live within it, not separately but likewise not swallowed up by it.

We do not have to be a Church of silence, forgetful of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, we must bear witness to an explicit faith in Jesus Christ.

One of the fundamental questions, and one that can sometimes cause anguish, is how to suggest to others to seek Jesus Christ who is our life, while respecting fully their liberty, and in a way that enables them to make a free choice.

V. THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION.

How should our educational communities be the Church, build the Church?

It has been rightly said of the Founder that he had a "prophetic vision" of a renewed Church.

The first Brothers were led to be constantly aware of the importance of their work in the Church.

«Consider that you are working in your ministry for the building of the Church through your teaching of the children whom God has entrusted to your care.» (MTR, 8.1)

But if De La Salle presents the Church as being at the same time mystical, christological and spiritual (cf. Sauvage and Campos), he shows it also at the same time to be part of human reality and therefore sinful.

In Meditation 205, he urges the Brothers to make it holy and to "purify" it with the word of life.

De La Salle knows that for it to become credible it must divest itself of its privileges, honours, possessions, culture, in a word, of all that prevents it from being the spouse of the One who was despised and poor, and whose only concern was for the Kingdom of his Father.

Our love for the Church must go so far as to make us dare to denounce by silent or even vocal opposition certain unjust situations, structures and methods that it supports even if it is only by its silence.

Let us not end, however, on a rather negative note: rather let us rejoice at all the things that makes her a spouse worthy of the Master.

Let us remember the true witnesses to the Gospel, Proagno, Romero, and all those thousands of priests, men and women religious and lay people who have been imprisoned and tortured because they had taken up the defence of the unimportant people who are crushed by regimes who betray the name of Christian.

CONCLUSION.

A commited community, one that has a critical spirit, a community of faith, bearing witness to the faith, an ecclesial community, will find its fulfilment in the liberating sacrament, par excellence, the Eucharist; the sacrament which authenticates a coming together for a great cause, that of the liberation of the world.

«Jesus Christ unites himself to you in holy communion in order to transform you into himself, so that you thus form but one heart and soul with him, and his interior disposition become your own». (Med. 54. 3)

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THE APOSTOLIC ROLE OF THE LAY TEACHER IN THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL

In establishments run by religious, the lay teacher is not simply a helper. He is above all a Christian who has a vocation to be a teacher: he offers his services to his pupils to help them become men and, because they are believers, to give them a more complete education.

WHAT THE PRESENT-DAY CHURCH CALLS FOR

1. The Church has now left behind that period of history in which the religious school was considered to be a substitute: it no longer sees it as being competitive either. What the Church calls for at the present time is a presence in education which is a witness to its message of salvation, and which serves the spiritual needs of people.

The lay teacher must be aware of his role as a believer who gives pupils that come to him a human and Christian education.

To the extent that his faith is vigorous and well-founded, he will feel it his duty to use it in the service of the believers he is educating.

2. As a baptised person and a believer, the lay teacher is in a position which is not radically different from that of other teachers who have consecrated themselves to the service of the Church and the Gospel by their religious profession.

His basic apostolate is to give what he has: culture, service, help and faith also.

3. The Church, as a community established by Christ, and we do not mean only its Magisterium and hierarchy, calls upon its members with insistence to acquit themselves of their duty to proclaim salvation to all men.

Aware of his baptismal character, the lay teacher is convinced that he is a herald announcing the message of salvation in the school in which he works. He announces this message by the sincerity of his speech, the witness of his life, and by collaborating with other Christians in the school, whose work is inspired by the same ideal.

4. He is sensitive to the spiritual needs of the Christians around him who are receiving a human and spiritual education. It is among them that he becomes fully aware of his baptismal and evangelical duty as a responsible Christian and, above all, as an influential teacher.

5. At no point, consequently, does he feel that he is simply a helper of more commited Christians, like the religious he works with. He is, like them, responsible for the evangelical and spiritual training of his pupils.

If he teaches religion, he is faithful to the message he carries. If he does not, he realises all the same that his work as a teacher of other subjects must be inspired by Christ's message of salvation. He looks upon science, history, literature, art and crafts with the eyes of a believer. He is not content simply not to take a rationalist, pragmatic or naturalist point of view: he offers his pupils teaching that takes into account the existence of Providence and the spiritual world.

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THE DEMANDS OF THE LASALLIAN CHARISM

If the lay teacher, working in an establishment inspired by the spirituality and educational approach of St. John Baptist de La Salle, has an open and understanding attitude, he will be encouraged by this very fact to become more aware of certain values that are a part of the Lasallian charism:

* a special awareness of his poorest pupils (the clumsy, lonely, problematic, hurt, ungifted and underprivileged);

* closer personal and affectionate relationships with each of his pupils;

* justice and fairness in assessment of work, as well as of behaviour and reaction;

* a practical and open approach to discussion about teaching methodology and content of courses;

* unshakeable fidelity to the spiritual and educational directives laid down by the hierarchy of the Church;

* willingness to work as part of a community, and an ability to share problems, efforts and work;

* a sense of responsibility with regard to tasks entrusted to him, and a sense of subsidiarity and collaboration.

The lay teacher working in a Lasallian school must attach much importance to doctrinal orthodoxy, openness towards the Church, sacramental life, devotion to Our Lady, fidelity to the spirit of Christianity, and the practice of the social virtues.

The Lasallian charism calls upon him to have the threefold spirit which the Founder of the Christian Schools and Heavenly Patron of all teachers wanted for his schools:

– a deep spirit of faith which sees God in the everyday events of life and history;

– a burning zeal for the salvation of pupils, helping them to turn their minds and hearts to God by the Christian training he gives them;

– a great awareness of the Christian community, which makes disinterested collaboration possible when giving this training.

The lay teacher at a Lasallian school is always prepared to learn more, to improve himself on a personal and professional level. He realises, in fact, the great responsibility given him, and he knows that he will not be able to do justice to it if he takes refuge in laziness, routine, and the expedient way-out.

This concern for continuing his training encourages him to work hard in the field of religious studies and teaching methodology, and to acquire the ability which is essential for relating to pupils. This demands much effort from him and sometimes involves sacrifices, but one element of the charism of John Baptist de La Salle is a strong and constant desire for improvement, and a willingness to be generous with one's time, ideas and signs of solidarity.

THE PERSON OF SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

He is not the exclusive heritage of a religious institution or a religious congregation.

The lay teacher in a school inspired by Saint John Baptist de La Salle should be aware of his providential value, and should share in an up-to-date and creative implementation of an ecclesial charism which goes far beyond a simple, passing devotion.

He must do all he can to get know this Church figure, his educational insights and especially his apostolic and catechetical inspiration which set a new trend in Christian education.

Sharing in this ecclesial wealth will give him a clearer idea of his own identity, while at the same time ensuring that his work as a teacher procures for him the happiness of fulfilling a noble mission. What is even more important is the fact of providing his pupils with an education marked by a true evangelical spirit and one that is full of spiritual meaning.

Brother Pedro Chico.

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A PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF A LASALLIAN LAY TEACHER

HIS WORK AS A TEACHER

1. He does all he can to be competent as a cultured person and as a teacher. He studies.

2. He is sensitive where justice is concerned with regard to both pupils and his colleagues in school. He goes so far as to claim for them what is best not only from an economic point of view, but also and especially from one that is moral, cultural and even spiritual.

3. He shows solidarity, willingness to work with others, responsibility and commitment (in acts rather than in words).

4. He tries to have relationships in school that are characterised by closeness, a family spirit, elegance and cordiality.

5. His approach to his profession is enthusiastic and joyful. He makes his vocation bear fruit through his efforts and conscientious attitude.

6. He realises that he is his pupils' teacher even when he is not all the time with them.

7. He shows concern for his own self-improvement, seeing in it the means of ensuring that his teaching is more professional and up to standard.

8. He is wary of theories and utopias, especially where fundamentals are concerned, because he is convinced that it is important for a teacher to be practical and concrete.

9. He is always spontaneous and bright, doing all he can to win his pupils' confidence, and ensuring his influence over them rather by his love of teaching than by exorbitant demands.

10. He is always studying. He is prepared to learn by experience all he needs to know in order to do his job properly as a teacher.

HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. He tries to increase his faith as a Christian by his own continuing formation and by putting into practice evangelical and Church criteria.

2. As a believer, he reads the Word of God frequently, seeking nourishment for his soul, avoiding all subjectivism, and following the guidelines of the Church found in the pronouncements of the Magisterium.

3. He shows great respect for the conscience of others, while developing his own.

4. He prays often and pursues his favourite devotions. Above all he develops his baptismal life by means of the sacraments.

5. Among all his other various and worthwhile devotions, he finds his greatest pleasure in his devotion to the Mother of God, the teacher of her Son.

6. In all the events of his life, he sees the hand of God who is always close to man.

7. He values professional virtues, especially charity, justice, patience, strength, joy, etc.

8. He always has a positive attitude towards life, towards events and people, even when he has to confront them.

9. In his own life he sets a high value on sincerity so that his personal witness may have a very strong impact on his pupils.

10. He often meditates in his heart on the person of Christ: he should become his principal source of inspiration, since he is the model of all teachers who have a heart. As a teacher full of faith he imitates Christ.

HIS APOSTOLIC ZEAL

1. He is aware of his responsibilities as a teacher, and considers his work as an evangelical service that he must offer with enthusiasm.

2. He gives disinterested help to the most needy, and sound advice to the lonely, the afraid, those with no will power, and the friendless.

3. He is always attentive to the spiritual needs of others, and he provides them with enough light and strength to overcome the temptations, dangers and obstacles that surround them.

4. He always manages to find the best ways of doing good: he gives advice and encouragement; he leads

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people to forgive and understand; he offers criteria inspired by the Gospel.

5. By the witness of his life he demonstrates in what direction good lies: he teaches how to pray; he encourages the frequentation of the sacraments; he points out criteria for just behaviour; he offers solutions to problems; he is constantly pointing the way to the Gospels.

6. He gives of himself unstintingly, even at great personal cost, when someone near him, whoever he may be, needs his help.

7. He always gives freely what he has received freely, for he realises that God's gifts are free.

8. He does not become discouraged at apparent failure, for he understands that, in the eyes of God, there are no failures when what is done is done in his name.

9. He is always prepared to face new situations, without being over attached to persons, places or resources.

10. He thanks God often for having chosen him for the important work of Christian education. He sees his profession as a sublime gift which marks him as someone specially chosen by God.

HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE CHURCH

1. He realises and feels that he belongs to the Church, and he follows faithfully the directives that come to him with the authority of the Magisterium.

2. He studies with great interest the documents and instructions of the Church, so that they become for him the norms for his conduct and, especially, a source of inspiration.

3. He takes pains to ensure his pupils feel what it means to belong to the Church, and he tries to make them go beyond the stage of seeing it only in sociological terms.

4. He defends the Church of Jesus with objectivity and sincerity, without glossing over, however, the mistakes that individuals or institutions may have committed.

5. By all the means at his disposal, he seeks to deepen his knowledge and love of the Church. He tries likewise to make his pupils share his own convictions and feelings.

HIS LASALLIAN SPIRIT

1. He considers himself fortunate to have been chosen to work in a profession inspired by the charism of John Baptist de La Salle.

2. He tries to increase his knowledge of the spirituality and pedagogical approach of the Founder of the Christian Schools. He acts on the basis of what is to be found there.

3. He feels he is a partner in the work he does and not simply a salaried teacher with no interest in these principles.

4. He works with others as a teacher at a local level, and feels proud at being part of a movement which is truly ecclesial and international.

5. He supports all the undertakings and initiatives that help to spread the work of the Christian Schools, including the fostering of vocations of various sorts to undertake this work.

THE LASALLIAN TEACHER CONSIDERS HIMSELF TO BE A PARTNER IN A CHURCH UNDERTAKING

This Church undertaking transcends time and space.

It transcends time because it is a response to a charism which has inspired an undertaking for 300 years, and which consequently has been approved by the Church for the same length of time.

It transcends the narrow limits of where we live, because it is spread over 5 continents and is to be found in almost all the countries where the Church has taken root. Its international character ensures its catholicity, oecumenism, and its work of evangelisation.

Far from shutting itself up in an impoverishing cliquish mentality, it sees in these two areas of transcendnece a reason to feel even more deeply that it belongs to the Church of Jesus, and to realise that it is committed to work in a specific area, it is true, but with a vocation also to be universal.

Brother Padro Chico

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SHAME AND EVANGELIZATION

At first, the title of this article may seem stange. Nevertheless, when examined, there appears to be a close but harmful relationship between the two as actually practiced. I would like to explore both of these areas and give focus to them in such a way that it will be helpful to deans of discipline, to religion teachers, to the adolescent retreat and encounter facilitator, and in a general way to adults dealing with adolescents. One of the things that has always bothered me in my years of teaching and giving youth retreats and encounters was the resistance by young people to things religious. And yet, when one gets beyond the facade into the person, the hunger for God and the deep spirituality that one finds in young people is awe-inspiring. In spite of this yearning for spirituality, and in many cases a genuine advance and growth in the spiritual life, there still remains a spectrum from hostility to deep suspicion of things religious. I believe that a clue to understanding this phenomenon is the role that shame has played in institutions of evangelization and education as well as the methodology and techniques that are commonly used. As I talk about shame, I would like to put some parameters on the words as I use them.

SHAME is the pain of feeling exposed to oneself or to others as defective, deficient, and flawed; it is the rupture of the self with the self; and it is excruciatingly painful because the self is exposed to the self as failure. This inner torment leads to deep spiritual malaise, which combines a feeling of being basically alone with the sense of absence and emptiness. John Bradshaw calls this **toxic shame** which he distinguishes from **healthy shame. Healthy shame** puts one in touch with one's self, the limitations one has a creature, the need for others, the need for relationship, the need for help. It lets us know that we are not God. Erikson points out the role of shame in the second stage of development. It is healthy when the primary caretaker –in Erikson's framework, the parents– has established trust the child can begin to set his/her own boundaries, learning to hold on and to let go, at different levels of being.

GUILT. Guilt and shame are often confused. Guilt, in a healthy sense, would be the psycho-emotional pain one feels in violating a norm or value that is part of one's moral values system. It can be relieved without any effect on the goodness or the badness of the person. **Toxic shame** in the same situation would respond by saying, "I have done something bad, therefore I am bad."

By the time one deals with school age children or adolescents the healthy based identity elements or the shame-based elements are already in place. What is done in the class can re-enforce the shame-based identity elements or diminish them. The very nature of shame is to keep itself hidden from the self of the shame-based person. The pain is excruciating, as children and adolescents who habitually cry themselves to sleep can testify. There are many shame-inducing procedures and situations within our educational and religious system. Some are blatantly so, others more subtly so. The common shame-inducing forms include: comparison with other children or with brothers, sisters or parents who have been educated previously by the same teacher or in the same institution; inattention or lack of response to the child; ridicule and pointing out defects publicly; abuse –physical, verbal, emotional or sexual; establishing gradations secretly or non-verbally on intelligence, race, economics, or social standing; not answering questions honestly; demanding instant perfection and maturity –either verbally or non-verbally. Less blatant forms are ensconced in "conventional wisdom" and are perhaps most shame-inducing. I would like to mention some very specific ones that are found in the home, the school, the catechism classes, and in unconscious attitudes expressed in conversation, be it in the home or in neighborhood or social gatherings.

1. **Insufficient sharing of the adult's experience of God with the result that everything about God has been converted into doctrine and morals.** The adult's experience of God is seldom shared and is usually substituted for doctrines which are the concrete expressions of past believers' search for God and the significance of Jesus. This verbal relic becomes distasteful for the child because the child lacks the needed sense of history. People's search for understanding of God from past centuries has become the "content of religious teaching" both formal and informal. The vocabulary of the past becomes meaningless (transsubstantiation, hypostatic union) or the present meanings of the vocabulary distort the meaning of the past (person, Father) in such a way as to render the evangelization as totally divorced from reality. The expectation of both adult and institution is that these words be learned rather than their meaning becoming grounded in the experience of the child and the child's nascent experience of God, it causes the child to think that he or she is deficient because these doctrines and moral principles are not understood nor do they relate to the experience of life. As a result, the affective experience of God and religion becomes bound in shame and distaste. I taught religion in a small town in Colombia some years ago. I would present some material in class and the students invariably would be bored, resistant,

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and even hostile. Later we would go out for a coke with a few students, or have a conversation in the plaza and I would say the same things that I said in class the day before, and lively interesting discussions would ensue. I came to see that the shame-bound structures that are associated with religion are to a great number of people very painful and therefore resisted, but life-filled sharing of God and the experience of God holds people's attention.

2. **The sacrament of reconciliation perceived as shameful and invasive.** "Conventional wisdom" would say that the boy or girl who did not go to confession during a retreat or who never went to communion at masses was "hardened". No matter how much teachers, priests, and religious insisted otherwise, at the feeling-conduct level this was the perceived attitude (there were and there still are many places that publicly communicate that this is the case). The "collective experience" of confession has always been bi-polar. One pole would be a certain feeling of relief for having dealt with the guilt, and the other would be the experience of fear and shame in the confessing. Enough people have had negative experiences of confession and are talking about them that on a popular level the use of confession as a means of experiencing reconciliation with God is declining at an astounding rate. Materialism, hedonism, and hardness of heart are the common explanations given for this decline. Yet studies and research indicate that the search for spirituality and for God is stronger than ever at all levels of society. If one uses the formation of 12 Step groups as an index –one that demands "a searching and fearless moral inventory", an "admission of our exact nature of our wrongs to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs"– many of the people who participate in these experiences have found them liberating. Many such participants of these groups are or have been Catholics and have found their life experience of confession shaming by contrast. It would be helpful to us as religious educators to look at what we are doing through the filter of shame in order to see if and how we are distorting the good news of the Gospel, and as a result, leaving people with an experience totally opposite of what we intend in our evangelizing efforts. The Good News of Jesus was indeed very simple and continues as our prime task. It seems that much shame-inducing baggage has been hung on the Gospel completely distorting it and making it a source of pain instead of a source of freedom.

3. **The fusion of Human Sexuality and Morality.** The whole area of human sexuality is indeed surrounded and permeated with **toxic shame** for the majority of human beings, whether its expression be by excess or by defect. Secrecy and a conspiracy of silence rooted in shame surround most children's and adolescents' introduction into this important dimension of human life. The church historically, has evolved into the protector of sexual moral rectitude. As a result, in the popular mind to be religious is to be against sex and sexual expression –and attitude which is not without historical justification, all the protests to the contrary. In many countries morality has come to be coterminous with sexual morality. This fusion of the gospel with moral rectitude and has been disastrous for the Gospel and for healthy sexuality rooted in love and an expression thereof. The heart of the Good News is God's unconditional love for us and the freedom that results from this reconciliation (II Cor. 5:14-6:2). The use of shame to control and deal with sexuality is theme for another essay.

It would be helpful then for us to discover how shame has permeated our evangelization efforts and do what is necessary to reduce the shame within the cultural context of each ethnic group. Evangelization, rightly done, gives people the experience of Jesus' words, "I have come that you may have life – abundant life." (Jn. 10:10)

Brother William McDonald

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CATECHESIS AND JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE'S SCHOOLS

«De La Salle wanted schools that were well-run... He wanted teachers that were skilled in imparting secular and religious knowledge, and able to educate hearts and minds.

His writings:

- The Conduct of Schools,
- The Duties of a Christian to God,
- The Rules of Christian Politeness and Civility,
- Instructions and Prayers

reflect this concern for pastoral care and education.

The Founder was able to see an area of neglect, with all its ramifications –and there lies his genius– and to offer an efficient remedy.

What the Founder of the Brothers wants to raise up are true Christians, true disciples of Jesus Christ. This goes much further than teaching the catechism. It affects a person's whole life».

(Jean Baptiste de La Salle: Le Message de son catéchisme, p. 18, Brother Jean Pungier).

I should like to show in this article how the present-day approach to catechesis in France reflects closely that of John Baptist de La Salle.

1. A CATECHESIS FOR THE PRESENT DAY

Its aims were redefined by the French Bishops' Assembly in Lourdes in October 1979.

This assembly stated its views and laid down guidelines regarding the mission, spirit and requirements of present-day catechesis in an official **Reference Handbook.**

It lays stress on the following points:

– the Christian message and the way it is expresed in the teachings of the Church;

– the cultural and pedagogical situation in which Christian initiation takes place in present-day France.

The catechesis of children is seen as part of their initiation into the Church, and as such it is a particularly heavy responsibility in present circumstances.

Article 31 of the Reference Handbook makes the following statement:

«Teaching catechism implies that there is somewhere where the child can experience the life of the Church.

Teaching catechism gives access to the "documents of the faith" by means of which a man can become part of the Covenant between God and his people.

Teaching catechism has a sacramental structure. Sacraments reveal and are the active gift of God who frees man and makes him share his life.

Teaching catechism leads to conversion *and to a way of life that is transformed by faith.*

Finally, teaching catechism leads to the celebration *of the Christian mystery and to feasts of the faith.»*

John Baptist de La Salle's aim was to "form Christians", who would be "truly" so, "living by the very spirit of Jesus Christ in all things." This is not a small undertaking...

I think this is also our task nowadays. It is not simply a question of imparting knowledge, but of leading children and young people to make a profession of faith as members of a community of faith.

This can be accomplished only if we adapt our teaching methods. We cannot simply use one method or other.

John Baptist de La Salle was well aware of this. That is why he insists on actual Christian experience. He wants to meet "the crying needs of the craftmen and the poor..." He is constantly searching for teaching methods that are perfectly adapted to the Christian message.

And this is exactly what the 1979 Reference Handbook asks of us in article No. 32:

"A religious language that is adapted to our times. An approach which is part of a catechesis that is integrated into the life of the child..."

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2. CATECHESIS - SCHOOL - PARISH

The catechetical renewal in France has helped us to rediscover what makes up a **Christian community,** that is, the place where catechesis takes place, and where the child can discover the real image of the Church.

School or parish? Catechesis? School as part of the Church's pastoral set-up? It is not simply a question of organisation. It rather depends on the existence, dynamism and acceptance by a community of believers.

Our Catholic schools will be credible only if we form real communities of believers. That is, if they are places where young people and adults are recognised and respected as they search for God...

It is important that there should be close cooperation between schools and parishes, in general pastoral terms, and especially as far as as the choice of catechetical texts is concerned, and regarding the training of catechists.

It is not a question of trying to impose uniformity or finding one solution for all problems. I think that schools and parishes should seek a basic consensus together with regard to diocesan pastoral policy and regarding the great differences between various situations.

Let us go further: the responsibility of the school and teachers does not end with catechesis.

What is important, as John Baptist de La Salle points out, is that "the school be well run".

As Christian teachers, we have to question ourselves as a matter of urgency about the way we teach. Does it prepare the way for proclaiming the Gospel? Does it lead our pupils to lead an interior life?

Our schools will be truly Christian if the secular side of our teaching prepares the ground for the acceptance of the Lord and his Word.

We have to make our schools willing to take part in the pastoral work of the local Church.

Let us end by quoting the words of John Baptist de La Salle in his 15th Meditation for the Time of Retreat (3):

«You can expect yet another reward which God will give you in advance in this life if you devote yourselves generously to your duty and, if through zeal and the grace of your state, you know how to strengthen your disciples in the Christian spirit. This is the very special satisfaction you will experience when they grow up and you see them living honourably and reverently, far from any unjust association, and performing good deeds. For the teaching you gave them is not a mere matter of words, but accompanied by a great abundance of grace for those who respond well, which will maintain them in the practice of good. Their perseverance in the faith will be a great cause of joy for you when you call to mind the way they show their faith and the results of the lessons you gave them, realising that this makes them dear to God and places them in the number he has chosen.

What a joy it will be to see that they have received the word of God in your religion lessons not as the word of men but as the word of God powerfully at work within them, which will be apparent in the honourable lives they continue to live.»

Brother Dominique Rustuel

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PRAYERS

OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER (2)

[(1): Cfr. 16-9–C-63]

* * *

3

MINISTER, AMBASSADOR, CO-WORKER...

Lord, our God,
You have reconciled us through Jesus Christ.
His passion and death
Earned salvation for all men.
You invite us to apply to ourselves
The riches of his saving grace.
It is by doing your will that we complete
The work of our salvation.

Jesus, you want us to play our part:
Your plan of salvation becomes complete
When we add our sufferings
To the torment of your cross:
"*I make up in my body*
What is missing in the passion of Christ".

I offer you my services.
I pray to you for my pupils
So that they do what is good
And unite their actions to yours,
Lord Jesus.

I am happy with the mission you have entrusted to me.
I wish to be your ambassador and your minister.
I offer you my hands, my words...
So that you can act through them.
Your Spirit is at work in me
Enlightening the hearts
Of children and young people.

It is not easy, Lord, to bear your message,
But I trust in your help to overcome difficulties,
For I do not seek my own glory,
Only to do your will:
You have the words of eternal life.

Lord, the branch bears fruit
If it is attached to the vine.
We educate
If we are united to you.
For it is you, Lord,
Who give strength and life
To all our efforts.
We ask you to enlighten our lives.
We ask you to make fruitful
The work that we do
In the hearts of children and young people
So that they too may bear fruit
By their love, their service and the good they do.

* * *

4

CO-WORKERS, SHEPHERDS, TEACHERS...

Lord,
You call upon us to plant and to water:
But you make growth possible.

Lord, you are the Good Shepherd,
Who cares for all the sheep,
Especially for those that are weak or go astray.
Teach me to love all the pupils,
Especially those who find it difficult to learn,
Those who misbehave,
Those who have problems at home...
It is you Lord who touch hearts.

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Jesus, you prayed to your Father:
When you performed miracles,
At the close of each day's work,
When undertaking any important task in your life.
Teach us to pray, to trust in God, our Father.
Teach us to love children and young people:
You are the Good Master.

Lord,
Now, just as you did 2.000 years ago,
You choose us to be your co-workers.
You send us out as your ambassadors.
You want us to be your witnesses.
You call upon us to live like you.
We want to proclaim your beatitudes:
"*to be poor in spirit*", "*to be gentle*",
"*to be compassionate*", "*to be merciful*".

You give us the example.
You invite us to love others,
You invite us to pray without ceasing,
You invite us to forgive,
You invite us to do your Father's will.

Lord Jesus, ideal Master,
Teach us to be good Brothers and good teachers.
Show us how to teach
With tenderness and responsibility.

It is not easy
To be your minister and your ambassador.
It takes effort, idealism and determination.
We are here, Lord,
To proclaim your message and your Kingdom.
We are here, Lord,
To live according to your spirit
With children and young people,
We are here, Lord,
To love them all with optimism.
We are here, Lord,
So that you may act with us and through us.

You, Lord,
You give us life.
You make it possible for us to be Brothers, teachers.
You give us everything.
That is why we praise you and give you thanks.

We pray to you:
For the children and young people in our classes,
For their parents and the members of their family,
For the lay teachers who work at the school,
For ourselves, the De La Salle Brothers,
So that we may live like Jesus,
Be joyful and optimistic,
Make the world around us better,
Remain brave at difficult times,
Be your co-workers
For the salvation of the world.

* * *

5

GUARDIAN ANGELS...

Lord,
You show special love to children.
"*Let the little children come to me!*"
You call upon us now
To be close to them,
To be their visible angels.
How good you are, Lord!
You send masters and teachers
To enlighten the minds of children
And to touch their hearts.
Count on us
To show them the right way
And explain the message of the Gospel to them!

Lord, thank you for the gift of faith.
Teach us to bear witness by our own example,
Since a Christian life shows itself by good works.
Children received faith at their baptism,
At home it continued to grow,
And in school they complete their learning:
– they are taught the maxims of the Gospel,
– they are put on the right road.
Help us to be good guardian angels
By our teaching and good example.
Children need teachers,
But we are above all witnesses to the Gospel:
We teach more by what we are
Than by what we say.

Lord,
life is hard and difficult,
There are many obstacles on the way.
We need your help and your support.
Children are weak in mind and body.
We want, Lord,
To lead them by the hand
Towards you. We are their guardian angels.
You remind us of your final message:
"*Go out into the whole world*
And proclaim the Gospel!"
The children are waiting for us.

Lord, give us the grace
To watch over the children you have entrusted to us.
Give us the strength to do your will.
We pray to you, Lord,
That children and young people
May grow to know you, Lord,
And love you with all their heart.
Preserve them, Lord, from evil and from sin,
And lead them along the road to salvation.

* * *

Brother Celestino Hernando

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RHEIMS '89

OPENING ADDRESS

July, 3rd 1989

From July 2nd to July 5th, there was a Lasallian Family gathering in Rheims, organised by France Region, in which more than a thousand people took part. The gathering was opened and brought to a close by an address given by Brother Superior General. In this article and in the one that follows (17-15–D-41) we publish both speeches.

A couple of years ago I heard several young Brothers from Asia speak with great affection of one of their former teachers, a missionary Brother who had made a great effort to master the local language. "He spoke to us at considerable length and with great enthusiasm in our own language," said one of the young Brothers. "We were grateful. We appreciated immensely his love and respect for us and for our culture, but –unfortunately– we never understood one word of what he said!"

I hope that your experience today with my French will not be the same!

CELEBRATING OUR UNITY

When I first learned that the Region of France was planning this assembly, I was delighted and –even before receiving an official invitation to participate– recorded the dates on my calendar. I was pleased because I am convinced that such assemblies and congresses have great value in fostering our unity as brothers and sisters in the Lasallian Family. Assemblies such as this cannot, it is true, substitute for other kinds of programs – such as those of your outstanding Center of Lasallian Formation. But they serve an other purpose. They give us the opportunity to celebrate, that is to say, –to praise God and to thank him for the great grace of being called to live our baptismal consecration as followers of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Such assemblies provide us the opportunity to share our experiences; to reflect on ways of living our Christian and Lasallian commitment more wholeheartedly and efficaciously; and to enjoy together our union as brothers and sisters.

What a blessing it is to be able to celebrate this assembly in Rheims, where it all began. Rheims: birthplace of John Baptist de La Salle; site of the Mother House of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, where Adrian Nyel asked Canon De La Salle for the help that changed his life and shaped the lives of thousands of young people throughout the last three hundred and ten years and indeed, in various ways, of all of us. Here in Rheims we can go as pilgrims to the numerous other sites which recall moments of great historical importance for the Lasallian Family: the College des Bons Enfants, the Cathedral, the Church of Saint Maurice, the Basilica of Saint Remi, the Church of Saint Jacques, the School of Rue de Contrai, the Sacred Heart Boarding School, the former Boarding School of the Brothers (now the Jesuit College), the tomb of Blessed Brother Arnould and, not too far away, the sanctuary of Our Lady of Liesse.

A WORLDWIDE MISSION

The presence of the Superior General of the Institute at this assembly is a reminder that the mission which began so modestly here in Rheims three hundred and ten years ago is today lived in more than half the countries with membership in the United Nations. Yes, the mission of the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle has become a worldwide mission. For this reason I am grateful for the invitation to share these days with you and am particularly appreciative of the orientations which Brother Jean-Marie Thouard and Preparatory Commission gave me for this address: a message on the international Institute, on the international Lasallian movement: its ramifications, its basic perspectives, its hopes."

"The international Institute"... "international movement." Our mission is to contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God. Our mission is to "make a difference" in this world: to make a difference through our efforts to procure the human and Christian education of youth throughout the world, particularly poor youth. Our Institute is today an international institute thanks to the Brothers of France who made it possible for the charism of De La Salle to animate Brothers and collaborators the world over in touching the lives and hearts of youth.

The Lasallian mission is lived by some 8.500 Brothers and a multitude of collaborators –it is almost impossible to estimate the number– all participating in varying degrees in the spirituality and educational tradition of John Baptist de La Salle. Among these collaborators in some eighty countries of the world are lay directors, administrators, and teachers, such as many of you; a certain number of priests and men and students; members of associations and boards of direction; members of staff and employees; former students; benefactors; friends; and, of course, those for whom our mission exists, the young people God confides to our care.

"TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION"

As members of the Lasallian Family, the Brothers and their collaborators are striving to work "together and by association" for the human and Christian education of youth, especially poor youth, in schools of all kinds and at all levels: pre-school, elementary, middle, secondary, teacher-training, professional, technical, agricultural, university.

Anyone who reflects on the mission of the Lasallian Family throughout the world cannot help but be impressed by the complexity and diversity which influences profoundly the particular shape of the Institute of John Baptist de La Salle in each country. Your Lasallian brothers and sisters and the youth they serve are people of a variety of races, colors, cultures, languages, and religions. The manner in which they live the Lasallian mission is profoundly influenced by the political and economic realities of each country.

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DIFFICULT POLITICAL SITUATIONS

In a number of these countries, the Lasallian Family finds itself in difficult circumstances, circumstances that call for extraordinary faith and courage.

There are Brothers in certain countries of Eastern Europe where the Institute was suppressed more than thirty-five years ago and the Brothers strictly forbidden to live together. Despite their inability to exercise a normal apostolate, they have remained as faithful as they are able to the demands of their religious consecration. In Poland, however, the Institute exists and is blessed with vocations –but because Catholic schools were suppressed many years ago, the Brothers devote themselves full-time to catechetical apostolates and to service of the handicapped.

In Vietnam our seventy-five Brothers are allowed to live together but have no normal apostolate. Twenty-three Brothers in politically tense Burma try to serve youth in non-school apostolates, since Catholic schools are forbidden.

A year never passes without some area of the Institute being touched by serious political violence or even war. You have followed throughout the past fifteen years the tragic events of Lebanon. During the last two years, many of you, as well as your pupils, have contributed financially to help our forty-five Brothers maintain the seven schools they conduct for the service of the youth of that ravaged country. Our Brothers in Israel and the occupied Territories continue to do all they can for their Palestinian youth, even when the schools are closed. Time does not permit me to speak at length of our Brothers and collaborators in Sri Lanka, in Northern Ireland, in Ethiopia, in South Africa, in Nicaragua, in Haiti, in Colombia, in Peru.

DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

This very partial list of countries served by your brothers and sisters of the Lasallian Family is a sufficient reminder that our mission today is to youth not only of different races, cultures, languages, but also of religions. Many of our young people –and, course, a number of our teachers, parents, and former students– are Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucianists, Shintoists, Animists... Vatican II insists that it is the mission of the Church to make Christ's loving and saving presence a vivid and effective reality among all peoples. It is our grace and privilege to play an important part in this great mission of the Church.

I frequently suggest that we read newspapers and watch television news with the eyes and ears of Lasallians. As we follow political and social developments in particular countries we should call to mind our fellow Lasallians and pray for them, as well as for all those confided to their care.

A SHARED MISSION

Yes, the mission which began at the service of the youth of this city, then spread throughout France, is today at the service of youth in some eighty countries. Lasallian educators are striving to assist young people to develop their God-given potential as human persons and at the same time are challenging them to commit themselves to building a better world, a world where all can live in dignity and with respect, where all can live as sons and daughters of God, a world where all can live, therefore, as brothers and sisters.

That was our mission yesterday and that IS our mission today. But the way in which that mission is lived has changed dramatically in recent years. For most of our history, we Brothers of the Christian Schools ourselves received, lived, and passed on the Lasallian ideal. While we might have had help from a limited number of lay colleagues, it was clear that the schools were Brothers' schools and that it was the Brothers who ran them. As I mentioned at Buzenval last year, I began teaching in a college of three hundred fifty boys with ten other Brothers and one lay teacher. That school was a Brothers' school, a school animated by the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

LASALLIAN SCHOOLS

That traditional model no longer exists. For a variety of reasons, it has yielded to a new model. We have moved from a model of "Brothers' Schools" to a model of "Lasallian Schools". This change of language is not trivial. The difference the new language conveys is significant. The "Brothers' School" was a school animated by Brothers, with lay collaborators in a very secondary role. The "Lasallian School" is a school animated by the Lasallian educational community, a community of Brothers, lay teachers, priests, members of other religious institutes, parents, members of the various associations, staff and employees, former students, friends and benefactors, the young people themselves...

Our Rule is clear and emphatic: "The Brothers' community is ever mindful that its apostolic activity takes place within an educational community in which all the functions, including positions of responsibility, are shared" (art. 17a); furthermore, "The Brothers' community makes known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition" (art. 17c).

NEW ROLES

What this change means is that both the Brothers and their lay collaborators have new roles to exercice. To say, however, that the Brothers have a new role does not imply a loss of faith in the vocation of the Brothers. On the contrary. Our conviction is that "the young, the poor, the world and the church still need the ministry of the Brothers" (art. 141). But the unique contribution is not to be found in any specific service. It is to be found rather in their manner of living and in the message communicated and questions raised by that manner of living: "As religious vowed to the ministry of Christian education, the first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life" (art. 24).

The mission of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is today a SHARED MISSION. You and I are blessed by God in being called to exercice this mission. Let us during this assembly praise and thank God for all the good that has been done and is being done today through the Lasallian Family. Let us ask God earnestly to make his Spirit come alive in us in order that we might make the loving and saving presence of his Son a vivid and effective reality among the youth He confides to us.

Brother John Johnston, Superior General

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RHEIMS '89

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Brother John Johnston, FSC
Superior General

Rheims'89 days of celebration – days of study and reflection – days of sharing experiences as Lasallians – days of evaluation – days of renewed commitment.

We bring RHEIMS'89 to an official close in this magnificent basilica of St. Remi, a place, as we all know, of great importance and significance in the life of John Baptist de La Salle.

The Preparatory Commission has invited me to give the conclusions and the parting word. I am not sure that it is really appropriate for me to give the conclusions. I think that you and you alone can formulate the conclusions, that is to say, capture succinctly what these days have meant to you and what difference these days are going to make in your life in the days ahead.

What I can do, however, is offer you some concluding thoughts and leave with you what I hope will be an appropriate parting word. Almost immediately after I began to reflect upon the content of my remarks, I decided to take as my point of departure the meditation which De La Salle wrote for the feast of St. Remi.

In that meditation our Founder says that we Brothers –and, I would say, all Lasallians today– must search for and desire "the plenitude of God's Spirit in order to live" up to our vocation.

Search for and desire the plenitude of God's Spirit in order to live. Our first impulse might be to dismiss this remark as pious exaggeration, the kind of comment one expects from a saint! But to take lightly this remark would be to reveal an inadequate grasp of De La Salle's understanding of the vocation of the Christian teacher.

The founder's starting point was always youth, especially poor and neglected youth. God loves young people, he would say, and wants them to know truth and be saved. But for this purpose, human ministers are needed. Therefore God kindles a light in the hearts of certain people, calling them to be his ministers. De La Salle would say to his first disciples, "Brothers, you are such people. God has chosen you. He has kindled a light in your hearts, calling you to be his ministers, his ambassadors, his co-workers. The founder goes so far as to tell the Brothers that they are to represent Jesus Christ, to RE-present him, to make his loving and saving presence a vivid and effective reality among young people.

De La Salle wasn't satisfied that the Brother be a capable teacher. He wanted him to be so united to Christ that he could serve as his co-worker, as his presence. Although De La Salle prepared these particular thoughts primarily for the use of the Brothers during their annual retreat, the title page indicates clearly that the meditations were intended also for "the use of all persons involved in the education of youth".

These reflections seem, perhaps, to be "too much" –too idealistic– well beyond the realm of probability if not possibility. If that indeed is your reaction, I don't think that De La Salle would have

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been surprised. He knew that the Christian teachers he was addressing were normal human persons, but he wanted to propose to them an ideal towards which they should strive. The ideal he proposes is indeed high: it is nothing less than TO BE CHRIST FOR OTHERS. For those who wish to make progress towards this ideal, the founder has practical advice: if you wish to be the persons that God wants you to be, give yourself totally to the Lord, beseeching him to fill you with the plenitude of his Spirit. He knew well that to be ministers, ambassadors, co-workers –to be the presence of Jesus Christ– the Christian teacher needs the plenitude of the Holy Spirit.

In the light of these thoughts, we can interpret that fundamental idea expressed in the meditation for the feast of St. Remi: to live our vocation well, we need the plenitude of God's Spirit. For this purpose, the founder continues, you should apply yourself very fervently to mental prayer.

The fruit of prayer, according to St. De La Salle, is the Holy Spirit. And, he adds, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is zeal. After reflecting on the extraordinary zeal of St. Remi, De La Salle says, "You exercise an employment which requires great zeal... When a man who is called to an apostolic mission first fills himself with God and His Holy Spirit, he can accomplish anything."

De La Salle concludes his meditation insisting that the vocation of the Christian teacher is to help young people live according to the Christian spirit. But, he says, that we may impart the spirit of Christianity to others, we must possess it ourselves.

I make these thoughts of John Baptist de La Salle my own. I present them to you as the concluding thoughts of RHEIMS'89. All of us in this basilica –Brothers, lay teachers, priests and sisters, parents, staff members, board members, friends, benefactors, and young people– all of us are, in one way or in another, disciples of De La Salle. Our call as Lasallians is to make Christ's loving presence a reality for others, especially for the poor. Our mission is to give ourselves with zeal and enthusiasm to the service of others. To be faithful to our call, we need the power of the Spirit of God. To receive that Spirit we must turn to the Lord in earnest prayer.

Here in this magnificent basilica, where our Father and Founder spent so many hours, even entire nights, praying fervently for the Spirit of the Lord, let us resolve to be men and women of prayer. And, aware of the Lord's presence among us in this sacred house of prayer, let us ask him for the grace we need to be faithful to that commitment.

Finally, Brothers, ladies, gentlemen, young people, let me leave with you a parting word. The expression I have chosen is not original. It is the invocation which has long been the signal of our community, the signal that reminds us that to BE true Lasallians, we must be so united to Christ that we are able to say that he lives in our hearts. For this reason, as we go forth from this assembly, let us proclaim with faith, hope, and love, that beautiful invocation: "Live Jesus in our hearts! For ever!"

Rheims, July 4th 1989

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (8)

5. DIFFERENT BUT ASSOCIATED

«Faced with the urgent needs of his day, Saint John Baptiste de La Salle began by gathering around him a group of men with whom he shared the process of building up a community and of mutual education». (Letter, p. 31)

1. COMMUNION AND PARTICIPATION

The Lasallian Family is more or less worldwide, and so it is hardly astonishing to discover that its members speak a multiplicity of languages, belong to a variety of countries and cultures, and come from vastly differing socio-political, economic and educational backgrounds. And so, as a consequence, the variety of Lasallian groups is both very wide and rich.

In Chapter 5, the Letter tries to divide up the present-day members of this large Lasallian Family according to **8 different groups or categories.** Here are the categories:

1. The **Brothers** of the Christian Schools.
2. **Teachers, catechists**, in general, anyone who works in a Lasallian school.
3. **Women religious** who live their consecrated life according to the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle.
4. Men and women who wish to define their attachment to the Founder by a more **special commitment.** For the moment, those included in this category are:
   - The Union of Catechists of Jesus Crucified and Mary Inmmaculate;
   - Signum Fidei (cf. articles 05-D-07 and 05-D-08);
   - The Lasallian Third Order.
5. **Young** Lasallians.
6. **Parents of pupils.**
7. **Former pupils.**
8. **Benefactors** and **Affiliated** members of the Institute, **parent**s of Brothers, **friends** of our schools and **sympathisers.**

All these groups have one essential mission:

- TO GROW as members of their group.
- TO DRAW CLOSER to other groups.

The Letter reminds the Brothers, however, that since they are the "principal heirs", they must *"by vocation, choice and consecration"* play an important role in the consolidation of the Lasallian Family.

The challenges they are called upon to meet could be stated as follows:

1. To deepen understanding of the Lasallian message, adapt it to the present day, and spread it abroad.
2. To encourage the vigorous growth of the Lasallian family and its sense of unity;
3. To make their communities places open to lay people, welcoming, prayerful and apostolically minded.
4. To contribute their availability to the schools they teach in, and to suggest ways of ensuring a human, professional or Lasallian education. (cf. Letter, p. 26)

Whatever the Brothers or Lasallian groups do, all must be done within a context of

COMMUNION and PARTICIPATION

seeing that each group has its own identity, and its members have opted for different states of life, professions and fields in which to exercise an apostolate. This internal pluralism is a source of enrichment, but it remains nonetheless clear there is an urgent need to work towards the achievement of a common purpose. In fact:

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«each component of the Lasallian Family has its own specific characteristics and must function in virtue of them. This is essential if everyone involved is to feel comfortable in what he is doing and if his work is to *be effective*. At the same time, we feel, however, that in all this rich diversity, *there must be a greater capacity and willingness to work together with others.*" (Letter, p. 31)

2. TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION

On June 6th 1694, the Founder and twelve Brothers pronounced the first perpetual vows of obedience, stability, and association in the Society of the Christian Schools. In this way, in the presence of God and their Brothers, they expressed their commitment to achieve their aims and to undertake certain obligations. Together and with no turning back, they wanted to launch an apostolic, religious and educational undertaking. In this way, the Founder made the spirit of association a fundamental characteristic of his work.

Our own formula of vows expresses this same desire for association. In this connection, it seems useful to remind ourselves of the following:

> «1. The importance of **the desire to live in association** as the basis and dynamic force of our community life. We are not employees hired to carry out a certain activity, but rather we are persons who voluntarily associate themselves within a consecrated state in order to seek and determine **together and by association** the best means of being ministers of God among youth.
>
> 2. The need of a **specific programme** that will provide meaning and substance to this association. The first Brothers were energised by the desire to develop successfully a type of school that would serve the poor. Their plan for such expressed itself graphically as well in their "state" as in their "work".
>
> 3. Within this dynamic programme structure **obedience** takes a positive significance: it is the basis of the solidarity promised by each member to "the body of the society".» (Circ. 410, pp. 51-52)

At the present time, the various groups belonging to the Lasallian Family wish to show their DESIRE FOR ASSOCIATION both within their own group and with other groups, so as to be able to undertake the EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME so admirably and clearly described in the 1987 Rule.

«We believe that the life of the Lasallian Family can be and should be characterised by this spirit of association, even though the forms this takes may differ. Ways to achieve this must be found for each of the groups we have spoken about, care being taken, however, to respect their specific characteristics and the kinds of links that bind their members together.» (Letter, p. 31)

However, in order that this **association** does not remain in the realm of pious wishes and good intentions, **five conditions** mentioned in the Letter have to be taken into account if action is **to be effective:**

1. Active involvement in Lasallian educational schemes or evangelisation;
2. A dovetailing of the efforts of individuals and groups;
3. Coordination in planning so as to be able to draw up common schemes and define practical measures that can be taken;
4. Common agreement, if only in general terms, about what they understand to be the position of man, the world, the Church, the essential values to promote, in God's overall plan;
5. The common pursuit of the task of exploring the works of John Baptist de La Salle, of translating his thinking and expressing it in modern language. (cf. Letter, pp. 32-33)

It is certainly not easy to put into practice in any significant way this "together and by association", which is a concrete way of living according to the ideal of **Lasallian brotherhood**, and which is an essential element of the spiritual message of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. The challenge that it offers deserves our response and the dedication to it of all our spiritual energies.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP STUDY GROUPS

1. What action should be planned so that the group I belong to can grow to its full potential?
2. What action should be undertaken so as to bring all the local Lasallian groups closer together?
3. What are the obstacles that I encounter, either in my group or in the area in which I work, when real team-work is needed for getting something done?
4. What precise instances could I use to show my group that, among the people I work with, there is a desire to work "together and by association"?

Brother Hernando Sebá López

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LETTER TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (9)

6. LET US BUILD OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

«As we go forward, we count on as many as possible of you to come with us. We count especially on the help of the Holy Spirit: we are sure he will not fail us if we listen to his voice, follow his inspiration and read the signs he sends us». (Letter, p. 41)

1. THE WAY FORWARD IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

In its seventh and final chapter, the Letter to the Lasallian Family offers some **practical suggestions** for "ensuring greater internal unity and vitality". Aware of "the urgency, the scope and importance of this task", the central administration of the Institute once again calls upon Brothers and lay people to involve themselves in the growth and organisation of the Lasallian Family. This is a task that demands the *"pursuit of excellence."*

Here, then are the suggestions for the next few years:

1. **Study and reflect deeply on our common Lasallian and spiritual heritage.**

This reflection is vitally important. Unless this point is taken seriously, it will be impossible to implement the other suggestions.

2. **Express the results of this research in clear and understandable lenguage.**

It is important to be able to formulate what we believe in and what it is that can make us devote so much energy to it, in language that is simple, suited to the task in hand and culturally appropriate. Such a statement will be of great help in implementing the next suggestion.

3. **Set up a process of discernment in each movement or association.**

The effects of reflection are twofold: on the one hand, it makes it possible to define the identity of each group and to judge its greater or lesser conformity to the Lasallian ideal; and on the other, it leads to a better understanding of the apostolic commitment of each group and to a more effective implementation of it.

4. **Organise more courses and set up more centres and commissions for Lasallian training.**

This is something that is both necessary and urgent. We need Lasallians who are enthusiastic and generous – that goes without saying; but these latter must also be well-trained and up-to-date, so that they can be creative and have a transforming effect in a society that is becoming more and more complex.

5. **Increase the number of meetings between the various branches of the Lasallian Family.**

Relationships lead to mutual discovery; dialogue, to mutual acceptance; frequentation, to mutual love. Lasallian groups have still a long way to go before they can draw close to one another, get to know one another and work happily together.

2. ACTION AT INSTITUTE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION LEVEL

As a result of decisions made at the 41st General Chapter and by Brother Superior and his Council, **five important measures** have already been taken in order to promote greater understanding and more effective consolidation of the Lasallian Family throughout the Institute.

1. **Lasallian Education Mission Secretariat**

This has been completely overhauled and organised to be of service to Institute Districts. It has two sections:
a/ Education and Pastoral care in Schools section to provide help for Lasallian schools;
b/ Associations and Movements section to deal with Lasallian association groups.

2. **International Lasallian Studies Sessions (SIEL)**

Two were planned, and the first one was a great success with 41 Brothers taking part. The second one is due to take place from October 1990 to May 1991.

3. **Lasallian Studies Department**

Following the death of the much missed Brother Maurice Auguste, Brother Michel Sauvage, with his widely acknowledged expertise, was appointed head of Lasallian Studies. With his team of experts he has drawn up an ambitious work programme in this important area of Lasallian research.

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4. **International Publications**

"Lasalliana" has resumed publication and offers new material useful for formation. **La Salle Intercom** is in the process of renewing itself and extending its range of information.

5. **Visits to Districts**

Brother Superior and his Council take advantage of visits to Districts to meet various Lasallian groups and convey their message to them.

3. ACTION ON DISTRICT LEVEL

Our Rule tells us that a District is not only an administrative structure but that it expresses "the ordinary communion existing among its communities and Brothers" (R. 124). The Letter sees the District level as being ideal for *concerted action* by Lasallian groups. This is because:

1. At this level, it is easy to bring together all the various groups of the Lasallian Family.
2. It is possible for groups to get to know one another.
3. It is possible for individuals to make personal contacts that last.
4. Plans can be made and a sense of mission experienced. (cf. Letter, p. 32)

From all this it is easy to see that contact between the various Lasallian groups and Brother Visitor and his Council is not only necessary, but is the source and guarantee of fidelity to the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

It is in the sector of the Church constituted by the District that "formation, Lasallian research and the sharing of experience schemes" must be drawn up and followed through. In order that groups may benefit from guidance and support, two measures are a priority:

1. THE TRAINING OF ASSESSORS
2. THE CREATION OF SPECIAL COMMISSIONS

In the light of this, an appeal is made:

1. To **Regional Coordinators** and **Visitors** and to **their Councils** to use the best means available to ensure training, follow-up, and growth for these groups.

In this connection it is important to point out that it is the Institute which *"evaluates the authenticity of (the) Lasallian character"* of various movements and associations (Rule, 146). On a District level, this duty is the responsibility of the Brother Visitor and his Council.

2. To **headmasters** or **governing bodies** of Lasallian schools to ensure that the instructions and guidelines laid down by the District are carried out faithfully.
3. To **Brothers' communities** to play a leading role in this new stage in the life of the Institute.
4. To **Lasallian groups** themselves to define clearly their aims and draw up plans for training and future action.

The Letter concludes by choosing the **42nd General Chapter of 1993** as a target to aim for forthe implementation of all the suggested measures. The assessment that will take place then will serve as the springboard for action in years to come.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO HELP STUDY GROUPS

1. Which Lasallian groups in your District are the most energetic? How did they develop? What has brought about this vitality?
2. What efforts should one make, or what measures should one take in order to set up a training course for Brother assessors for Lasallian movements?
3. What possibility is there in your District of creating a commission (of Brothers and lay persons) or a secretariat to deal with everything relating to the Lasallian Family? What alternative solution can you suggest?
4. Do the educational communities of the District have a Lasallian training programme worked out to meet the various categories present in them? How is this programme implemented? How is it assessed?

Brother Hernando Sebá López

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ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AND THE CENTENARY OF THE INSTITUTE IN COLOMBIA

A bishop's appeal.

The Brothers arrived in Colombia in 1890. The country was going through a difficult time. One civil war had followed another ever since independence. The consequences of this state of violence and instability were poverty, ignorance and illiteracy.

Both the government and the Church were looking for some solution to remedy these evils. They thought that providing education for the people was an ideal means to overcome social calamities and to set the nation on the path to prosperity.

But where would the teachers come from to accomplish this noble task? The young nations of Latin America have always looked upon Europe as a source of cultural influence; and it was from Europe that the teachers of our nation would come. There were already several religious teaching congregations established in our country.

Around the year 1890, the diocese of Medellin was under the jurisdiction of Mgr. Bernardo Herrera Restrepo. He had got to know the Brothers of the Christian Schools when, as a young seminarist, he had gone to study theology at the seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris. The discipline and the good behaviour or the Brothers' pupils had impressed him greatly, and he wanted to see them established in Colombia. This is indeed what happened when he returned to his country and became bishop of Medellin, his native town. At this time, Brother Joseph was Superior General of the Institute.

With the support of the civil authorities and especially of Doctor Joaquin Velez, plenipotentiary representative of Colombia in Paris, he asked the Superior General to send at least six Brothers to Colombia. The time was right, as there were still plenty of vocations, and Brothers's schools were in a period of great expansion everywhere, especially in Europe, Asia and America. The fact that the laws of the French Government obliged religious to do their military service had done nothing to stem the numerical growth of the Institute.

On completion of all necessary negotiations, a contract was signed between the Institute and the diocese of Medellin, and the Superior General gave permission for the departure of the six Brothers that had been asked for.

The first steps.

The community went to Ecuador first. There they learnt Spanish before moving on to their final destination in 1890. Brother Bernon Marie, Visitor of the District of Ecuador, accompanied them.

The group included four French Brothers, a Colombian and an Ecuadorian. When they arrived in Medellin on March 19th, they were greeted with much respect and esteem by the civic and religious authorities as well as by the population which had been waiting impatiently for the Brothers to come and open a school.

And so Colombia became the second country in South America to receive the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle. The first country had been Ecuador where the Brothers arrived in 1863.

In April 1890, the Brothers opened the San Jose school in an old building which had housed an orphanage up till then, and which now the bishop handed over to them.

Expansion.

The community was soon reinforced by the arrival of other French Brothers, this time from the Districts of Rheims and Clermont. These were young religious who preferred to leave their own country in order to keep their vocation which was threatened by the anti-religious laws which forbade them to run schools in their native country. These providential reinforcements made it possible to open other schools in places such as Barranquilla and Bogota, capital of the Republic. They had been invited to the capital soon after their arrival in Medellin by Mgr. Bernardo Herrera Restrepo who had, in the meanwhile, become Archbishop Primate of Colombia.

Besides being professionally competent, the Brothers who founded the District were apostles and true missionaries. They had a great ability to adapt to circumstances and to get on with people, while at the same time respecting the cultural traditions of the country. All these qualities and an almost perfect mastery of the language ensured them a great influence. Their extraordinary capacity for work and their sacrifices explain the prosperity that the Institute enjoyed in Colombia.

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These French Brothers owed the sanctity of their lives in a good measure to those who formed them, Brothers Exuperien and Blessed Brother Arnould. Their spiritual vitality crowned their work in Colombia: vocations were numerous and the first Colombian Brothers followed closely in the footsteps of their founders, assimilating their religious virtues, their love of work, their religious observance, self-sacrifice, piety and zeal for the apostolate. This spiritual heritage ensured the continuation of their religious influence up to the 1960's. And then that extraordinary 1966 Chapter renewed religious life in line with the edicts of Vatican II.

Abundant fruit.

Thirty-eight years after the arrival of the Brothers in Colombia, their schools were spread all over the country and this made possible the setting up of another District in 1928. From then on, the District of Medellin would include the western part of the country, while that of Bogota the eastern part. In 1960, there were 600 Brothers in Colombia, most of them natives of the country.

At that time, they ran about 50 establishments and taught some 30.000 pupils. There was talk even of founding a third District in the north of the country, but these plans came to nothing with the onset of the religious crisis following Vatican II.

As the centenary celebration come closer, San Jose school is no longer the small establishment it was in 1890: it has become a very large and attractive centre of education. Its original 173 pupils now number 3.600 and represent all social classes, without distinction of social rank, economic circumstances or religious beliefs. The San Jose complex offers education which goes from nursery classes to university level.

In their first hundred years, the Brothers have left their mark on Colombia: the Lasallian approach to education and the religious, professional and pedagogical influence of the Brothers have enabled them to play a most important part in education at a national level.

The Brothers have contributed to the formation of a society which lives according to civic and religious values. Colombians have had to cope with many problems, but the education that the Church has provided by means of its religious has enabled the country to face successfully major socio-economic and religious crises.

Difficult times.

The post-conciliar crisis that affected all levels of the Church took a heavy toll of the Brothers also. Numerous religious returned to secular life; numbers went down by 50%; houses of formation remained empty; there were no vocations for 10 years; and the religious who had stayed grew older without hope of being replaced.

In spite of everything, the work has survived. Roots deeply imbedded in the rock of the regularity and sanctity of the founding Brothers have made possible the inspiration of new life into the century-old trunk of the Congregation, and new growths are vigorous and auger well for the future. The words of Brother Charles Henry, Superior General of happy memory, "renewal or death", have been taken to heart by the Brothers: we are resolved to survive. Our houses of formation rejoice once again at the presence of young people wishing to follow in the footsteps of St. La Salle.

Future prospects.

At the present time, our establishments include free schools, country schools, youth centres, centres in poor districts of towns and two universities: the La Salle university in Bogota and the Lasallian University Corporation in Medellin. Working closely with us are 2.000 lay teachers.

The lack of Brothers –they number 250 at present– has been compensated for in our schools by the presence of lay teachers. There is a certain amount of truth in the assertion that our schools have become teacher training colleges in which Brothers make known the principles of Lasallian pedagogy to a considerable number of lay people. The dream of the Founder, who on several occasions tried to set up training colleges for lay people, has become a reality in each one of our establishments: we have undertaken the responsibility of making known to our lay co-workers the spirituality and pedagogy of St. John Baptist de La Salle. With a view to achieving our objective, we organise study days, retreats, inter-District meetings, etc.

A short while ago, we started up an "Education Society" at university level which offers courses on the life and work of St. John Baptist de La Salle. What we are aiming at is to obtain from the Government recognition of these studies as a course in the Faculty of Educational Sciences.

Looking upon things as St. La Salle would want us to, namely, "with the eyes of faith", we have hopes for a bright and promising future.

Brother Hernán Pulgarín

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17 - 19 – E - 44

DE LA SALLE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING CENTRE DALOA

Daloa is a large town in the west central part of the Ivory Coast, in the forest region. It is caught up in a process of expansion. Immigrants from everywhere, especially from Burkina Faso and Mali, live in very poor, crowded and rudimentary conditions.

The population of Daloa is thought to be 175.000 inhabitants. The Moslems are slightly in the majority and are more vociferous. Catholics make up less than 2.5% of the population of the diocese.

Some 15.000 students follow secondary school courses in three State schools, four private schools, two "general education schools" (CEG), and a State professional school.

Many of these pupils had problems at primary school level: they began too late, they received no support from their family, or they were simply not terribly interested, which is understandable if we remember that this is a forest region where the crushing climate tends to favour a certain "dolce farniente".

The Brothers of the Christian Schools were invited to Daloa by Mgr. Pierre Marie Coty. On the occasion of his consecration as bishop, he had stayed at our Generalate in Rome. It was then that he strongly urged Brother Superior to send Brothers to take over the running of the Lycee II. Before being the Lycee II, it had been the Sacred Heart Catholic College. It was founded and built by the Canadian Brothers of the Sacred Heart, who had been obliged as a result of a series of tragic circumstances to let go of the school.

Three Brothers, then, arrived in Daloa in September 1978. For eight years they worked simply as teachers in this school, but the idea of taking over the running of the school posed insurmountable problems to do with the number of students (some 2.000) and the spirit of the school.

During those eight years a great deal of thinking went on and the result was the creation of a Professional Training Centre for the outcasts of society: boys and girls, between the ages of 15 and 20 who were too old to begin general secondary education courses, or who had reached the limits of their ability in the first years of their secondary schooling.

These young people who came from both the town and country districts were frustrated in their hopes, did not know where to turn, and had no training for life or for a job.

The La Salle Professional Training Centre wishes, at least in some measure, to help such youngsters. It aims to gives these young people who are failures some basic technical intruction which will give them hope and some dignity. For this reason, this Centre stresses the practical side of teaching in particular. It aims to train student apprentices so that they can earn an honest living as more or less expert workers in electrical equipment or as repairers of radios and television sets.

The Centre aims also to makes its students responsible and honest citizens in their work and all areas of their lives. This is the special aim of the ethics class, but the whole dynamic ethos of the Centre is directed towards training the personality of the future worker in all its aspects. Teachers and monitors are aware of these aims.

There was no other similar establishment in the Ivory Coast. This means that we had to be pioneers. Not bound by any particular curriculum, not tyrannised by the prospect of State examinations, we can devise our own courses which are adapted to the needs of our special clientele and are accessible to it. We are in a position to choose our methods and approach. We can give our students whatever information or techniques we feel will be of most use to them in the short or long term.

Out teaching tends to be practical. Apart from a few French, maths and electricity lessons, adapted as far as

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possible to their ability and work-patterns, our apprentices spend most of their time in the workshops, where they work on repairing radios and television sets, practising setting up circuits in houses that are being built or renovated in town. This work is always supervised and checked by teachers and monitors from the Centre.

The Centre opened in 1986 with 21 students. In 1987, they numbered 53, in October 1988 there were 80 of them. We hope to pass the hundred mark when school starts again in October 1989.

The buildings we use were built by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The land which covers an area of 9 hectares was provided by the town authorities of Daloa. The German Charity organisation MISEREOR has supported the Centre during the first three years of its existence, and we have reason to hope it will continue to do so for another three years. We have already submitted our request.

Is not all this something of a dream? Is not our work here something of a Utopia, something that cannot be achieved?

Our pupils come from country and forest regions. They are lacking in a sense of thinking about the future, about making savings or investing. The idea of keeping a promise is foreign to them, as is love of work and of work well done. They have no team spirit or professional conscience. All these are values that need to be taught and promoted among our students.

And so, our Centre is open to young people whose academic record is somewhat poor. It represents, therefore, a life-belt, a last resort. This is social work in the true meaning of the word. This is why MISEREOR has adopted us, as have other organisations who have come to our support.

From the very first day the Centre opened its doors, it was made clear to parents and students that it did not offer studies leading to a diploma. However, students who did not manage to get a diploma in their general education studies hope to be able to do so by coming to us. It takes all our patience and skills as teachers to wean them away from the glittering prize of THE DIPLOMA, and a great deal of courage and perseverance to teach them the value of work, and to make them want to have the joy of working for the development of their country, and to take part in the struggle against under-development.

We have taken steps to obtain basic toolkits to give to students when they finish at the Centre, so that they can start a job without too many problems.

The idea of starting up a cooperative is in everybody's mind. We encourage our students when they finish their training to pool their efforts, their work and their skills, so that when they start work it will be with a lot of backing. A cooperative would put at their disposal a sufficiently well equipped workshop where they could work and do some repairs. It would also provide an administrative office, some books, value tables, catalogues, etc. Teachers from the Centre would be able to advise them and, from time to time, could organise refresher and retraining courses for them.

However, we see that there are inherent dangers in such an arrangement. Would our former students see the cooperative as a place of refuge? They have always dreamed of becoming officials. The idea is inbred in them, and it is very difficult to succeed in making producers out of them when their ambition has always been to be consumers.

* * *

And so, the challenge facing us is to transform these young men, who have been disappointed in their ambition of finding a comfortable and secure job as a petty official into free men, determined to become the co-workers of God the Creator through their work for a better world, ready to pool their efforts, so as to play a greater part in the salvation of the world; and as children of God following in the footsteps of Christ, helping those in need and those who are oppressed.

Are we, really, the ones who are dreaming?

The Daloa Community

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ST. GABRIEL'S HALL
AUDUBON
PHILADELPHIA - U.S.A.

St. Gabriel's Hall is a private Residential Rehabilitative Institution conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools giving continuous service to wayward youths and orphans for over 91 years. The Founder of the Institution was Archbishop Patrick John Ryan, Archbishop of Philadelphia, who selected the Brothers to conduct the facility on behalf of the diocese. The Institution was officially opened in 1898 as the Philadelphia Catholic Protectory for Boys, a homeless institution.

In 1899 the Protectory received a charter from the City of Philadelphia which increased it as a court adjudicated facility. In 1962 its name was changed to St. Gabriel's Hall reflecting a growing sensitivity in rehabilitative work. Appropriately St. Gabriel is the patron of difficult boys.

St. Gabriel's Hall is a non-profit, year round, Private Residential Rehabilitative Institution for over 200 court appointed boys between 12 and 18 years of age. The average time spent in residence is between 9 and 12 months. The mission of Sr. Gabriel's Hall is to provide stability, therapy, counseling and education to prepare residents for a successful return to home and community with self-respect, discipline and an understanding of the circumstances which brought them to us for help. The principal aim is to care for the individual in the belief that early intervention can restore a purposeful relationship between self and society.

St. Gabriel's Hall is not restricted to any religion or group. All interests are served with emphasis upon individual values fostered by a dedicated order of Brothers, certified teachers and a highly qualified experienced staff. Every boy assigned to the facility is given a comprehensive psychological, educational and medical work-up upon admission. A program is then devised to best benefit the individual. Case progress is reviewed regularly, both inhouse and by the committing authority.

The Social Services Department is committed to serving the needs of the young men in its care through an on-going interdisciplinary approach. The effectiveness of the program stems from the cooperative effort of a high skilled staff working as a team, bringing together treatment coordinators, child care workers, teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, school counselors, mental health workers and social workers. A wide range of services is provided including individual, group and family therapy, outpatient clinic, partial hospitalization services, drug and alcohol counseling, full medical and dental care, psychological and psychiatric evaluations and therapeutic activity groups. Since 1984, St. Gabriel's Hall has been licensed by the Office of Mental Health and Department of Public Welfare to operate a Mental Health Clinic and Partial Hospitalization Program.

The Group Living Department is an integral part of our residential in-care program. It is based upon a few well-founded principles, the most fundamental of which is the assertion that all young people committed to the program are essentially socially and community oriented. The basic unit of Group Living is the "fraternity", a self-contained group of approximately 20 boys under the close supervision of youth care professionals. Each fraternity is provided its own living, sleeping and dining areas, in addition to indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Students are assigned to fraternities according to age, emotional maturity and physical size. Fraternity living enables the professional staff to establish mature, trusting relationships with the residents, foster cooperation among peers and develop positive adult role models.

St. Gabriel's Hall provides comprehensive educational opportunities to the young men committed to our care. The school provides advanced academic, academic remedial and special education programs. The ultimate objective of the school program is to

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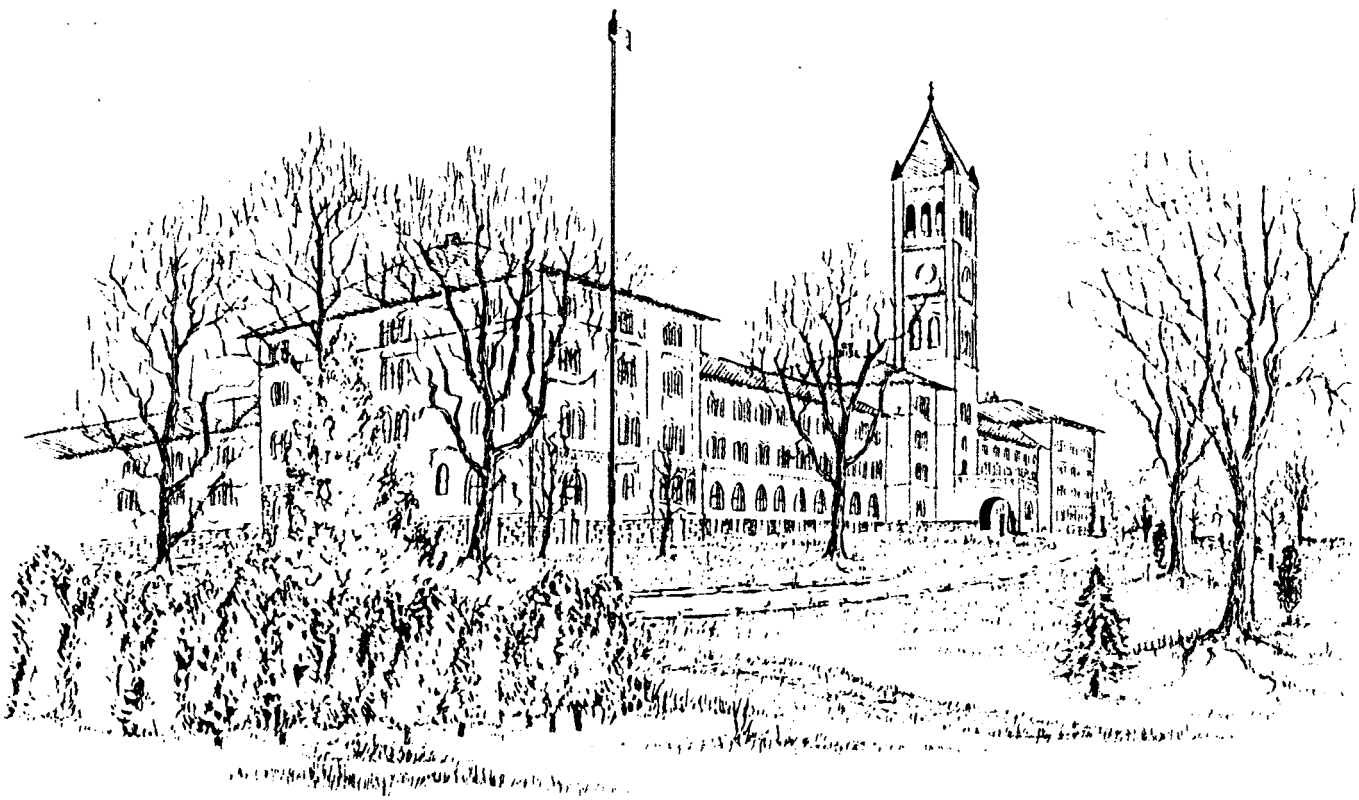
provide a student with the necessary skills for his transition to other programs in other schools. St. Gabriel's Hall School is recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and is accredited by the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association.

Graduation is a very significant event in the lives of our boys. It is held twice yearly in conjunction with the St. Gabriel System and is the culmination of a truly heroic effort on the part of many boys to overcome multiple difficulties and accomplish what they would have considered impossible a year earlier. Graduation is a formal ceremony in a distinguished setting, with friends and family in attendance. There is always a keynote speaker, academic awards, a class valedictorian, and a range of diploma and certificates presented by the respective programs.

St. Gabriel's Hall provides a wide range of recreational activities for the residents. We have a large gymnasium with two indoor baskestball courts and a modern weight lifting center, outdoor swimming pool, basketball, volleyball, baseball, soccer and football fields and extensive grounds for all manner of leisure pursuits. The school participates in the Archdiocese Catholic Youth Organization in track, the Philadelphia League in basketball as well as intra-mural sports in basketball, flag football, soccer, softball and volleyball.

Special assemblies, talks and presentations are scheduled throughout the year to augment in-house programs. Visiting professionals work with the boys throughout the year as volunteers. St. Gabriel's Hall participates in career exploration and has an Explorer Scout Troop.

Brother Richard Kestler.



St. Gabriel's Hall

by Brother John Brady

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N° 18
May 1st 1990

INTRODUCTION

● Issue N° 18 of LASALLIANA is the second of the three planned for 1990. In this issue we have concentrated especially on subjects related to our mission as educators and to the Lasallian Family. In doing so our aim was to offer topics that were thought-provoking and provided material for discussion, in the hope that they would encourage Brothers, communities and teaching establishments to think seriously about them, and lead them to follow the guidelines laid down in the Letter to the Lasallian Family.

● Once again, we should like to stress that these articles are meant to provide information and be used as discussion documents not only by the Brothers, but also by communities as a whole and by lay teachers who wish to reflect more deeply on their vocation as Christian educators.

For this reason it is desirable that there should be enough copies of our publication in all our Lasallian establishments so that they can be used unhurriedly and when the need arises. Quite often, when we have occasion to speak about our mission as educators, we search around for suitable material to use. The aim of this Institute publication is to meet this need by making high-quality articles available on this subject as well as on numerous other Lasallian topics.

● Subscriptions to Lasalliana are dealt with at a District level. The Brother Visitor tells us how many copies he wants and he distributes them on arrival. A certain number of establishments in several countries have told us that they would like more copies. Our answer is that they should take the matter up with their Visitor. This goes also for lay teachers, affiliated members of the Institute and other colleagues who wish to receive copies.

● We mentioned in Issue N° 17 that we were going to start up a correspondence section which would provide an opportunity for readers to ask questions, offer explanations or furnish additional information relating to topics treated in articles. We have already received a number of letters but unfortunately not soon enough to be included in this issue. We hope therefore to launch this new section in our next issue, N° 19, which will include both the letters we have already received and any others that arrive in the meantime.

HOW ARTICLES ARE CLASSIFIED

Each article is identified by 4 numbers/letters. E. g.: 16 - 14 – D -34.
- the first number indicates the number of the issue.
- the second, the number of the article in the table of contents.
- the letter indicates the nature of the subject matter.
- the last number indicates how many articles exist already on subjects of a similar nature.

The example given above indicates that the article in question appears in issue No. 16; that it is No. 14 in the table of contents of that issue; that the subject matter relates to lay people and the Lasallian Family; and that 34 articles already exist on related topics.

Subject matter is indicated by letters as follows:

O. General subjects, miscellaneous.
A. St. John Baptist de La Salle. Facts, writings, spirituality, teachings, etc.
B. The FSC Institute: history and present day.
C. Thoughts on education.
D. Collaboration between the Brothers' Institute and lay people. The Lasallian Family.
E. Personal witness, experiences, events, celebrations.

Brother José María Valladolid

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18 - 2 - A - 68 De La Salle and Training Schools for Teachers (1)
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18 - 3 - A - 69 De La Salle and Training Schools for Teachers (2)
Bro. José María González y Angel Ibarguren.

18 - 4 - A - 70 Chapter 5 of the Conduct of Schools: A dramatic Dialogue.
Bro. Dominic Everett. *200 De La Salle Drive. Romeoville, Illinois, 60441, USA.*

18 - 5 - A - 71 Editions of the «Devoirs I» by Years and Cities.
Bro. Manuel F. Magaz. *Residencia La Salle. Marqués de Mondéjar, 32. 28028 Madrid. España.*

18 - 6 - B - 85 Saint Mutien–Marie. Possesses all the Greatness of the Humble.
Homily for the canonization. **Pope John Paul II.** 10 December 10th 1989.

18 7 – B - 86 The Lasallian Tradition. Report on a symposium.
Bro. Brendan Kneale. *St. Mary's College. Moraga, CA 94575. USA.*

18 - 8 - B - 87 I knew Brother Jaime Hilario.
Bro. Manuel Olivé. *Casa Generalizia FSC. Via Aurelia, 476. 00165 Roma. Italia.*

18 - 9 - B - 88 The Brothers and Natural Sciences in Quebec, Canada.
Bro. Marcel Blondeau. *Rés. La Salle. 3775, Place De-La-Salle, Trois-Rivières, Qué. G8Y 1Z6.*

18 - 10 - C - 74 Discipleship: A call to follow Christ through identification with the poor (1).
Bro. David Kinneret. *École des Frères. B.P. 30. 16100 Nazareth. Israel.*

18 - 11 - C - 75 Discipleship: A call to follow Christ through identification with the poor (2).
Bro. David Kinneret. Nazareth.

18 - 12 - C - 76 Perspective of a Religious Educator in a Science Classroom.
Mrs. Maureen Mellor. *La Salle High School. 3880 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.Pasadena.USA.*

18 - 13 - C - 77 "Higher expectations" in the Catholic inner City High School.
Bro. William Harkins. *Manhattan College. Riverdale, New York 10471.USA.*

18 - 14 - C - 78 People–Driven Schools.
Bro. Terence McLaughlin. *200 De La Salle Drive. Romeoville. Illinois. 60441.USA.*

18 - 15 - C - 79 Prayers of a Christian Teacher (3).
Bro. Celestino Hernando. *Res. La Salle. Avda. La Salle, 8. 28023 Aravaca-Madrid. España.*

18 - 16 - D - 44 Lasallian Association (1).
Mr. Francis P. Coughlin. *St. Gabriel's Hall. P.O. Box 13. Audubon, PA 19407. USA.*

18 - 17 - D - 45 Lasallian Association (2).
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18 - 18 - D - 46 Together and by Association (1).
Bro. Hernando Sebá López. *Casa Generalizia, Via Aurelia, 476. 00165. Roma. Italia.*

18 - 19 - D - 47 Together and by Association (2).
Bro. Hernando Sebá López.

18 - 20 - E - 46 Calvert Hall College. Two Education Programs.
Calvert Hall College High School. 8102 Brentwood Avenue. Baltimore, MD 21202. USA.

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LASALLIAN POSTAGE STAMPS

Stamp collecting is one of the many pleasurable hobbies or leisure time activities of our retired Brothers.

Collecting stamps on the basis of themes is the area which seems to generate the most interest while also furnishing a lot of information. Collections of stamps on De La Salle have not been too popular, more because few collectors know about them rather than because of a lack of interest. Certainly their circulation is very limited and therefore they are not readily available everywhere.

In LASALLIANA 14–0–26, some information on Lasallian philatelic Publications was made available internationally. Admittedly it was not exhaustive, but it does indicate that there is interest in this area among the Brothers, students and alumni. The present material is designed to add a little more to what has already been published, and is subject to further revision and completion.

- For the tricentenary of the foundation of the Institute, new issues were published in 1980 and 1981 in **Bolivia, Sri Lanka** and **Venezuela.**

- Also in 1981, **Panama** came out with a stamp which commemorates the 75th year since the arrival of the Brothers in that country. Actually, it should have appeared in 1979 because the Brothers came to Panama in 1904.

- In 1980, **Ireland** issued an excellent stamp of the Founder to commemorate the arrival of the Brothers in that country.

- The picture of Brother Miguel Febres Cordero appeared on a stamp issued in **Ecuador** on October 30, 1977.

- Subsequently, **Ecuador** honored one of its illustrious sons on October 21, 1984 on the occasion of the beatification of Brother Miguel of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. That was the third stamp dedicated to him. The first was printed in 1954 to commemorate his birthdate.

- In 1961, the **Philippines** honored the work of the Christian Brothers on the occasion of its Golden Anniversary and in 1986 there were three issues to commemorate the Diamond Anniversary of La Salle University of Manila. They represent the Founder and other canonized Christian Brothers.

- Just as in 1962 Belgium honored Brother Alexis Marie, so likewise in 1981 **Canada** presented a stamp to honor the eminent botanist Brother Marie Victorin.

- The **Democratic Republic of Madagascar**, in 1981, brought out a stamp to honor Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa who, during the early years of the ministry of the Christian Brothers in that land, became a man very much revered for his holiness.

* * *

In this part of our presentation we will furnish more information on the stamps mentioned above. Unlike LASALLIANA 14–0–26, we cannot provide the Ivert cataloging for the simple reason that we do not have it at hand. We will use the Scott cataloging for those who are interested. We will follow a chronological order for the stamp issues, as far as possible, when the date is available.

- On August 15, 1964, **Nicaragua,** which has issued "the most beautiful group of Lasallian stamps", put into circulation an Air Mail stamp C 410-A80 which presents the most commonly used Lasallian heraldic emblem. It appeared previously on July 13, 1958 but this time it is identified as Cs 0.20. Scott has it cataloged as N° C539A-A81.

- The country with the second largest number of Lasallian stamps is the republic of **Ecuador.** For the beatification of Brother Miguel by Pope Paul VI it published a stamp on October 30, 1977.

It is allegorical and mesures 12 x 12 1/2, cataloged as N° C608-AP153, worth $2.60.

The previous issues of 1954 showed the sites and monuments which commemorate Brother Miguel. The stamp alluded to above, in allegorical style, shows the Piazza of Saint Peter in the Vatican over a background map of Latin America which highlights Ecuador and above these is the image of Brother Miguel. The general idea is to emphasize his importance in the Lasallian contribution to education on this continent. The inscription below reads: "An Academician on our Altars - Blessed Brother Miguel, 1854-1910". It was printed in the Instituto Geográfico Militar de Quito.

- On the feast of St. Joseph in 1980, **Ireland** issued a beautiful stamp of the Holy Founder on the occasion of the centenary of the arrival of the Brothers on that island.

Technically, it consists of a lithograph in several colors measuring 14 x 15. It is nicely done and bears the catalog number 477-A156. Oddly enough it is listed in the catalog as "Order of Salesians" (founded by St. John Baptist). The only printing on the stamp reads" "Ord De La Salle in Eirin – 1880-1980". It is printed by "Irish Security Stamp P. L."

- **Bolivia**, to the best of our knowledge, on May 15th, issued the first stamp commemorating the Tricentenary of the foundation of the Institute. It is an allegorical drawing by A. Bel in several colors which represents the Founder with a map of the world to his right and the following words in the upper portion: "Worldwide Tricentenary of De La Salle 1680-1980". It was printed by La Papelera, S. A. and cataloged by Scott as N° 653-A234 with 13 1/2 x 14 perforations and valued at 9 bolivianos.

On May 15, 1981, three others Lasallian stamps appeared in as many countries.

- One of these comes from **Venezuela** by way of Ipostel which issued a vertical stamp excellently printed in silverish tones with the signature of the Founder in red and a black

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inscription reading "Lasallian Tricentenary 1680-1980" in the upper part.

There is also a special, original and we believe unique postmark for first day circulation from Colegio La Salle-La Colina bearing the signature of the founder which is very similar to that on the stamp itself.

Printed by "Casa da Moeda do Brazil", it appears in Scott as N° 1244-A285, lithographed, with perforations of 11 1/2 x 11 with a value of 1.25 bolivianos.

• Another stamp issued on the same date comes from **Sri Lanka** and is worth 2.00 rupies. Horizontally oblong, with perforations of 12 1/2 x 12, predominantly blue in color and lithographed, it was printed in the Soviet Union and represents the Founder on the left, while on the right we find the star heraldic shield of the Institute with its garlands and motto: "Indivisa Manent". Beneath this is a scroll with "Lasallian Tercentenary 1680-1980". Catalog N° 603-A223.

• On that same 15th of May, 1981, **Panama** put on first-day sale a stamp which actually celebrates 75 years of Lasallian education in this small Republic. The real date for commemoration was 1979, but for various reasons, the issue appeared only in 1981. The art work is that of Alberto Conte, an alumnus and shows the Founder blessing the map of Panama. The nine stars represent each of the places in which the Brothers exercised their apostolate in the course of 75 years.

It is the second philatelic issue made in Panama on the Lasallian theme. The first appeared on September 24, 1951 and included two stamps which celebrated the Tricentenary of the birth of St. John-Baptist de La Salle.

It was printed in Colombia with a run of half a million stamps. The value of each was 17 C. Catalog N° 608-A195 with perforations of 12 x 12.

• Among the series on important national figures of **Canada** we find a stamp dedicated to Brother Marie Victorin (Conrado Kirouac) which was issued on July 22, 1981. He was born in Quebec in 1885 and died in an automobile accident on June 24, 1944. He is considered among the greatest botanists of Canada along with John Macoun to whom a stamp was also dedicated on the same day.

Almost square, lithographed in several colors with a value of 17 c it represents Brother Marie Victorin surrounded by flowers and his name appears at the bottom.

Perforations are 12 1/2 and the stamp bears catalog N° 894-A430 of Scott.

• **Madagascar**, where the Brothers have labored since 1866 issued a stamp on August 10, 1981 which was dedicated to Brother Raphael Louis Rafiringa. He was born in Tananarive on May 1, 1854 and died with a reputation for sanctity on May 19, 1919. It is a rather large stamp 5 x 3.5 with perforations of 12. The value is 30 Fr of this Democratic Republic. It is catalog N° 622-A195 and represents the traditional image of Brother Raphael against a red backgroud.

• For the trird time in the history of Lasallian Philately **Ecuador** steps forth on October 21, 1984. This time it presents an issue commemorating the canonization of Brother Miguel, henceforth known as Brother Miguel Febres Cordero. Strangely enough, the stamp says "sanctification".

There are two stamps: one of 24 and another of 9 sucres, printed at the Instituto Geográfico Militar, one vertically oblong and the other horizontally oblong. The 9 sucres stamp shows a photograph of the Academia Ecuatoriana de la Lengua de 1892 against a silver background. Brother Miguel was a professor there. A much better image is found on the 14 sucres stamp in which, against an aerial view of the Vatican and the Piazza of St. Peter as a background, we see superimposed on the right upper corner the picture of Pope John Paul II and on the left lower corner, the photo of St. Brother Miguel.

A very limited edition which is also a collectible appeared as a Philatelic Sticker measuring 9 x 11 cm with a value of S/28. It has the family house of the Febres Cordero in the city of Cuenca in the bust of the father of Brother Miguel, while his mother appears at the lower right.

• In 1961 the **Philippines** issued two stamps to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the arrival of the Brothers on the islands. Then on July 16, 1986, on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of this same historic event, the government of the Philippines issued three stamps each showing one of three Lasallian saints against a background of the Brothers' schools of Nozedale and of Taft Avenue.

The first, against a red background, shows the sculptured group of the Founder and pupils in front of La Salle–Paco and La Salle–Taft. Its value is 60 s.

The second, against a yellow background, presents the image of St. Brother Benilde over the building of La Salle University. Value, 3 p.

The third, against a blue background, has the image of St. Brother Miguel Febres Cordero against the original school of Paco where the Brothers first began teaching on the islands. Value: 2.40 p.

All of these stamps are horizontally oblong, 3 x 4 cm and below have the inscription "De La Salle University. 1911 - Diamond Jubilee - 1986".

Besides these stamps, there was also published a triptych entitled: "Commemorative Stamps of the Diamond Jubilee" with the above-mentioned stamps in the center, flanked by a Philatelic Sticker to the right and left, together with a short explanation of the stamps and the Lasallian communities. The Philatelic Sticker is green and white (the colors of the University) and presents the nine founding Brothers of the Lasallian schools in the Philippines.

Also issued was a night view of the front of the University. This Philatelic Sheet is square, 7 1/2 x 7 1/2 at 7.20 p.

In 1988 (Ivert 1510) the **Philippines** reissued the same stamp of Saint Brother Miguel which appeared July 16, 1986 only this time the value changed from 2.40 to 1.90 p.

Br. Constancio Juan Rilova

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DE LA SALLE AND TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR TEACHERS (1/2)

A CHERISHED DREAM OF THE FOUNDER

In the studies which have been made on De La Salle and his work, there is one project which has suffered from benign neglect, perhaps because it did not achieve its intended result, perhaps because the attempts ceased before his death, but it is difficult to believe that he ever completely gave up on the idea. I am referring to the steps De La Salle took to firmly establish a teacher training program for rural teachers.

Much has been written about his establishment of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as it is officially known, and more popularly "Christian Brothers" or "Lasallian Brothers". It was due to the chance encounter of two men, Nyel and De La Salle, in the reception room of the convent of the Sisters of the Child Jesus on March 9, 1679 that in the designs of God was born a Society which was to become the Community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

However, if we read his biographers carefully, it becomes evident that from the outset De La Salle entertained the idea of training teachers for rural schools. When Blain speaks about the foundation made by De La Salle in the Parish of Saint Hypolite of Paris, he tells us: "No other institution fascinated him more. His plan included the Institute of the Brothers for the cities as well as the formation of school teachers for the rural areas". (1) Elsewhere he continues: "He was convinced that there would always be something missing in his Institute or that it could not render the Church those services it deserved as long as rural areas were not provided with the same kind of teachers available to the cities; i. e., devout teachers who were well prepared to educate and instruct youth in all that is necessary for salvation". (2) Both of these quotations confirm the statement of Brother Maximin when, speaking about the "Normal Schools of St. John Baptist de la Salle", he says that after his Religious Congregation, there was nothing that occupied his thoughts and zeal more than truly efficient Normal Schools (in the pedagogical terminology of the day) for the training of lay teachers for rural areas". (3)

A PROJECT SPECIAL TO THIS INSTITUTE

From his very first years of working toward the organization of schools, we can see him taking steps, setting the stage, so that while children in the cities were being provided with teachers dedicated to their salvation by means of schools, the rural children would not be deprived of equal opportunities.

In his "Memorial on the Habit", a very important document which he composed around Christmas time of 1689 in Paris defending his position relative to the Habit of the Brothers against M. Baudrand the parish priest of Saint Sulpice who intended to change it, he clearly states: "In this community (its members) operate gratuitous schools only in cities, in which they teach Religion every day including Sundays and feasts.

They also devote themselves to the training of teachers for rural schools in a house other than that of the Community, which we refer to as "a seminary". Those in training remain only a few years until they are well prepared both in piety as well as in what concerns their work as teachers." (4)

The reasons for this separation during formation and later in place of ministry we already mentioned when we discussed how De La Salle differed from his predecessors. Reviewing them quickly, we could say that they were basically due to the strong spirit of community which he wanted for the Brothers. He was faced with the resounding success of the Christian Schools due to the new teachers he was training. However, in the same rural villages there were not enough children to occupy the time of two or three Brothers and this was the number required to form a community. On the other hand, the number of students was sufficient to occupy a lay teacher who could live in the village, and since he received the same kind of training and formation as a Brother, he could achieve the same results with the village children. Besides, lay teachers could also help in the parishes with the liturgical service, an area in which the Brothers did not wish to become involved because they wanted it perfectly clear that the Brothers were not clerics.

THE ORIGINAL INTENT

During the entire life of De La Salle as the founder of schools, the concept, the project and the realization of training schools for lay teachers was always on his mind. It was an enterprise from which not even the most serious difficulties, not even the betrayal of those he trusted could dissuade him.

The first information we have goes back to 1683. Brother Dante found it among notes of Maille and Capillon, notaries of Rheims, as quoted by Lucard; and Brother Maximin discovered a document of Remi Favart, Doctor of Theology and Canon of Notre Dame of Rheims, dated April 2, 1683. Both quotations refer to the same thing and transcribe a content which is identical. "The house contracted to him for the sum of two thousand five hundred and fifty (livres) which is located on Grand Street of Rethel is the same sum as that said given him by someone who wishes to remain anonymous, on the condition that said house be used by the discreet and worthy person of M. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Doctor in Theology and Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims for the purpose of a gratuitous school for children which is being opened in said place of Rethel, and to house the teachers who operate it; likewise, if it be possible, there will be established a seminary for rural teachers for the diocese of Rheims. The above has been stipulated and accepted by M. De La Salle, present". (5)

Everything seems to indicate that this original plan was not realized for reasons which are quite evident. Primarily, he did not as yet have the personnel sufficiently prepared to undertake such an ambitious enterprise. Nevertheless it does tell us that from the very beginning of his work as a Founder (only 4 years after his meeting with Nyel) he has in mind to provide rural teachers indipendently of his work with the Brothers.

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ANOTHER ATTEMPT

In that same year of 1683, De La Salle rented two houses next to the house on Rue Neuve where the Institute was officially born in 1682. One of them would be the home of the first Normal School on record in the history of education.

Zeal for the glory of God is creative and with parish priests begging for Brothers to teach in their parishes, De La Salle found himself with too few Brothers. In places where there were too few students to warrant the investment of a whole community, he suggested that these pastors send him devout and intelligent young men so that he could train them as teachers. The proposal was enthusiastically received and the first Normal School began, as close as we can ascertain, around Christmas time of 1685 with three candidates. S. Gallego states that this "is the humble beginning of the training school for teachers". (6)

Concerning this Normal School, Blain says that at one time there were up to thirty students and De La Salle saw that these student teachers could take the place of Brothers in small towns. (7) He was personally interested in them, although he appointed a competent Brother to direct them according to his programs and counsel.

We know from early biographers the kind of schedule and activities which were in place in this first training center. The students were taught reading, writing and plain chant as well as the skills necessary for the profession of an educator. Also indicated were the times for prayer, meditation, spiritual reading and other duties of Christian living. De La Salle describes it all in his already quoted "Memorial on the Habit": "They are in a house separated from the Community which we refer to as «a seminary». Those in training remain only a few years until they are well prepared both in piety as well as in what concerns their work as teachers.

They wear the clothing of ordinary laymen, preferably black or some other dark color, and they are distinguishable from other lay people only by their white collar (rabat) and their shorter haircut.

They are taught singing (Gregorian), reading and writing to perfection. Their food, lodging and laundry are furnished free of charge. Afterwards, a position is found for them in a town or village where they are to fulfill the office of teacher-cleric. Once they have been so placed, they have no further ties to the Community except those flowing from courtesy. However, they are welcomed any time they come to make a retreat." (8)

Occasionally, impressed by the atmosphere of recollection and devotedness of the house, some asked to join the community of the Brothers and they were welcomed. This, however, was actually the first school designed specifically to train teachers and "only teachers" as S. Gallego insists; that is, lay teachers in the strict historical sense of the term with no overtones of novitiate or seminary.

This first Normal School, opened toward the end of 1685, continued to flourish while De La Salle remained in Rheims. After he left for Paris in 1688, under the direction of Brother Henry L'Heureux and Brother Jean Henri according to Brothers Dante and Maximin, it began to dwindle and it finally disappeared in 1690. All told, we can see that it enjoyed three years of successful operation of the five years of its existence.

THE PROJECT OF MAZARIN

Before the Normal School in Rheims began, De La Salle was the lessee of a house which had not yet been used for its original purpose according to the contract drawn up by Favart and the wishes of Charles-Armand de la Porte, Duke of Mazarin. De La Salle began negotiations with him to open his "seminary" in order to produce a sufficient number of lay teachers to disseminate correct doctrine and Christian morality as well as solid citizenship throughout the lands of his duchy, as we read in the contract of the foundation dated August 20, 1685. The duke will pay for 17 people, their lodging and formation and De La Salle commits himself to furnish two Brothers who will be in charge of organizing the program. Besides, according to the contract, there is provision for the continuation of the work even should the community of Brothers dissolve. 3.000 (livres) spread out over the year will be provided.

Everything had been arranged, but, as Brother Maximin says, "unfortunately John Baptist de la Salle was too far ahead of his times". (9) The project was not accepted by those whose influence was brought to bear on the Archbishop and when De La Salle and the Duke of Mazarin went to him to seek approbation they were answered with a caustic: "You are both crazy". In all humility, De La Salle replied: "Forgive me, Your Grace, there is only one," referring to himself as the author of the proposal. (10)

Consequently, the contract was nullified. However, on the same day, September 22, 1685, they signed a similar agreement to make the establishment in La Fere in the diocese of Laon. This contract is less generous in the matter of personnel (3) and finances (600 livres) and stipulated that locating a house and opening the program must take place by October 1, 1686, at which time the funds would be made available. We cannot be certain that this school actually opened, but Rigault is of the opinion that an ephemeral and undocumented foundation did exist in La Fere.

Perhaps it was for this reason that, convinced as he was of the need for these "seminaries", that he opened the one in Rheims at his own expense and under his own responsibility because it began with three candidates for teacher training from the duchy and for the duchy, according to S. Gallego.

Brothers José María González and Angel Ibarguren

(1) Blain, C. L. 7, p. 364.
(2) Blain, C. L. 8, p. 56.
(3) Bro. Maximin, L. *Les Écoles Normales de saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle.* Procure des Frères, Bruxelles-Namur, 1922, p. 19.
(4) Gallego, S. *San Juan Bautista de La Salle. II. Escritos,* p. 716. Cf. C. L. 11, p. 349.
(5) Brother Maximin, L. *Ibid.*, p. 20. Cf. "*Anales de l'Institut des Frères*". Vol. I, p. 21. and Rivista Lasalliana, 1934, p. 194.
(6) Gallego, S. Ibid, p. 197.
(7) Blain. C. L. 7, p. 278.
(8) *Memorial sur l'Habit*. C. L. 11, p. 349; 4, 5 and 6.
(9) Bro. Maximin L. *Ibid*, p. 29.
(10) Blain. C. L. 7, p. 221.

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DE LA SALLE AND TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR TEACHERS (2/2)

THE PARIS PROJECT

De La Salle moved to Paris in 1688. Ten years later, in what was called Grandmaison, it seems that among other programs existing in this house, there was also a kind of "seminary" for rural reachers (1) under the direction of Brother Nicholas Vuyart. It could be that it functioned in conjunction with the novices (pretty broadminded for those times!), but it does not seem to be concerned only with novices, according to Guibert.

It is in the parish of Saint Hypolite in Paris where the teacher training program for rural teachers reappears. This was in 1699. Encouraged by the enthusiasm of the parish priest who had requested Brothers for his school, and financed by the contributions of various benefactors, De La Salle re-opened the "seminary" on Rue de l'Ourcine. The two Brothers of the school also assumed the operation of the "seminary". The director was Brother Nicholas Vuyart "whom De La Salle considered as one of his best men (2) and who, it seems, had already prepared a couple of young men then teaching in Rethel (1683-1685) according to the wishes of the Duke of Mazarin. This was to be the first Normal School with supervised student practice, because one of the two classes it scheduled was to be taught by student teachers under the supervision of a master teacher.

Regulations for the student teachers were similar to those of the Brothers: "Rising at four-thirty, and retiring at nine. Prayer, spiritual reading, examination of conscience were part of the routine, along with instruction and activities proper to their profession... Silence and recollection were common practice along with all that went into the ordinary day of the Brothers, (3) The program of studies was similar to that of Rheims, with additions and modifications. Included were catechism, reading, grammar, spelling, arithmetic, the system of weights and measures, and Gregorian chant which would be useful in their function of assistants to the parish priests of rural areas. It was, for a century and a half before, what it would continue to be afterward; that is, a formal obligation for parishes to organize elementary schools, and teachers had to be trained.

We have no way of determining the number of student teachers who were certified in this program, but we can give here a typical testimonial concerning the effectiveness of this "seminary". A priests wrote this in 1719: "My country and I owe an eternal debt of gratitude to De La Salle. It was his kindness which furnished me four young men to teach in the neighborhood of Saint Marcial. They were well prepared and very zealous. One became a priest". (4)

Unfortunately, Bro. Nicholas Vuyart lost his head over the money to which the parish priest of Saint Hypolite made him a legal heir. He abandoned De La Salle and once he had broken off his commitment, the seminary began to decline in 1704. Perhaps the whole affair began because of the strategy adopted to save the "seminary" which was prospering, at the time of the Court case of Chatelet on the 29th of August. De La Salle would not allow the proposed dissimulation and insisted on the principle of "together and by association". However certain Brothers implemented their plan to pretend not to belong to the Institute in order to save the school and the "seminary". Eventually both disappeared. It seems that later on Vuyart requested his re-admission and De La Salle, who never harbored rancor toward anyone, was disposed to receive him with fatherly forgiveness. However, according to his custom, he consulted with the Brothers before taking a decision and after hearing their objections he decided against the re-instatement.

NEW EXPECTATIONS WITH ABBÉ CLÉMENT

Another attempt would be made in Paris itself. De La Salle was convinced of the need for these training schools and whatever had to be done to get them going would be done. During the spring of 1708 the Brothers had come to Saint-Denis, a small town to the north of the capital. While negotiations were still in progress, a young man by the name of Abbé Clément, son of the King's surgeon and aspirant to the rich monastery revenues of St. Calais comes into the scene. Impulsive and eager to achieve something significant in the field of education, he contacts De La Salle. The founder senses that something is not right. They meet off and on during the course of the year and then, because of the recommendation and strong approbation of Cardinal de Noailles, the interest of Madame de Maintenon and even of Louis XIV, the "seminary" is opened at Easter of 1709. Three Brothers take charge of it, one of whom teaches Gregorian chant. They used the same format previously employed with the same happy results. Except for a temporary closure during the famine, everything seemed to indicate that the cherished dream of De La Salle was finally to be realized, and that his tenacity was to be rewarded.

However, once more money and social status caused the failure of the training school for rural teachers and this time it involved disgrace and humiliations for John Baptist de La Salle.

Toward the end of 1709, Abbé Clément received his coveted prize of the Abbey of St. Calais as well as a position as Canon of the Cathedral of Le Mans. Dominated by vanity and ambition, he began to lose interest in the humble work of the "seminary" for rural teachers which he formerly considered a worthy project for both his youthful dreams and his money. In 1711, his father received the title of nobility from the King, and from then on his aversion turned into disdain. He not only ignored his former friends but also became ashamed of the projects to which he had commited himself, refusing to repay the loan which De La Salle had made to him and insisting that he had been forced to support the foundation of the "seminary".

A court case ensued. De La Salle was charged with taking advantage of a minor. At first he decided to defend himself by presenting his evidence in the case –13 letters written by Clément to De La Salle– over the course of the entire planning stage. He left this documentation in the hands of "trusted people in authority" (5). Unfortunately, few there are who cannot be suborned with money. These trusted friends turned against him and the whole Parisian atmosphere became hostile to him. After doing all he could poss-

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ibly do, to no avail, flight (6) remained his only alternative; so on February 18, 1712 he went South whence he had come scarcely 5 months previously.

On June 15th, a second judgment of the Court adjudicated the house of Saint Denis to Rogiers, one of the "trusted people in authority", and ordered the Brothers and De La Salle to vacate the premises. Thus the training school for rural teachers perished for the third time. After all the work he had invested in his dream which, after the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, was dearest to his heart, he had just suffered another severe set-back. He felt both discouraged and very tired. It was the moment of his dark night of the soul which would be dispelled by the peace and tranquility of Parménie. De La Salle would die without the consolation of seeing a single teacher training center in operation, but his sons, faithful to the vision of their Founder, have succesfully established teacher training centers or Normal Schools on every continent throughout the 300 years of Lasallian history.

IN THE HANDS OF PROVIDENCE

From all this, it is clearly evident that, for De La Salle, it was of vital importance to give teachers a proper formation if education was to enjoy continuity and effectiveness. With this conviction, he founded a Congregation of men consecrated to God by vocation to exercise the ministry of Christian education. They were to remain lay Religious, not clergy, so that nothing, not even the attractions of the priesthood, would distract them from their primary mission. They would live in community so that "together and by association" they could better do the work which God has entrusted to their care. And yet, almost as if there were something more the Institute had to do, from the very beginning he envisioned the formation of lay teachers as collaborators in the Lasallian project, to go where the Brothers could not go – to the small towns and villages.

Given the above, no one can say that this idea of De La Salle concerning the training schools for rural teachers was only sporadic or incidental. We have witnessed him constantly striving to begin again whenever circumstances, which were always external to himself and to his work, brought his efforts to naught. Just consider the 29 years (1683-1712) during which De La Salle tried to establish various "seminaries". Sixteen years went into projects, transactions and more or less stable establishments. And 13 of these years saw the full implementation of these incipient Normal Schools. These 13 years are more than the few days or the few months which we commonly ascribe to their functioning.

If De La Salle proposed to himself the re-formation of the popular school of the Seventeenth Century, he very intelligently undertook the re-formation of the principal factor in the system of education: the teacher. This has to be fundamental in any attempt to improve the school. Any other attempt at reform, be it through creative concepts or through administrative shake-ups is doomed to ultimate failure. Thus it is that the greatest Lasallian contribution has been a focus on the teacher as the means and the condition of the true reform. During his whole life, we see him dedicated to improving his teachers, be they Brothers or not, by way of written pedagogical works, catechisms and spiritual writings. If we find him teaching classes in Dijon or Grenoble it is only due to special circumstances on which he substitutes for a Brother who for some reason cannot meet his classes.

The excellent results of his method of teacher training were immediately recognized and praised. We know of the letter sent to Brother Bartholomew, the first successor to De La Salle in the government of the Congregation, by one of the priests of the parish of Saint Nicholas du Chardonnet to which we have already referred. Blain himself says: "He saw his work and his concern rewarded as he contemplated the blessings God had bestowed upon these young teachers in the schools of the villages to which they had returned. They would bear much fruit and would be the "good odor of Jesus Christ" by their example, their piety and zeal, and by their dedication to the duties of their profession" (7). And this must be the true purpose of Lasallian teacher training, not only to impart excellent professional skills, but above all, to enkindle that religious zeal which is indispensible for the complete fulfillment of so exalted a mission. This is what really makes a true Christian teacher.

No wonder that Pope Pius XII, on May 15, 1950 proclaimed St. John Baptist de La Salle "Patron before God of all teachers".

Brothers José María González and Angel Ibarguren

(1)Aroz, C. L. 41, p. 37.
(2) Rivista Lasalliana, Vol. I, p. 196. "Il suo migliore discepolo".
(4) Blain. C. L. 8, p. 179. Cf. Brother Maximin. Op. Cit. p. 38 and Gallego, S. San Juan Bautista de La Salle, I, p. 314, note 61.
(5) Balin, C. L. 8, p. 77.
(6) Blain, C. L. 8, p. 78.
(7) Blain, C. L. 7, p. 279.

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CHAPTER 5 OF THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS: A DRAMATIC DIALOGUE

In Chapter 5 of the *Conduct of Schools* De La Salle is at grips with the major pedagogical problem of the 17th century: teacher cruelty. Canon Blain tells us in the *Life of John Baptist De La Salle* that De La Salle's ambitious intention was to eliminate all forms of corporal punishment from the schools, a formidable task, I might add, at a time when the paternal swat was considered the beginning of pedagogy.

Blain also tells us that De La Salle during his lifetime was not successful in eliminating corporal punishment from the schools because the teachers were not ready to do so. They were so threatened by the possibility of losing their authority in the classroom, that they could not relinquish the security of the ferule. Regarding the elimination of corporal punishment in the classroom, De La Salle had to engage in a patient, political, lifelong program of persuasion with his teachers. Like a good administrator, he accepted the teachers where they were, and he worked patiently to wean them away from their reliance upon corporal punishment. De La Salle understood the teachers' insecurity and resistance, and he accepted whatever changes of moderation and limitation that were possible. It took until 1860, 141 years after the death of De La Salle, before the Brothers finally eliminated all mention of corporal punishment from the *Conduct of Schools*.

It is an historical tragedy stemming from a superficial reading by historians of education of Chapter 5, the longest chapter in the *Conduct of Schools*, that De La Salle's approach to the elimination of corporal punishment has been misunderstood. The length of Chapter 5 has been mistakenly interpreted by some historians as a confirmation that De La Salle as well as his teachers were obsessed with corporal punishment. It is my belief that such a misreading has been due to the failure to recognize the chapter's dialogical structure and the concomitant failure to identify what is said by De La Salle and what is said by the teachers.

Ironically, De La Salle's approach to the elimination of corporal punishment as expressed in Chapter 5 is probably the most realistic and humane presentation on correction written by a practising primary school educator in 17th-century France. Chapter 5 is a pedagogical treasure, a gem in the history of discipline in education. In Chapter 5 De La Salle's pedagogical genius is at its best, and what he has to say about classroom correction and "kids at risk" has value for teachers today.

Without being theatrical Chapter 5 is a subtly staged dialogue in which the moderating views of De La Salle alternate with and respond to the needs and demands of the teachers to hang on to the traditional means of correction. Based upon the text of De La Fontainerie's English translation of the *Conduct of Schools* (McGraw-Hill, 1935) a counting of the positions identified as taken by the teachers totals approximately ten pages; a counting of the responses identified as De La Salle's totals approximately 22 pages. Chapter 5 of the *Conduct of Schools* is the best example in all the writings of De La Salle illustrating the painful reality of his role as collaborator in the pedagogical formation of the teachers. The objective of this article is to outline the script of the painful dialogue between De La Salle and the teachers in Chapter 5.

Script of the Dialogue between De La Salle and the Teachers

De La Salle: (Introduction, four pages) **The principal cause of student misbehavior: the teacher**

The Introduction to Chapter 5 is not in the 1706 manuscript of the *Conduct of Schools*. De La Salle added this long introduction prior to the 1720 printed edition in order to strengthen and focus his position regarding corporal punishment vis-a-vis the teachers. De La salle sets the stage by posing a dilemma in terms that are meaningful and challenging to the teachers: How can a teacher obtain classroom order and discipline without alienating the students? Then De La Salle, front and center, presents the model teacher as one who combines firmness with gentleness and follows with the lengthy claim that the cause of student misbehavior is the unbearable and weak teacher. Typical lines:

"... first the necessity of joining gentleness to firmness in the guidance of children must be explained."

"What must be done in order that firmness may not degenerate into harshness, and gentleness into weakness?"

(Summary) The unbearable teacher is rigorous and lacks discretion; domineering and impatient; demanding and nagging; unreasonable and unwilling to listen; unfair; insensitive.

(Summary) The weak teacher is neglectful; lax on regulations; familiar; frivolous. He fails to follow through; shows favoritism; lacks conviction or feeling.

Teachers: (Article 1, four pages) **The traditional kinds of correction**

The defensive demands of the teachers dominate this response. The teachers insist upon a description of the kinds of correction they have traditionally relied upon: reprimand, strap, rod, expulsion, and penance. The 1706 manuscript of *Conduct of Schools* had included the whip, but by the time of the 1720 edition De La Salle had succeeded in getting the teachers to drop it. De La Salle makes three interventions in the teachers' presentation: he makes the startling recommendation that reprimands not be used; he gets the teachers to agree to a limited and minimal number of blows; and he puts off talking about penance, which "has special utility," until the end of Chapter 5. Typical lines:

"When a teacher has threatened the pupils with something, and one of them commits the fault on account of which they have been threatened, he must be punished."

"The ferule may be used on several occasions: 1. For not following the lesson or for fooling around. 2. For coming late to school. 3. For not obeying at the first sign; and for several other similar faults."

According to our custom, the rod may be used: 1. For not being willing to obey. 2. For habitually not following the lesson or not studying. 3. For scribbling instead of writing. 4. For fighting in school or on the streets. 5. For not praying in church. 6. For not behaving at Mass or during catechism. 7. For missing Mass or catechism on Sunday."

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De La Salle: (Articles 2, 3, 4. seven pages) **The moderation and restriction of correction**

De La Salle goes into a lengthy monologue regarding the moderation, limitation and eventual elimination of corporal punishment. The monologue is broken up into three "scenes." In the first "scene" De La Salle counsels the teachers to avoid corporal punishment by critiquing the source of the disorder; by creating non-punitive means of keeping order; by consulting beforehand with the school principal.

In the second "scene" De La Salle describes the "ideal" punishment which fulfills ten "ideal" conditions: seven of which apply to the teacher; two apply to the student; one applies to both. De La Salle probably had his tongue in cheek during this "scene," knowing that the ten "ideal" conditions in reality eliminate corporal punishment.

In the third "scene" De La Salle describes the ten worst faults commited in administering corporal punishment. Again, and the implication is clear, if the faults are avoided, corporal punishment becomes practically non-existent.

In the monologue De La Salle uses his strongest language in Chapter 5 against corporal punishment, and he makes very specific limitations and restrictions against its usage. De La Salle comes through as an administrator who is in touch with his teachers and on top of the problem. Typical lines:

"... in a good school punishments must be rare..."

"To avoid punishments which are a source of great disorder in a school, it is necessary to note well that it is silence, self-control, and vigilance on the part of the teacher that establish and maintain good order in a class, and not harshness and blows."

(Summary) The ten conditions are: on the part of teacher: charitable, just, proportioned to the fault, moderate, calm, prudent, and not administered for offenses taken personally; on part of the student: accepted and respectful; on the part of both: silent.

(Summary): The ten worst faults are: harmful, useless, impulsive, disturbing to the class, antagonizing other students, using disrespectful words, brought on by displeasure with the student or his parents, done in an indecorous manner, not approved by school policy, and not approved for the particular teacher.

Teachers: (Article 5, two pages) **The serious offenses deserving punishment**

The teachers respond by listing the five most serious offenses which they righteously demand deserve corporal punishment and which they defensively maintain can only be controlled by corporal punishment. It must have been very difficult for De La Salle to compromise and to let the teachers have their say in this matter. Typical lines:

"There are five vices which must not ordinarily be pardoned: lying, fighting, theft, impurity and indecorum in church."

De La Salle: (Sections 1, 2, 3, 4. six pages) **Understanding problem children**

De La Salle immediately steps forward as a "psychologist" and in the same article delivers, in pre-scientific terms of course, a touching treatise on the types and treatment of "children at risk." He analyzes the etiology of the plight of poor children; he explains how parental neglect, deprived family conditions and social background account for student misbehavior. He recommends appropriate ways of dealing with various types of problem children. At this point in the exchange regarding the etiology of student misbehavior, De La Salle, the teacher of teachers, is at his peak.

School psychologists and counselors today would undoubtedly applaud De La Salle's delivery as a precursor to their undertaking. The reader with further interest in this matter should refer to Brother Othmar Wurth's in-depth study of De La Salle's analysis of troubled children in *John Baptist De La Salle and Special Education*, (Saint Mary's Press, 1988).

In a short peroration (Section 4) De La Salle warns the teachers against the dangers of accusations made against students, and he prescribes ways of dealing with the accusations fairly and justly. Typical lines:

"There are some children to whose conduct their parents pay very little attention – sometimes none at all."

"These faults do not come from an evil disposition of heart or mind, but from their having been left to themselves."

"... it would ordinarily be more to the purpose not to correct him, but to pretend not to notice it when he does not study or fails to do his duty."

"If they have a haughty spirit, give them some charge in the school... If they are thoughtless, show them affection... and place then between two students of sedate disposition."

"Do not require of them what is beyond their capacity... and be satisfied with the little progress that they make."

Teachers: (Articles 6 and 7. four pages) **The administration of punishment**

One would expect by this time that the teachers would have been won over by De La Salle to less violent means of correction. Quite the contrary! At this juncture the teachers wanted their "right" to the use of corporal punishment spelled out in detail as to when, where and how it should be administered. One might also justifiably expect by this time that De La Salle would have lost patience with the teachers. But he had not. De La Salle sympathized with their deep insecurities, and he understood how hard it is for the teachers to risk giving up "their hold over the class." So De La Salle goes along with the description of the administration of corporal punishment in school, patiently tempering and restricting the unpleasant details. Typical lines:

"When the teacher wishes to give the ferule to a pupil... he will indicate with the point of the signal the rule which the pupil has violated... The pupil will go to the teacher, make the Sign of the Cross and hold out his hand... If when the teaher wishes to make the pupil hold out his hand, he meets with resistance, he will make a sign to the pupil to go to the place where punishment (with the rod) is administered... there he will prepare himself in such a manner that he may not appear indecently."

De La Salle: (Article 8, five pages) **Penance and De La Salle's recommendation**

Tired but not discouraged in his efforts to "convert" his teachers from corporal punishment, De La Salle comes back to his recommended method of correction: namely, penance and its explanation which he had postponed earlier. In this last effort in Chapter 5 to get rid of corporal punishment from the schools, De La Salle attemps to convince the teachers of the preventive, corrective and exemplary advantages of using a variety of forms of penances as effective alternatives to corporal punishment. De La Salle's final recommendation to his teachers in this dramatic dialogue is the closing line:

"The most appropriate penance and the one that is of the greatest utility is to give the pupils something to learn by heart."

Bro. Dominic Everett

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EDITIONS OF THE «DEVOIRS I» BY YEARS AND CITIES

Introduction

● This is not the first time that LASALLIANA dedicates one of its issues to "Duties of a Christian I" which, according to some opinions, is among the best works of St. Jonh Baptist de La Salle. (Cf. LASALLIANA: 03-A-16; 03-A-17 04-A-23; 04-A-24; 06-A-34).

● We present here all the editions which have been personally verified by the author in the following sources: the National Library of Paris, the Archives of Motherhouse of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Municipal Library of Avignon, the Library of the Jesuits of Chantilly, the Municipal Library of Madrid, the National Library of Brussels, the Departamental Archives of Pibrac, the Library of Lyon, Hotel de la Cloche, the Library of the Gregoriana University of Rome...

● We have also received many written communications from libraries of the Christian Brothers, and public, diocesan and seminary libraries of France which have been added to the list of editions of "Duties of a Christian I".

● I am convinced that subsequent investigations will refine some of this data and that other editions will be discovered in the future. The historian, G. Rigault considers this work of De La Salle as "the most important contribution of all Lasallian literature, a masterpiece of its kind and one of the most outstanding books of recent centuries". (G. Rigault, Histoire de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes, Vol. I, p. 556).

NOTE: Recently, I consulted lists of the editions of the "Duties of a Christian I" in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Christian Brothers and found some which are not included here because, for the time being, they need to be confirmed.

* * *

EDITIONS OF THE «DEVOIRS I»

1703	Paris	1
1705	Paris	1
1716	Grenoble	1
1727	Rouen	1
1733	Rouen	1
1736	Grenoble	1
1751	Rouen	1
1752	Rouen	1
1767	Rouen	1
1770	Metz	1
1773	Rouen	1
1774	Rouen	1
1777	Nancy	1
1779	Reims - Reims	2
1781	Rouen	1
1782	Saint-Omer	1
1787	Rouen	1
1789	Caen	1
1796	Fribourg - Rouen	2
1802	Avignon	1
1804	Langres	1
1806	Bourges - Rome	2
1809	Lyon	1
1810	Evreux - Toulouse	2
1811	Evreux - Rouen	2
1812	Charleville - Laon - Paris - Rouen - Saint-Omer	5
1814	Tours	1
1815	Amiens	1
1816	Lyon - Toulouse	2
1817	Avignon - Avignon - Evreux - Lille - Lille - Paris - Paris	7
1818	Albi - Amiens - Lille - Metz	4
1819	Avignon - Avignon - Evreux - Paris	4
1820	Avignon - Liège - Lille - Rouen	4
1821	Avignon - Langres - Paris - Toulouse	4
1822	Avignon - Avignon - Dole - Liège - Lille - Lyon	6
1823	Dijon - Paris	2
1824	Avignon - Evreux - Paris - Paris - Reims - Saint-Malo	6
1825	Evreux - Lille - Metz - Metz - Paris - Paris - Saint-Brieuc - Saint-Malo	8
1826	Laon - Metz - Paris - Paris - Saint-Menehould - Sedan - Troyes - Tours	8
1827	Dole - Lyon - Paris - Paris - Paris - Toulouse	6
1828	Avignon - Dijon - Dijon - Evreux - Langres - Lille - Metz - Metz - Paris - Paris	10
1829	Lille - Lille - Lisieux - Paris - Paris	5
1830	Liège - Liège - Lille - Lille - Paris	5
1831	Avignon - Lille - Lyon - Paris	4
1832	Liège - Liège - Lyon - Troyes	4
1833	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Paris - Saint-Brieuc - Toulouse	6
1834	Clermont-Ferrand - Liège - Lille - Limoges - Marseille - Metz - Paris - Tours	8
1835	Limoges - Paris - Paris	3

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1836	Bruxelles - Metz - Nancy - Paris	4
1837	Clermont-Ferrand - Paris	2
1838	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Metz - Paris	5
1839	Lille - Noyon - Toulouse	3
1840	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Metz - Namur	4
1841	Lille - Limoges - Lyon - Paris - Paris - Paris - Toulouse - Vannes	7
1842	Clermont-Ferrand - Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Metz - Vannes - Tours	6
1843	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Paris - Vannes - Vannes	6
1844	Clermont-Ferrand - Lyon - Metz - Vannes	4
1845	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Paris - Toulouse - Tours - Vannes	7
1846	Clermont-Ferrand - Lyon - Lyon - Lyon - Vannes	5
1847	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Lyon	4
1848	Rouen - Tours - Vannes - Vannes	4
1849	Lille - Limoges - Lyon - Vannes	4
1850	Clermont-Ferrand - Tours	2
1851	Lille - Limoges - Namur - Vannes	4
1852	Clermont-Ferrand - Clermont-Ferrand - Limoges - Lyon- Lyon - Ploermel - Tours - Vannes	8
1853	Le Mans - Limoges - Vannes	3
1854	Limoges - Lyon	2
1855	Lille - Lyon - Lyon - Paris	4
1856	Lyon - Tours - Tours - Vannes	4
1857	Le Mans - Lille - Limoges - Tours	4
1858	Limoges - Lyon - Lyon - Tours	4
1859	Lille - Tours	2
1860	Aix - Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Limoges - Lyon - Tours	6
1861	Limoges - Limoges - Lyon - Tours	4
1862	Lille - Limoges - Lyon - Tours	4
1863	Clermont-Ferrand - Tours	2
1864	Clermont-Ferrand - Lille - Lyon - Lyon - Tours - Tours	6
1865	Aurillac - Lyon	2
1866	Lille - Lyon	2
1867	Limoges - Limoges - Ploermel - Tours	4
1868	Lyon - Ploermel - Tours	3
1869	Lille - Limoges - Tours	3
1870	Tours	1
1872	Lyon - Tours	2
1873	Limoges - Ploermel	2
1875	Tours - Vannes	2
1876	Lyon - Ploermel	2
1877	Tours	1
1891	Paris	1
1892	Paris	1
No date	Albi - Bruxelles - Liège - Liège - Liège - Liège - Paris - Rodez - Tournai	9

* * *

Conclusions

1. How many copies of editions and further printings of the "duties of a Christian I" would there have been?

- It is not easy to venture even a close approximation of this number. The number of copies of editions and re-printings varies in each case: the edition of 1799 (Rheims) had 12.000 copies; that of 1811 (Rouen) had 2.000; and that of 1812 (Laon) had 6.000...

- Estimating an average of 4.000 or 5.000 copies per edition-reprinting, this would amount to over a million copies which for those times is quite considerable.

2. The "Duties of a Christian I" held an important place in the Christianization of the primary schools of France. According to the former Superior General Nicet Joseph, his mother used this book as a reader while teaching school in his home village.

3. If the cities in which editions-reprintings of this book are pegged on a map of France, some interesting facts come to light.

4. Has the "Duties of a Christian I" received the consideration it should have within the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for its **content** as a theological synthesis of the Founder; or from the point of view of its **diffusion** among the families of our students and in our classrooms; or because of its possibilities for the **christianization** of generations of students?

Brother Manuel F. Magaz

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SAINT MUTIEN -MARIE (1841 - 1917) POSSESSES ALL THE GREATNESS OF THE HUMBLE

Homily for the canonization.

John Paul II

December 10th, 1989

1. "*Repent*, because the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt 3:2).

During this season of *Advent* the Church addresses to us once again John the Baptist's invitation. She addresses it to each one of us! John, the Precursor, was alone in the desert, in austerity. He had no other task than to prepare the way of the Lord. His voice was heard, and the crowds arrived. At John's invitation they submitted to baptism, acknowledging their sins. Their path was one of conversion.

With John, this crowd is preparing the way of the Lord. *In fact, the Kingdom of heaven is now at hand!* John announces that "he who is to come after me is mightier than I" (cf. Mt 3:11). The last and greatest of the prophets announces the *Messiah*, the shoot that has blossomed from the stump of Jesse, the one whom the prophet Isaiah awaited.

2. When we listen to the prophets today, when we listen to John Baptist who leads us on the way of the Messiah, we are not only hearing the echo of an *ancient message. It is the Church of Christ* which in every generation, in this generation at the end of the second millennium, returns to say that the Kingdom of heaven is at hand in the Messiah foretold by the prophets.

He is *coming* into our midst, upon whom rested "the Spirit of the Lord, a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord..." (Is 11:2).

If *conversion* is asked of us, it is in order to welcome him who is coming, to receive the gifts of justice and peace, to become peacemakers because, as the prophet Isaiah says, "he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted" (Is 11:4). To prepare for his coming, to become his disciples, it is necessary to let ourselves be transformed by his justice and guided by his wisdom. We understand that through "the spirit of wisdom and of understanding" (Is 11:2) the Messiah discovers our sin and invites us to be conformed to the law of love and truth of his Kingdom.

3. The prophet says again of the Messiah that "*justice* shall be the band around his waist" (Is 11:5). He will inaugurate a *kingdom of peace*: "Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, ...the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them... There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain" (Is 11:6, 9).

Is this an illusory message, since the endless conflicts in so many parts of the world seem to render it vain? It would be so if this message did not come from God, if it were not addressed to consciences, if it were not of itself a source of justice, justice according to God, God's *justice!* Isaiah's message, then the ardent appeal of the Precursor, and finally the coming of Jesus himself bring the *fruits of peace* to the hearts and actions of those who allow themselves to be converted.

John the Baptist proclaims the urgency of conversion: "Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees" (Mt 3:10). Let us heed this warning well: *each person is called to produce the good fruits of justice and peace*: each moment, each act, has its importance in the function of the Kingdom which is coming and whose spirit we must not contradict. Every person, no matter how modest he or she may be, is irreplaceable in the human family; the humblest act inspired by love gives glory to God.

4. Today the Church exalts a very simple religious. Throughout his life he fulfilled the Lord's will without delay. Faithful to the demands and the renunciations of his rule, *St Mutien-Marie* has all the greatness of the humble.

Throughout sixty years of religious life lived in obscurity, he *practised the observances of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* with a total generosity. For him, nothing was more important than obedience, nothing more joyous than poverty, nothing more urgent than the obligations of the common life, the acceptance of his students or whoever came to him. Faithful to the little tasks which were entrusted to him, *day by day* Brother Mutien *gave his life* to the Lord, in a self-renunciation that became natural to him. For this reason he is already an exemplary figure; he achieved holiness in routine things, in following docilely the way of the sons of St John Baptist de La Salle.

A simple teacher of music and drawing, or busy with the many services needed in a large educational institution, Brother Mutien lived constantly illumined by

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God's presence. His *sense of prayer* impressed his confreres and students, to the point that they called him "the Brother who prayed always".

He is an admirable *model of the "life of prayer"*. He spent as much time as he could in adoration and meditation *before the Blessed Sacrament*; he radiated with joy each day in communicating in the Body of Christ; he never began a task without invoking the Lord and venerating the Cross. At every moment, his rosary in hand, *he invoked the Blessed Virgin* with a total devotion as these words show us: "To arrive at an intimate union with our Lord, take the way of Mary where there is no task or shadow which could stop your progress towards Jesus" (Letter of 3 Jan. 1914).

By the intensity of his spiritual life, St Mutien-Marie "prepared the way of the Lord, making straight his path" (cf. Mt 3:3). Those who saw him at prayer were struck at finding in him "nothing but simple sincerity". In the man of God there is something like a transparence which disposes him to give authentic witness to the Lord present in him. *The Word of God dwelled in him*, the spirituel writers nourished him; *from them he drew a wisdom* which he naturally communicated. We think of the words of Isaiah which we have heard this day: "The earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea" (Is 11:9).

5. At Malonne Saint Mutien-Marie had a hidden influence which owed everything to the living source of his piety, his prayer. The children in the catechism classes, the students who endlessly gathered around him, understood that the strengh of this man came from his intimacy with God and that his unfailing charity was more valuable than any other talent.

His message is not expressed in terms of this world's wisdom. Rather, he shows his Brothers, teachers, and students the true fruitfulness of a life that is humbly offered. He could say, like the Psalm in today's liturgy, that it is God "who shall have pity for the lowly and the poor; the lives of the poor he shall save" (Ps 71 [72]:13).

He considered himself weak and poor, and that enabled him to help whoever confided their troubles to him. After his death they spontaneously recognized him as the intercessor whom the Church now honours, a friend of God who remains a brother to men.

With the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, with his compatriots from Belgium, we are awestruck by the influence of this humble religious. Today we give thanks for the holiness of Brother Mutien-Marie. We ask him to inspire today's teachers that they will know how to accompany young people on the path of faith, to open them to the beauty of the Gospel message, to invite them to renew ceaselessly the conversion which Christ the Saviour asks for, to take an active part in the Church's life.

6. The long path of holiness which Brother Mutien travelled seems to be a faithful response to the words of St Paul which the Church has us listen to on this second Sunday of Advent: the holy books are written "for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15-4). The holy Brother gave proof of endurance and encouragement. May he help us along this path to take our support from the power of the Word of God to face the challenges in the lives of each one of us, the challenges of each of our families or communities.

St Paul added, "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus" (Rom 15:5). After the example of the holy Brother of Malonne who was entirely imbued with the spirit of Christ, we will welcome better the Saviour who is coming among us if, in unity, we receive the Word and act in communion with the same Spirit and share the same gifts. "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom 15:7). To live the season of Advent is to prepare the days when "justice will flower", the days when we shall know "profound peace" (cf. Ps 71 [72]:7), the days when "all the tribes of the earth (shall) be blessed" (ibid., 17).

7. Brothers and Sisters, the example of a saint who lived close to us can strengthen in us the courage of hope. Brother Mutien-Marie goes before us on the path of fidelity to God's invitation and of tireless service of our brothers and sisters. We ask his intercession, that we may be given in our day to make straight the way of the Lord and of man, which is the path of the Church. We invoke his intercession that we may be given the ability to produce fruits which express true conversion, to proclaim ceaselessly the Kingdom of heaven which is now at hand in him who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 3:2-11).

And thus we can "with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. Rom 15:6).

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«THE LASALLIAN TRADITION»

Report on a symposium

In October, 1987, a symposium on "The Lasallian Tradition" was organized as part of the series of events held to honor the 125th anniversary of the founding of Saint Mary's College. Several participants requested that a follow-up symposium be organized, and it was –on Saturday, November 12, 1988. I acted as moderator for the occasion and took some notes with a view to presenting here a summary report. In this account I attempt to group together topics which were scattered throughout a discussion that lasted more than two hours among the sixty faculty, administration and staff members present.

BACKGROUND TOPICS MENTIONED

More than one speaker pointed out the need for historical background about St. John Baptist de La Salle and for some appropriate documentation for study purposes. La Salle's "Meditations" were mentioned as an example. A definition of the term, "Lasallian Tradition," was asked for, and a tentative one was forthcoming: "a set of developing educational beliefs, attitudes, and policies handed down through generations of Brothers and lay teachers from St. John Baptist de La Salle –a heritage that has always emphasized working in schools primarily for the poor, schools as communities engaged in Christian religious instruction and in the human development of students through quality education, and schools characterized by a brotherly concern for persons, for institutional stability and good order, of a non-clerical, non-elitist, and non-Jansenist kind."

In order to make this tradition the possession of all the members of the College community, readings and seminars should be organized.

On the other hand, it was asked, is not this tradition the sole proprietorship of the Brothers? Perhaps the rest of the College community can participate only in the "spirit" of La Salle, while the Brothers alone own the tradition. This distinction occasioned several comments: some speakers saying that all people of good will at the College are sharers and shapers of the tradition, that we all have access to it, that there never has been discrimination, that in Lasallian matters there should be "a level playing field" for everyone. At any rate, none of us should be ignorant of it; and maybe some lay teachers, especially those with no family obligations, can actually be devoted to it as much as the Brothers. Is it correct to say that the future of the College depends on the prime possessors of the Tradition, the Brothers, who must present the rest of us with plans?

Moreover, beyond individual commitment to the tradition, there is an institutional or corporate commitment to which we can all contribute in varying degrees. It was claimed that by a kind of osmosis we can all (students included) absorb the spirit of the institution and acquire its focus. There is no secret fraternity in this matter. In fact, it may be that we all participate to the extent that we are dedicated to the goals of the College, exhibit human decency, do our work professionally, etc. –since La Salle's life was spent in training just such teachers. We become thereby "Lasallian family members," i.e., more than "employees" of the College.

KEY TERMS DISCUSSED

One of the key words in the tradition is that of "brother." We should all be brotherly in our approach to each other and to the students. To be brothers and sisters means that coercion and competition are inappropriate at the College, and that consultations are appropriate. A family spirit was shown by the motto on La Salle's coat of arms, Indivisa Manent, keep undivided.

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But, it was warned, we must beware giving to the Lasallian Tradition dimensions that are only humanistic.

Another key word is much more troublesome: "poor". Do we want an extrinsic, sociological definition of "poor," or, in some way, a more intrinsic one? From the very beginning of the "Christian Schools," their success has attracted a well-to-do clientele. The early Brothers' schools were victims of that success. But in La Salle's lifetime even the rich were not charged for classroom instruction– all the schools were maintained by outside financial support (by parishes, municipalities, patrons, etc.). Does this tradition actually go all the way back to Socrates who also refused to charge for instruction? His concern for truth, and only truth, required him not to muddy the waters of education with student fees. Or does the tradition of gratuitous instruction stem from the counter-Reformation in which the Church was anxious to save the poor as well as the rich from Protestant doctrine? If so, there is now a crisis: not only is there today no longer a counter-Reform spirit, there seems to be no desire to pursue truth in the Socratic sense. In particular, one speaker inquired, do we not today shift our instructional aims away from truth for its own sake to training-for-doing? Isn't vocational preparation the preoccupation of most colleges' curricula? Have we not lost the concern for truth (which was the claim of the catechisms which were at the heart of La Salle's schools)? If so, we may react pessimistically, or we may react by seeing in the situation a real opportunity for evangelization. It is true that La Salle had a reputation for including a lot of practical, vocational material in his schools, but for him this was a lure to bring children to the truths of the catechism. At the same time, of course, he insisted on quality training (e.g., in mastery of vernacular French) with a view to assuring a secure living for the students in society. A student participant suggested: by teaching college students to think, we may show our concern for truth itself. Such an effort may be called "pre-evangelization;" at least, that is the attitude of Brothers in missionary schools where the student population is often largely non-Christian.

VOCATION NEEDED

There was considerable discussion about terms like "vocation," "career," and "job". Vocation is etymologically a "call" and came to mean a call from God; but that language has been replaced by expressions such as "sense of identity" –meaning that God calls us to be our true selves. And, unfortunately, modern work places do not often provide careers where our true selves can be realized. Hence careers and jobs must be distinguished, regrettably, from vocations. For both lay teachers and religious teachers the notion of vocation can be a unifying idea. And in both cases, it can be subsumed under the idea of "Providence." Each of us as a unique person is a mystery; our providential vocation is a means to energize each of us but also to give us a ministry to carry our vision to the institution. "Abandonment to divine providence" was one of La Salle's teachings (characteristic of the spirituality of his day), but one which is difficult to translate into terms acceptable to modern sensibility. Perhaps we could speak of a force moving us to integrity. There remains, however, the fact that we do not live up to our ideals; reality intrudes. The resulting tension should be creative.

Brother Brendan Kneale

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I KNEW

BROTHER JAIME HILARIO

I lived with him and had the privilege of seing him each day and to come to appreciate him. Therefore, I can today bear witness which may contribute both to the joy of seeing him beatified and to the simple and heroic life of virtue which he led. May he come to my assistance.

His childhood

Manuel Barbal Cosán was born in Enviny, in the region of Pallars Sobirá (Lérida) in the diocese of La Seu de Urgel on January 2, 1898. His family was profoundly rooted in the Christian tradition: grace before meals, the angelus, and rosary in the family life, helping the poor and keeping Sunday as the Lord's day.

"My father is a good Christian with a gift for going out to people and he has a lot of common sense. He is an optimist with a wonderfully positive outlook filled with hope." "My mother is a saint. She belives that love must be everywhere. There are some people whom God places as trailmarkers to show us the way to heaven. She was one of these." Manuel passed his childhood amidst the hardships and joys of a mountain village. Work in the fields, the grand scenery of the Pyrenees and the rugged mountains, all became a part of his hard-working, serious, sincere and poetic personality.

Desire for the priesthood

In January of 1908, he went to the boarding school of the Vincentian Fathers in Rialb. He made his First Holy Communion in May of 1909. Soon he felt the stirrings of God's call to the consecrated life, initially to the priesthood. The family was overjoyed. A religious vocation is a blessing from God.

October, 1910 saw Manuel in the seminary of La Seu where he received excellent commendations. However, a progressive deafness became an obstacle to an ecclesiastical vocation. He went back home but the hidden stirrings of God's call did not diminish. He met a Brother of the Christian Schools who spoke to him about his institute. "I like that" he exclaimed. From that moment he sought for a way to follow a Lasallian vocation.

The novitiate in Irun

Before entering the novitiate where only French was spoken, he went to Mollerusa for three months to begin to learn that language. "The Brothers have a gift for KINDNESS", he wrote. The Director of Novices in Irun was Brother Junien Victor, the future Superior General and an eminent formator. A month after his arrival he received the holy habit and with it the name Brother Jaime Hilario.

A thumbnail sketch of this novice would say: young, tall, rather thin, brownish hair; quiet of maner, bright, courteous, simple and direct, unassuming, very tenacious both in work and study and always in good humor. He was uncommonly mature for his 19 years. He lets us into his interior life by writing: "Little by little God is becoming everything for me: father, guide, support, light, strength and joy". Socially, his zeal become very concrete: "The greatest work of mercy in a community is to encourage, create enthusiasm and to spread joy".

Successive assignments

Between 1918 and 1926 he served in several places. First, there were five years in Mollerusa. At the end of his first year, both Brothers and students agreed that: "Brother Jaime is a great teacher and a holy man". Quite a compliment for a beginner. In 1923 we find him teaching latin in Manresa..., unfortunately, his hearing deteriorated drastically and he had to give up the classroom for the garden and the orchard. The following year he returned to Mollerusa. Oliana became his new community the nest year, following which he went to the boarding school of Ste. Germaine de Pibrac, Haute Garonne, France. He remained here for quite some time.

Final vows: August of 1927

Among his personal notes, we find this statement which we think is very significant: "If God had revealed to me the difficulties I would have to face as a Brother, I would have been afraid and I would never have entered... But now I would not give up the robe for all the gold in the world, nor my way of life for all the land in Enviny". Even the Founder at the end of his life said something similar. Pibrac would be his home for 8 years, on the "staff of the Novitiate". He was well prepared culturally and spiritually and with his firm convictions and determination, he was a role-model and an encouragement to the young men in formation. In 1932, it was suggested that he try his hand as a recruiter in vocational work. He started by sending pamphlets and other information on the religious life to the neighboring towns with fair results... However, his deafness became more pronounced until finally he had to return to work in the garden as he had done as a boy in the fields of Enviny... In the silence of his labors be found the opportunity to speak with God and to accept the action of Grace which was steadily preparing him for his ultimate testimony.

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I knew brother Jaime Hilario when I was an aspirant in Cambrils (Tarragona) in 1934.

At about this time, both the Spanish Brothers and the schools which belonged to the French Districts of Beziers and Toulouse had in Catalonia were transferred to the District of Barcelona. The aspirants from Pibrac came to join us. One day Brother Jaime Hilario came to visit his former students... This gave me my first flash of insight.

I was on my way out to mid-morning recreation when I noticed this little group from Pibrac surrounding a Brother. They were tightly pressed around him and hanging from his every word. Brother was listening them with total concentration (only later did find out he was almost deaf) to their questions and comments. His answere were accompanied with a smile. As a detached observer, I found this charming. Meanwhile, Brother Leoncio, another man of great faith and subsequently a martyr also, came into the courtyard and when he realized who was the center of interest of the small group, threw up his hands (I can still see him) as he passed by and exclaimed: "Dominus (sic) non sum dignus". I was impressed.

Another incident. When I was already a novice in San José of Cambrils, I found Brother Jaime Hilario working in the orchard. As usual, the novices were rapt in observing and cataloging. We all admired his recollection and sense of the presence of God as he expertly went about his work... We also saw him alone before the Blessed Sacrament, deep in adoration... We likewise knew that he was contributing to the publications of the diocese of La Seu... We never spoke to him (in those days we were not supposed to communicate even between communities existing within the same house) but we novices had decided that "he is a saint".

The revolution of 1936 took Brother Jaime Hilario by surprise in Mollerusa while he was on the way to Enviny.

He was detained and placed under house arrest with a family of friends (the Badia family) who tell of the way they were edified by his total abandonment to the will of God, his intense prayers, his charism as a catechist for the children of the house. Transported to the prison at Lérida, he was placed in cell 31. Since he was a native of Cambrils, he was taken to the Commissariate of Tarragona and interned in the prison-ship "Mahón". This was in December of 1936. His trial was fixed for January, 1937. A friendly lawyer, Mr. Montañés suggested: "Just declare that you work in the gardens of the community... that you are not a Religious... and you will be free to go. Later, Brother Jaime said to Brother Eusebio: "We are not going to get along with this lawyer... I cannot pretend that I am not a Religious..." This amounted to signing his own sentence. That much was very clear.

The trial in Tarragona before the people's court

To help Brother Jaime, Brother Sorribas sat next to him so that he could repeat the questions of the Court for him. The opening statement of the defense attorney was a classic in logic and profundity: "This monk has studied latin (sic) and poisoned the minds of children. If we do not kill him, he will kill all of us..." Then he tried to present him as a poor man, a stranger to politics, a laborer in the monastery. He then asked Brother Jaime to corroborate his statements. "No," said Brother Jaime, "I am a religious, a Brother of the Christian Schools". The presiding officer interposed: "Let the accused explain the difference between a gardener and a monk." "No, there is no contradiction. My deafness prevents me from being an educator". That was all. After a semblance of discussion, the Judge condemned him to death. Once they were alone, Brother Jaime asked what was decided. Brother Sorribas rubbed the back of his neck and asked, "When?" He had not been told. Bro. Jaime asked for paper and wrote in pencil to his sister and his nephews: "I have just been condemned to death by the Tribunal. Do not be ashamed of me and do not weep for me. I have done nothing wrong. Pray for me as I do for you. Good-bye until we meet in heaven..." Perfect spelling, no sign of nervousness.

The martyrdom of Brother Jaime Hilario

Two days later (it was decided to act quickly to prevent a possible indult of pardon, which in fact arrived on January 18th, effective immediately) at three-thirty in the afternoon, Brother Jaime was taken into the woods on a small hill "la Oliva" near the cemetery. While they were waiting for the arrival of the official, some members of the platoon asked him: "Don't you realize we are going to kill you?" The reaction was typical of the testimony of every martyr in this situation: "To die for Christ is to reign!" They placed him near a dry waterfall and the platoon took its place about 10 feet away. Brother Jaime, facing the soldiers had his arms folded and his pale face raised toward heaven... "Fire!" Brother Jaime remained standing. Not one bullet had hit him. Furious, the captain repeated the order: "Fire!" Brother is still standing. Frightened, the platoon dropped its guns and fled while the cursing captain fired his pistol into the temple of the victim who thus entered the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

"I would not give up my Brother's garb for all the gold in the world!" This is not just melodramatic literature. He confessed Christ when his life was at stake; but "he who loses his life for My sake, keeps it unto everlasting life". Brother Jaime Hilario was already there... Together with his Brothers of Turon who, like him, had given their youthful lives for the same crime of "having poisoned the minds of youth".

"We follow the footsteps of saints" and "uncommon holiness" are Lasallian principles. May they also be ours.

Brother Manuel Olivé

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THE BROTHERS AND NATURAL SCIENCES IN QUEBEC

For a long time now, the Institute has had in its ranks Brothers who have specialised in natural sciences. Some of them even have become famous like Brother Sennen in Spain, Heribaud Joseph in France, Leon in Cuba and Marie Victorin in Canada, to mention but a few. In general, the Brothers's first concern was their work in school. In France they published a whole series of textbooks on zoology, botany and minerology, especially at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. The influence of the French Brothers who arrived in Canada from 1904 onwards, and who were often highly competent in zoology, doubtlessly contributed to the expansion of this subject which took place at that time in Canada. In Quebec, interest in natural sciences was due initially to the boost given it by Brother Marie Victorin (1917), and to the expansion of a movement promoting science among young people. Nowadays, ecology has become a topical subject. There are only a few Brothers working in this area.

1. The predominant influence of Brother Marie Victorin (1885-1944).

In Quebec, Brother Marie Victorin was without fear of contradiction the outstanding figure in the field of natural sciences. What made him famous in particular was his "La Flore laurentienne" published in 1935, and the creation of the Montreal botanical garden. For several years now, a very highly coveted scientific prize has been named after him, and is presented every year by the Quebec government.

But Marie Victorin was more than a famous scientist or an efficient administrator. His genius was to have been able to gather around himself others who would spread and continue his work. Brother Rolland Germain (French by birth, 1881-1972) was a very close collaborator, and Brother Alexandre Blouin (1892-1987) illustrated his books. Numerous other scientist were influenced by his example and pursued their work in a variety of areas of natural sciences: the exploration of the Great North, ethno-botany, producing popular scientific material for newspapers and radio, phytogeography, ecology, algology, teaching science to very young children, etc. Marie Victorin exerted his influence on adults by his university teaching, his writings and his personal contacts.

His influence extended also to thousands of young people through Young Naturalist Clubs (CJN) which came into existence in the 1930's. A number of Brothers have been involved in the running of these clubs in schools, juniorates and scholasticates. The Clubs were run according to well-defined lines and were affiliated to the Canadian Natural History Society. In the daily newspaper "Le Devoir de Montreal" there appeared a weekly article; regular leaflets on botany, zoology and minerology were distributed to members; exhibitions were organised to encourage competition between different Clubs. The Natural Sciences Exhibition held in Mont Saint Louis (Montreal) in 1933 was spectacular: in the space of two weeks it was visited by 100,000 people. In addition to the activities of these Clubs, there was also in the 1940's a series of broadcasts on Radio Canada intended as an introduction to botany (1941-1946). To stimulate the interest of listeners, competitions were organised for different age-groups, and free educational pamphlets were distributed to those who were interested.

This powerful movement which sought to popularise science and which was characteristic of Quebec at that time (1930-1950) was a stimulating influence on many Brothers. Several formed collections of various sorts, set up biology laboratories, gave or followed courses in natural history, explored remote regions and in particular, the Mingan Archipelago (Gulf of St. Lawrence), prepared teaching materials like illustrated manuals to help with identification of plants, etc. Museums and herbariums still have precious specimens valuable for research purposes.

2. Exceptional contribution of Brother Firmin Laliberte (1905-1988) to entomology.

The work of the agronomist, Brother Firmin Laliberte is in the same tradition as that of Brother Marie Victorin. Recently, Brother Firmin bequeathed, with the permission of the Quebec District Council, his collection of 100,000 insects to the new insectarium of Montreal. It will be located in the Montreal Botanical Garden, founded by Brother Marie Victorin. The collection will be exhibited in a hall which will carry the name of Brother Firmin Laliberte.

All the while he was involved in farming in our agricultural establishments, Brother Firmin became increasingly interested in the world of insects. Under the influence of Jean Henri Fabre, a French entomo-

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logist (1823-1915) whose works he had read several times, he built up his impressive collection over a period of 60 years, devoting most of his free time to this fascinating work.

Many young scientists kept in contact with Brother Firmin, seeking the master's valuable advice. He developped their curiosity and the ability to observe closely. He spent his summers in holiday camps, running entomology classes, either at the Le Saisonnier de Lac Beauport camp, near Quebec, or especially at the Rolland Germain camp in Frelighsburg (Quebec) near the frontier with the USA.

Brother Firmin took an active part in the foundation of the Association of Amateur Entomologists of Quebec in 1973, and he was its president for the first five years. He contributed learned articles to the review "Fabreries" which he ran from 1975 to 1984. In 1982 he published his "Glossaire entomologique".

Almost to the end of his life, Brother Firmin was a powerful figure in the world of science teaching to young people, and in learned societies. From many of them he received marks of esteem and awards, in particular from the following: the Societe linneenne of Quebec, the Canadian Entomological Society, the Quebec Entomological Society, and the Association of Amateur Entomologists of Quebec.

3. Adaptation by the Brothers to the needs of today.

Following the example of Brother Firmin Laliberte, many Brothers have had to adapt their working methods to fit in with the evolution that has taken place in Quebec society in the last few years. The setting-up of the Marie Victorin Centre is the result of this process of adaptation. The Centre has been set-up in the basement of one of our communities in the suburbs of Quebec. It was organised by a number of Brothers for the use of young scientists. In this centre there have been brought together specialised works (books, magazines) scientific instruments, collections of all kinds: birds, insects, plants, shells, etc. The Centre is near a school which runs courses in natural science technology, and students following these courses are able to complete their scientific training at the Centre. Other study groups have been set up to satisfy the needs and interests of outings and visits to ecological centres open to the public. Visits to centres such as this inspired Brothers to find a new way to stimulate scientific interest.

Brother Claude Cote who had created a botanical Garden and a mini-zoo in the scholasticate in 1956, already had a great deal of experience in teaching science to young Brothers. He took his inspiration from the new technology in use in State education (centre for interpretation of nature), and set up an ecological centre at the La Saisonnier de Lac Beauport holiday camp. He prepared rooms for visiting groups and laid out an ecological path in the neighbouring forest. During the summer, young people attending the camp followed courses in science. During the rest of the year, the centre served as a place where courses in ecology where given to various groups. Visitors found displays on various subjects very interesting: subjects included astronomy, mycology, ornithology, minerology, zoology, entomology, botany, etc. There was also an aviary with live birds in it for visitors to see. Little by little, people have been made more aware of the quality of life in the environment, and of the need to protect our ecological heritage by means of collective action. The first stage in this process is to make people aware of their responsibility as individuals.

This short article cannot hope to describe everything that the Brothers of Quebec have done in the field of natural sciences. Many have put in a lot of time in open air centres, and some still do. Certain things have been done which are not strictly speaking part of the Brothers' work: Brother Benoit Laganiere, a biologist, takes groups round the Quebec Aquarium; Brother Marcel Blondeau has been spending summer for the last few years in the Quebec Great North collecting plants for Laval University. He has written already several short studies of the flora of the Quebec Eskimo villages.

Brother Marcel Blondeau
District of Trois Rivieres

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DISCIPLESHIP
A CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST THROUGH IDENTIFICATION WITH THE POOR (1/2)

Introduction

The scope of this short essay is to look into some forgotten aspects of discipleship, to read through St. John Baptist de La Salle (hereafter DLS)'s writings and experience in order to see how these aspects intersect with them. We have selected four which have a real interest for us: 1– discipleship as a personal encounter after a call; 2– discipleship for the sake of the Cross; 3– discipleship as victory over fears, and 4– discipleship as sharing the mysteries of Christ.

These four aspects turn around the axis of the service to the poor because 1– our call to discipleship is a call to encounter them and to love them; 2– we follow Christ for the sake of his Cross which shares and redeems the cross of the poor; 3– through true discipleship we learn to overcome our fears and give them hope, and 4– through discipleship we share with them the mysteries of Christ, in a continuous and joyful identification with them.

Needless to say that it is all implied in the Lasallian spiritual writings where DLS moves freely from the Brothers' experience to his grasp of ecclesiology. It is through his writings and experience that we will try to see these four aspects of discipleship.

1. DISCIPLESHIP. CALL AND ENCOUNTER WITH GOD FOR AN IRREVOCABLE CONVERSION TO THE POOR

It was only after many years that DLS discovered what type of call he was following. "If I had even thought that the care, motivated by pure charity, which I gave to the schoolteachers would ever impose on me the duty of residing with them, I would have stopped it. For, since quite naturally I consider lower than my valet the men I was obliged to employ in the schools, especially at the beginning, the very thought of having to live with them would have been intolerable to me. And as a matter of fact I felt great distress in the early period when I had them come and live in my house, a period that lasted two years." (1)

God's action in DLS' life is summarized in the unobtrusive call of God and his gradual conversion to the poor "God guides everything wisely and gently and does not usually do violence to the inclinations of men. Therefore, when he determined to urge me into devoting myself completely into the care of the schools, He did so in a manner that escaped my knowledge over a long period of time, with the result that one commitment led to another that I had not forseen at the beginning". (2)

After nights of prayer and a continuous presence to God DLS was able to discover –almost in a slow conscious way– Christ in the person of the dispossessed children of Rheims. DLS saw a kind of "natural" identification between these poor children and Jesus Christ and does not hesitate to ask the Brothers: "Do you honor Jesus Christ in their person"? (M 133, 3) (3)

The holy founder calls the Brothers to look upon these children with real "tenderness" – "For these children, he says, are often like orphans... as far as the salvation of their souls is concerned. It is for this reason that God has appointed you their guardian" (M 37, 3).

In his deliberate choice for the poor, in becoming man, God chose poverty. Through his "kenosis" or voluntary self-denial of his divinity, he lived as a poor man from cradle to the cross proclaiming the beatitude of poverty. DLS passes from the gravity of this mystery to a personal application: "Our Lord was born poor and loved the poor: he was glad to be with them and even said that the poor are blessed because the Kingdom of God belonged to them" MTR (10th or 202, 2). "The poorer we are the more fully we shall possess the spirit of Jesus Christ who glorified in living a life of poverty" M 179, 1.

The spirit of Jesus in us means discipleship open to the poor. "Look upon them as the image of Jesus Christ, and as the best way to be disposed to receive his spirit abundantly. In this way the more you cherish them, the more you will be united to Jesus Christ." M 173.1.

In this Meditation for the feast of St. Francis of Assisi we see in a few lines how the classical call to encounter God through discipleship ends up with the encounter with the poor. In a shorter way DLS says: "When we have voluntarily embraced poverty to imitate Jesus Christ, we love as he did those whom God has allowed to be poor." M 166.2. For the Brother, the poor may be considered as "sacraments" of God. Obviously, to say that the poor are "sacraments" or "sacramentals" of God does not mean that there is an ontological identification between them and Jesus but, they are so close to him that we cannot miss them when we follow him. "You should recognize Jesus beneath the rags of the poor children whom you have to teach. Adore him in their person." M 96.3.

The personal call to discipleship is thus far from being a call to a bi-lateral dialogue with God. There is a kind of trinitarian movement which true discipleship creates intensely between the Brother, Jesus and the poor children. "The love of the Brother for his pupils is for them sacrament of God's love. But it is also a sacrament for the Brother himself. His educational relationship to his pupils educates him to love God more fully... They evangelize him." (4)

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In such movement DLS invites the Brother to become more transparent: "Jesus Christ wants that your pupils consider you as they would consider Him and receive your instructions as if it were from Him... Your pupils are the letter which he has dictated to you and which you are writing daily in their hearts." MTR (3rd or 195.2).

This is the first aspect that we wanted emphasize: discipleship starts with a call to meet God but it materializes by preferring, honoring and loving the poor because they are the image of Jesus Christ. It is only thus that we succeed in making them into disciples too, able to meet God.

2. DISCIPLESHIP: FOR THE CROSS OF JESUS FOR THE CROSS OF THE POOR

Ernest Best brings out the idea that "there are three commands in discipleship: come, deny, take up, followed by a present continuous mode "follow me". The call is not one to accept a certain system of teaching, live by it, continue faithfully to interpret it and pass it on –which was in essence the call of a rabbi to his disciples; nor is it a call to accept a philosophical position which will express itself in a certain type of behavior– as in Stoicism; nor is it a call to pass through certain rites –as in the Mysteries, so as to become an initiated of God, his companion. The carrying of the cross is no rite! It is a call to fall in behind Jesus and go with him." (5)

There is an upheaval in Jesus relationship to the notion of "family" in Matthew 10.36. In these texts the family relationship represents for the disciple a real cross, difficult to bear till Jesus becomes the real family to him. The choice is between the disciple's vision of the family and Jesus' radical new stance: Jesus is the family in which he wants his disciple to include all the poor of the earth.

To stand by the poor as Jesus stood by them till the cross is to share their plight and suffering. After Jesus, all the oppressed of the earth are invited to project one day their own frustration and helplessness on his cross. While matching their cross to his they are also called to see in it not a minus sign "–" but a positive sign "+" of resurrection. Through living discipleship the Brother tries to replace the cross of the poor by that of Jesus Christ with all its power of redemption.

This is the second aspect that we wanted to emphasize. Discipleship is not a private affair between the faithful and God, far from it. It is sharing the cross with Christ and the poor. The faith in his resurrection encourages the Brother to carry on without tiredness and fear.

Bro. David Kinneret

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* Bible quotations from the New American Bible, Catholic Book Publishing Company, New York NY. 1970.

(1) Blain, Jean-Baptiste. **La vie de Monsieur Jean-Baptiste de La Salle.** Translated quotations from French original in Cahiers Lasalliens n. 7, Rome 1961. p. 169.

(2) idem.

(3) De La Salle – **Meditations** (M).
– English translation by W. J. Battersby. Waldgrave Publishers, London 1964. This edition does not include the Meditations for the Time of Retreat.
– The Meditations for the Time of Retreat (MTR). English translation by Augustine Loes, FSC., St. Mary's College Press, Winnona 1975.

(4) Sauvage Michel, FSC., and Campos Miguel, FSC., **Announcing the Gospel to the Poor,** Translated from French by Matthew O'Connell, Christian Brothers National Office, Romeoville Illinois, 1981. p. 123.

(5) Best Ernest, **Disciples and discipleship, – studies in the gospel of Mark.** T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1986, p. 8.

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DISCIPLESHIP: A CALL TO FOLLOW CHRIST THROUGH IDENTIFICATION WITH THE POOR (2/2)

3. DISCIPLESHIP: A VICTORY OVER ALL FEARS

It is interesting to note the context surrounding the fears of the first disciples in the gospel. If we take the context of the storm in Mt. 8.23 and following verses we see that they are afraid of 1 – the mission, (as in Mt 10.26 and Lk 12.4); 2 – they are afraid of the appearance in the lake (as in Mt 14.26 and Mk 6.50); 3 – they are afraid of the ascent to Jerusalem (as in Mk 9.32 and Lk 9.45) and 4 – they are afraid of Jesus during the appearances after the resurrection (as in Lk 24.37 and Jn 20.19). (6)

Fear of the mission:
DLS knew quite well that to become a Brother of the Christian Schools was not an easy commissioning. In his beautiful meditation for the feast of the Nativity he stresses the idea that this vocation gives no room for misunderstanding or wrong interpretations. He knew quite well that a wrong appraisal of a chosen state of life makes it unbearable. In other words, once we know our real commissioning there is nothing to fear.

"In choosing our present state we should have prepared ourselves for abasement, like the Son of God when he became man, for lowliness is the characteristic of our profession and our employment. We are poor Brothers, forgotten by the world and esteemed of no consequence. Only the poor come to us, and they have nothing to offer but their hearts prepared to receive our instructions." M 86.2.

On the other hand, how can we be afraid of our mission when it is characterized with glamorous titles by the holy founder all drawn from the Pauline vision of discipleship. "Ministers of God," "ministers of Jesus Christ", "ambassadors of Jesus Christ", we have nothing to fear because "the strength of Jesus Christ helps you to overcome all the obstacles opposed to the salvation of the children." MTR (3rd or 195.2).

Fear of the appearance in the lake:
When Jesus walked on the water the disciples mistook him for a phantom. "It is a ghost, they said, and in their fear they began to cry out." Mt 14.26. To walk on the water is an attribute reserved to God in the Bible (c.f. Job 9.8). Nevertheless, the apostles failed to recognize him.

Fear to go up to Jerusalem:
On his way to Jerusalem with his disciples Jesus sets out to announce his Passion. At least three times in Mark's gospel. There was an atmosphere of fear among them: "Though they failed to understand his words, they were afraid to question him." (Mk 9.31) and "at these words they were overwhelmed with grief." Mt. 18.23.

Fear of the appearances after the resurrection:
First of all there is a fear to get out and proclaim the resurrection. The doors were tightly closed because they were afraid of the authorities. Here they are "clandestine disciples" like Joseph of Arimathea... As in the appearance on the lake they fail to recognize Jesus the Resurrected (c.f. Lk. 24.37).

The real fear the disciples should have is the fear of being tempted by false messianic power (cf. Jn. 6.14) and the eagerness to take the first places above all (cf. Mk. 9.33).

In this context we hear from Jesus: "Where is your courage, how little faith you have" Mt 8.26 and "Do not be afraid." The key teaching about the storm is that those who have embarked themselves on the journey to discipleship have no right whatsoever to be afraid, in spite of the irrationality of the surrounding events. What is at stake is the unconditional fidelity of God. As well as discipleship is the unconditional commitment of the disciple so is the commitment of Jesus towards the believer.

Fear is incompatible with discipleship because it is a lack of faith. We will never attempt our "exodus" or our "ascent" to Jerusalem if we doubt of the recognition of his resurrection. Any fear would jeopardize these elements altogether.

Nevertheless, the Brother cannot conceive discipleship without hardships which threaten his faith in his mission. DLS tries in several meditations to convince him to be like "the grain of wheat which dies and produces much fruit" Jn 12.24. "Do not be surprised, he says, if you meet with trials and opposition in the exercice of your ministry. The more you suffer the more resolute you should be to acquit yourself conscientiously of your work. Rest assured that God will then shower his blessings upon you in abundance." M 136.3.

Through his meditations on the apostles and evangelists DLS follows the same pattern: he explains to the Brothers what is persecution for the sake of the Kingdom and how to overcome its fears. "Have you as much love of suffering as St. Andrew had for the cross on which he died? Do trials, afflictions and persecutions which you have to sustain in the exercise of your ministry augment your zeal and, far from discouraging you, lead you to endeavour even more ardently to make Jesus Christ known and loved? M 78.3.

The third aspect that we wanted to emphasize was true discipleship as a victory over all the disguises of fear. Fear to react against the status quo which crushes the poor daily, fear to be tagged as reactionary, communist or marginalized religious, fear of leaving Jesus the Messiah for false prophets and philosophies of redemption of the poor... No wonder if discipleship requires thus a patient and constanty discernment.

4. DISCIPLESHIP: SHARING THE MYSTERIES OF CHRIST WITH THE POOR AND IDENTIFYING WITH THEM

The first fact that seems clear to DLS when he speaks to the Brothers is that these men are gathered around him for

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a specific service. He recalls to them how the gracious gift which is transforming their lives is not for themselves. "Beseech this Divine Spirit to make known to you the gifts with which God has favoured you, so that you can communicate them" M 189.1.

It is thus clear that discernment is not enough. Interiorisation of the mysteries of Jesus is the first step before sharing them with others: "Let it be clear to you that in order to be filled with God as much as your state requires it from you, you are obliged to speak very often with God." M 80.2. It is only after such a deep and faithful dialogue that the Brother will grasp his call to discipleship as a call "to engender children in Christ and also to make Jesus live anew in their hearts." M 157.1.

It is interesting to note with Bro. Miguel Campos, that "the Meditations for the Time of Retreat start with the recall of the creative action of God and end up with the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Brother's daily work takes thus its full dynamic and historical meaning within the plan of salvation and the sharing of the mysteries of Christ. (7)

The plan of salvation and the sharing of his mysteries take place in the Church which is built by the Brothers' discipleship. The Brothers do the utmost to sanctify it, to purify it with the word of life, so that she may appear before him full of glory without stain or wrinkle. They make present the mystery of Christ in its growing in the Church, through the instruction of the children. (cf. MTR 9th or 201.2). For DLS there is a clear and simple convergence between his spirituality and his ecclesiology: it is true discipleship which daily builds the Church in the Brothers' hearts and in the hearts of the poor entrusted to them.

"You are laying the foundations of the building of the Church when you teach the children the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the mysteries of Christ on earth... Happy are you to be honoured by the Church which singles you out for such a holy and high task." MTR (7th or 199.1).

For the Brother-disciple there is no sharing without identification. Through hours of loving contemplation he realizes that his call is not to live for the poor, nor to live with the poor but to live like a poor person with the poor for the sake of the Kingdom he is suppose to build.

Building the Kingdom the Brother renews and synthetizes the relationship of sonship between God and the people, the relationship of brotherhood between people and people and the relationship between people, nature and history. This building gives the Brother a wider sense to his discipleship. It is not just social work for the benefit of a neighborhood. There is a redeptive-cosmic dimension to discipleship when it comes to share all the mysteries of Christ with the poor.

To make this sharing successful it needs a complete identification with the poor which goes beyond the consecration and exclusive attachment to God. God does not need human beings for himself. That would be a pagan conception of consecration; he needs, in fact, instruments to make the promises of the Kingdom visible among human beings. Hence "consecration" means basically "mission". As religious we are "reserved" for the poor, consecrated to them and identified with them through Jesus. (8)

Who are these poor we are identified with? The "Declaration of the Brother in the World today" has an enlightening position which avoids two extremes. First, the rigid interpretation of a poverty based solely on pure economic grounds and, second, a loose interpretation which defines the poor so broadly that we are encouraged to do nothing except to maintain the status quo with an easy conscience.

There is a poverty of frustration, product of injustices, physical and social handicaps, personal insufficiencies or failures. "The Brother is also called to wage war against the poverty of frustration." (9)

DLS charism and concern for the poor are not different from the concern of the Church expressed at Medellin and Puebla. Obviously, the situations encountered by DLS are not those of Latin America but the patterns taken by poverty are almost the same regardless of time and political regimes. It is only the formulation of the problem and the wording of its theological appraisal that have changed. Some refuse to call it "theology" and prefer instead the term "politics".

DLS did not enter in such niceties. He lived the concerns of the Church through persecutions and abuses. His identification with the under-dogs of his time disturbed l'ordre etabli. It was "politics" too when his religious enterprise chalanged the official schoolmasters and the archbishops.

Acting as DLS the Brother will be able to bring in the Kingdom, to live the eschatological dimension of his vocation and, for those confided to him, he will be the simplest and the best "exegesis" of God's word.

The gospel completely oriented to the poor starting from the Beatitudes and ending with the last judgement lesson in Matthew 25, the charism of the founder living with the Brothers for the last three hundred years and the signs of the time, all these three elements advocated that we speak today about discipleship as "option for the poor".

The word "option" has a very interesting military connotation. Its meaning in this context points out to a high degree of urgency, calculated strategy and forcible results... The crucial impact of the "option" for the poor on the future of the Church highlighting this urgency is the basis of this essay. It calls the Brother to true discipleship oriented to the poor because, paradoxically enough, the option for the poor is not optional. It does not depend on personal inclination, good will, a personal charism or socially concerned people only... (10)

The reality of Christ, the Poor person par excellence, is unique and means an essential element of our faith. It is in his solidarity for the poor that we realize our encounter with him. (11) It is through his solidarity that our discipleship overcomes all fears and is able to share his Cross and his mysteries with them.

Bro. David Kinneret

(6) Castillo, José María, **El seguimiento de Jesus**, Ediciones Sigueme, Salamanca 1986. Spain. p. 134.
(7) Sauvage and Campos, **op. cit.**, Quotation from the French original – portion omitted in the English translation. Edit. Beauchesne, Paris 1977. p. 94-5.
(8) c. f. Boff Leonardo, **Vida Religiosa y Secularización**, from CLAR, n. 18, p. 14. CLAR: Latin American Conference of Religious.
(9) **A Declaration of the Brother in the World Today**, De La Salle Brothers. 1968. art. 29.5.
(10) cf. Pixley Jorge and Boff Clodovis, **Opcion por los Pobres**. Ediciones Paulinas. Madrid 1986. p. 273.
(11) cf. Galilea Segundo, **El Seguimiento de Cristo**, Ediciones Paulinas, Bogota 1986. p. 33-41.

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PERSPECTIVE OF A RELIGIOUS EDUCATOR IN A SCIENCE CLASSROOM

As Christians we are committed to living and spreading the Good News. This is possible in all areas of academic study and very much so in the area of science. Teaching in a Lasallian school enables us to carry out our mission of teaching science and teaching Jesus.

The science curriculum does not cover religion content as such, but as we give students the content of science we must, at the same time, work to instill in them Christian principles and values. We must be committed to the spreading of Jesus' Gospel message of love, peace, justice, and forgiveness.

It is from our personal relationship with Jesus that our own value system develops. What and who we are as people is what and who we are as educators. If we are committed to the Jesus message what the students will see in each of us is the reflection of Jesus.

As religious educator we must pass on a value system, a science content, as well as teaching them how to learn. Our value system is derived from the Good News, but our technological information must be up-to-date so that we can help students of science and techonolgy to interpret the Good News.

In order to pass on a Christ-centered value system, we must be motivated by a spirit of Faith, and therefore, the Lasallian educator is necessarily a religious person. It is absolutely essential that we stay in touch with God, that we pray and meditate.

As members of a Lasallian community/school, we are called to be ministers of Jesus Christ and of the Church. Since Vatican II there have been many changes in the Church. One reason for the changes is telecommunication, science, and modern techonolgy. However, the Church changes slowly, especially in response to scientific advances. It is difficult but necessary for us to be understanding and patient with the Church. This does not mean that our knowledge and understanding of the latest advances in science should stay behind. We have a responsibility to the students and to the Church to move ahead.

The manner in which we present scientific issues and the same time the Church's present position on issues is what is important. In fact, the manner in which we teach any subject area is the first evidence to our students of what our value system is – how we treat each individual with respect and dignity; being prepared; being just in disciplinary matters and in grading; establishing an environment where students can learn, where they can have respect for themselves because someone believes in them, where they can respect others and not fall to peer pressure, where each can develop habits of study and do honest work, where they can grow spiritually, emotionally, as well as academically. These are values that they will carry with them for life.

The issues where religious and moral values must be taught in conjunction with content seem to fall into three categories: those that deal with the individual, those more social/global in nature, and those that relate only to the sciences – the interdisciplinary areas that must be of concern to science teachers.

The real issue in the first category is teaching a respect for life, for the importance of the individual. In life science and in other science courses, the topics that may come up are: abortion, birth control, artificial insemination, invitro fertilization, AIDS, euthanasia, biogenetics.

It is clear what our position should be if we are in tune with the Church's teaching about abortion. And in this case, the Church is absolutely right. There is no logical reason to present an opposing view. Abortion is wrong – it is taking a life. The latest case of the comatose pregnant mother that was in an accident that has been in the news lately, does not make it easy for us. However, it is important to be straight forward with the students and that is why our value system must be founded on the teachings of Jesus.

There is great difficulty regarding the issue of birth control. The Church says that rhythm is the only acceptable form of birth control. As science teachers, it is necessary to inform the students of all types of birth control even though we are on touchy ground here. They must make their own decision as to which method they will use. We must rely on the religion curriculum and the religion teachers to give the students the process of making moral and ethical decisions. There is need for communication among religion and science teachers so that the religion teachers know when such topics will be covered.

This brings us to artificial insemination and invitro fertilization. The Church is opposed to test tube babies as she considers this not normal. As in the issue of birth control, students must be aware of advances being made in this area and then must make their own decisions.

We must teach students to have compassion for those who have contracted AIDS, but must do so in a manner that does not promote overt sex acts or drug usage. It is essential that every school develop and implement an AIDS curriculum. Knowing the scientific facts will help us directly and in our caring for others. It will also help our students to deal with AIDS.

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Euthanasia is often a topic of discussion. A person may not be killed but one does have the right to die with dignity and this must be the message we impart to students.

As for biogenetics and all scientific research, it is essential that we are first knowledgeable ourselves and present, according to the level and the course that we are teaching, the advances that are being made, the research that is being done, and the importance of these studies. The use of animals in research is often questioned. Undue torture of animals should never take place. Christian ethics in research must be encouraged.

As a religious educator, we must teach a sense of responsibility to pass on to the next generation the planet earth better than it is at the moment. Science topics that naturally fall into this category are nuclear power, nuclear armament, nuclear energy, nuclear medicine, nuclear waste, other toxic waste, pesticides, acid rain, and air pollution.

The topic of nuclear power provides opportunities to discuss student fears of nuclear bombs and nuclear armament. It seems to me that when teaching about the structure of the atom and nuclear energy our social responsibility for a better world must be established. We must include, and not leave to chance, Jesus' message of peace and love. The students must be made aware of the negative effects of nuclear war. There are positive contributions of nuclear power and these, too, should be explored with the students. Yet the question of nuclear waste and what to do with it is a problem.

The whole area of toxic waste, pesticides, acid rain, air pollution, and the diminishing ozone layer are critical concerns of the science educator, especially the Lasallian educator. We must instill in the students a drive to help solve these problems. For example, in the small area of aluminum cans and newspapers – are we teaching the right value system when they see us throw the can away or never mention it in a class setting? Isn't recycling a practical lesson to teach students so that we might preserve the beauty of Mother Earth?

There are opportunities to teach ethics in medicine when we deal with nuclear medicine. Although this advance in science has resulted in the enhancement of life, a major drawback is the disposal of nuclear waste. In fact, disposal of many things connected with a hospital or with medical care needs a lot of updating.

All of our students must be taught that each has a responsibility to mankind with regard to science and/or science information. Lawyers, politicians, those in communication, business people all need to be aware of their responsibility to the next generation in passing on the planet earth. Everyone must respect life. Everyone has the power to preserve, practise, and help others to live in a peaceful and safe environment.

Why are pesticides being used so extensively? What about the food that is covered with pesticides or the ground water into which the pesticides are seeping? The sewage systems of our cities and towns do not take care of the human pollution and waste and hence our rivers, lakes, and oceans are really a mess. We are religious educators when we communicate to the students our/their responsibility to respect all life and to help provide a world environment that will serve each to reach his/her full potential – his/her oneness with his/her fellow human beings – his/her oneness with God.

I would like to end my perspective by addressing an area that falls into both respect for life and for passing on a better planet earth. It is the lab environment in which we teach. In the 30 years that I have been teaching science I have not been in even one properly ventilated lab until this year. It was not until I developed severe toxic poisoning did I realize the full danger in which I have been working. With the toxic waste sweep made throughout Southern California, especially in the Los Angeles area, I became very much aware of the vast problem in our labs. We owe it to ourselves, our families and the students we teach to make sure that all labs are properly ventilated – up to good health/safety standards – and that the toxic waste dump sites in our areas are properly used and/or cleaned up.

I realize there are many other areas of science that we teach that lend themselves to religious input – lasers, communication satellites, Star Wars, etc. It is important to reiterate that being a religious educator demands that we pass on the message of Jesus in a manner that exemplifies Jesus, giving the students all the knowledge which they need to make Christian moral and ethical decisions about their lives, their future and the future of Mother Earth.

Mrs. Maureen Mellor

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«HIGHER EXPECTATIONS» IN THE CATHOLIC INNER CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Christian hope – shaped by teachers, school climate and curriculum design– thwarts the realities of early death and poverty.

Antoine's mother thanked the young men and women who had organized everything, who had spoken, who had led the prayers. She repeated what she had said a year before, that Antoine was a good boy. He was not an angel; but he was a good, respectful boy. Every morning he prayed a psalm with his mother before leaving the house, as he did a year ago when he left for school but did not return.

The students who shared their reflections at the memorial service voiced a wide range of feelings: anger, frustration, fear, hope and love. No one expressed surprise.

On his way home from school, near the East New York housing projects in which he lived, a group of older teenagers had without cause beaten Antoine so badly that he died a few days later. Death is always shocking, especially when the victim is young. But murder is so frequently the cause of death for young blacks that it is not a surprise. Most of Antoine's friends knew of other youngsters who had been murdered in their neighborhoods. When you are young and black and male,, murder may be the final fact of life.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for black males between the ages of 15 and 44, and for black females between the ages of 15 and 24. During his lifetime, a black male has one in 21 chance of becoming a homicide victim; he is six times more likely to be murdered than is a white male. When a murder victim is a 16-year-old student in your own school, there is new import to these and like statistics:

- In 1976, when many of today's eighth-graders were born, more than half of all black children and 45% of all Hispanic children born in New York City were born to single mothers.
- In 1985, one out of every two black children under the age of 6 lived below the poverty line; for Hispanic children, the figure was two out of live children.
- In 1985, median income for white families was $29,152; for black families it was $16,786; and for Hispanic families it was $19,027, with poverty rates growing faster for the Hispanic population. (1)

What are the implications of these statistics for the Catholic high school with a large minority population? When students, by virtue alone of being Hispanic or black, are more likely to be murdered than are white students, death is not far from student consciousness. In fact, when ninth-graders in our school are asked at the start of a class retreat to name what they most fear, 30% to 50% name "death." When 11th or 12th- graders sign up for electives, sections fill up most quickly in the course Death and Dying. The Catholic high school offers something that public schools cannot easily allow: open discussion of life and death, of death and dying, with a difficult but clear position grounded in faith. Central in such discussion is the reality of hope: not as a palliative, but as a leavening agent.

A second implication of statistics about death and poverty in minority communities is that "higher expectations" in a Catholic high school must be rooted in the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is important to assert this clearly because when the phrase "higher expectations" is used in educational writing, it is often unwittingly rooted in an assembly line view of school popularized earlier this century by the Efficiency Movement. (2) If education means simply choosing the best "raw material" and producing a well-educated "final-product," Catholic schools would have only to assure some final Catholic coating. Students in such schools might implicity learn that success is a matter of performance and production, reward and consumption –hardly Christian values.

Instead, a Catholic high school community can call all of its members to respond to the challenge of prophets of every age: to see visions and to dream dreams. For a black or Hispanic youngster it may be especially important to have a dream. It is not utopian thinking that a school must sanction, but firm hope and Christian expectation grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The clearest statement of Christian expectation is the Nicene Creed: exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum et vitam venturi saeculi –I expect, I am fully confident about, I have as my living hope the resurrection of the dead and life in an age soon to be.

* * *

These are the "higher expectations" fundamental to the Christian community and central to a Catholic inner city high school.

Hope is at the heart of such a Catholic high school, and hope can take shape in the lives of students through the teachers, the school climate and the careful design of curriculum.

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Where many young people face unrelentingly harsh realities in life, the teacher is a sacramental sign of gentleness and acceptance. Where many young people find few adults concerned enough to guide and correct them, the teacher is a sure and firm guide. Three hunded years ago, the church's patron saint of teachers, John Baptist de La Salle, defined the role of the Christian teacher.

"You who are teachers have the responsibility to use every possible means to bring those under your guidance into that liberty of the children of God which Jesus Christ obtained by dying for us. You must do this by possessing two qualities in your relationship with them. The first is your gentleness and patience. The second is prudence in your reproofs and correction. (3)

The teacher, as sacramental sign, reveals some of life's unsuspected dimensions. A teacher helps a student to believe in him/herself. In inviting a student to believe in the power of life over death, in the possibility of shaping a world in the image of the Lord and the beatitudes, the teacher is a sign of hope.

Not only the teacher but the total school community is to be a sign of hope, somehow reflecting the Mystical Body of Christ. It is a tribute to the honesty of Catholic high school administrators that, in the NCEA's survey of Catholic high schools, two areas of school life given some of the lowest evaluations were: a/ responding to the special needs of minority students (rated fair or poor by 28%) and b/ recruiting and retaining low-income students (rated fair or poor by 40%). (4) Perhaps the lead question on climate questionnaires distributed to black students in Catholic high schools should be: "Does this school receive you as you think Jesus Christ would receive you?" The total school community teaches the basic lessons: This school cares about you, believes in you, supports you. This school challenges you to reshape yourself and society in the image of the risen Lord.

Excellence in course design and curriculum planning is another practical way that a Catholic school builds hope. Courses must challenge students to think clearly, to work hard, to be creative. Courses must offer students a realistic opportunity to succeed. Good curriculum design calls forth from students new belief in themselves, new trust in their ability to learn.

Minority students are often low income students with predictably lower scores on standardized tests than higher income students. Such test scores can debilitate adolescents and cause them to lose hope. In such circumstances, thoughtful curriculum planning and competent, caring teachers are especially important.

Thirty years ago, philosopher Etienne Gilson reminded teachers of the limitations and the importance of their work. Gilson wrote:

"We should not imagine that school children know nothing more than what they are taught in schools. In fact, what we teach them is but an infinitesimal part of their knowledge, but it is made up of what, without us, they would never learn. "(5)

What most minority youngster learn about the Catholic faith and Catholic attitudes toward minorities will be learned not only from teachers in Catholic schools, but from Catholics in the local community. Minority youth will surely learn whether Catholic high schools reach out enthusiastically to them or reach out only to those among them with special academic or athletic promise. This said, Gilson's words can encourage and challenge teachers of minority youngsters in Catholic high schools. Without such teachers, students might not learn the "higher expectations" open to them through the power of the resurrection, and their responsibility, as children of God, to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in reshaping the world in the spirit of the beatitudes.

Brother William Harkins

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(1) Statistics on murder rates are from **Report of the Secretary's Task Force on Black and Minority Health**, vol 5. **Homicide, Suicide and Unintentional injuries**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, January 1986, pp. 5-10. For statistics on poverty see **The New York Times**, Sept. 4, 1986 and Sept. 16, 1986. See also Henry M. Levin, "The Educationally Disadvantaged: A National Crisis." **Working Paper No. 6 of Public/Private Ventures: The State Youth Initiative Project**, Philadelphia, 1985, pp. 3-5.

(2) Raymond Callahan. **Education and the Cult of Efficiency**, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

(3) John Baptist de La Salle. **Meditations for the Time of Retreat**, Winona, MN, St. Mary's Press, 1975, pp. 82-83.

(4) National Catholic Educational Association, **The Catholic High School: A National Portrait**, Washington, DC, 1985, p. 133.

(5) Etienne Gilson, "The Eminence of Teaching," **A Gilson Reader**, New York, Image Books, 1957, p. 303.

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PEOPLE–DRIVEN SCHOOLS

"Schools should become age-integrated – with senior citizens invited to take courses with our High School students."

The foundation of the Catholic school system is its "social capital". This social capital is the people who share our school values and the people who agree on basic religious and educational concerns. Dr. James Coleman, in his research at the University of Chicago, refers to these sustaining groups as the "functioning and supporting communities" of the Catholics schools. These are the people who are responsible for our birth, growth, and our sustenance.

Like our financial capital, our people-support is a treasure which we dare not lose. However, as we move the zoom lens close to delineate the linkages of this network, we will find that our social capital is gradually eroding. Much of this valued asset is disintegrating right in front of our eyes.

Many of our nearby manicured residences no longer have kids in them. In fact, only 23% of all households in the United States have children of school age in them! Furthermore, the loosening of family structures limits the possibility of other parents, who have school-age children, being directly involved in the life of the school.

Too, as more Catholic parents adopt a cafeteria_-style approach in their selection of Church offerings, we may find that Catholic education is not one of the more popular choices. Some parents who are getting caught up in the trappings of society, or who cannot pay for a home and a Catholic education, or who wish to save money for a college education for their children, are trading off a Catholic-school education for some other preferred commodity. These realities, all taken together, are more than just an erosion. Their consequences send tremors into the school bedrock!

Today's communication from the school to the home must be more than a paper trail. We need to have a feeling for what is going on in these homes and we must do this with a sense of mission, and not just as another job. This must become our main interest.

Our schools need also to become age-integrated. Senior citizens should be invited to take courses with our high school students where space permits, and at no charge. Parents may also wish to sample some attractive courses in our curriculum. All of this will bring an exciting challenge to our faculties and at the same time forge a new bond between the school and the community it serves.

Volunteers also need to be included in our new social capital. Many people are waiting in the wings for an invitation to be part of our school life and to invest in what they perceive to be an exciting adventure. In this age of volunteering, our Lasallian Association must open wide its gates to accept these generous people.

Our alumni are also part of this social capital. In La Salle's view these organizations were to be established in every school so that former students would persevere in the spirit of the school. He advocated retreats and days of recollection for them. He gave them something of substance. Our alumni should be included in our educational process and not just be looked upon as a reservoir to be tapped when the school needs financial help.

And how about the other 77% – those who, as statistics indicate, are not connected with high schools anywhere? What a terrific market for us! Three-

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fourths of the nation is there for us to spread our message. Friends, neighbors, alumni, alumni parents, grandparents, businesses, and all those others, who until now have never heard of us, are all part of this untouched market.

Our schools need to be articulate communicators to the general public. Our daily work in school, with each educator in a separate classroom or office, identifies us as working in a loosely coupled organization. For the most part we work alone and do not have to deal often with adults, even with fellow teachers in close association, unless we choose to do so. This has left an insular mark on the teaching profession. And it is one that we must remove quickly before our elusive social capital goes bye-bye.

We do not need believers. We need disciples. The difference is that disciples invest themselves in the activity. In times past our outreach was limited to parents and alumni, and they are the reason why we are alive today. Now, however, we must add "new" social capital in addition to our parents and alumni. We discovered years ago that "new" financial capital was needed and we pursued this insight with great success.

It would be a terrible irony if we did not have the disciples within our schools who feel that adult activities – volunteers, adult education, business linkages, to name a few – are important enough for faculty involvement. If this is the case, we may be going the way of the railroads. Passenger trains served a real need, but yet private passenger carriers went out of business. Apparently the managers and workers were just looking down the same old tracks each day and they did not observe the changing landscape. And, believe me, our educational landscape is changing!

Brother Terence McLaughlin

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PRAYERS

OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER (3)

(1: 16-9–C-63; 2: 17-13–C-73)

* * *

APOSTLES, GUIDES...

Lord, you manifest yourself to the world
by the gifts of your grace.
You have chosen us to be your adopted sons,
we thank you,
we are proud to have been singled out by you.

Lord,
in the same way as the angels
went up and down Jacob's ladder,
our apostolate as teachers
is to go up to you by prayer
to get to know you better,
and then to go down to the children and young people
with your message, your Word.
Our challenge, Lord, is
to learn Christian truths and maxims,
and to adapt them to the life
children and young people lead.

Jesus, be our Master.
Like you, we too consecrate our lives
to the marvellous work of showing
the way to the Kingdom of God.

Our apostolate is not restricted
to enlightening and enriching the minds of the pupils.
We have to obtain for them the means
to do good
according to the will of God.

Lord, Father of all light and all gifts,
we ask you for the strength and light
to guide the lives of children and young people
according to the Gospel message
and to offer our support in doing good.

It is not easy, Lord,
to encourage those who are not brave,
to support the weak

to be patient with everyone;
and yet, following the example
of Jesus and the Apostles,
we dedicate ourselves to our work as ministers.

To be a teacher and a guardian angel means:
encouraging others to do good,
teaching them to pray,
encouraging them to frequent the sacraments,
leading them away from sin and
helping them to look for the Kingdom of God.

Your Apostle Paul shows us the way
to build up the body of Jesus Christ
in the hearts of children and young people:
– By reminding them that they are
the temples of the Holy Spirit
by virtue of their baptism and confirmation.
– By encouraging them to be honest
with God and their neighbour.
– By encouraging them to gentle and kind,
forgiving one another
by loving one another, following Jesus' exemple.

We want to remain vigilant
as we work as ministers
teaching our pupils
and giving them good example.

* * *

MISSIONARY, CATECHIST...

Lord, You chose Paul and destined him
to spread the Gospel.
He went down the highways and byways
announcing the Kingdom
always building the Church
on the foundation of faith in Christ.
Now, You confide to us that same mission.
We beseech You to grant us
a profound knowledge of Jesus
and a generous committment, Paul's style.

We are honored to be educators
for teaching is the basic call of the Church.
We collaborate with parents and pastors
in the mission of helping Christ grow
in the minds of children and youth.

Ours is the mandate
to build the foundations of the Faith
– to teach the truths and maxims of the Gospel
– to instruct in the mysteries and love of God
– to encourage acceptance of the will of God.

The Church honors us as it entrusts to us
the work of educating to the Faith
and chooses us to pass on to children
a knowledge of Religion
and the spirit of Christianity.
Lord, make us Your humble apostles.

You sent the Apostles to teach Your word.
The early Fathers of the Church
understood the importance of being catechists:
St. Cyril, St. Augustine, St. Ambrose...
all taught catechism.
St. Jerome even wrote:

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"A more beautiful thing it is to catechize children
than to tutor an emperor".

The mission You gave to Your Apostles
has not passed away.
You told them to teach the Kingdom of God:
"Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them
in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit".
Peter and Paul were model
catechists and educators.
Even You, Lord, spent more time as MASTER
than PRIEST.
Three years of your public life
went into announcing the Good News about God.

Thank You, Lord,
for choosing us for so great a mission.
We ask You to help us
that we may complete it with dignity and love,
like the Apostles and Saints.

Lord, Your Apostle Paul
gloried that he was sent to preach the Gospel.
He taught the message of the Cross of Christ
folly for the Gentiles, scandal for the Jews,
but Divine Wisdom
for those who believe the Gospel of Christ.

Lord, it was You who filled his mind and heart
with such a zeal for Your glory
that he became the Apostle of the Gentiles.
Thank you, Paul!
Many who were strangers to God's Covenant
became sons of God and temples of the Holy Spirit
through faith in Jesus Christ.

Lord, like your Apostles and Saints
we value the mission
of the Christian education of children and youth.
Because of it they will become sons of God
and by it will persevere in their Faith.

Thank You, Lord, for choosing us to be
MINISTERS OF YOUR GOSPEL.

* * *

WITNESSES

Lord, to instruct children and youth in the faith
is to establish the foundations of the Church.
To us You have confided the work
of building that foundation.

Day by day the Apostles spread the Good News
and the number of believers grew and grew.
When the number of the faithful was overwhelming,
they chose seven deacons to manage ordinary affairs
while they devoted themselves
to the one important thing,
the teaching of the Divine word.

Jesus, Master, You taught daily.
We pray that you increase
our diligence in Your service.

We are successors of the Apostles
in the great enterprise
of catechizing and instructing the poor
in the truths of Faith.

We know that without You we can do nothing.
So we pray to You,
asking for necessary graces
to exercise our ministry worthily.

Prayer and study,
the two pillars of Christian ministry.

Our labor as apostles does not end
with teaching the Truth.
It is complete only when it produces Christian living.

The Apostles
encouraged early Christian communities to live
in the communion of the breaking of the Bread,
and to pray daily in the Temple
and especially to live in union with each other.

We want to be Your apostles,
we are prepared to contribute
to the extension of Your Kingdom
by educating in schools
by pastoral efforts outside the school.
The pastoral and catechetical work of the Apostles
was based on instruction about Christ,
it was complemented
by the administration of the Sacraments,
and it grew through prayer and committment.

Lord, give us the strength and the dream
of donating our time and our efforts
to forming our young into real Christians:
instructing, forming, organizing,
with COMMITTMENT.

Lord, we hope that our children
will not simply believe;
we ask that You stir up in their hearts
a truly Christian life.
We want to go beyond reaching
we want to be witnesses to You,
witnesses who will inspire youth
to join in Christian community.

Show us the way
to prayerfulness, simplicity, and committment
so that we may follow You and have the joy
of seeing our children with us
on the road to salvation.

Brother Celestino Hernando

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LASALLIAN ASSOCIATION

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This article and the following one are part of a talk given by the author, Francis P. Coughlin, an ex-Brother. He is at present the Educational Coordinator for the St. Gabriels' Hall in Audubon. The various headings are ours.

Introduction

I need to begin, although is not a good way to do so, by stating two qualifiers and one apology.

My first qualifier is that my remarks are addressed almost exclusively to the lay people present. I hope the Brothers and others will not be offended. There is much to say on the topic and I have limited time and have to develop a focus for myself. My remarks do have implications for the Brothers, but I think they would best be stated by others.

My second qualifier is: I am not a theologian, nor am I an expert in Lasallian matters. I do have long familiarity and great love and respect for things Lasallian, but even all of these things together do not make me an expert. I am, therefore, open to and would welcome corrections in either my facts or my interpretations.

My apology is that I am going to speak from a prepared text. I am a lecturer and rarely speak in this way, and I think I may be a little uncomfortable doing so. I am doing so in order to cover my material in the time allotted.I consider myself first and foremost a teacher, and prefer speaking from notes and would much prefer the give and take of the classroom setting. I ask that you be patient with this approach.

The lay state

Let's start by putting a couple of things in context and perspective.

The first context and perspective we must establish is one which concerns us, the laity. Up to Vatican II and to a large extent since Vatican II and to a large extent since Vatican II, and in opposition to Vatican II, there was a theology of laity which emphasized our instrumental value to the hierarchy of the Church. Such a theology stresses our role as helpers to the hierarchy, to the clergy, even to the Brothers in accomplishing their mission, the Church's mission to the world.

Since Vatican II there have been a number of other theologies of the laity put forth, all of which are only more or less satisfactory, because, I think, they continue to be theologies of laity and not theologies for laity. The real need is for a new integrated theology of Church. You and I, however, cannot do much about that.

Both the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity in the documents of Vatican II make it clear: We (lay people) do not belong to the Church, nor do we have a role in the Church. Through baptism we are the Church. Through baptism and confirmation we are called and gifted. Through baptism and confirmation, in union with Jesus Christ, our mission is the mission of the Church itself. The dignity of who and what we are, the dignity of what we do is rooted in and rises out of our baptism and confirmation. We are an ecclesial people and we are sacrament to the world. The awareness of that reality must be for us an ever growing awareness. I make a strong point of this fact now because it must be a basic assumption in our discussion and understanding of the idea of association. If the conccept of association is translated into actual practice in our schools, it will be of the utmost, even critical, importance that we be aware of the reality of who and what we are.

Association

The second context and perspective we must establish is that of association itself. For us the term association does not have very strong denotations, nor very inspiring connotations. It is a rather weak neutral word. We will, hopefully, in the coming years change that. It will come to have a weight, a significance, an import similar to that which it has always had for the Brothers. You may be aware that Association is one of the vows each Brother professes and renews throughout his life. This vow ol Association the Brothers profess traces its origin back to the very foundations of their Institute. In 1694, John Baptist de La Salle with twelve laymen (the first Brothers) pronounced three vows: Obedience, Association and Stability. I have prepared a copy of that vow formula in English for you to examine. You will note there are no vows of poverty or chastity. They came later. The first three vows were practical and highly functional in their purpose. These twelve men were laymen. De La Salle alone was a priest, the only priest-brother in the 300 year history of the Brothers. The three vows had as their very practical purpose the provision of manpower for the maintenance of free schools. These men were associated together to keep free schools for the poor.

Men who were not Brothers i. e., not bound by the vows of obedience, association and stability, have always, from the very beginning, been associated with the Brothers in their work. We know this from De La Salle himself in the Memoir on the Habit written in 1690. But, it is evident that the association was limited, and, it seems, somewhat distant.

The term association for the purposes of maintaining schools, has for the most part over the past three hundred years been applied specifically and exclusively to the Brothers. Association truly has been and is a characteristic of the Lasallian School, but until now it has not technically applied to us, except in a general vague way. I believe that we and the Brothers are at a turning point in our and their understanding and implementation of association.

Let's define association. It is a bonding together for the common purpose of conducting Christian Schools. I think we can all more or less identify with that. We are doing that. Now this bonding together, this association allows for a great many degrees, a large spectrum. At one end we have the Brothers who are associated by vow. At the other end we have people who work in the same building and are relating to the same students, and that's about it. That is an extreme, but possible and real. Between these two extremes there is room for a great many degrees of association. My point is not to try to identify where we are on this spectrum. That is not yet possible. My point is to suggest that we are being

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called to move on the spectrum to greater association for the common purpose.

Association for Lasallian Schools

We are being called to greater association in a Lasallian School. What is a Lasallian School? Or what makes a school Lasallian? From the very beginning, right to the present time a Lasallian School was recognized as different. What made it different was the presence of the Brothers. The terms Lasallian and Brothers were interchangeable. We spoke ordinarily of a Brothers' school. Graduates identified themselves as Brothers' boys, and now we can speak of Brothers' girls. These schools had profound influence on their students, and on other staff members. Whether there were many Brothers or only a few, the school was distinctive. What made these men Lasallian? It is very important for us to be clear on this, if we are ourselves to be identified as Lasallian by associating ourselves with the Brothers. It will be a superficial, unconscious association at best if we become Lasallian by some process of osmosis, or if we are Lasallian because we fall within the aura of the Brothers.

The Brothers and spirituality

The Brothers themselves are not Lasallian simply by virtue of membership in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Being Lasallian, it seems to me, is both a personal and communal enterprise, and it is available to us through the Brothers. De La Salle is their founder and father. They are his sons and heirs. De la Salle's legacy is primarily theirs, and can be ours through association and by their willingness to share it with us. De La Salle's legacy is essentially a spiritual one. It is discovered in his own life story, in his writings, in the 300 year old story of his Institute and in the lives of his Brothers present with us today.

It is the spirituality of De La Salle which makes the Brothers Lasallian, and their schools Lasallian, and it will only be by sharing that spirituality with us that the Brothers can hope to make us Lasallian. It will only be by their sharing that spirituality with us that we can hope to become Lasallian.

Please be aware that these are my views. I try to indicate that by repeatedly saying "it seems to me" or "I think". For some, and even for some Brothers, my emphasis on buying into the spirituality as a requirement for being Lasallian, may be a bit strong. I should make it very clear that I am not talking about, I don't think it is intended, nor do I think it is desirable that we all become "mini-brothers", or that we create a third order. I am talking about buying into a spirituality which is particularly suited to us as educators, and it is only available to us through the Brothers. With those cautions, let me proceed.

De La Salle, like all of us, did not sit down and write his life story or the life story of the Brothers, and then set about living it. His story, like ours, is written in the living of it. The story unfolds as we go along, not always as we or he would have it. It is important for us to know his story and how he got into the work of the Christian Schools, but I cannot trace that here. He did in fact get into the work of establishing the Christian Schools. He quickly realized that they could not be maintained, could not prosper, unless they were staffed by trained and dedicated men who would give their entire lives to the schools. He also quickly realized that he himself had to train these men and that their dedication could not be sustained unless it were provided with interior and exterior supports and that the dedication must be based upon religious principles. He eventually, very gradually, painstakingly, brilliantly developed a spirituality for laymen who were exclusively, specifically committed to the ministry of education.

The spirituality of the educator

This is the great good news for us, you and me, lay people committed to education: the spirituality we need to sustain us in our ministry already exists. It is a living,, vibrant spirituality which has evolved from de La Salle's original teaching through 300 years of history. It is this spirituality, I think, which makes the Brothers unique. You and I, and the Brothers' students would, in general, be at a loss for words to explain why it is we are drawn to and devoted to the Brothers as we are.. It is this spirituality of De La Salle, I think, which they are trained to early in their lives and which they live out daily that draws us. It is this spirituality which, when all the external and superficial distinctions are removed that makes them Lasallian. It is not so esoteric, so otherworldly as to be beyond our reach. This spirituality is, as La Salle intended it, very practical, very functional, suited primarily to the Brothers, but able to be adopted and adapted by us. The sticking point is that we need to be educated and trained in this spirituality, and only the Brothers can do it. It is my own conviction that it is this spirituality which is the most characteristic element of anything Lasallian –whether it be Brothers, schools, students, teachers, people.

I know things are not this simple, and I know I am not sufficiently learned in these matters, and I have not done the research necessary to validate this statement, but, if I were to identify the linchpin which holds de La Salle's spirituality together, it would be what I consider his most brilliant insight, fully realized only late in his life, namely, that the Institute, the Christian Schools, were of divine origin. They were not the work of De La Salle, nor of the Brothers, nor of the Church, nor of us. They are God's work. And his work like his will will be done, regardless.

We are but his ministers, the administrators of his mercies. This rather awesome insight holds the spirituality together and informs each of the elements.

Mr. Francis P. Coughlin

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The elements of Lasallian spirituality

I can only list and briefly comment on what I consider the salient elements of Lasallian spirituality. Hopefully, they could form future agenda for us.

The first element is a Spirit of Faith. We are not talking about faith whereby we believe in God or the dogmas of the Church. Having the Spirit of Faith is having a way of seeing the world. It is a world view, a way of looking at ourselves and others, especially our schools and our students. It is a way of knowing that the world has meaning, that appearances both conceal and reveal the realities behind them. If we see and comprehend the world, ourselves and our work in a Spirit of Faith, we will go beyond seeing and comprehending and we will begin responding in a Spirit of Faith.

The next four pieces flow from the Spirit of Faith, but they are also the means by which we acquire it.

First – a profound respect and reverence for Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament. Without it there is no Christian spirituality of any kind. We must read and assimilate it not just as human beings and Christians, but as teachers. If read in this way it has new meanings for us.

Second – a great trust in the providence of God. This is related to the unifying element of Lasallian spirituality. What we do, our work is God's work. He will provide for it. We trust that our best efforts will advance the work, and our worst failures cannot destroy it. If he should decide the work is finished, it's over, regardless of what we do. If it is to continue, it will continue, regardless. It is a wonderfully freeing sentiment. We do as much as we can as well as we can, and then it's on him.

Third – a great attentivesness to the presence of God. The practice of the presence of God is as old as Judaism and perhaps as old as man. Much has been written on it over thousands of years. Again, as with all the things we are speaking about, De La Salle took this age old practice and fitted it to the teacher and the classroom, and so made it distinctively Lasallian.

Fouth – a devotion to prayer, especially to meditation, or as the Brothers have traditionally called it, Mental prayer. Again this is nothing new in the Christian or any other tradition of spirituality, but De La Salle again brings it into focus on the teacher.

Zeal

The next element is a Spirit of Zeal. Zeal may be an old fashioned word, and perhaps an old fashioned virtue. A good synonym may be love. Interestingly, I think, (again, I have not done my research) the word rarely occurs in De La Salle without the adjective ardent. A burning, vigorous, strenuous, (passionate?) zeal or love is what is called for. As the Spirit of Faith is a way of seeing, the Spirit of zeal is a way of doing. Can you imagine grading your papers, preparing your lessons, attending faculty meetings with a passionate love? That's what is called for. Remember that De La Salle was not just a theoretician, he was a practitioner in the classroom. He never asked his Bothers to do what he was not willing to do himself. He knew he was asking his Brothers to devote their whole lives to the schools. He realized they could not perform their work unless they saw it in the light of faith and did it with passionate love, nor can we. Much of what we all do is routine, rote, attention to details, bookkeeping. It could and does easily become drudgery, and we can and do easily become drudges. Over the long haul we can become bored and, worse still, boring. De La Salle's solution: passionate love. At other times and other places it would be called elan, panache. The renaissance man was characterized by sprezzatura, an apparent effortless grace. De La Salle would not have found those words appropriate in his context. They would not have carried for De La Salle the weighty significance he wished to convey. And yet, they are words which very much characterize him and his way of getting things done.

The Spirit of Zeal is that element which infuses the spirit of joy into that we are about. It saves us from the gloomy religiosity which characterizes drudges and bores. It is a simple, clearheaded devotion to duty, it always takes us that extra mile, it gets the job done neatly, efficiently, completely. It is a characteristic of the Lasallian school.

The poor

The next element is a predilection, a preference, for the poor. It was for the children of the poor and the working classes that De La Salle established the Christian Schools. It is a characteristic of the Lasallian school to show that preference for the poor. It is easy to enter into a lengthy and heated discussion of "who are the poor?" I would urge all of you to avoid that discussion. For our purposes it is useless. Place yourself squarely in your school or your classroom. Then ask yourself, "who is poor"? If they are all poor, ask yourself who is the poorest? You do not need an advanced degree in anything to answer the question. It is probably the ugliest, dumbest kid. Maybe the quietest or noisiest, maybe the biggest thug. Probably the most disadvantaged emotionally, socially, educationally. The preference for these kids is based not on feeling sorry or wanting to help. It is based on a spirituality which calls on us to see beyond the appearance and minister to the reality. Identify your own poor kids, zero in on them and then give them the most and best you have to give. That always has been and is the Lasallian way, pure and simple. The spirituality consists is being tuned and disposed to doing that.

Openness to the signs of the times

The next element is not clearly stated anywhere by De La Salle, but it emerges from his own life story and the 300 year old life story of the Brothers. It is an openness to the signs of the times. It is a disposition of attentiveness and watchfulness to what is being asked of us. It is a disposition of attentiveness

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and watchfulness to what is being asked of us. It is an abiding recognition and acceptance that all things change and that there is a season for the change. It is sensitivity to the fact that we change. It is acknowledgment that a 12 year old is different from a 17 year old, that each child is different from every other child, that we ourselves are different at different times and in different ways. It is insight into the distinction between the letter and the spirit of the law, but also the insight that because we are frail humans the letter is the embodiment of the spirit and safeguards it. The spirit must be supreme always, but if the letter must be put aside it is done carefully, not through faddishness, but through discernment. It is the patience to accept that the mythologies we live by today must give way. It is the wisdom to create new mythologies to live by tomorrow.

This is a difficult element of Lasallian spirituality to articulate. Openness is a pretty neutral word, but the implications are by no means neutral. The implications of openness are clearly related to the unknown and to vulnerability. Not an easy element to embrace, but nonetheless very Lasallian.

We are what we do

The last element I wish to list is again one which is not clearly stated anywhere by De La Salle, but it clearly emerges from his life story and his writings and the history of the Brothers. For lack of a better term it has to do with the practice of a holistic view of all we are and do. It is the development of an integrating force within ourselves. It has to do with all the other elements I have spoken of. You may have noted that they are all related. One flows from the other, informs the other, complements the other, then turns back and defines the others. They are distinct for the purspose of conceptualizing, analyzing and articulating, but individually they make little sense. It is only when integrated and embodied as a whole in a human being do they become Lasallian. This element was underscored by De La Salle when he insisted that a Brother was not a teacher when he was in school and a religious when he was in the community house. He insisted that a Brother was not a religious who happened to be a teacher. His Brothers were teaching religious and religious teachers. They did not live their lives in community and earn their living in school. For him and for the Brothers the two were distinguishable, but inseparable. The same is true for us. We are not Christian for an hour on Sundays, teachers from 8 to 4 on weekdays, and husbands, wives, parents, or whatever for the rest of the time. These distinguishable parts of ourselves are to be inseparable. Each must flow from, inform and define the others. By insisting that his Brothers' holiness, wholeness, perfection and even salvation depended on how well they performed their duties in school, as well as on how well they prayed, De La Salle made this integrating force a key element in his spirituality. Dichotomizing diminished the significance of both life and work. Integrating enhanced the significance of both. He addressed directly the schizophrenia to which we are all drawn as well as the false dualism which divides and destroys all of us.

The research has yet to be done, but I am sure it will prove that De La Salle's spirituality is a whole, a structured coherent teaching. It's effectiveness and vitality have been proven over 300 years in the history of the Brothers. I am certain it is applicable to us. Large parts of it can be adopted wholesale, other parts will require adaptation.

I really wish I could expand on all of these elements, which to me are of the utmost importance. I am sure, however, that there are people much better qualified to do it. These things should be part of a future agenda. Unless we are educated and trained in these things, our association with the Brothers will be of a very superficial nature. The extent to which we accept and practice Lasallian spirituality will determine the degree of our association.

The genius of De La Salle

Lasallian spirituality is what makes De La Salle an educational genius. His genius has relatively little to do with the fact he introduced the simultaneous method or the use of the vernacular for instruction. His genius lay in his transformation of the entire concept of the education of the masses by laymen. We are no longer misfits good for nothing else but to teach filthy street urchins and other people's brats. We are God's ministers, administrators of his mercies. We have been entrusted with the sublime task of caring for and saving our students, who are sacred immortal souls. De La Salle elevated us and our profession to extraordinary, sublime heights. De La Salle made teaching the finest of the useful arts. Teaching is a manifestation and exercise of divine goodness. De La Salle had a great deal to do with making it so.

There was a little disgression on De La Salle. It will be hard for us to be Lasallian without developing an appreciation for him. He is not easy to get to know, but worth it. Initially, he will strike you as austere, even severe. Be patient and get beyond the appearances. We would have reason enough to love him, if only for his Brothers, but, I think, if we learn his ways and practice his teaching we can love him for himself. He is our patron.

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TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION

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"John Baptist de La Salle was led to found a community of men who, enlightened by God and sharing in his plan of salvation, joined together with a view to meeting the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation. At the present time also, every Brothers' community finds its basic motivation in this event" (Rule, 47).

The expression **"together and by association"**, rarely used up to the present time, is now more frequently so in the wider context of Lasallian lay people. Lay people, however, vary in their usage of this expression. Many repeat simply what they have heard the Brothers say but are unaware of **the origin** or **richness** of this Lasallian expression. What follows is an attempt to explain the meaning of this expression and so contribute to a better understanding of it, and perhaps lead to a more correct use of it.

1. THE SOCIETY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Thanks to Blain, we probably know when this idea was born. The occasion was the "heroic" vow made by De La Salle, Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin on November 21st 1691 (cf. Blain I, p. 313, C. L. 7). We know from the Founder's own words how he was led by God "from one commitment to another", in an "imperceptible" way. On this occasion, then, he understood that God wanted him to take a further step and commit himself more fully. He invited the two young Brothers, on whom his future hopes rested, to join him in an act of total and radical gift of their lives and energy so as to ensure the success of what they saw as "the work of God". It was a private vow which was meant to set the seal on a commitment which would consolidate the newly-born community. The text of the vow is as follows:

"Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with profound respect before thine infinite and adorable majesty, we consecrate ourselves entirely to thee to procure with all our ability and dedication the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools, in the way in which it seems most pleasing to you, and in which it is of the greatest benefit to the society. And for this purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, Priest, I, Nicolas Vuyart, I, Gabriel Drolin, **make a vow of association and union**, now and for always, till such time as there is only one survivor or till the complete destruction of this society, to procure and maintain this establishment, without our being able to depart from it, even if there remain only the three of us in the society, and we are obliged to beg and live on bread only.

In view of which, we promise to do, unanimously and with common consent, all that we consider in our conscience and without any human consideration, to be for the greater good of the society.

Done this 21st of November, day of the Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin, 1691. In proof of which we have signed".

The text speaks for itself and reveals the generosity and spiritual quality of these three men who were prepared to stake everything on the free schools.

And now we come to the year 1694. This year reflects in a certain sense an increase in maturity in the work understaken by De La Salle. It can be said that his community "was growing from within", in spite of difficulties like the famine of 1693-94 and its great consequences. The Founder thought it was time to call an assembly of the Brothers. In the Institute, we consider this to have been the first General Chapter. He summoned 12 Brothers out of the 30 that probably existed at the time according to calculations. He discussed with them, and assessed the situation of the community. They were faced with an important task: that of approving by community consensus the regulations according to which they had lived and which they had observed. They wanted also to commit themselves more fully to God and to one another so as to be better able to answer God's call to them. And so they decided to make perpetuel vows of association, stability and obedience. On June 6th, Trinity Sunday, in the course of a simple ceremony, they pronounced each in turn the formula of perpetual profession. The formula written and signed by the Founder is kept as a precious relic in the Archives of the Generalate. Its text runs as follows:

«Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, protrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, I consecrate myself entirely to thee to procure thy glory as far as I am able and thou wilt require of me.

And for this purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, Priest, **promise and vow to unite myself and live in community** with Brothers Nicolas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, Jean Partois, Gabriel Charles Rasigade, Jean Henry, Jacques Compain, Jean Jacquot, Jean Louis de Marcheville, Michel Barthelemy Jacquinot, Edmo Leguillon, Gilles Pierre and Claude Roussel, **to keep together and by association** free schools, wherever this should be, even if I am obliged in order to do so to beg for alms and live on bread only, or to do in this society whatever is entrusted to me, whether by the body of this society or by its superiors.

For this purpose, I promise and vow obedience equally to the body of this society and to its superiors. These vows as well as those of association and stability in the society and obedience I promise to keep inviolably all my life time.

In proof of which I have signed. Done at Vaugirard, 6th of June, Feast of the Holy Trinity, 1694. (Signed)

De La Salle».

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The 12 other formulas are identical, apart from the substitution of the name of the Brother making vows by that of the Founder. Brothers who made perpetual vows after this memorable occasion did so with equal determination and in the same spirit. A register is kept in the archives of the Generalate containing the 1694 formula of vows of the Founder and of the 12 Brothers, and those of 23 other Brothers up to 1705.

2. FIRST CONSEQUENCES OF ASSOCIATION

On that same day, there took place another event which I think is worth mentioning and which reinforced, one could almost say welded together, the association they had professed: the Founder suggested the Brothers elect a superior who was a Brother. His intention was to ensure that the newly-founded society should henceforward be in the hands of its members. It was a wise suggestion which the Brothers did not accept at the time, preferring to be governed by De La Salle and to benefit from his wise guidance and counsels for as long as possible. This was made clear by their unanimous vote that he should continue as superior. They decided, however, that on the death of De La Salle, they would accept as superior no one else except a Brother who was associated with them, and who had made the same vows and commitments as they. The following day, June 7th, they recorded their decision in the following terms:

«We the undersigned, Brother Nicolas Vuyart (there follow 7 names), having become associated by the vows we pronounced yesterday with Mr. John Baptist de La Salle, priest, **to conduct together and by association** gratuitous schools, recognise that, as a result of our vows and **of the association to which they have bound us**, we have chosen Mr. John Baptist de La Salle as our supeior, and we promise to obey him with complete submission by virtue of our vow, as well as those he will give us as superiors. We declare also that we do not intend that the election we have held to make Mr. De La Salle our superior should set a precedent for the future. We intend that after him, in the future and forever afterwards, no priest will be accepted among us, no priest or anyone who has received holy orders will be chosen as superior, and that we will not have nor accept any superior who is not associated with us, and **who has not made vows like us**, and like all the others **who will be associated with us in the future.**

Done at Vaugirard, June 7th 1694».

Apart from being very clear, this document shows the determination of the members of the society to be a completely lay community, a fact that reflects the extent to which they were aware of their identity. The document is also a vigorous defence of their autonomy with regard to making decisions and their internal government. Their election of their superior is a consequence of the vows they have made and the association they have bound themselves to. These two positive statements have been a permanent feature of the Brothers' Institute ever since.

Brother Hernando Sebá López

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3. WHAT ASSOCIATION MEANT IN THE INSTITUTE

From the various facts we have mentioned and the documents which support them, we can deduce what part association played in the lives of the Brothers, how it was an integral part of their lives, and how it became one of the key elements of Lasallian spirituality and its charism. The following points illustrate this:

1. The Founder and the 12 Brothers understood clearly the real nature of what constituted at that time the Soociety of the Christian Schools.

2. They formed an organised body. They had committed themselves by a vow to God, for the rest of their lives, **together and by association**, to a specific educational apostolate – that of gratuitous schools.

3. They based this educational apostolate on their total and radical availability.

4. They understood clearly that authority was exercised by the superior, but also by the Body of the Society. In everyone's mind, the Society was a solid reality. This would be subsequently proved by the famous letter that the Body of the Society sent the Founder in 1714.

5. The opening words and the content of the formula of vows emphasise the religious character of this offering to God: the consecration is addressed to the Most Holy Trinity, and it is in order to procure its glory that the three vows are pronounced.

6. The apostolic aim of this consecration and of association are unequivocal: the Brothers commit themselves to work for the glory of God by conducting together gratuitous schools.

7. They determine to remain faithful to their commitments even if they encounter opposition and difficulties, and they are reduced to such a state that they have to beg for alms and live solely on bread in order to pursue their apostolate.

Association is the result of a group decision which expresses the brotherhood or unity that must exist among the members of the community in a social form, gives it a juridical basis, and makes it visible.

This brotherhood acquires its profound meaning from the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit, on which it is based. It is sufficient to recall the Gospel metaphor of the vine (John 15, 1-8), or St. Paul's reference to the body (I Cor. 6, 12-20). Association must be anointed with the oil of fraternal union which "enables all, communities and Brothers alike, to assist each other **in sharing their common** responsibility for their life and their apostolic work" (Rule, 124).

The Founder and the first Brothers were convinced that God had chosen them and called them so that, closely united and of one mind, they could be "ministers of God and dispensers of his mysteries" among poor children and those furthest from salvation. They see their work in a Church context, and consider it as "one of the most important and necessary functions in the Church".

Three hundred years later, our 1987 Rule "faithful to the specific intentions" of the Founder keeps the original spirit and fervour alive and active. It summarises this marvellously when it declares: "The Brothers, in fidelity to the Spirit and the charism of their Founder, consecrate themselves to God in order to exercise, **by association**, their apostolic ministry of education" (Rule 2).

The Brothers consecrate all their energies to the ministry of Christian education: **"Together and by association,** they labour to accomplish God's saving work in a profession where the poor have the Gospel preached to them and where young people grow as human persons and children of God" (Rule 20).

4. A MISSION SHARED WITH LAY PEOPLE

Since Vatican II, the acceptance of lay people by the Institute has been clear and explicit. As early as 1967, in the "Declaration on the Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today", there is talk of "friendly collaboration between Brothers and lay people", a point which is taken up by the 1967 and 1977 Rules (cf. Chap. 9, 7).

In May 1981, all the Visitors of the Institute gathered in Rome and studied the whole question thoroughly. They recognised that "with all the facilities offered by the large number of laymen working with us, the meeting esteems it an urgent duty to get them **to share in this mission and this spirituality**. An urgent duty because it is a debt the Church owes the layman" (Cir. 415, p. 25 Oct. 1981).

But it was at the 1986 Chapter that a definitive change took place. There was now talk of a mission shared with lay people. "Thanks to this integration of Brothers and lay people working together in a common ministry, our schools will be better and we will be able to offer a service of greater quality to the Church" (Cir. 422, p. 13 July 1986). Although the Brothers remain the "mainstay", the "heart" and the "faithful memory" of the Lasallian spirit, there is a steadily increasing number of Lasallians who seriously wish to live according to the Lasallian charism, and to express their commitment to Christ through the spirituality left us by the Founder.

The men and women find support for their wishes in article 17 of the Brothers' Rule which says: "Ever since the time of their foundation, the Brothers have contributed to the promotion of the Christian laity, especially among those educators who want their professional work to be a form of Gospel ministry.

The Brothers **gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission.** They provide for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit".

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This then is special invitation that the Institute makes to Lasallian lay people: to share in the apostolate and live with the Brothers, inspired by **the spirit of association** of Lasallian tradition.

But that is not all. The Rule reveals yet another dimension of this Lasallian spirit of association, when it says: "The Institute sees the existence of the various Lasallian movements as a grace from God renewing its own vitality. The Institute can associate with itself lay people who want to lead the life of perfection that the Gospel demands, by living according to the spirit of the Institute and by participating in its mission.

The Institute helps them achieve their proper autonomy. At the same time it creates appropriate ties with them and evaluates the authenticity of their Lasallian character" (Rule 146).

This article refers to groups of lay people who form themselves **into associations** inspired by De La Salle. This idea of forming associations is nothing new in the Church. One can say that it is as old as the Church itself, but in our days, it has acquired new strength. It is what Pope John Paul II says in "Christifideles Laici": "In these last few years, the special characteristics of the phenomenon of lay association have been variety and vitality. It is possible for us to speak of a new era of association among the lay faithful" (N° 29).

The two texts quoted above reveal to us the various ways Lasallian lay people can live according to **a Lasallian form of association**, that is to say, according to the Founder's form as illustrated by him and the first Brothers, and still valid for us to a great extent.

Among many others, I should like to pick out the following forms of association:

– Lay people who wish to make "together and by association" a part of their lives, together with Brothers and within a Lasallian educational community, or in the context of some other activity at a District level.

– Lay people by themselves (because there are no Brothers) who wish to practise "together and by association" in a Lasallian educational community. (In certain countries, there are already many Lasallian schools run by lay people only).

– Lay people who feel they are specially called by God to make a more explicit commitment by undertaking specific obligations. This is the case at present of Signum Fidei members and those of the Lasallian Third Order.

– The Union of Catechists of Jesus Crucified and Mary Immaculate is a special case, because it is a secular institute and so enjoys an autonomy proper to these institutes. It takes its inspiration, however, from Lasallian spirituality and in this sense it has a spiritual link with the Institute of the Brothers. In practice, this link takes the form of a Brother Assessor, appointed by Brother Superior, who has an advisory role.

Under normal circumstances, a Lasallian association should function within a District or Regional framework. At this level, there exist District or Regional plans which coordinate all the energies of Brothers and the various Lasallian groups with a view to achieving a single aim. In the light of this, a District or Regional plan cannot be drawn up by Brothers only. The various Lasallian groups must each make their specific contribution to it, otherwise the Lasallian contribution to the Church will be incomplete. Seen in this light, the District Plan becomes the District Lasallian Family Plan.

However this is done, one must never lose sight of the fact that work **"together and by association" in Lasallian thinking** has nothing to do with the friendship that can exist among a group of friends or even an efficient team of workers. The Lasallian must aim higher and, with the eyes of faith, feel he is personally called by God, so that with others, likewise called by God, he can commit himself totally to the ministry of Christian education, especially to that of poor children and of all those far from salvation. The commitment by association of lay people will doubtlessly be different from that of the Brothers, but it will have to have the same evangelical basis and be sufficiently visible to be a genuine proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ.

At present, hoping that groups of Lasallian lay people will think about this subject and study it, I feel the need to point out that there are certain requirements that are absolutely essential if we are going to speak about Lasallian-style association:

– The awareness among those who are associated of God's personal call to each one to undertake a Christian educational apostolate. This presumes looking at things with the eyes of faith.

– A clear idea and basic consensus with regard to the common aim which is to be pursued. This follows from an acceptance and implementation of a common educational plan.

– The promotion of a spirit of service and availability, and a commitment to gratuity.

– The growth of fraternal relationships so that each person is valued at his true worth as an individual. This produces a tight-knit community.

– Personal and community experience of Christian values stemming from constant attention to the Word of God and the celebration of Mass.

– Awareness that one belongs to the Church. Not shutting onself off from others, but showing a need for what other groups or communities have to offer.

And now it is up to committed Lasallian lay people to speak. What is needed now is to look for concrete ways of putting into practice this **"together and by association"** so that it can act as leaven in everyday life.

This is what Pope John Paul II said when he declared that: "the faithful who join associations or movements through the inspiration of the Spirit seek to put the Word of God into practice in real situations, bringing the life of the Gospel to everyday life and human values, and enriching the Church with an infinite and inexhaustible fund of charitable and holy undertakings" (March 2nd 1987).

I firmly believe that those groups of lay people who want to live according to the spirit and charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle by association are called upon to play an important role in the renewal of the Church and present-day society.

Brother Hernando Sebá López

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CALVERT HALL COLLEGE

(BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, U.S.A.)

TWO EDUCATION PROGRAMS

* * *

THE XAVIER PROGRAM

The Xavier Program at Calvert Hall College, Baltimore, Maryland, serves a unique group of students with identified language learning difficulties. The goal of the Xavier Program named for long time faculty member Brother Xavier Langan, FSC, is to provide remediation for continued development of skills in language areas and support for completing coursework simultaneously. The students served in this Program may encounter problems in reading, writing, spelling, and math skills due to conditions often referred to as dyslexia or specific language disability. While some students in the Xavier Program may have relatively mild differences, their learning problems are significant in that they result in performance below that expected from students with high potential.

Characteristic of students with specific language difficulty is an uneven profile of performance. Each individual presents a unique profile of strengths and weaknesses in academic areas. In order to address the unique learning characteristics of these students their academic programs are tailored to meet their individual needs. Though they are fully integrated into the academic environment at Calvert Hall, students in the Xavier Program receive additional instruction from a Language Specialist on an individual or small group basis for one period each day. During this time, they receive remediation and direct instruction in language skills affecting reading, writing, and math, as well as assistance and support for coursework assignements. This may well involve work on skills such as organization, monitoring and proofreading, and test taking techniques.

Students in the Xavier Program at Calvert Hall profit from smaller class sizes and flexible scheduling. The average class size is twenty students and classes can be arranged to help students meet graduation requirements and acquire electives of particular interest. In their regular clases, these students receive consideration through appropriate modification in instructional techniques and testing procedures. Specifically, they may take untimed tests where the need arises, may receive help with note taking, and may request differential grading of written assignements (content vs. mechanics).

An educational plan will be developed for each student which outlines his program and specifies objectives to be addressed in the language remediation sessions. To facilitate implementation of their programs, there is ongoing communication between the language specialist and classroom teachers. Progress towards the stated goals is reviewed with the parents at regular intervals.

The Xavier Program affords its students a strong academic program in a resourceful setting that acknowledges their strengths, and encourages their contribution to the school community. Calvert Hall believes that the student in the Xavier Program benefits from the challenging, yet supportive, academic environment at Calvert Hall. The students will also profit from the art, music, and sports activities which round out their academic programs and contribute to their personal development, to the mutal benefit of both students and the school.

Calvert Hall College has an enrollement of 1060 young men between the ages of 14 to 18. Approximately 40 of the students are enrolled in the Xavier Program. The Xavier Program is staffed by a full time Director and four full time staff members. Calvert Hall's overall faculty of 80 members includes 20 Christian Brothers.

* * *

THE McMULLIN SCHOLARS PROGRAM

THE PROGRAM

The McMullin Scholars Program is a comprehensive, four-year academic program consisting of honors and Advanced Placement courses from the English, Social Studies, Religion, Foreign Language, Mathematics, and Science departments.

Courses are designed to meet the special needs of the intellectually gifted student. Accelerated content, in-depth study, small group discussions, interdisciplinary approaches, and experiential learning opportunities are an integral part of the Scholars Program.

Recognizing that many of our students will one day assume high-level, responsible position in society, the

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development of leadership skills and social responsibility are central components of the program.

General requirements for students in the Program include:

- Honors Latin
- Honors Religions
- Humanities Seminars
- Summer course in Communication, Research and Study Skills
- Proficiency in a modern foreign language
- Advanced study in at least two disciplines.

THE STUDENTS

McMullin Scholars are a small, select group of students who are committed to the pursuit of truth and knowledge. As a part of a community that includes other scholars (both students and teachers), Scholars are expected to be active learners who take responsibility for their education. In return for making an academic commitment, Scholars are entitled to certain opportunities and benefits that are not available to the general student body.

BENEFITS AND HONORS

- A variety of cultural, educational, and travel opportunities, designed to promote fellow-ship among participants, are available to Scholars.

- Each student in the Program is assigned a faculty member who serves as a mentor and academic advisor for four years.

- Upperclass students have an opportunity to work on real problems and engage in independent research projects with mentors in the academic, business, professional and political community.

- A student who fulfills all requirements of the program will be honored at graduation as a McMullin Scholar.

- An explanation of the Scholars Program accompanies a student's transcript when he applies to colleges and universities.

PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of the Scholars Program is to promote academic excellence. Program goals are:

- To ensure that each student has an opportunity to develop his intellectual gifts to the fullest.

- To enhance further the opportunities for fellowship and leadership in a Christian community.

- To graduate students with a liberal education so that they will be life-long learners who are: proficient in a foreign language; well-grounded in the humanities, sciences, and mathematics; able to communicate successfully both orally and through the written word.

HISTORY

The development of the McMullin Scholars Program at Calvert Hall College began in the Spring, 1985 with the first class of Scholars beginning in September, 1986. Although Calvert Hall had an outstanding Honors and Advanced Placement Program for many years, the Administration felt a signifiant need to move beyond a traditional program into a more inclusive and coordinated effort involving academic and leadership development. While academic knowledge is the key to scholarship, responsible use of that knowledge should be at the heart of any true Scholar Program.

STUDENT SELECTION

Students are selected for the program on the basis of overall intellectual ability, as well as specific high-level ability in the mathematics, verbal, scientific, or foreign language areas. The selection committee and program director will consider IQ test scores, standardized ability and achievement test scores, grade point average, and teacher or counselor recommendation and faculty interview.

BROTHER FRANCIS McMULLIN, FSC

The McMullin Scholars Program is named to honor the memory of Brother Francis McMullin, FSC, the founder of Calvert Hall College, and the first American Christian Brother. In 1843, at age of 16, John McMullin responded to the invitation of Archbishop Samuel Eccleston to go to Montreal for training as a Christian Brother. In 1845 he returned to Baltimore as Brother Francis and on September 15, 1845, began Calvert Hall at Saratoga and Sharp Streets. He continued his work at Calvert Hall for the next year and a half, until poor health forced him to move to a warmer climate. On March 7, 1847, in St. Augustine, Florida, Brother Francis died, but his work lived on reflecting that same spirit of service, generosity, and dedication he brought to its beginnings... and all this between the ages of sixteen and twenty!

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Nº 19
October 1st 1990

FROM THE EDITOR

This is the last issue of LASALLIANA for the year 1990. Our editorial year has dealt with many themes which we believe to be of common interest to our many readers both in deepening our knowledge and reflection on Lasallian matters and in providing material to those who are active in sharing with others our spirituality and our mission.

We have been notified by many communities that they are not receiving LASALLIANA but that they have seen it in other centers. We regret that this Institute publication is not available in all communities. Ordinarily our mailings go through the Provincial office. The ideal would be to send each District enough copies for every community or center, as well as to provide for distribution to our immediate collaborators.

In previous issues we promised to begin a LETTERS TO THE EDITOR section. Since two letters for this purpose have been received, we publish them below.

Brother Jose Maria Valladolid

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

«In Nº 17 you began a section for LETTERS TO THE EDITOR. I am taking advantage of this opportunity to offer a correction to the article of Brother Hernan Pulgarin R. on "St. John Baptist de La Salle and the centenary of the Brothers in Colombia" (Lasalliana 17-18-E-45).

The fact is that there were two Colombian Brothers: Brother Filemon (Juan Isidoro Sanchez), from Pasto and Brother Alonso (Manuel Valencia) from Ipiales. Both cities are in the Department of Nariño which borders Ecuador and to which country these two Brothers went for their formation. (Cf. Rigault, *Histoire Generale*, p. 319 and Archives of the Motherhouse)».

Brother Bernardo Montes Urrea, Dist. of Bogota, residing in Rome.

«From its first edition, I have been an avid reader of the LASALLIANA for which I have the greatest admiration. However, I would like to call your attention to the variations in the spelling of the name of the Founder within each issue, and sometimes within the same article.

This is the case in the excellent contribution of our former confrere M. Francis Coughlin (18-16-D-44) in which he speaks of the spirituality of De La Salle and later on he refers to the originality of the teaching of de La Salle. It might possibly be a question of two different articles translated into English or simply a matter of pecularities of language. While in the United States, I had the pleasure of visiting La Salle College, and for many years I taught in a certain La Salle School. In Colombia I saw a Colegio De La Salle and here in Cameroun I was a professor in Collège de La Salle.

Personally, I prefer the spelling De La Salle which we sometimes see as the authentic (?) signature of the Founder. Thus we have: spirituality of De La Salle (as above) as well as Brothers of De La Salle. Brothers of de La Salle or Brothers La Salle to my Dutch ear sounds somewhat odd. Of course, the adjective "Lasallian" is perfect!»

Brother Laurent Vester, Bertoua, Cameroun. District of Douala.

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Bro. Joe Samson. Chicago De La Salle Institut. 3455 S. Wabash Ave. Chicago, Il. 60616.

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Bro. José María Valladolid. Via Aurelia, 476. 00165 Roma.

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Bro. Baptist Will. De La Salle Brothers. Kirkwood Street. Armidale, N.S.W. 2350.

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Bro. Bernard LoCoco. Sangre de Cristo Center. Route 4. Santa Fe. NM 87501. USA.

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19 - 1 – A - 72

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS... FOREVER!

– *We say the name of JESUS as the Risen Christ.*

– *We earnestly wish him to stay in our hearts FOREVER.*

1

For centuries now,
«LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS»
has been the invocation with which we,
Brothers of the Christian Schools,
have begun our prayers every morning.

As the sun rises, we address
our praise and desires to CHRIST,
the first-born of creation.

Greetings of peace,
like those of Jesus to his disciples;
like those of Paul at the beginning
of his epistles to Christians;
like those of the priest
at the beginning of Mass:
«The peace and grace
of God our Father and of Our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you!»

2

LIVE JESUS IN OUR HEARTS
is the fraternal expression of a deep desire.
It's as if we were saying:

– If every day, as soon as you rise,
you feel that Jesus is living in you,
you possess already within yourself
the source of life and the fount of enthusiasm;

– If you place JESUS
in the boat of your heart,
what passion-filled storm,
however violent it may be, can make it sink?

From the depths of your being
you will hear the Founder say to you:
«Beseech this Divine Saviour
to be ever in your soul
tou pray therein and to lead yo to God»
(Med. 62, 3)

3

When we are part of a closely-knit community,
the LIVE JESUS rings in our ears
with harmonious sounds of joy and happiness.

Is it not a source of great happiness
to be assured that JESUS
presides over our group...
«Where two or three...»

His presence is comparable
to that of the sun in nature:

– It is as the source of life;
– It communicates to plants
the power to produce;
– It gives fruit their taste and full ripeness.

It is enough for us expose ourselves
to the influence of his beneficial rays

– for his spirit to enter into us;
– for our hearts to draw closer to one another;
– for the Gospel to become our rule of life.

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4

The FOREVER cried in answer by all will be

- like a cry of praise to JESUS CHRIST;
- like the signature at the end of a letter
  which endorses what has been written;
- like the «We want you to rule over us»
  said to David by the children of Israel;
- like the centurion's profession of faith:
  «Truly, JESUS, yo are the Son of God».

Your name, Jesus, is above all other names.
Before yoy all knees vow,
above in heaven and here on earth.

Come, Spirit of Jesus,
take possession of my heart
and give life to all my actions,
so that I can say:
«IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE,
BUT IT IS CHRIST WHO LIVES IN ME».

* * *

PRAYER OF THE TEACHER BEFORE SCHOOL

O my God, you are strength in my weakness,
The bright light in moments
of uncertainty and worry,
A friend's advice when most needed.

It is you who entrusted me with my ministry,
You who have made me the shepherd
of the little flock at school.

Never abandon me to myself for one moment,
Lest pride overwhelm me,
And I consider «your work»
As being totally mine;
Lest the children listen only to my voice'
And forget to listen to yours.

Give me and my pupils
the spirit of discernment in our lives

- So that I can make the child
  And his preparation for life,
  And not reputation, the main of the school;
- So that I derive consolation
  Not only from efficient work,
  But from announcing the Gospel;
- So that I am in my class as one who serves
  And not as one who calls upon others
  To serve him.

I unite my work
With that of Jesus Christ, my Master,
So that it may draw
Its strength and efficiency from him.

I pray to the most Holy Virgin,
Queen of the Apostles,
And Mother of the Christian Schools,
And to St. John Baptist de La Salle,
My Father and Founder,
And ask them to deign to protect me
in the exercise of my ministry. AMEN.

Brother José Luis Hermosilla

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S. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

AND OPENNESS TO THE WORLD (1/2)

Pope Paul VI, speaking to the members of the 3rd World Congress on the Apostolate of the Laity, had the following to say:

«The world is your field of action. You are immersed in it by your vocation» (15/10/67).

Nearly three centuries earlier, St. John Baptist de La Salle addressed these words to religious educators:

«Your profession requires you to mix every day with the world, where your every step is watched. It behoves you, therefore, to be a model of every virtue for the seculars among whom you live» (Med. 69, 3).

And nowadays we can read in the new Rule of our Institute:

«The Brothers live out their consecration in a community of the Church. Such a community affirme the duty and the possibility of renewing the world in the spirit of the Gospel» (R. 23). Elsewhere the Rule tells us that this community is committed to the educational apostolate; that it is characterised by great openness to others; that it is integrated into a wider pastoral care programme; and that it is interested in cultural groups and other aspects of social work.

Priests, religious and lay people are sent out into the world as the seed of life to transform it by the action of the Holy Spirit.

WHO IS THE WORLD?

We should perhaps first of all define the meaning of this word by looking in the dictionary.

– In current usage it means the planet we live on.

– When Jesus said that *«God so loved the world that he gave his Son»*, it is clear that "world" meant all people. It is a world, fallen because of its sin, a world that the Redeemer came to save, *«For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved»* (John 3, 16-17).

– So what is this world that Jesus curses and condemns, the world for which *«he does not pray»*? It is the world of which he said: *«it (the world) does hate me, because I give evidence that its ways are evil»* (John 7, 7); it is the world described by St. John: *«the world has to offer the sensual body, the lustful eye, pride in possessions»* (I John 2, 16); it is all the people whose "prince" is Satan (cf. John 14, 30 & 16, 11); it is all those whose perverse or misguided beliefs that are contrary to the maxims of the Gospel; it is those who do not belong to the Kingdom of God.

Whether hidden or overt, the influence of the world is felt everywhere.

Pope Paul VI, speaking to the members of this same Congress on the Apostolate of the Laity, has this to say:

«Under the influence of a thousand and more factors, the world is naturally moving towards a state which has been described by certain contemporary thinkers –to the joy of some and the chagrin of others– by such terms as secular, laicised, desacralized. We note with much sadness that there are Catholic writers who, in opposition to the 2.000 year old tradition of the Church, look forward to the gradual reduction, even the eventual disappearance, of the sacred character of places, times and persons».

The Sovereing Pontiff then added: *«Your apostolate, dear Sons and dear Daughters, is to oppose this trend».*

– This word is used in yet another way which can cause confusion: the world, as opposed to the monastery, is the mass of people who live their Christian lives in a way that is very praiseworthy and blessed by the sacrament of marriage, but which is different from that of Christians who consecrate themselves to God in the priesthood or by celibacy by the vows of religion and the practice of the evangelical counsels, and in conformity with a Rule approved by the Church.

That world is neither wicked nor cursed: God has willed it and sanctity flourishes in it, but it is distinct from the world of consecrated people. To return to it after having renounced it can be an act of infidelity. St. Paul, abandoned by one of his "faithful helpers" writes sadly about him: *«Demas has left me through love of the world».*

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AVOIDANCE OR PRESENCE?

The real Lasallian paradox consists in shunning the world in order to be closer to it.

It is important to grasp the exact meaning of the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle. He is not unaware of the need that teachers have to have social contacts.

«Your duties oblige you to have occasional relations with the world» (Med. 127, 2).

He advises, then, much less a physical separation which, however, he still insists on as far as possible, than a kind of effective but prudent presence, following the recommendation of St. Paul who says we should give up all our "worldly ambitions" and «be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world» (Titus 2, 12). And so in his Meditations he says the following:

«St. Leo forbade religious to meddle with secular matters» (114). *«Hold in horror all frequentation of it (the world) and have no communication with those who are in it except in so far as it is necessary»* (Med. 182, 1). *«Beware lest you imbibe its spirit»* (Med. 127, 2).

He ask us to behave in it as religious:

«Learn from this Saint to live and move in the world without participating in its corruption, its views or its maxims» (Med. 174, 3).

And the desire to renounce the world:

«Have you so completely rid yourself of it as to never think of it? Are you quite free of every attachment?» (Med. 144, 1)

According to him, to be in the world is like being for a short time in a place of work:

«You will not cause your name to be noised abroad, but you will be in the world merely as passers-by, occupied solely in the work of God, causing Jesus to live in the hearts of those he has given you to instruct» (Med. 6, 2)

The Founder's greatest wish is that the presence of the Brother in the world should bear witness to love for Christ and the neighbour; and that this presence be a burning light constantly fed but never dimmed by it.

«Your faith should be... a beacon for those whom you instruct» (Med. 178, 1)

And from St. Paul he borrows the following idea which is dear to him: *«We are Christ's incense to God for those who are being saved and for those who are not»* (2 Cor. 2, 15).

«Your employment requires that you should have some communication with outsiders. Be on your guard to be ever a subject of edification... So act that your exterior appearance, all your words and actions may breathe virtue. It is only for this reason that God wishes you to go out. Prepare yourself in your retreat to comply with his intentions» (Med. 98, 2).

Finally, the Saint wishes this presence in the world to be a real and effective apostolate, in accordance with Jesus' instructions to his apostles: «and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit» (John 15, 16). The Founder too sends his Brothers out into the world and tells them that the best way to make their apostolate effective is to stay away from the world (cf. Med. 146, 143).

He returns often to the same ideas, and like a blacksmith hammering on his anvil, he forges solid convictions. And so a religious lives in the world like a soldier well-armed for the battle ahead, or like a workman fully equipped for his work.

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S. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

AND OPENNESS TO THE WORLD (2/2)

PRESENCE IN THE WORLD AND INTIMACY WITH GOD

Lasallian spirituality is constantly concerned with two things: to avoid everything in the world which is an obstacle to a life of union with God; and to attain intimacy with God so as to be more effective in one's apostolate.

However, if the Founder fears over-familiarity with the world to this extent, it is not because he questions the goodwill of the Brothers, but rather because he wishes to protect them from a very real danger. He wants also to ensure that they have the necesary peace and quiet for union with God.

«The less you converse with men, the more will God communicate himself to you» (Med. 111, 1)

He sees this peace as being necessary for interior life:
«In the restfulness of solitude, forgotten by the world and occupied only with the thought of our sins and of the way to live holily, we find God and can seek to please him» (Med. 174, 2).

Union with God is essential if our apostolate is to be effective in the world: a lamp that has gone out gives no light:
«As you stand in need of both these things (the Spirit of God and zeal) you should seek retirement from the world where neither can be found. As Our Lord has said: "For the truth-giving Spirit the world can find no room, because it cannot see him, cannot recognise him". This is because the maxims and practices which the Spirit of God inspires are clean contrary to those of the world» (Med. 189, 2).

And he continues elsewhere:
«It is frequent intercourse with the world which usually destroys religious, because such associations withdraw them from the communications they should hold with God. There can be no alliance between the Spirit of God and that of the world. Hence, we no sooner become impregnated with the spirit of the one than we lose the other» (Med. 174, 3).

The Saint returns constantly to the cause and effect relationship between union with God and effective presence in the world. They are like the weft and warp of the tapestry of our religious life:

«Since you have left the world in order to lead a life above the merely natural life and human inclinations, so that you can labour for the salvation of your neighbour, your whole study should be to seek God alone. You should apply yourself to the ministry to which he has called you, and devote yourself entirely to spiritual things» (Med. 58, 3).

Like a weaver's shuttle, we dart from one to the other:
«You should love retirement which enables you to work efficaciously at your own perfection, but you should leave it when God requires you to labour for the salvation of the souls he has entrusted to your care. But, after the example of St. Anthony, you should return at once to your solitude when your task has been accomplished» (Med. 97, 3).

PRESENCE OR SEPARATION?

A religious is a consecrated person, separated by his state from Christians living in the world, but living among them as leaven in dough.

In our own days, the Conciliar Decree "Perfectae Caritatis" has clearly defined the meaning of the religious state, the consecration of its members, and their separation from the world, whatever the nature of their apostolate:
«The members of each community should recall above everything else that by their profession of the evangelical counsels they have given answer to a divine call to live for God alone... (and they) should combine contemplation with apostolic love. By the former they adhere to God in mind and heart; by the latter they strive to associate themselves with the work of redemption and to spread the kingdom of God» (Chap. 5).

It follows that one cannot say that religious and lay Christians in the world are identical, although the latter also are bound by their baptismal vows to bear witness in the world.

This separation which characterises religious was stressed by Pope Paul VI when he spoke to the members of the General Chapter on June 7th 1966:
«You are religious, consecrated, and men of the Church».

The Founder's thinking on this point is inspired by the words of Jesus to his Apostles: «My choice withdrew you from the world» (john 15, 19), and can be summarised as follows: the religious educator has to live in the midst of the world, without belonging to the world, without adopting its way of thinking:
«Have no communication with it (the world)... Do not suffer that it should have any access to you, lest by dealing with it you contract its spirit» (Med. 41, 2).

LOVE OR INTIMACY?

It is true that one cannot achieve anything without love, but it is important to avoid ambivalence. It is not the world that one hates, but what is evil in it; and the world itself, only in so far as it identifies itself with the evil that is in it. St. John is very clear about this: *«You must not love this passing world or anything that is in the world. The love of the Father cannot be in any man who loves the world»* (1 John, 2, 15). St. James says something similar: *«Making the world your friend is making God your enemy»* (James, 4, 4).

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St. John Baptist de La Salle cannot be accused of exaggeration when he says:

«Are you completely disgusted with the world?» (Med. 174, 2)

«Do you hold in disgust all that constitutes the pleasure of worldlings?» (Med. 144, 1).

He quotes St. Paul to show the incompatibility between love for the world and love for Christ: *«If I still wanted that (man's approval), I should not be what I am – a servant of Christ»* (Med. 182, 1)

In fact, did not our Divine Master say: *«If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before you»* (John 15, 18)? The Founder bases himself often on this text to encourage his followers to bear patiently the difficulties the world puts in their way.

PRESENCE OR ASSIMILATION?

Presence in the world must not mean fusion, identification or assimilation. We must keep our religious, consecrated and separated character as described by the Council. This is exactly what St. John Baptist de La Salle thought:

«You ought, as St. Paul says, "to be clothed in the new self, which is created in God's image, justified and sanctified through the truth"» (Med. 60, 2).

«Have you given up your worldly ways? Your manner of life, no less than your habit, should be entirely different from that of worldlings» (Med. 60, 1).

In our own days (1968), the Vicar of Christ has much the same thing to say, as we can see from the audience he held on December 11th 1968:

«We deplore the attitude of certain priests who, in order to come closer to the world, believe that by changing the way they dress and by living in the world like lay people, they can come closer to the world. Such a form of identification gives the immediate impression of making contact. Let us be careful, however, that this contact does not make the priest lose his efficaciousness and his specific role, this role which distinguishes him, which places him in the midst of people to whom he is called to preach the message and with whom he must not become assimilated socially and materially».

And St. John Baptist de La Salle had this to say:

«People ought to be able to distinguish a person who is consecrated to God from an ordinary secular by his appearance and by the way in which he behaves, for he owes edification not only to the wise but to all, as St. Paul says» (Med. 92, 2).

There is also in this context, the famous allocution of Pope Paul VI, given on November 16th 1966, to the members of the General Congregation of the Jesuits:

«Some were under the illusion that, in order to spread the Gospel, it was necessary to adopt the ways of the world, its ways of thinking and acting, and its profane character. By doing so they forgot that, if a herald of Christ has the apostolic duty to come close to the people to whom he has to deliver the message of Christ, he cannot become identified with them in such a way that the salt loses its taste, and the apostle his specific strenght».

CONCLUSION

St. John Baptist de La Salle considered well-judged contact with the world to be so important, that he included it in his final recommendation on his death bed. The last will and testament of a Founder is as precious for his followers as that of a father for his sons:

«If you wish to preserve and die in your vocation, have nothing to do with people of the world; because, little by little, you will start to appreciate the way they act, and you will become so involved in their conversations that, through tact, you will not be able to avoid showing agrement with what they say however harmful it may be. This will lead you to be unfaithful, and once you no longer observe your Rules, you will lose interest in your vocation and eventually abandon it» (Blain).

The Saint's 40 years spent in founding the Institute, and the experience of religious throughout history, show that flirting with the world is to play with fire.

This teaching is demanding and austere. It is the teaching of the Gospel: it is the narrow and rough road which leads to God and true happiness here below. There is no suffering to compare with that of a divided heart that gives itself at the same time to the world and to God; or an overburdened heart where God and the world are in competition. St. John Baptist de La Salle joins St. Augustine in saying:

«Mere trifles hold me back and prevent me from belonging wholly to God» (Med. 173, 2).

On the other hand, how great is the joy of a heart free from all attachments to the world and its demands!

Jesus said to his Apostles: *«Be brave: I have conquered the world»* (John 16, 33). His victory ensures our own, and the Holy Spirit assures us of this: *«Anyone who has been begotten by God has already overcome the world; this is the victory over the world – our faith»* (1 John, 5, 4). Inspired by these words, the Founder advises his followers:

«Faith should lead you to despise what the world esteems» (Med. 96, 2).

His final words are to them:

«How happy are you to share the same lot as these Apostles, and the advantage of having left the world» (Med. 182, 1).

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THE PARISH SCHOOL (1654)

AND THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS (1720):

A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

The "official" manual for primary schoolteacher education in France during the second half of the 17th century was the **Parish School** by Jacques De Betancourt, a priest at the parish of St. Nicolas du Chardonnais in Paris, who wrote the book after 18 years' experience teaching in the parish schools. Lasallian researchers tell us that the **Parish School** was a "source" book for John Baptist De La Salle when he wrote the **Conduct of Schools.**

It is true that there is very little in the **Conduct of Schools** which was not previously contained in the **Parish School.** Both books treat identical topics such as: qualities of teachers, admission policy and practice, school building and furnishings, student "offices," rewards and punishments, teaching prayers, catechism and the 3R's. Nevertheless, two major differences have historically contrasted the two works: charging fees from students who could afford them and teaching Latin syntax and grammar, neither of which were part of the program in the **Conduct of Schools**.

However, both the topical similarities and the financial and curricular differences are deceptive in the sense that they tend to distract us from other important but less obvious differences between these two pedagogical works. As a matter of fact, when De La Salle wrote the **Conduct of Schools,** he radically departed from the approach of his "source" book, the **Parish School.** The objective of this article is to outline eleven contrasts between the **Parish School** and the **Conduct of Schools** and thereby, hopefully, to present a complete picture of De La Salle's transformation of the established text in teacher education.

(1) The **Parish School** is based upon the long but limited experience of one teacher. The **Conduct of Schools** is the product of the shared classroon experiences of a teaching "faculty" acting in a process of correction and updating. It is very likely that De La Salle wrote the **Conduct of Schools** from notes taken at the "many conferences held with his teachers."

(2) The **Parish School** is a single publication, whereas the **Conduct of Schools** is one work in a pedagogical system which includes, among other works, the **Meditations for the Time of Retreat** and the **Common Rules.** These works complement the **Conduct of Schools** and provide it with a new "pedagogical spirit" without which the **Conduct of Schools** would otherwise remain just a training manual, as is the **Parish School.**

(3) The **Parish School** is structured into three parts from "the top down." Part One begins with administrative concerns: qualities to look for in hiring a teacher, building maintenance and furnishing, and teacher assistance needed to maintain large enrollments (80-100). Part Two deals with piety: teaching catechism and prayers. Not until Part Three does the **Parish School** consider the essentials of teaching: learning methods, the daily schedule, and points of order and discipline. The **Conduct of Schools** is also structured into three parts but "from the ground up." Part One deals with the daily tasks required of the teacher in order to help the teacher *make it through the day*. Part One explains the daily schedule and provides a chapter containing directions on classroom management and teaching method for each successive activity and subject to be taught. Part Two deals with ways and means of obtaining order and discipline without alienating the students in order to help the teacher *make it through the year.* Part Two is really a treatise on building the sense of community in students with the result that they will want to come to school. Part Three organizes school administration as a teacher-support system in order to help the teacher *make it through a career of teaching.* Part Three describes the duties of the *formateur* in an initial teacher-formation program designed to help the beginning teacher "to get rid of bad habits and to acquire good habits necessary for effective teaching." Part Three also describes the duties of the Inspector of Schools in an in-service development program designed to help the teacher in the classroom on a day-to-day basis to master matters of judgment in teaching and management.

(4) The **Parish School** is modeled after a seminary manual which logically deduces the qualities needed in a teacher according to the theological and moral virtues. De Betancourt fit his teaching experiences into these predetermined categories; whereas De La Salle inductively discovers the qualities of the effective teacher by allowing the successful classroom experiences to provide the categories which characterize effective teaching. Part Three of the **Conduct of Schools** describes the undesirable qualities to be eliminated by a beginning teacher: talkativeness, fickleness, fidgetiness, giddiness, indifference, familiarity, harshness, spitefulness, particlity, negligence, faintheartedness; and it describes the desirable qualities to be acquired by a beginning teacher: vigor, firmness, reserve, vigilance, self-control, skill in teaching, prudence, friendliness, zeal, ability to communicate. Clearly these qualities describe the good or bad affects of a teacher in the classroom. They are not deduced from a seminary manual. This conclusion also applies to the traditional list of the 12 qualities of the good teacher.

(5) The **Parish School** presents an ambiguous view of the primary teacher when De Betancourt concludes that "humility puts the seal on the virtues of the teacher." Apparently in the last analysis De Betancourt identifies the lowly position of primary teaching with the lowly image of the primary teacher. De La Salle, on the other hand, does not cease to speak in the **Meditations for the Time of Retreat** of the primary teacher in lofty terms as a minister of grace sharing in a sacerdotal ministry which the Apostles reserved for themselves.

(6) The **Parish School** employs the traditional approach to teaching. The students recite in rotation, "two by two", before the teacher. The curriculum gives priority to Latin over French, and the teacher gives preference to the Latin stu-

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dents who occupy the first place in the classroom. Unfortunately, slower students and those who study to read only French seem to be treated as "second-class" students and dealt with less patiently than their brighter counterparts. The **Conduct of Schools,** on the other hand, presents an innovative program which not only excludes the study of Latin grammar from the curriculum but also begins teaching reading in French without prior knowledge of Latin pronunciation. The **Conduct of Schools** also organizes student recitations into a "simultaneous method" wherein the correction of one become the correction of all. Lastly, the **Conduct of Schools** gives preference to the poor and solwer students who are to receive more attention and care from the teacher.

(7) The author of the **Parish School** has a "theological" view of schooling. Such a view is made clear in the description of the teacher according to the theological and moral virtues, and in the lengthy description given to the various catechisms in the curriculum of piety. In the **Conduct of Schools** De La Salle, on the contrary, demonstrates that he has a "psychological" view of the teacher and the student. His use of "psychology" is most apparent first in his analysis of the causes for student difficulty in learning, misbehavior and absenteeism, and secondly in his description and recommended treatment of the various types of problem children.

(8) The **Parish School** offers a "preparatoy" program of studies which prepares students to go on to "the next level of schooling." Surprisingly De Betancourt encourages the teacher to seek out financial aid for the economically poor but bright students who could not afford to go on. The **Conduct of Schools** offers a "terminal" program which prepares poor students for work and for life. When parents request from De La Salle more schooling for their child, further studies will be in vocational or general studies, not in preparatory studies for higher education.

(9) The **Parish School** gives an ecclesiastical and doctrinal flavor to the curriculum of piety. Frequently students are excused from class to act as servers for the parish masses. Detailed description are given of the several catechisms used in the preparation and reception of the sacraments, and detailed practices are held for the processions held on feast days. In the **Conduct of Schools** the section on teaching catechism emphasizes the art of questioning for understanding and the practices of virtuous living in daily life. De La Salle puts more emphasis on living in religion than on doctrine. One could say, in contrast to the **Parish School,** that the **Conduct of Schools** puts a layman's emphasis on religious study and practice. It is not without significance along these lines that De La Salle did not allow the Brothers to teach catechism in the church building.

(10) The **Parish School** presents a fragmented curriculum which is divided into a curriculum of piety and a curriculum of knowledge which, in turn, is subdivided into a study of Latin and a study of French. The students also are separated from each other on the basis of curriculum and finance: those who study Latin from those who read only in French; those who pay fees from those can not afford them. Whereas in the **Conduct of Schools** the curriculum unfolds as an integral part of the daily schedule. Prayer and catechism are distinct but not separated from the three R's. No distinctions are made in the placement of students, economically poor or well-off. All students read French, and students are dealt with on their own merits. Two characteristics of De La Salle's school were an integrated curriculum and student body.

(11) The **Parish School** employes a teacher assistance program that delegates the teaching authority of the classroom teacher. The assistant teacher, hired for a class enrolled with 80 to 100 students, is responsible for teaching deignated subjects to certain students, and student officers also are allowed to be involved directly in teaching and correcting other students. De La Salle, on the other hand, is very strict about keeping the authority in the classroom focused in the teacher. He keeps the class enrollment small (50-60 students!) with one teacher. Only on a temporary basis might begining teachers attend the class to "learn this new method of teaching". Student officers were never directly involved in teaching as such or in the correction of other students: they were employed only to hear practice recitations and to be models for the slower students; they were employed only to hear practice recitations and to be models for the slower students; they were assigned only to watch over the students and to report to the teacher, never to intervene with the misbehaving student.

In review we list the contrasts between the **Parish School** and the **Conduct of Schools** as the following: a single publication vs. one of a system; isolated individual experience vs. shared group experiences; logical vs. experiential development; ambiguous vs. lofty view of teaching; deductive vs. inductive thinking; traditional vs. innovative methodology; theological vs. psychological understanding; college preparatoy vs. terminal programming; doctrinal vs. living religion; ecclesiastical vs. lay concerns; fragmented vs. integrated curriculum and student body; divided vs. reserved authority.

This article has been offered as another example of how De La Salle who was at grips with the primary teacher education program of his time inaugurated a new approach in contrast to the **Parish School** in order to achieve the true and the beautiful and the good in primary education.

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THE BEATIFICATION OF THE MARTYR BROTHERS OF TURON AND THE BROTHER JAIME HILARIO

Pope John Paul II's address at the audience for pilgrims

(Monday April 30, 1990)

1. The solemn beatification of eleven Servants of God, martyred for Christ, and sons of Spain's noble land, gives me an opportunity to hold this most welcome meeting with you who have come to Rome to honour the new Beati and take part in this great demonstration of faith and Church fellowship.

On this happy occasion I wish to greet especially the Brothers of the Christian Schools and their many students and former students here presents, as well as the members of the Passionist congregation. Let us all honour together the eight Brothers and Father Inocencio de la Inmaculada, martyred in Turon, Asturias, and Brother Jaime Hilario who shed his blood in Tarragona.

2. These eleven martyrs, apart from sharing a rich spiritual personality, forged by fidelity and dedication to their vocation, have in common also the fact they were all teachers and educators of young people. School gave them the opportunity to stay close to children and young people, to listen to them, to love them, to accompany and help them in their growth as human beings and Christians. This is what these Brothers and Sister Maria Mercedes did, because they believed in the great value of their educational and religious mission in the service of children and young people. They wished to be faithful to the noble cause of the Catholic school, the distinctive purpose of which is, as the Vatican II Council says, «to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity... so that the light of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life and of mankind» (Gravissimum Educationis, 8). And so they did not hesitate to shed their blood and thus bear witness to their faith in an exceptional way.

These martyrs should provide an incentive for all Christian teachers and especially for religious to dedicate themselves totally to an apostolate which is so worthwhile and necessary in our days. St. John Baptist de La Salle had this in mind when he said to the Brothers of his Institute: «You must not doubt that it is a great gift of God, this grace he has given you to be entrusted with the instruction of children, to announce the Gospel to them and to bring them up in the spirit of religion» (Med. 201).

3. These words tell us that the Catholic school is a privileged place in which children and young people discover God in their lives and are trained to be true Christians, witnesses to their faith and followers of Christ. But this training and evangelisation can be brought about only by men and women of faith, who through their religious consecration share their experience of God with young people and who are prepared also to give their lives for him and for them, as the new Beati did.

Heroic actions are not improvised. They are the result of a whole life of renunciation and abnegation. This is the kind of witness that we find in particular in Blessed Maria Mercedes Prat, who is remembered as beign a humble and pleasant religious, always ready to be of service to others.

Similarly striking is Brother Jaime Hilario's dedication to God, borne out by the following words he wrote: «The day you give yourself totally to God, you will enter a whole new world, as has happened to me. You will enjoy a kind of peace and tranquility you have never experienced before, even on the happiest days of your life«.

4. Before ending, I should like to say a few words to you, teachers, parents, and students of the Brothers of the Christian Schools or of the Company of St. Teresa of Jesus. As Christians and members of Spanish society, you should be aware that institutes involved in

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social work, which the Church itself or other institutions support, are not restricted to a purely religious or ethical plane, but offer society valuable service, stimulating cultural, civic and religious life, constantly aware of the needs of contemporary progress.

This same second Vatican Council, recognising that parents are those who are primarily and principally responsible for the education of their children, defends their right to total freedom in the choice of schools. In this way it is possible to opose the temptation to impose an educational system which would deny the inalienable right of parents in the name of healthy pluralism, and which «would militate against the native rights of the human person, the development and spread of culture itself, the peaceful association of citizens, and the pluralism which exists today in very many societies» (Gravissimum Educationis, 6).

«For this reason the Church gives high praise to those civil authorities and civil societies that show regard for the pluralistic character of modern society, and take into account the right of religious liberty, by helping families in such a way that in all schools the education of their children can be carried out according to the moral and religious convictions of each family» (Ibid. 7). In this way, civic legislation will be enriched by important spiritual and ethical values.

In the fervent hope that the beloved Sapanish people, ever faithful to their Christian roots, will continue at the present time also to promote culture and peaceful coexistence, with affection I impart the Apostolic Blessing to you all, to your families and to the educational communities of your Institutes.

* * *

EXTRACT FROM THE POPE'S HOMILY AT THE BEATIFICATION MASS

St. Peter's words in the second reading remind us that «the blood of Christ, the spotless lamb» (1 Pt. 1:19) was the price paid for our redemption and salvation. Thus it is consoling to state that in Church history there have been very many Christian men and women who have imitated Jesus Christ in the supreme act of shedding their blood, and at the same time were his witnesses in difficult situations of persecution. In this solemn Eucharist, then, the Church puts forward some of these Christian for veneration and reflection by all.

First among them we remember the community of eight Brothers of the Christian Schools of Turon (Asturias, Spain) who in 1934, together with the Passionist religious Father Inocencio de la Inmaculada, were led to death without giving any resistance. In the eyes of their persecutors, they were guilty of having dedicated their lives to the human and Christian education of youth in the Catholic school of Our Lady of Covadonga in that mining town.

The Passionist priest met occasionally with the De La Salle Brothers. In that way, God in his inscrutable providence wished to unite in martydom members of two congregations who workerd in solidarity for the Church's one mission. This fact which might seem circumstantial, is truly significant, since it makes clear to us the unity, interdependence and collaboration which must wxist between religious congregations in the church, especially in our time, in order to face up to the challenge of the new evangelisation.

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BEATIFICATION OF THE MARTYRS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS 1934 - 1937

The martyrs who were beatified yesterday by His Holiness, John-Paul II, are a source of joy for the Catholic Chruch. They are heroic witnesses to the Christian faith. They witnessed to their faith in and their love for Jesus Christ with their own lives. It is the Holy Spirit who awakened in them faith, hope and love, and it is the same Spirit who sustained them in fidelity and perseverance to the very last moment of their painful passion. Because of this they have become for us an honour, and for the Church an outstanding example. They are now, for us all, powerful intercessors in heaven where they enjoy the reward of their dedication to the cause of the Gospel.

We thank God today for this new gift which He has given to his Church by the glorification of nine martyrs. We share in the joy of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, of the Passionist Fathers and of the Sisters of the Society of Saint Teresa who see their martyrologies enriched by these new martyrs. We, bishops and priests who are concelebrating, together with all of you who are participating in this Eucharist, are happy to represent the various dioceses and regions where the newly beatified were born and where they died: Barcelona, Buenos Aires (Argentina), Burgos, Cantabria, Guadalajara, Lugo (Mondoñedo), Seo de Urgell (Lérida), Tarragona, and the Asturias. To me, as archbishop of Oviedo belongs the honour of presiding at this celebration and of represennting the Asturian diocese where the martyrs of Turon shed their blood for Christ.

Brothers Cirilo-Beltran (Burgos, 46 years(, Marciano-Jose (Guadalajara, 324 years), Victorian-Pio (Burgos, 29 years), Julian-Alfredo (Leon, 31 years), Benjamin-Julian (Burgos, 26 years), Augusto-Andres (Santander, 24 years), Benito de Jesus (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 24 years), Aniceto-Adolfo (Santader, 22 years) formed the Community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the mining valley of Turon near Mieres. Arrested with them was Fr. Inocencio de la Inmaculada (Lugo, 47 years), a Passionist priest who was about to celebrate Mass in the college when the Brothers were arrested on the orders of the revolutionary Committee. Led to the House of the People, they were all condemned to death because they were religious and executed near the wall of the cemetery on 9th October 1934.

* * *

At the beatification of this group of witnesses the Pope added the name of another member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Brother Jaime-Hilario (Seo de Urgell, 39 years) who was martyred at Tarragona and that of the Teresian Sister Mercedes Prat (Barcelona, 56 years) who were martyred at Tarragona and Barcelona respectively during the Spanish civil war (1936 - 1939).

On the occasion of the beatification of the martyrs it is inevitable that I should refer to the circumstances of their death, to the historic context in which their martyrdom took place. If it is properly understood, the glorification of the martyrs invites us to overlook the causes of the injustice which led to the deaths of innocent people. It is a cause for reflection for the society which endured the sectarian intolerance of political groups which went so far as to ruin the peace of society and to destroy harmony among the peoples.

The hatred of religion shown by the extremist leaders of the revolution of 1934 and of the civil war of 1936 - 39 in Sapin is an undeniable fact of history. In those circumstances the fact of belonging to a religious order, of being a priest or simply a fervent practising Catholic, could, at the height of anti-religious fury, lead to death.

How was it possible to reach such a point of confrontation among a people so deeply religious as the people of Spain? That is an important question which must find a calm, objective answer as more light is thrown on the revolutionary processes of those years and as the historic facts are studied with calm objectivity.

I have not intention of dwelling of these considerations which, on this joyful occasion, are of secondary importance. The motive which compels the Church to act in the cause of the martyrs is not one of political or social revendication. It is entirely "religious". The Church wishes to highlight the example of heroic death for the faith because such a death is "precious in the sight of the Lord" and is a divine gift which should stimulate us believers to live in a manner consistent with our beliefs and with the first commandment of the Law of God; «Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and above all things».

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I invite you to look on the death of the martyrs with the eyes of faith, as a fact whose realization was part of God's plan, according to the prophetic vision unveiled for us by Christ: «You are not of this world. The world will hate you as it has hated me» (John 15: 18-21). That divine vision, according to faith and divine Providence is the back-drop to the death of the witness of Christ. Has Our Lord not warned us that we would be persecuted and that our persecutors would event think that they were serving the cause of justice?

The hatred breathed out in Spain at that time against the Church and religion was presented as the defence of a just cause. At the instigation of demagogic and sectarian leaders, the Church was often accused of being the cause of all the ills that afflicted Spanish society where the vast majority of people found themselves in misery and in a situation of high unemployment.

The glory of our martyrs does not consist in the fact that they were wrongly accused of complicity in political or social activities. Their glory arises from the fact that the real cause, their being religious or well-known representatives of the Church of Christ, came out clearly and decisively in the summary trial which led to their condamnation and execution. The Church exalts the martyrs, not because they were innocent victims, but because they were faithful witnesses of Christ. That is why she calls them martyrs, that is, witnesses to the risen Lord – witnesses par excellence.

In the death of a martyr shine forth the purity and strength of faith in Christ and the superabondance of Christian love which leads him to declare himself a disciple of Christ, help him to accept death with serenity, sustain him at the supreme moment and enable him to praise God and to die while pardoning his enemies.

The death of a martyr is like the death of Christ on the cross. It is in the peace of his death that the truth of his cause is revealed. «Truly this man was the son of God». The impression created by the death of the martyrs beatified yesterday, is engraved on the hearts of those who murdered them or who were present at their death. The martyrs of Turon prayed for and forgave their executioners. The tranquility of Brother Jaime-Hilario impressed those who fired on him twice without hitting him. Even the bullets respected him according to his biographer. Mother Mercedes Prat recited the Our Father and murmured "Jesus, Mary, Joseph". The attitude of peace and calm with which they died, their rosary beads in their hands and forgiving their executioners while praising God, expressed clearly the purity of their dedication to the cause of Christ and of the Church.

Let us thank God for the gift of these martyrs. They will be the seed from which will come new religious men and women, new priests and new committed Christians.

* * *

In the death of the newly beatified there are values which we should accept with devotion as drops of the blood they shed and as relics which will be the seed of a new life for the whole Church.

They are witnesses of the faith at a time when there is a pressing need to rediscover the necessity of risking our comfort and of confessing our faith even at the cost of our temporal interests.

They are witnesses of the value of the Christian school at a time when so many Christians neglect their duty to provide their children with an integrated education in harmony with their religious beliefs.

They are witnesses of love for the poor by giving their lives for the education of the children of the working classes. I can personally bear witness to the love that the people of the mining valleys of the Asturias have for the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The workers of the Asturias who have attended their schools will never forget the sacrifices and generosity of their educators.

They are witnesses of love of their enemies. The temptation to resist force with force is always there. Nevertheless, «He who uses the sword will persih by the sword». Christ asked us to forgive always, even our enemies, and that our revenge be sincere love for those who persecute and claumniate us. In the last analysis, judgement of persons belong to God and we are asked not to judge our brothers but to give our life for them after the example of Christ. «Father, forgive them for they know not what they do».

Some will say that we are too fearful; others that we are under an illusion or that we are too trusting. As for us, we want to remain faithful to the words of the Master who calls us to be witnesses in his way: «Love one another as I have loved you».

let us imitate the martyrs. Let us be witnesses of the faith and of the love of God in the community of the Church and the world will believe in the Lord.

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I READ THE RULE

AND BEGIN TO DREAM...

As I read the **Rule**, I seem to discover a new message in the text which affects me deeply.

As I read the **Rule**, I feel new power bursting from this simple, warm, direct, spiritual and fraternal text.

As I read the **Rule**, I think of all the things going on in the Institute which reflect the wisdom and realism of the Chapter members of 1986 –things that are so varied, so open in character, and things that remain to be completed.

As I read the **Rule**, I begin to dream how different our lives would be if we fully accepted this inspiring text and lived it naturally, simply, with affection and courage, with creativity and daring.

I feel that there is more inspiration in the text of the Rule than in all the things we do or will do. The reason for this is that the **Rule** is based on truths that inspire our work and, in a special way, our **conversion** and interior freedom.

These truths come from the Spirit, for the **Rule** as well as the whole Institute are the work of the Spirit. «The spirit of the Lord, indeed, fills the whole world, and that which holds all things together knows every word that is said» (Wis.1:7).

As I read the **Rule**, I see the importance of living as one: unity in diversity. For, although the Rule was written by the Brothers and for the Brothers, it is already a source of inspiration for so-called "Lasallian groups" and for the "Lasallian Family" which include in their number both lay people and Brothers.

As I read the **Rule**, I feel that the Institute, that is, we the Brothers, must come to accept this new situation. In order to do this, we must become aware of and accept at this particular moment in history a certain number of significant things that are taking place in our midst and all around us.

What, then, in real terms, is the message contained in an article of the **Rule** such as the following?

«The spiritual gifts which the Church has received in St. John Baptist de La Salle go far beyond the confines of the Institute which he founded.
The Institute sees the existence of the various Lasallian movements as a grace from God renewing its own vitality. The Institute can associate with itself those lay people who want to lead the life of perfection that the Gospel demands, by living according to the spirit of the Institute and by participating in its mission.
The Institute helps them achieve their proper autonomy. At the same time it creates appropriate ties with them and evaluates the authenticity of their Lasallian character« (Rule 146).

The kind of life the Institute led for the first 300 years of its life, and which it considered to be its private and exclusive property, now has to be shared with others if its vitality is to be renewed. The Institute is the work of God, as St. La Salle used to say, and as the **Rule** says again in our days (articles 141, 143, 66, 15c, and 21). The God of the Covenant, who is able to make all things new (Apoc 21:5) and «because the time has come» (Mk 1:5; cf. Gal 4:4), has chosen to act in a new way and to make his message known beyond the vicissitudes of our history and human fragility on both a personal and community level (cf. Rule 144).

THE GIFT OF GOD

As I read article 146 of the **Rule**, I stop with a sense of satisfaction at some paragraphs:

- «St. John Baptist is a gift of God. God has acted through him and has revealed himself in him, in his life's journey, and in his work as Founder. And thus the **Rule** states with joy and hope that St. John Baptist de La Salle goes far beyond the confines of the Institute which he founded».

- In the same way, the Institute he founded is a gift from God and that is why there is a very great need of it for a great many people who see it as a hopeful means for salvation. That is why the Rule urges us to SHARE ITS MISSION (Nº 17a, 132c, 146) and its SPIRITUALITY (Nº 17c).

- Finally, Lasallian movements which have appeared and established themselves among us are also "gifts of God". We might even say that these are in a manner of speaking a "renovative gift within the Institute because they contribute to the feeling that through them the Institute is renewing its own vitality. The RULE is even tentatively beginning to refer to "THE LASALLIAN FAMILY" (Nº 64).

The RULE speaks of "Lasallian movements" as though the charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle is now reaching out beyond the Institute proper and creating many other groups and communities which have and live with a sense of "belonging", a "belonging" not so much to the Institute as to the "Lasallian heritage" which has been preserved and developed within the Institute.

Since it is an "inheritance" which maintains its richness and which grows in the mesure in which it is shared, the Institute invites those who wish "to strive for evangelical perfection according to the spirit proper to the Institute and in accord with its mission to ASSOCIATE themselves with it, be they men or women, Religious or lay.

And so, in all that concerns this ASSOCIATION which is somewhat unique to the Institute of the Christian Brothers in that it involves a committment by VOW to «ASSOCIATION for the service of the poor», we must delve into it more deeply and live it in conjunction with the various

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LASALLIAN GROUPS which have come into being. Here we are launching into uncharted waters, far beyond the traditional understandings we have had.

I CONTINUE TO READ...

I read the Rule and dream of the progressive extension of such statements as: «the spirit of God has given the Church in the person of St. John Baptist de La Salle a charim which still animates the Brothers and many other teachers» (Nº 20).

Because the LASALLIAN CHARISM is confided to the Brothers and resides in their hearts and in those of many other educators, I dream of how the following texts may read:

«This Institute... creates, renews and diversifies its works according to the needs of the kingdom of God.» (Nº 11)

«In spite of difficulties, by Faith, the Brothers realize that God does not abandon "His work" but rather "He takes pleasure in making it more fruitful day by day"» (Nº 141).

«From the very beginnings of the Institute the Brothers fulfilled their mission "together and by association", exercising their apostolate as members of a community in which they are accepted, supported and affirmed.
... By the fulfillment of their mission, whatever it may be, they contribute to the realization as a community of the unique and ecclesial mission of the Institute» (Nº 16).

All of these statements of the Rule, naturally, are FROM the Brothers and destined FOR them, because they have originated from their manner of life as Christian Brothers and from the charism of their Founder. However, from the moment we personally and institutionally accept that our holy Founder does not belong to us exclusively, then we must also accept that he is free to continue to be the GIFT OF GOD, the evangelical Way for many within and beyond the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, within and beyond all Lasallian groups. And we must always recognize that he has this freedom!

AND I CONTINUE TO DREAM...

As I read the above quoted articles of the Rule, then, I am envisioning a CONVERSION of attitudes and structures: a conversion which frees hearts from fear and self-doubt. This must be a conversion which opens our Communities of Brothers to initiate relationships with Christian teachers and which makes our "together and by association" a reality in the here and now among the diverse elements and levels of the Lasallian Educational Community. It must be "together and by association" that we develop our educational system in study sessions, evaluations, relaxation, prayer and in the celebration of our common Faith. "Together and by association" because we share the same Spirituality and Mission, we drink at the same Lasallian fountain, we are drawn by the same social and ecclesial needs and challenges in the areas of education and evangelization. Above all, we are "together and by association" in the SPIRIT. The Lasallian experience was born as an experience of the SPIRIT and we must not allow it to become primarily an experience of workers and of Labor Unions. The necessary steps must be taken so that, in accord with the educational systems of particular places, both Brothers and Lay collaborators may develop complete understanding, openness, creativity, mutual collaboration and enthusiastic confidence.

I dream of Brothers and Communities in which there is no diffidence toward lay teachers because of an awareness of the richness of our Baptismal committment and the efforts being made to "make their work a truly evangelical ministry" (Nº 17).

I dream of Brothers and Communities which generously open the rich treasures of Lasallian tradition to all those teachers, young people and families who wish to enhance their Christian way of life by means of the teaching of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

I am dreaming of Lasallian Teachers who are serene, open and dedicated to the most needy students, who are able to rise above the tensions of Unions and salary conflicts... who seek only to be real teachers dedicated to the wholesome development of their students, who dedicate themselves totally to teamwork within the Lasallian educational and pastoral system.

I am dreaming of a better definition and description of the NEW place and the NEW role of the Brothers in Lasallian Educational Centers.

I am dreaming of a betterdistribution of responsabilities in Lasallian Schools consistent with the educational outcomes envisioned and with a recognition of the quality of the commitment invested, together with a reasonable amount of scholarship grants for the needy. Because it is an "experience of the Spirit" the Lasallian experience must always rely on a certain quota of gratuity on the part of both the Brothers and the Laity, always taking into consideration their means, times and places.

I am dreaming of the growth of the SENSE OF FAMILY among all Lasallians whose common Father and Founder is St. John Baptist de La Salle. There are myriads of experiences of "together and by association", thanks to the many efforts being made to assure that LASALLIAN INSTITUTIONS be identified by their will to put all the means of salvation within the reach of youth so that they may achieve a high degree of excellent formation as persons while publicly acclaiming Jesus Christ (Nº 13).

I dream while I read, share and meditate on the RULE... and this fills my heart with hope and patience!

Brother Genaro Saenz de Ugarte
Vicar General

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THE «AUTORS»

OF THE ORIGINAL RULE

To ask ourselves who the authors were of our original Rule is not simply an academic question. It is a crucial one, because the true understanding of our identity and mission dependes on it.

I. DE LA SALLE IN ASSOCIATION WITH HIS BROTHERS

1. Biographers make **two statements** with regard to the authorship of the Rule:

a/ It was De La Salle who wrote the Rule. The biographers see three dates as being important before 1726, the year when the Rule was first printed:

- 1682: Practice of the Daily Regulation (community exercices).
- 1694: Collection of Rules (the copy we have is dated 1705).
- 1718: Chapters on modesdy and regularity are added.

In this edition, De La Salle was inspired by the Spirit according to Blain, who writes: «And if this is so... we should not think he was only half inspired. All must follow him to the letter, without exception, without modification.» This is moreover the spirit of the preface of the 1726 Rule. It is probable that Blain wrote it, but his style has improved. It is noticeable that its contents differ from what the Founder profoundly believed. Let us take only two facts: there is no mention of young people, and community is defined in terms of three vows and not consecration. De La Salle wanted men who were totally consecrated to God, living in community, with a view to pursuing their apostolate. This preface was omitted in 1901.

2. Many authors.

It is clear there were several authors, but not in the sense that different persons wrote different parts: techniques used for the Gospel cannot be applied to work out if De La Salle wrote this or that. The whole text was written by De La Salle and by all the Brothers. De La Salle obviously had a leading role in forming a community out of a group of individual and free persons for the salvation of young people. The Rule brought them together and gave them unity.

II. AUTHORS WHO LIVED IN A CHURCH IN THE MIDST OF THE WORLD.

1. A Church in the world.

a/ This was **a Church that was weighed down** by rigid structures, political and religious conflicts (eg. Fenelon and Bossuet, jansenism and quietism, etc.).

De La Salle did not change the Church, but he wanted a Church that would set out on its way, reach out to the world, to the poor. When he was a Canon he went against social convention and associated with men inferior to his footman, as Blain says (Vol. I, p. 169).

De La Salle wanted people to be prepared to move from a clerical Church into a Church that was the People of God. This dynamic thinking regarding the Church can be seen in the Rule (cf. insistence on the lay nature, brotherhood, community spirit...)

b/ It was **a Church that was carried** along on a wave of spiritual enthusiasm. There were spiritual, pastoral and missionary renewal movements. From the point of religion, the 17th century has been called the «grand siecle» of the soul (Daniel Rops).

– It was a century when the Bible came to the fore, and changes in attitude to communion occurred regarding frequency of reception, for example.

– The was a renewal in parish life

– Liturgical prayer was restored

– Men and women came together for prayer and to deepen their spiritual life, as well as for the purpose of organising the renewal of the Church.

In a word, there was much spiritual searching going on. (Moliere would have something to say about religious hypocrites in his Tartuffe). There was also a desire for prayer. «Methods of mental prayer were all the rage» wrote H. Brenond.

As far as the Brothers were concerned, De La Salle gave priority to mental prayer, the spirit of faith, the presence of God, and interior recollection as an interior support of the Institute. All these enabled the Brothers to live with throes of a mass mystical movement.

c/ It was **a Church in the midst of the world tortured** by the cries of young people deprived of education and of the Gospel. Article 1 of the Rule speaks of this:

«As he became aware, by God's grace, of the human and spiritual distress of "the children of the artisans and the poor", John Baptist de La Salle devoted himself to forming schoolmasters totally dedicated to teaching and to Christian education.»

The basis and justification of our identity and mission are to be found in these cries of distress from society. And so, consecration, Christian education especially through the school, free education, special

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concern for poor children, faith and zeal manifested in a lay community are the basic values on which the Lasallian community is founded. The Founder wanted schools «to be well run» and the Good News to be preached to the poor.

d/ It was **a Church in the midst of the world marked** by the foundation of traditional and new types of communities. By way of illustration, there were among others:

– The Salon of Mme Acarie (Barbe Aurilot, cousin of Berulle) in Paris. Its members discussed the reform of the monasteries and the foundation of new congregations.

– The Tuesday Conferences. This was a gatherin of ecclesiastics which took place every Tuesday at St. Lazare and was led by St. Vincent de Paul. Its purpose was «to speak about virtue and the duties of state». Or their number, about 20 became bishops, including Godeau, Pavillon and J. B. Bossuet.

– The Company of the Blessed Sacrament. It was founded in Paris in 1627 by the duc de Ventadour. Its membership was mainly lay, but included priests also like Olier, Vincent de Paul and later, Bossuet. The Company did charitable work (hospitals, prisons, ill and afflicted people); worked for the protection of Christian morals; strove to awaken the consciences of those in power (clergy, magistrates, the Court), and to offer support to organisations not belonging to it. Gaston de Renty (1611-1649), a married person with a family, was the leading light in the Company for many years.

III. AUTHORS... INSPIRED AND SUPPORTED BY THREE INSEPARABLE FACTORS.

At this point, we should say that, basically, what is essential is not to know who wrote the Rule, for it is something the whole community contributed to. What is important is to realise that:

1/ De La Salle and Brothers did no form an association in order to write a Rule. The Rule was not the point of departure. That was God. God who had seen the human and spiritual distress of poor children.

2/ The text produced by the community was meant to help the community life of ots members who had accepted to bear witness «together and by association». By association, because all:

a. had allowed God into their lives. It was their call to help one another to search for God.

b. had been moved by the distress of children to help them to have life, and have it more abundantly. They were associated by and in a God of love for the sake of an apostolate.

c. had accepted to belong to the one and same fraternity.

3/ It is in the name of this fraternity that the community gradually set up structures (schools, communities with rules, assemblies, vows) for the Christian education of poor children.

These factors are central to the observance of the Rule. Brothers who became holy did so not by the literal observance of the Rule, but because they understood these factors enshrined by the Rule and bassed their lives on them. In this sense, the Rule is spiritual. The spiritual dimension includes life in its entirety and consists in fidelity to the Spirit. It is not like an extra floor you add to life. These factors (God, the needs of children and fraternity) are inseparable.

IV. WHAT DOES ALL THIS IMPLY FOR US TODAY?

1. The 1987 General Chapter and Rule were of historic importance for the Institute. They call upon us to look into the future, if only just a little. As Gaston Berger said, we Brothers should not «crawl backwards into the future», with our eyes steadily fixed on the past. In his January 1988 Letter, Brother Superior calls upon us to «let go of whatever is holding us back and move off in the direction indicated to us by our new Rule» (p. 38). This is not meant to be a Lasallian version of a general clear-out; but past models that paralyse, that inhibit or prevent the growth of the Institute must be abandoned.

2. We have to admit this is a demanding task. Our Rule is demanding.

Less prescriptive and normative, the Rule appeals more to the creativity of Brothers. It is a Rule that inspires, that is spiritual and creative. To abandon accepted models and to strike out in a new direction is never easy. For most of us, change is difficult; for some, extremely dificult.

3. It has to be said finally that we need God's grace and mutual support. Faithful to Jesus Christ, to his Gospel and to his Spirit (Rule 142); convinced that God does not abandon his work but is pleased to make it bring forth more fruit each day, (Rule 141); we must have faith in the future because we know in whom we have placed our trust. Let us always work «together and by association» for the vitality of the Lasallian Institute, convinced as was our Founder that «there is a great need for our Institute».

Brother Crispin Kukwikila

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VOCATION CRISIS:

A COMMUNITY'S

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY (1/2)

Since the mid-sixties there has been a steady decline in the number of women and men who are choosing the religious style of living. The average age of community members continues to rise. Retirement houses are bursting at the seams while novitiates stand idle and empty or have been converted for other uses. Religious communities have been forced to examine personnel commitments which the group has made, to redefine the kind of presence which they will have in institutions, to withdraw from certain ministries and to consolidate others.

There are some analysts, sociologists and other experts, who paint a grim picture of the future for religious communities. From the perspective of those historians who have put this phenomenon in the context of the total history of religious life we see that there have been other times when a «vocation crisis» has led to renewal and revitalization. Along with these historians there are visionaries who describe the future of religious life and outline its possibilities.

Simultaneous with the described «vocation crisis», religious communities are experiencing radical changes. There are changes in self-understanding, styles of prayer, community, theology of vows, manner of dress, etc. There are new forms of ministry which do not necessitate a group commitment. In short, the uniformity which at one time characterized the religious life style has changed to plurality and diversity of life styles. The basic structure remains: some form of community, prayer, ministry, vowed life and celibacy.

All of the above is important to the continuing dialogue and subsequent plans of action for communities as they prepare for the future. There is, though, at least one more perspective on the «vocation crisis» which is as significant and calls for the same consideration.

IS THERE A DEATH WISH?

For many religious communities, the past twenty year experience has been exciting, new, meaningful and hope-filled while at the same time tumultuous, confusing, perplexing and uncertain. The community's pastoral ministry of vocations today evokes confusion and uncertainty about its present identity and its future. Because religious communities are unclear about their corporate image, they are uncertain about what to present to potential members and those who influence their choices. A religious community needs to address this confusion and uncertainty before vocation ministry within the community can be effective.

The experiences of the diminishment, aging, consolidation and radical change in life style are impacting on the group's view of the future. It is essential for the religious community to assess its present attitude about the future. It is especially important for the community to assess the impact that declining numbers has had on the group's attitude toward and belief in a future FOR THEMSELVES. The group's perspective is one of the most important factors in shaping the process of revitalization and renewal.

Some religious communities believe that the «vocation crisis» cannot be addressed. They hold that there are too many sociological and cultural factors which are determining the group's future. They believe that there are many things which militate against a person chosing to be a member of their group. These factors seem to be beyond their control. They feel that they are powerless victims and refuse any responsibility for what is happening. They will not acknowledge that they are potential agents for change. Theses communities will not believe that they can influence the course which the future will take. The «vocation crisis» is happening to them. More accurately, they are allowing the experience of diminishment to have more power than it should. If the group has this pervasive attitude, the «vocation crisis» will become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Societal and cultural influences do have a powerful impact on the vocation picture in the Church. These influences, though, are given more power than they deserve and can paralyze a group. More importantly, they can shape the groups's view of the future by robbing a religious community of its own power to effect change.

If a religious community believes that they are powerless to affect what, at best, is an uncertain future, then this will be automatically conveyed to others. Those to whom they minister will sense their fear and anxiety. Those who might consider membership would be shunned by this unspoken and subtle death wish. No person would choose to work for a corporation who believed it would be bankrupt in a matter of time. No person would board a ship which was to be ser adrift

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to be tossed about by the elements. Nor would any person take a membeship in a health club where all the members allow their physical condition to deteriorate because they have no desire to improve.

MOTIVATION FOR VOCATION MINISTRY

A related attitude among some religious which also shuns potential members is the yearning for the time in their history before the «vocation crisis» and the changes in religious life. Large numbers entering the novitiate gave veteran members a sign that their chioice was still credible. These large numbers of new members enabled them to expand and make even more institutional commitments. There is a desire to again be a part of a great influential network of institutions, and to enjoy the impact and power which came with that responsibility. There is a desire for the status which came with being a religious who contributed to this network. There is a nostalgia which, by its very nature, does not allow religious to let go of the past. Some community members will perpetuate the «vocation crisis» precisely because their grief over the loss of what was only serves to point to stagnation and death.

Consequently, for some, the desire for new membership stems primarily from these yearnings. Hidden in these yearnings is a denial of death which keeps some from seeing the possibilities for new life. The subconscious desire to appease their grief becomes the motivation for vocation ministry. For these, many new members would be sign of regained status, power and prestige. This increase is seen as a source of self-esteem and pride. This motivation for seeking new membership keeps religious communities from addressing the hard questions of renewal and revitalization. Vocation ministry for these religious communities becomes recruitment. The ultimate goal of recruitment is to serve the community and not the individual who is discerning a vocation. Needless to say, a potential member will be hard pressed to consider joining a group with these sentiments.

Discussion of vocations and the «vocation crisis» in these settings are invariably filled with frustration and lead to feelings to helplessnes, inadequacy, doubt and further anxiety. Still, the concerns of vocation ministry and its relationship to renewal must continually be brought to the consciousness of the group. It is always difficult to look at the past and be reminded of the pain which was associated with making renewal possible. To remember the ambiguity, the indecision and the confusion seems only to reopen wounds which one wants so much to remain healed even if only superficially. Questions about the group's commitment to the future remain unasked. I believe the vocation ministers of the religios community are among those who are charged with the challenge of raising these questions and concerns.

There is another motivation for the desire to have new members. It stems from the yearning for life, for what could be, for possibilities, for urgent needs to be met and for dynamic growth. It is the motivation of religious women and men who have the experience of being called to religious life by God. When this call is heard continually throughout life it becomes a powerful source which promotes self-confidence and hope for the future. The vocation is continually chosen as a response to a God who wants the individual to be happy. The religious person hears this invitation in the everyday events of life: through people who are entrusted to their care. The trusting response to the Caller is made again and again throughout their life.

These religious women and men are in touch with an evolving dream for themselves, their community and the world. They have found a community within which their dream comes alive. They have discovered a Church wherein many communities have joined to announce the Reign of God. They look for others who will share this dream and help make it a reality. A religious person with these felt convictions, dreams and hopes, sees her/himself as a positive addition, a significant part, a unique person in the Church. They know that their community continues to be an instrument of God's love in the world. They sense that they and their community are needed today and have a role in the future. They are convinced that they are a gift for others. Their life has meaning and significance because they are, along with other members of the Church, called to make the dream of the Reign of God a reality. Having contact with such religious is an empowering experience for potential members because it is inviting and attractive.

This view of the self, the community and the Church becomes the underlying motivation for wanting new membership. Religious want to share this experience with others. They feel the life style is important for this world and there is a significant place for it. This person radiates her/his convictions and is attractive because of his/her stance toward life. An invitation extended to another to consider this life style is powerful because it is an invitation to be part of a life-giving, vibrant and vital group.

These are two extremes. Hopefully, as religious communities move toward the fullness of renewal, they will also move toward a more positive and healthy view of themselves. Consequently, their life style will become a more attractive option for those who have yet to make a life style choice.

Brother Joe Samson

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VOCATION CRISIS:

A COMMUNITY'S

SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY (2/2)

Moving Toward Revitalization, Renewal and New Membership

The renewal of communities and individuals happens when community members involve themselves directly in vocation ministry. There is a significant relationship between vocation ministry and the ongoing renewal of the group. It is a cyclic relationship in which life generates life. The crux of the relationship between renewal and vocation ministry is in the commitment a community makes to allow others to see it as it is today, in its humanness and as it struggles to live up to its professed ideals.

This is difficult for religious communities because religious women and men are hesitant to involve themselves in vocation ministry. There are a number of elements in the renewal process. I will highlight only a few of them by describing a religious community which is overcoming its hesitancy and is moving toward the fullness of renewal by involving themselves in vocation ministry. This religious community is described as an ideal. In reality communities are still moving toward this goal. By contrast, I also describe some of the dynamics which seem to keep communities from moving forward the fulleness of renewal.

A religious community that understands and sees clearly its purpose, role and unique charism will stand as a credible and valuable contributor in the Church. This religious community sees its ministry as significant because its members are responding to today's real and pressing needs. This community welcomes new members. These new members will undoubtedly give shape to future commitments. Potentially, they may even involve the community in new ministries. Together, new and old members will determine what the real and pressing needs are today. Individuals are commissioned in the name of the group for their specific ministry. There is never an individual commitment, but one which has the support of the whole body. This community recognizes the importance of being professional. They balance professionalism with a ministerial perspective which gives them a different motivation from others in their respective professions.

A religious community who has a strong awareness of their giftedness for the Church today also recognizes the possibilities for continuing to offer these gifts. They appreciate their history and acknowledge that the future may involve changes. They welcome those changes which are discerned as elements of renewal and revitalization. This community knows that they are presently trying to bring about renewal. They invite new members EVEN WHILE struggling to renew. They expect that the new members will contribute to the renewal.

This religious community extends hospitality at every opportunity and invites non-community members to share in their prayer, socials and meals. They encourage others to express their curiosity and welcome question about their values, goals, lifestyle and ministry. The community members pray regularly in thanksgiving for their vocation and also the vocations of others. They understand their vocation as one among many others in the Church. It is not better or holier in the eyes of God but unique and different. This community personally extends invitations to individuals to consider membership in their group. They extend this invitation because they see themselves a instruments of God's call to others. They invite others because they experience their own vocation as a gift and want others to share in their joy. The community's vocation ministry is seen as part of the ministry of the entire Christian community and, as such, is carried out in the spirit of concern for the individual, the Church and the community simultaneously.

Contrasting this ideal is a description of religious communities who are having difficulty moving toward genuine renewal. For these groups there seems to be a built-in resistance to any suggestion that more openness and hospitality might be good. Often, these communities will avoid any activities which might make non-community members aware that perfect renewal has not yet taken place. Community open houses or allowing visitors in the actual living spaces (eg. dining and living rooms) are not acceptable by one or several community members. Visitors in these instances are ushered into a parlor with the instructions that they should "wait here". Sometimes a few members or even one can keep the whole community from welcoming people into their home. The unspoken fear is simply that others will see who they are and how they live. They might ask too many questions, speak too many observations or scrutinize too carefully that with which they themselves are not yet comfortable. Another fear which is important to name is the fear that individuals have that they might have to get involved. Involvement in vocation ministry automatically will mean making a personal investment. There is a real hesitation for an individual in this community to get involved in vocation ministry. They know that they will experience inconvenience. They are not willing to allow their routine and comfortable lifestyle to be disrupted.

Members of these same communities will not exted personal invitations to consider their life style. Invitating others will automatically open the religious woman or man to questions about their life style and how it is experienced. The potential member will express concerns, observations and judgments which will call for a response from the religious. They are not comfortable sharing their own reflections on the struggle to live a religious life. These community members are often unaware of the sequence of the initial formation program and are embarrassed to any that they do not know what the potential new member could do next with her/his interest.

Lastly, it is rare that this community brings to their common prayer the names of those people who might have an interest in their community. Instead, there are pleas for an increase in vocations with the hope that the Lord will deposit many interested "prospects" on the doorstep of the vocation

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office. Also, rarely heard are prayers of thanks for their own vocation or vocalized petitions for an undestanding of where they might be called today by God.

Vocation Ministry As A Source of Renewal

It has been my experience that individual community members and whole communities who involve themselves in vocation ministry are renewed and find energy in this activity. The actual involvement in vocation ministry, specifically in offering hospitality, extending personal invitations and praying, is a source of renewed hope in the future. One example which I would like to cite involves my own brothers.

Last summer our summer volunteer program situated itself in one of our existing communities. It was a program which invited young men to experience our ministry and our community life. The volunteers helped out in a remedial reading and math program for youngsters in a poor innercity shool. They lived as members of a local community. The experience of ministry to the poor was very significant as was their experience of our community life.

There was some initial hesitation on the part of my brothers about welcoming these young men into theirhouse. They expressed their concerns about having these "outsiders" as a part of the community. (Who could tell what they might do?) Still, fears and ansieties notwithstanding, they opened their doors and hearts to the fifteen volunteers. The five week program proved to be a tremendous blessing for everyone involved. It is especially good to hear my brothers who hosted the summer volunteer program speak enthusiastically about the experience of having the young men in their community. Meal times came alive with conversation about the excitement of the day's ministry and activities. Prayer and liturgy echoed with earnest pleas for assistance in discernment, petitions for those entrusted to their care and utterances of thankfulness for life and all it holds. The brothers could talk again about their accomplishments, experiences and hopes for the future. There were new ears which listened attentively respecting their wisdom, and young inquisitive minds which questioned with a genuine desire to understand. There ewere shared dialogues on life's familiar questions and concerns flavored now with the young's perspective. The brothers have expressed gratitude for,this experience. This kind of interaction with young people is lifegiving and energizing.

Another example of vocation ministry as a source of renewal comes from a religious sister who recently expressed to me her excitement for the ministry. She is a history teacher in a co-educational high school. Two years ago she began to serve as the local vocation coordinator for her community at that high school. Initially, she was reluctant to get involved. Gradually, the usual fears and anxieties gave way to more and more involvement. She talks freely of the experience she is having working directly with young people. She sees herself as one who is walking with them, as they discern God's call to them. She found that some of these young people are considering religious life as an option.

This sister is choosing to be present to young people in out-of-class discovery experiences like retreats, prayer groups and discussions. These experiences are especially geared toward helping them develop their skills for discernment. She is now an active participant in the programs of discovery which her community's vocation office sponsors. She enthusiastically invites the young people entrusted to her care to accompany her on these experiences. Her local community is becoming a place of more hospitality where the young people feel comfortable because they are welcomed sincerely. She speaks about the experience of renewal, about a new perspective on the future, about hope and about feelings of revitalization. Her attitude is infectious and is involving other colleagues, both lay and religious, women and men, in vocation ministry for the sake of the young people in their school. I believe that this is what the process of renewal could look like. I'm sure that many similar examples of vocation ministry as a source of renewal could be related. We would do well to share these with our community members and each other.

Conclusion

First, religious communities cannot look for new membership to define who they are for Church today. They must have a clear purpose and identity which give meaning to their presence today in the Church. Second, they cannot afford to wait for signs of new membership to give them hope for a future. It must be found in the experienced call from God to be instruments of grace and peace for those entrusted to their care. Third, it is clear to me that religious communities cannot wait for the fullness of renewal before they begin to invest in vocation ministry. Struggles for renewal and vocation ministry must be simultaneous precisely because there is a cyclic relationship between them.

We are called as vocation ministers to point out this cyclic relationship. We are called to suggest that involvement in vocation ministry is one avenue for the difficult journey through renewal and revitalization. Our invitations to individual community members will serve as a beginning and make it possible for entire communities to participate in vocation ministry. The first step, and probably the most difficult, is for the group to assess its present attitude about the impact which the last twenty years is having on its self-image and view of the future. Next, it is important to evaluate how these perspectives affect the group's willingness to participate in the pastoral ministry of vocations. This seems to be a frustrating part of the slow and gradual movement toward the fullness of renewal through vocation ministry. This effort on the part of vocation ministers will help other community members to discover that which empowers them for ministry today and will also serve as the basis of hope for the future.

Brother Joe Samson

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THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS A TECHNICAL-PROFESSIONAL TRAINING MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

• Origen of the "Conduct"

From his first contact in 1679 with Nyel's teachers, De La Salle noticed they had two dangerous shortcomings. There was above all an excessive freedom of movement which caused all kinds of disorders in the new society. These disorders were bound to have a negative effect on both the organisation and the running of schools. This first shortcoming could be relatively easily remedied by bringing the teachers together under one roof so as to make their supervision less difficult and to get them used to a more regular and well-ordered lifestyle (1). But there was also another shortcoming which was even more serious as far as work in school was concerned. Since Nyel's teachers had no training, each taught as best as he could with whatever talents he had and as he was inspired. This lack of uniformity of approach in these newly-established schools prevented them from achieving the results that might have been expected.. Having become aware of these deficiencies, De La Salle was eager to remedy them without delay. As he attempted to suppress disorder in school caused by a lack of uniformity of approach, De La Salle conceived the first idea which would lead to the writing of the Conduct. He tells us himself that it became necessary to write it so as to be able to ensure a uniformity of approach in all the schools and in all places where there were Brothers of the Institute (2).

• Its influence on teaching

The advantages that De La Salle foresees will be gained from a faithful observance of the practices contained in the book are clearly stated: order in school, well-ordered and uniform behaviour on the part of the teachers, and great benefits for the children. One might be tempted to consider the presumption of the author of the Conduct as somewhat simplistic and over-ambitious when he expects such results simply from the implementation of the collection of rules contained in the work. Such a statement, however, is neither gratuitous nor utopian. In fact, the preface of the book tells us that it was not written as a book of rules, but as a result of a great number of discussions between the longest serving and most capable Brothers, and after many years of practical experience. It says also that nothing was included in it that had not been agreed upon and tested; that all the advantages and disadvantages had been considered; and as far as possible, all the good and bad consequences had been foreseen (3).

Supported by this long experience which guarantees and justifies each and every practice contained in the Conduct, De La Salle exhorts the teachers to make sure they put them into practice. He tells the superiors of the Institute and school inspectors to take the trouble to learn and assimilate perfectly whatever is contained in it. He tells these latter also to make sure that teachers observe exactly all the practices prescribed, even the smallest ones, and do not infinge any. De La Salle concludes by stressing the importance of the document, and urging the Brothers who are already teaching in schools to read and reread often what is relevant to them in the Conduct, so that there is nothing in it they are ignorant of, and so as to put everything faithfully into practice (4).

• Textbook for teacher training

But, if the Conduct was the vade mecum of the practising Lasallian teacher, it had already served as a textbook on the theory and practice of pedagogy in the seminary where students spent many hours studying it. There they learnt not only the subjects they would later teach in school, but they were taught also the pedagogical methods and procedures they ought to use in order to exercise their ministry among children better (5). These methods and procedures could not be other than those recommended in the Conduct. Manuscript 43 tells us in fact that training teachers means giving them, to the greatest extent possible, the spirit of the Conduct; explaining how to put the methods contained in it into practice, and how to make the methods efficacious (6). Manuscript 43, just like the preface of the 1706 "Method", proclaims its full confidence in the efficacy of the practices recommended in it, considering them "as an infallible means of diminishing greatly the problems experienced in the course of teaching (7).

The educational instructor must show prudence, however, in the way he explains and demonstrates the importance of the Conduct to his student teachers. He must not present it to them as law: the very word would make them think it was unpleasant and difficult. He must show skill in convincing them that it is absolutely essential if uniformity of teaching approach is to be ensured throughout the Institute; for the members of the same organisation must not proceed differently in one place from those in another. There are, moreover, more important reasons for having uniformity in meth-

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ods and procedures, and the instructor must bring them to the attention of his student teachers. The fact is that, since teachers are not likely to spend their whole life in the same class in the same town, they would have to cope with indescribable difficulties on moving elsewhere if the class they took over had been taught by a teacher whose methods were diametrically opposed to those in force in the Institute. In such a situation it would take months to get the class used to the methods of the new teacher (8). The basic aim of the Conduct, therefore, is as follows: to introduce uniformity of methods and procedures into all Lasallian schools, so that the running and organisation of these schools is not left to the whims and fancies of teachers, and so that their work is made easier wherever they may be or whatever class they teach.

- **Adaptability to pedagogical progress**

And so one might be justified in thinking that Lasallian pedagogy had ended up in a cul-de-sac; that, in a sense, it had become fossilised by depriving the teacher, stuck in the rigid and inflexible straightjacket of the Conduct, of any possibility of showing personal initiative. That is a pessimistic view which seems to be approved almost in the uncompromising text that follows –a text that confirms in legal terms the approach we have been describing: the Brothers "will teach all their pupils according to the methods prescribed for them and which are universally used in the Institute. They will change nothing in them and will not introduce anything new into them" (9).

And yet, all things considered, the intention was not to fix, once and for all, laws that were immutable: it was rather to consolidate a position that had been won, and to render impossible any backtracking or return to an approach that the genius of De La Salle had made obsolete. There were still some who might miss or even advocate such an obsolete approach because, while it was less efficient, it was easier and more convenient in that it encouraged routine (10).

De La Salle does not claim in the Conduct to have discovered a universal panacea, nor does he try to stifle the personal initiative of the teacher. He leaves the door open to all future progress in methodology. What he insists on is that, whatever changes are proposed in the practices recommended in the Conduct, they must first be thoroughly tested over a long period (11). Consequently, what seem at first sight to be harsh laws are in fact efficient means of ensuring pedagogical progress. In fact, since any new ideas a teacher may have to be submitted to other experienced teachers for checking and approval in the light of school practice, totally impractical and farfetched ideas are rejected and only what is positively useful and an improvement on what already exists is accepted. What is more, the general spread of new ideas, once accepted after a critical appraisal by other teachers, ensures that the efforts of individuals do not remain isolated and ineffective, but rather contribute to the general good of the organisation.

- **Universal Lasallian diffusion**

There is one aspect of the methodology which the Lasallian approach to education offers teachers in the Conduct which deserves a special mention, and that is its universality. It is intended –at least, this is what it says– to be understood by the average teacher. Unlike some very well known modern teaching methods which are understood and practised more o less only by their creators or at the most by a restricted circle of their followers, the Conduct is intended for all teachers, and not only for those who have a special aptitude for teaching. It is this aspect in particular which made the Conduct so valuable and popular during the last quarter of the 17th century and throughout the 18th up to the time of the French Revolution. It is what even now, three hundred years later, makes it still valuable in certain ways. It cannot be, nor should it be, discarded as something old with a glorious past and put on display in a museum to be admired by visitors.

Manuscript 44 cannot speak too highly of the excellence of the Conduct when it turns to consider its aims: the organisation of large classes, some of which could number as many as 100 children, and sometimes more. In such circumstances, there was a need for a specific approach to make it possible to instruct and educate children properly in large numbers (12).

The advantage of the methods and procedures recommended in the Conduct lies basically in the fact that they made it possible to cope properly with large classes. This possibility offered undeniable advantages, if not from a strictly pedagogical point of view, at least from a social one. At a time when schools for the children of working people and the poor were so rare, no teacher, struggling to better the lot of the lower classes, could afford to hesitate for reasons which were strictly pedagogical: his slogan had to be: «As much basic instruction and education possible for the greatest number». The Lasallian approach to education understood this from the very beginning.

Brother Josafat Alcalde

(1) Blain, I, 170
(2) Conduct, Preface, p. 5
(3) Ibid
(4) Ibid
(5) cf. Bernard, p. 85; Maillefer, II, pp. 68 & 157; Blain, I, pp. 270 & 365
(6) Ms. 43, pp. 331 & 332; cf. also Ms. 41 p. 1.
(7) Id. p. 343
(8) Id. p. 339
(9) Rule, ch. VII
(10) In this connection, see the famous controversy between De La Salle and Mgr. Godet Desmarets, Bishop of Chartres, about the innovation consisting in teaching reading through the mother tongue instead of Latin, which was the usual practice at the time. Blain, I, pp. 375 & 376.
(11) Cf. Ms. 44, p. 51 and Conduct, p. 221.
(12) Ms, 44, p. 60

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PRAYER OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR (4)

(1: 16-9-C-63; 2: 17-13-C-73; 3: 18-15-C-79)

* * *

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

Lord,
You gave your Church
apostles, prophets and Doctors;
and you have chosen us
to be ministers of the Gospel.

Holy Spirit,
enlighten each of us
that we may be worthy instruments
of your grace.

You entrust to us, Lord,
the teaching of your Gospel to children;
give us also the generosity and eagerness
to dedicate ourselves to their salvation.

We are your ministers
when we work with charity and enthusiasm
at the task of instruction and education.

Thank You, Lord,
for entrusting children and youth to our care;
and give us the courage to face, for Your sake,
all the difficulties which may arise..

You, Lord,
send us to work in Your vineyard,
we are here with willing hearts.

We are Ambassadors of Christ and His Church,
in His name we bear Good News.
You, Lord,
through Your Holy Spirit
dictate the words we write
in the hearts of children and youth.

Jesus, as you were dying on the cross for us all,
so that we might live in You,
You willed that we be Your ambassadors,
teaching what it means to love God
and to seek only His glory.

Lord, Jesus,
You are the cornerstone
on which Your Church is built.
We are that Church
whose mission is to sanctify itself
and we humbly ask for an ardent zeal
for Your glory, that so it may be.

Thank You, Lord,
for this gift of ministry through education;
help us to love children and youth,
and to bring them the grace to follow You.

Lord,
You so loved the world
that You sent Your Son to save us.
That same mission is the one you give to us:
to walk with our students on the Way to You.
Fill us with love and generosity, Lord,
as we go along together.

Jesus, Good Shepherd,
always careful of those who are Yours,
we, too, are pastors of your children and youth:
help us enjoy the good pastures
of Your Gospel.

May we spend our lives
bringing the life of God to our students.
We want only to educate in Christ,
so that the life of Christ
may radiate in children and youth.

* * *

MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT

Lord, You sent us Your Son
to redeem us from sin
that we might live the life of grace.

Catholic schools
and we Catholic teachers
try to guide and encourage
our students
to do good and avoid evil.
«Zeal for your glory, Lord,
consumes me because the sons of Israel
have broken their Covenant with You».

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We seek, Lord,
only the best for children and youth:
that their baptismal Covenant with you
be not violated
by lying, stealing, impurity,
hate, disobedience...
We want them to embrace willingly
their dignity of sons of God
by charity, prayer, joy...

Your Gospel, Lord,
identifies the path along which
we must lead our students:
- To love God above all.
- To love our neighbor as ourselves.
- To do good, even to our enemies.
- To live in sincerity and truth.
- To strive for the values of the Kingdom.
- To pray always, with piety and faith.
- To love God more than the riches of this world.

.....

Teach us, Lord,
to live according to Your word
to pass on Your maxims and purpose of life
with enthusiasm and consistency
to children and youth.
because You, Lord, alone
move hearts enlightened by truth.

We wish to follow your example,
because we know
that witnesses are more convincing
than teachers.
The ideal is to be both witness and teacher:
make us like unto Yourself!

Young people identify with and imitate
their educators, their teachers.
Lord, make us
into good Christian teachers,
witnesses to the God You are
before the students we teach,
so that they may come to know You
and love You,
Our Lord and our God.

* * *

TO GUIDE AND ENCOURAGE

Lord Jesus,
zeal for the glory of the Father
made you cast from the Temple
the merchants and money changers;
Teach us to correct our students
with firmness and love
when they stray.

Hypocrisy and pride in the Pharisees
brought You to confront them
personally and publicly
so that they might be converted.

Lord,
children are weak
and inclined to act without thinking.
Inspire us with the right approach
to help them think
and consider the consequences
of when to act and how to act.
We need love when we encourage them
and more love when we correct them.

Our inclination
is to give in to our passions
and this is more true of youth.
We must support them
by word and example
by motivating and correcting.
Good and bad habits
acquired during these years
can best be changed during these years;
in adults they become habits.

We want to be Christian teachers;
we want to teach in Catholic schools;
we want students to have
the freedom of the sons of God
which You won for them
Lord Jesus, by Your death.
You have chosen us for this apostolate,
a ministry of education.
Grant us the gentleness, patience and prudence
we will need
when we must reprimand or punish.

We hold the place of parents
as we teach and educate for their souls.
Lord, we commit ourselves
to show them the right path
and to bring them back should they stray.

You have made us, Lord,
the guides and keepers of children.
We offer our lives
in the ministry of education.
Confirm, O Lord, the work of Your hands.

Brother Celestino Hernando

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«THE SCHOOL IS DOING WELL...»

The Founder uses this expression only in his correspondence. Other variations include:

1. «...In Avignon. The schools there are doing well.» (L. 16,3 p. 68. Letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin, Feb. 11, 1705).

2. «I am pleased that your school is doing well...» (L. 44.20. Letter to Brother Robert, April 26. 1709).

3. «Nothing should be left undone to ensure that the schools do well, especially your own.» (L. 8.18. Letter to Brother Hubert. June 1, 1706).

4. Take care that the classes run well.» (L. 52.8. Letter to Brother Joseph, Dec. 1706).

These words suggest to us what must have been a continual concern of St. John Baptist de La Salle. However, of themselves they still leave us in the dark because of the lack of any context which might throw light on what standards he had in mind when he used them. It helps little to know that the Founder wants the schools to "do well" if we do not understand exactly what he means by this formula. Our natural inclination would be to interpret it in the light of what we mean by it today in our own circumstances.

We do have some passages which are more explicit.

5. «Take care that your school runs well and that your community is faithful to the Rule». (L. 42.12. p. 144. Letter to Brother Robert, Feb. 26, 1709).

6. «You must carry out not only your class duties, but also the other exercises, for classwork without the spiritual exercises will not do.» (L. 62.6, p. 177. Letter to Brother Mathias, April 13, 1708).

The first of the above quotations (5) might leave us with the impression that there is only a coincidental relationship between a school which is going well and fidelity to the exercises among the Brothers. Yet, that harmony accords perfectly with the ideal defined in the Rule.

The second (6) leaves no doubt about the interpretation. The words used are categorical. They establish between the two terms employed a strict relationship of causality: the school doing well depends upon the proper performance of the spiritual exercises. Certainly these are not the only factors (it would be an exaggeration to pretend that they are). However, they are a decisive element, a condition *sine qua non.*

There are other passages which support this assertion. Even though they do not use the words we are investigating, they express the idea perfectly.

7. «Since you ask it, I will see that you have plenty of students. Be keen on carrying out your school duties, but please be as keen about your spiritual exercises as you are about class.» (L. 64.4, p. 179. Letter to Brother Mathias, May 16, 1708).

8. «Your spiritual exercises and your school require all your care. If you involve yourself in anything else, you are acting in opposition to the designs of God.» (L. 12.5, p. 44. Letter to Brother Hubert, Oct. 2, 1710).

* * *

At this point we must recall a key phrase of the MEMOIRE SUR L'HABIT: «The exercises of the community and work in the schools require a well integrated man.» (1) This document, written between 1689 and 1691, is definitely anterior to the letters which we quoted above. Brother Miguel Campos, in his "*Itineraire évangélique de St Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*" (Rome, 1974) makes the following commentary on this passage:

«...community requires a totally committed man –totality both in his life and in his work as a member of the community, in view of its mission. It would be well to note here that the expressions "exercises of community" and "work" are already used by De La Salle and that they are not understood as two parallel realities. Community is the word which unifies the unique way of life of the Brother – doing the will of God. The exercises of the community are designed to emphasize the evangelical dimension of the work of the community; i.e., the work of the community empowers this evangelical life within the redemptive mission of the Son of Man» (CL 45, p. 194).

We must not lose sight of the fact that the main purpose of St. John Baptist de La Salle (in both senses of the word as given by Littré: goal and its logic) is apostolic rather than pedagogical. If the Founder has restructured schools, it was not that they "do well", but according to the Rule in Art. 3: «to make them available to the poor as signs of the Kingdom and a means of salvation». This is best expressed by Brother Michel

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Sauvage in "*Annoncer l'Évangile aux pauvres*" (Paris, 1977) in a section which he, himself, entitles "that the schools do well...":

«In De La Salle, evangelical inspiration moves his practical efforts to adapt the school to its concrte, earthly conditions. In an effort to make the means of sdalvation available to poor children on their level, he does not hesitate to question traditional pedagogical procedures when he finds them inadequate. He is concerned about the effectiveness of teaching even with regard to the minutest details. Today, these seem to be very nit-picking, but we can understand their existence against the broader pricture of the lack of preparation of teachers during that period. The history of education recognizes that because of De La Salle and his Institute significant progress has been made in institutional learning. By seeking the Kingdom of God those who worked under evangelical inspiration also contributed to the advancement of the human education of poor children within their earthly condition... In other words, spiritual motivation stimulated educational creativity. The attitudes which the Founder inculcated in his disciples with regard to an evangelical love for children and their real participation in the "work of God" are actually the basis for an effective transformation of our human condition... The Meditations of the Founder remind us that professional competence also results from the intensity of the spiritual life of the Brother.» (pp. 271c, 272a, 274a, 280a).

* * *

I have limited myself to these two passages because they bring us to the point we want to make. They help us to see that we lose the meaning intended by De La Salle when we limit it to a strictly pedagogical sense, even when it seems to be within a purely pedagogical context. I have previously discussed this matter in Lasalliana 15-11-C-58.

While recognizing the pedagogical competence of the author, I must confess that I do not recognize the thought of the Founder in the interpretation as it is presented. In effect, it is saying:

«The school is doing well". This means right now.
- That the users are partners.
- That each is responsible for the whole.
- That the ability of each is necessary for the common work.»

This constitutes a real shift in the meaning. The author, (even if what he says is perfectly acceptable) actually substitutes his own ideas for those of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

By his own words, which may sound like a slogan, the Founder expresses the same fundamental requirement for his school; i.e., that teachers, be they Brothers or lay people, must be penetrated with a Christian spirit, consider themselves as "ministers of God and dispensers of His mysteries" (1 Cor 4:1 quoted in MTR 1, 1), thus "cooperate with Him and enter into His plan to bring about the salvation of children" (M. 56, 1 in CL 12, p. 157).

However, the word "salvation", which is found in the Conduct of Schools (Cf. CL 24, pages 151 & 186), is not found in the article quoted above. When it is read and re-read, one is struck by its secular tone. It is not enough to insert the word Christian from time to time at the end of a sentence in order to transform a pedagogical text into a pastoral presentation.

We find here the phenomenon of the secularization of the writings of the Founder as has been pointed out by Brother Jean Pungier in "Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, le Message de son Catéchisme" (Rome, 1984): «...What these texts contain that is universal in time and space have become a mere laicized commentary. Since the 18th century we see in the Schools of the Brother... a pedagogical instrument... become so modern that in a certain sense it has lost its religious purpose... and often, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie of the Enlightenment, it has become the model for training in the skills.» (p. 32-33).

If Lasallian schools ought to be "excellent schools" aimed at "succes", it must not be for excellence in itself nor in success for itself. These two qualities are part of a project for the total liberation of the human being as a necessary condition for attaining Salvation.

The school of St. John Baptist de La Salle strives "to bear fruit" in both meanings of the expression – personal sanctification (of the teacher) and evangelization (of the student). «I have chosen you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain» (John 15:16).

To profane a word of St. John Baptist de La Salle is, in fact to desacralize it.

Brother Jacques Goussin

(1) I have often found this expression abbreviated into: «The school needs an integral man». This vitiates the thought of the Founder and almost always eliminates its religious and communitarian content.

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STATUS OF A NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN JAPAN (1/2)

In order to understand the present situation of a La Salle school in today's Japan it behoves to say first a few words about the education system.

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JAPANESE EDUCATION

The first Imperial Edict dated in 701 A.D. can be considered the start of the real system of formal education. That Edict provided for an organization of lay schools modeled on those of China for the training of civil officials. A parallel educational ladder for the education of priests in Buddhist temples and monasteries was also envisaged. Outside of those government and clerical schools during the eight hand the ninth centuries, private schools were established in Kyoto for the education of the court families.

During the long feudal period formal education came to play a very minor role. Educational institutions virtually disappeared. As in Europe of the Middle Ages, scholarship was kept alive in temples and monasteries.

Under the Tokugawa regime, (Shogun) formal education prospered once again. The feudal lords (daimyo) were encouraged to set up schools in their own fiefs. They were for persons of rank. Some private schools were also set up to educate children of lower status. Temple schools for both boys and girls were encouraged, and by the close of the Tokugawa period, 15.862 of these institutions were reported in operation. Intercourse with Europeans gave the Japanese a knowledge of Western culture. The Jesuits established seminarios and collegios in various parts of Japan to facilitate the propagation of Christian teachings.

The change from the Shogun to the Imperial rule –commonly referred to as the Meiji Restoration– took place in 1867. The aim of the new leaders of Japan was to make Japan a strong state, unified internally and opposed to the rising power of the West. They looked upon education as a powerful means to achieve their Restoration and National Unification program. They lost no time and in January, 1871, the Ministry of Education was organized and vested with authority over all educational and cultural matters. In August 1872, the system began operation. Though there were many changes in the details of the organization, it remained the basic pattern for Japanese education. The purpose of this new system of education seems to have been to train a people that would be both technically competent in the skills necessary to operate a modern state, and indoctrinated with the principles upon which the unity of that state rested. Education from 1872 to 1945 was essentially an instrument for the control of the people by the state. The Imperial Rescript remained the accepted statement of the principles underlying the educational system from which much of the militaristic and ultranationalistic emphasis in education was later developed. By means of education, militaristic leaders fostered a "national spirit" to make the new generation fanatical about the "Mission of Japan." Service to the Emperor and the State was made the principle of life. This ideology was mirrored especially in courses in history, geography and morals.

During the pontificate of Leo XIII, the Brothers were asked to go to Japan but it was not until 1932 that it could be materialized with the arrival of four Canadian Brothers. In September 1930 Brother Ephrem had been sent by Brother Assistant Mandellus to make a kind of survey. In his report we read: The Japanese Government having rather strict educational requisites the establishment of the Institute in Japan will be an expensive adventure. Besides, the apostolic results will take many years to be noticeable. During the few weeks he had spent in the Far East he had forseen what was needed except one important detail: The Brothers sent to Japan would have to be fully qualified with University degrees to get permission from the National Board of Education to teach even in elementary schools. The international armed conflict being near, the Brothers were advised to wait before building any school.

After 1945.

The surrender of the Japanese military government in August 1945 brought the Imperial Rescript to a sudden end and the Occupation authorities attempted a reformation of Japanese education. Their ultimate goal was the establishment of a system of education based on the principle: pursuit of truth and recognition of the dignity and worth of individual. The Japanese government was then strongly directed to eliminate all militaristic and ultranationalistic features in the new educational system and to construct a sound demo-

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cratic pattern of education. Following the promulgation of the new Constitution on November 6, 1946, the fundamental Law of Education and the School Education Law were enacted in March 1947. The new school system provided free and compulsory education for children of elementary and middle school age, and introduced coeducation. Two notable features of the postwar system were removal of restrictions upon private schools and the freedom granted to these schools to teach religion. Unfortunately, some of the unpleasant features of the old regime remain: namely the utilitarian view of education simply as a means to get ahead in life, the college entrance examinations, the textbook control by the Department of Education, etc.

Situation of Private Schools in the Past and at Present.

The feeling of the Meiji statemen was that private education, which advocated academic freedom, was an impediment to the aim of the restoration and tended to perpetuate feudalistic tendencies. For this reason there was discrimination against private schools throught the whole period from 1872 to 1945. In November, 1945, the Chief of the Bureau of School Education, in a directive to the Prefectural Governors, acknowledged the fact that private schools had "suffered too much interference and excessive oppression in the past" and instructed them to "pay attention to schools of this kind treating them justly and helping them to develop their special character."

It explains in a certain way, why the Governor of Kagoshima Prefecture did not hesitate to affix his seal of approval when in 1949 we asked permission to open a La Salle School in his Prefecture. He even sent his own son to our school and more than once he accepted to give a talk to our students. It must be pointed out that this long period of oppression has produced in the country a rather unfavorable attitude towards education where religion was taught.

We thus had to prove that religion was not an obstacle to education through the accademic results of our Catholic schools. Of course this attitude is fading away but it took many years to be acknowledged but it has not yet completely disappeared. In the minds of some people, even to this day, public education is regarded as the superior form of education. This should be understood by anyone who seeks to know the actual position of Catholic schools in Japan. *These schools are operating under a handicap which only a high reputation, based upon academic superiority and excellent moral training, will enable them to overcome. In other words, Catholic schools in Japan must be outstanding schools if they wish to succeed.*

Fortunately our La Salle Institutions rank among the best even academically above most of the public schools in Japan. «The influence of the Church in the field of education is shown in a special manner by the Catholic schools. No less than other schools does the Catholic school pursue the goal of human formation of youth.« (Gravissimum educationis, 8)

Brother Marcel Petit

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STATUS OF A NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN JAPAN (2/2)

2. APOSTOLIC INFLUENCE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

A. Great Influence of Schools in General.

Catholic schools in this country can exert a great influence upon youth, because of the favored position of schools in Japanese society. Education in Japan is exceedingly schools-centered. The greatest part of the child's education is entrusted to and expected of the school. School education is often more valued, and may exert a more lasting influence than education in the family. For most Japanese children, school becomes the center of their lives. Sports, recreation, interest in cultural activities and the like are centered in and around the schools. Such activities contribute to the great influence of the schools. This academic influence upon its students will be all the greater as the school is considered a "good" school –this is, a school which succeeds in placing a high percentage of its graduates in good universities. If a Catholic school, besides being a "good" school in this sense, also gives a sound character formation, it will exert an even greater influence than other schools, public or private.

• The Ground-breaking Apostolic Influence of Catholic Schools.

To understand and evaluate the nature of the apostolic mission of Catholic schools, the methods, limits and results, one has to take into consideration four elements: a) the present situation, b) the apostolate of the Church in Japan, c) the educational situation and d) the psychology of the Japanese people.

The educational situation at present, with large numbers of students flocking to Catholic schools, surely opens up vast possibilities, but at the same time the psychology of the Japanese people sets limitation to the kind of apostolic work which can be achieved in Catholic schools. It would therefore be a great mistake to evaluate the apostolic influence of a Catholic school in Japan merely by the number of students baptized.

All agree that Japan is a very difficult mission. Actually the progress of Christianity is slow; the Japanese are in no particular hurry to be baptized. The propagation of the faith is still in the ground breaking stage. And however important it may be to promote the direct apostolate, it may be equally if not more important to disseminate Christian ideas throughout the country sound ideas about man, the family, society, etc., which are "praeambula fidei." This is where our Lasallian schools are able to fulfill a most important mission, «since, therefore, the Catholic school can be of such aid to the fulfillment of the mission of the people of God and to the fostering of the dialogue between the Church and mankind to the benefit of both, it retains even in our present circumstances the utmost importance.» (Gravissimum educationis, 8)

It is an established fact that through the work of the Catholic schools, knowledge of Christianity, and Catholic influence has been carried far and wide into families and influential circles to which perhaps the Church would otherwise not have had access. To mention but one aspect, more than one thousand and two hundred graduates from our school in Kagoshima are now medical doctors, not to mention the University professors, lawyers etc. The Bishps of Japan have often publicly recognized this far-reaching apostolic influence of the Catholic schools, saying that missionary work in such an education-minded country as Japan would be impossible without good Catholic schools.

• Propagation of the Faith in Schools

The propagation of the faith among non-Catholic students should not be narrowly interpreted as meaning direct proselytizing. «A La Salle Brother is a Catechist by profession so catechism should be thaught to all students.« It must be realized that hardly any of the children entering Catholic schools are sent there by their parents to become Christians. The parents, Catholic or not, are interested in the academic and "moral training" given by the Catholic schools, not ordinarily in religious instruction as such. Apostolic "pressure" results in an antipathy and an impeding of the apostolic influence of the school. Naturally, all the Brothers wish to increase the number of Catholics in their schools. But at present the indirect apostolate seems to be the more important, and care must always be taken not to obstruct this apostolate by too direct or indiscreet methods. The work being done at present will bear fruit in the second or the third generation. When His time will come.

B. Apostolic Influence on Various Groups

1. Upon the students

Apostolic influence is exerted upon the students through: The ethic course. This course given in Catholic schools aims at instilling in young minds sound moral principles and at developing the power of moral judgment. It produces in many students the desire to study religion more profoundly, and thus prepares the way to baptism.

Practical training in every life. Talks are given regularly on practical matters by the Principal, teachers, invited speakers. Thus the students over a number of years develop sound moral habits and attitudes.

The religion course. This course is on a voluntary basis. By experience it seems to indicate that freedom in this matter will produce better results in the long run.

Religious activities. Optional attendance at Holy Mass, religion-inspired activities such as charity drives, Christmas Baskets etc., may help to drive home the idea of Christianity. Here again the reputation of the school will add to the Christian spirit.

2. Upon the family.

Schools can exert a very great influence upon the parents of the students. If a school has again a good reputation, the parents will follow almost blindly any directive given by the school. Talks given to the parents by the school authorities or outside speakers, are well attended and usually produce great effect. Some parents who marvel at the remarkable improvement in their children's behavior may want to know the spirit and the religious basis of such character-training.

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Conferences on educational subjects often develop into courses on religion and lead some parents to baptism. Since Catholic schools enroll many students from the better families, professional men, such as doctors, lawyers, professors, etc. who might not get acquainted with Catholicism otherwise can get such information through the school. These men in turn through their contacts often communicate their information to others, and thus knowledge of Christianity is spread.

3. Upon other educators

Principals and teachers of other public and private schools often visit Catholic schools and consult the teachers on educational matters. They might be interested in the method used to train character, often ask about the religious basis upon which this program is built. Frequently they return determined to apply some of the Catholic principles in their own schools. Public school teachers and teachers of other private schools often send their own children to our schools.

4. Upon society at large

Catholic schools often get attention in the press. Various ceremonies the cultural and athlectic activities especially Universities entrance results appear in prints and published all over the country.

Our schools being known as La Salle and Catholic the attention is then focused on the Catholic Church.

3. ADMISSION OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS INTO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Article 798 of Canon Law states the obligation of Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools. The Catholic schools themselves have therefore a correlative obligation to accept Catholic children. However, as with any obligation stemming from positive legislation, practical circumstances may render the fulfillment of this obligation difficult or almost impossible. At present, because of the educational situation in Japan, it is simply impossible to give every Catholic child an opportunity to receive education in a Catholic school.

Limits are set by the number of students that can be accepted and by the academic standard which Catholic schools must maintain in order to recruit good students and continue to exert their missionary influence. If a school, for example, were to accept every Catholic irrespective of his scholastic ability, it would lose its reputation for being just and objective. This being known, the Catholic parents would send their children to public schools instead.

We try to give every possible consideration to Catholic applicants having the greatest welfare of the Church at heart. If we were to accept all Catholic students without passing the entrance examinations, the school authorities as well as those Catholic students would be despised by non-Catholic teachers and students. The school would lose its prestige and there would be a decrease in the enrollment. Financially speaking it would become quite a burden not receiving any help from the diocese and being a private school very little from the Japanese Government.

4. LASALLIANS FACING REALITIES IN JAPAN

Frustration. A Lasallian engaging in education in Japan may experience a deep frustration upon realizing that although his Congregation has established and is administering the school, he may not in many cases be so free in this administration as in his home country. This because he has to reckon with the limits set by law, by local custom, the composition of the lay staff (most of them non-Catholic) in the school etc. One must realize on what legal basis private schools are granted approval to operate in Japan. They are granted their charter on the basis of an act of endowment, called in Japanese "kifukoi". Through the "kifukoi" the property of the newly established Catholic school is legally separated from the ownership of the founding religious corporation and is administered by a new school juridical person. The school can thus be considered as a part of the educational setup of the country. Religious teachers should be careful in thinking or speaking too much in terms of "our" school. They should rather consider themselves as Japanese educators working in the educational framework of this country. As for local customs, regulations, teachers' opinions, etc. any attempt to disregard these and operate the school alone or on the pattern of their home countries would be fatal.

Non-Catholic teachers and students do not immediately perceive the greatness of the religious as such. They often evaluate a Brother only as a person and as a teacher.

The Brothers have been asked by the Lord to work in a milieu where human relations in the beginning at least, may not be very rewarding. Students and parents do however appreciate the devotion of religious teachers and on occasion express their wholehearted gratitude. That came into focus last year when one of the Brothers was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Rosette Golden Rays by the Japanese Government with the Imperial Seal.

Expert teaching. If a Brother is an expert in his field he will be duly appreciated by the staff and the students, and it will greatly increase his influence.

Availability. A Brother should always be available for consultation, student guidance or teachers' conferences, and make every effort to attend all school activities.

Teaching of religion. The long school hours (six days a week) and the many extracurricular activities present a difficult problem. Religion courses have to be wedged into a tight schedule. Time can be found, however, if one is willing to adapt himself to conditions.

Evenness of temper. East is East and West is West. No doubt many things will annoy a Brother when he comes to Japan. As elsewhere a man who gets angry is the loser.

Unity among the Brothers. It is essential to preserve unity among the Brothers living in community and in a school. The least sign of disunity among them will be noticed by the staff and students to the great detriment of the apostolic aims of the school.

Conclusion.

In Japan the educator's motto should be to work quietly day after day, in great humility and patience, with great charity and kindness for all. Results, sometimes very rewarding, will appear in God's appointed time. «In order to respond to this divine plan and also to situations of distress similar to those that the Founder knew, the Institute desires to be present to the world today as part of the Church's work in spreading the Gospel.» (R. 11)

Brother Marcel Petit

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REFLECTION

after the Gospel

at the Closing Liturgy of the Fourth Session of the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies

(St. Mary's College, Moraga, California) July 14, 1989

«And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it is written,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him. And he began to say to them: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing"» (Luke 4:14-21).

This particular segment of the gospel of Luke is situated immediately following the baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan (Luke 3:21-22) and the great temptations of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). It is in the wake of these great experiences of affirmation, of self-clarification, and of empowerment that Jesus goes home... that Jesus goes home to Nazareth, the town "where he had been brought up."

For many of us here at the Buttimer Institute, these past three weeks together have been an extraordinary experience. For many of us, these three weeks have been a powerful experience of re-foundation... of increased self-understanding... of re-dedication to God's holy work. And so it is today, with Jesus, that we pack our bags, ship our packages, say our good-byes, and prepare to go home.

There is another way, however, to look at this issue of "going home." For some of us, hasn't the whole of these three weeks, or perhaps even for others the whole of these past three summers here at the Buttimer Institute, been a kind of going home? Hasn't this experience been a kind of going home to the real John Baptist de La Salle... a more human, a more accessible, a more inspiring and loving father... a going home to the foundational vision, the gospel call, the initial dream... home to that time when God's most Holy Spirit raised up our new family in the Church in order to bring the Good News to youth who found themselves cut-off and without access to the promises of the Covenant... a going home to the deepest and best in ourselves... a being re-called, re-claimed, and re-challenged by that same God, who De La Salle assures us, is so good that he always takes the necessary means to make himself known (MTR 1)?

In the wake of this Buttimer Institute experience, we leave here with a clearer sense of having been chosen once again... sent once again... empowered once again. We return home more aware that "the Spirit of the Lord God is truly upon us"... sending us to challenge the darkness of ignorance... sending us to set free those imprisoned by self-doubt... sending us to be the compassionate presence of God leading back

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those who are alienated and spiritually abandoned... those cut-off from the Truth in a society where, more and more, the teaching of religion is like the teaching of a second language.

How fitting it is then as we prepare to go home... how appropriate it is that we gather here at the table of the Eucharist as we prepare to leave... that we pause and remember as we gather around this table of the Lord's Supper that we do not go home alone. The Father so loved the world that he sent his only Son to bring us home (John 3:16)! The Father so loves the poor... the abandoned... those without access to the promises of salvation that he sends us to bring them home!

The great apostle Paul says that it is not I who pray... it is not we who pray... it is the Spirit of Jesus praying in us (Romans 8:15-16). It is the Spirit of Jesus in the depths of our hearts crying out, "Father, bring me home! Father, help me bring them home!" I believe that this is the scriptural foundation of what John Baptist de La Salle meant whent he told us to get in touch, in the first place, with that interior movement in the depth of our hearts... to get in touch with that inner stirring of God's Holy Spirit murmuring, "Father, bring me home" (MSF 62 & CL 15, p. 103). I believe that this is also why he told us to be equally attentive to that same Holy Spirit murmuring in the hearts of those most abandoned and spiritually cut-off... in the hearts of the young people with whom we work... and through whom that very same holy Spirit cries out in prayer to us, "bring me home" (MTR 37).

And so tonight as we prepare to leave... as we celebrate this new begining..., I urge you to keep in mind these words of our beloved Founder and to pray for the grace to be faithful on your journey. De La Salle writes: "Entreat then this God of hearts to keep your heart and the hearts of your brothers and sisters one in the heart of Jesus" (MSF 39).

Brother William Mann

The Buttimer Institute was founded in 1986 as a study project of the United States-Toronto Region. Conducted at St. Mary's College, Moraga, California, groups of 30 to 40 Lasallians educators come together for 3 consecutive summers to examine the foundations, pedagogy, catechetics, and spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle and the Christian Schools founded by De La Salle's Brothers.

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NEW LIFE FOR THE LASALLIAN FAMILY IN QUEBEC

The breath of new life given to the Lasallian Family by the last General Chapter is reflected in the greater cohesion among different former students associations, in closer relations between Brothers and former students, in a growing need among our members to deepen their grasp of Lasallian spirituality, and in work more in line with the spirit of our Holy Founder.

A common programme for Lasallian groups

In the past, each of our schools had a former students' association. In the last 25 years, changes in schools have led to fortunate amalgamations, and so now, all the former students of the city of Quebec belong to the same Lasallian organisation.

The result of so many people coming together gives much more strength to the various apostolic activities we engage in in the region. This increase in numbers encourages new ventures, and provides dynamism, efficiency and support for important schemes.

Another advantage of having one group has to do with the need of some standardisation in the training of members. Since we are asked to be more and more knowledgeable about the teachings and life of St. John Baptist de La Salle, there is a need to draw up some worthwhile programme. We are asked to organise day-long refresher courses, provide topics for study, directions, literature, all of which presupposes some forward planning.

The Lasallian Federation of Canada also makes it more easy to arrive at standardisation in the work of the assessors in the four Canadian Districts. At the three annual meetings, the exchange of information about local activities provides an incentive for all the groups.

As far as those who do not belong to the Federation are concerned, assessors are still trying to devise a common training programme. They have a scheme for next autumn.

It is clear that the publication of the Letter to the Lasallian Family offers us a good opportunity to reflect on our apostolate, and on the qualities that are needed of a group wishes to join this new movement. Such reflection will enable everyone who is already involved to become reacquainted with the whole of the spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Creation of new links between Brothers and lay people

Usually it was the Director who looked after the former students' association: the other Brothers did not feel particularly involved. Apart from special anniversaries, there were very few contacts with former students.

With the closure of our schools and their regionalisation, many associations found it difficult to survive, and others folded up. This situation enabled us to form the Quebec Lasallian Association. In the absence of specific premises, meetings began to be held in Brothers' communities. This was the first step in the establishment of closer relations between Brothers and lay people. Nowdays it would not occur to anyone to hold monthly meetings anywhere but at the Brothers' house.

These links between the two groups lead to greater mutual understanding and awareness of one another's problems. People living in the world help us at times to get our feet back on the ground, and this enables us to work better with ordinary people or the underprivileged. On our

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side, our Gospel values influence those that come into contact with us.

Let us give you an example of what we mean. Three times a year, Lasallian men and women come to visit our retired Brothers. Their comments include the following: these Brothers give us a lesson in serenity, and faith in God. They continue to be Christian teachers even in old age. We like visiting them because they give us more than we give them.

Deepening of Lasallian Spirituality

We have always had members who were very active in local good works. But, in the last few years, especially since the Congress in Mexico, they have been trying more and more to bring the Gospel dimension into their work for charity.

The truth of this is borne out by the increasing demands they are making for means to study the life of our Holy Founder. They want to delve more and more deeply into his spirit. As a result their life as Christians becomes renewed. An example of this, some asked for a day of recollection in preparation for Lent.

Every time we speak of St. John Baptist de La Salle, they listen with great attention. What attracts them most is his interest in the Scriptures, his faith and trust in God, his work to give human and spiritual help to young people, and his gift of being able to bring people together for his schools.

The stress on Christian education

When it comes to choosing activities, they always insist on allocating time for the pastoral care of either young people or adults. In this way, members follow our Holy Founder's approach who always stressed the education of the individual as a whole.

As we take part in their assemblies, we feel that they are inspired and guided by Lasallian spirituality. For them, concern for the young, the poor, and ordinary families is a priority.

The publication of the Letter to the Lasallian Family comes at a good time. All will be able to find in it new reasons to stimulate their apostolic work. The feeling of belonging to a group that includes so many people inspired by the same spirit will give renewed stimulus to each one's spiritual life. The heritage of our Father, shared with them, will produce in the Church a much needed and hoped for renewal.

Brother Jules Cantin

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«SHARED MISSION»

HOW SHALL IT BE ACHIEVED?

One of the most burning questions of our present Rule concerns the fact that at present the Institute and the Brothers share their apostolic mission with lay colleagues who share the work of our Brothers' schools.

Proof of this lies in the numerous articles and conferences produced by the Institute on this theme. They are becoming so common that little by little the topic is evolving platitudes uttered almost unconsciously.

1. Mission of the Institute and the Brother

Mission:

We realize that to fulfill a mission in the Church it is not enough just to work long and hard. Such work becomes "ministry" when it is seen as a sharing in the "mission" of the Church.

The Brothers are fulfilling the "mission" which the Church entrusted to them when the Institute was officially recognized and approved. It is the mission to provide a Christian education for children and youth and this is identical with the finality of this Institute as formulated in the Rule.

Consecration and the spirit of the Institute:

In accepting that mission, whoever wants to be a Brother leaves the ordinary life of the world, accepts to live in poverty, chastity and obedience for the love of Christ and unites himself to other Brothers in order to run schools "together and by association". «The Brothers participate in the Church's mission by consecrating their lives to God in order to bring the Gospel to the educational world» (Rule 12).

These are the commitments which change a man into a Brother. Living out this reality requires one essential factor: a soul, a spirit, which in this case is the spirit of faith and zeal. The Brother acquires and deepens it during a period of intense formation in the spiritual life.

Acquiring and maintaining this spirit is so essential that he who does not have it, or has lost it, even though he lives in community and calls himself a Brother «ought to be considered, and consider himself as a dead member». It is the adquisition of this spirit of the Institute which changes a person into a bona fide member of that society. Of course, it is self-evident that the possession of this spirit cannot be measured statistically nor can anyone infallibly know who has it and who does not.

Mission and spiritual life

De La Salle frequently correlates the spiritual life of the Brother and the success of his apostolate: i.e., his mission. «Secular affairs are a great source of distraction and they would render you incapable of applying your mind to those exercises which demand that our thoughts should be filled with God's holy spirit« (M. 114, §3). «Rest assured that you will do good in the Church only in so far as you are filled with faith and conduct yourself by the Spirit of Faith, which is the spirit of your Institute with which you should be animated» (M. 139, §2).

Ministry

As he goes about his work of teaching, a Brother is fulfilling his mission and accomplishing his "ministry" of education within the Church. «Teach them the rules of a Christian life and the means by which they may secure their eternal salvation. It is for this end that God has called you to your present vocation» (M. 87 §2). The Rule says: «The Brothers consider their professional work as a ministry» (R. 13).

Because he is entrusted with a ministry within the Church the Brother shares all the characteristics proper to "one who is sent", one who has been given a "mission" or in other words an apostle. That is why De La Salle uses terms of high esteem for the dignity of the Brother (and the teacher) such as the following: Minister of God (M 3, 2; 51, 1), collaborator with God (M. 205, 1); dispensor of the ministries of God (M. 166, 3), minister of the Spirit of God (M. 189, 1), co-worker with Jesus Christ (M. 195, 196...), ambassador, minister and vicar of Jesus Christ (M. 78, 2; 93, 3; 99, 2), guardian angel (M. 197), voice of God (M. 3; 168, 2), spiritual father (M. 110, 1; 157, 1), good shepherd (M. 33; 196), minister of the Church (M. 199, 2; 201, 2), helpers of the parish priest (M. 61, 3...), etc., etc.

* * *

Therefore the mission of the Brother has a certain hierarchical order: First, the Church recognizes that the Institute has a mission which is a part of its own mission – spreading the Gospel and working at the salvation of all mankind. Secondly, the Brother consecrates himself entirely to God as a member of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and acquires its spirit. Thirdly, as a living member of that Society he becomes part of its mission and commits himself to its realization by being an educator. Fourthly, all his work is done as a "ministry" within the Church. Fifthly, as he fulfills his mission by means of his ministry, he takes on the dignity of an apostle, a minister of God, an ambassador or Jesus Christ, etc.

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2. The laity associated in the mission

In synthesis, this is the basis on which the mission of the Institute and the Brother rests. Then, when we speak of the "shared mission" of lay collaborators, we are actually saying that they share in this total concepts. They share; that is, they have a role in it. But they are a part in the sense that they are a sector of people who fulfill an educational role within the schools.

The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools confide to the lay teachers of their schools the responsibility which it has contracted with the Church, which involves fulfilling its mission of educating by exercising its "ministry" of education.

With ideal logic, that would mean that these lay persons would also "be formed" as the Brothers are, for the fulfillment of their ministry. This would involve a preparation consisting the adquisition of the spirit which "animates" their life and mission as teacher.

In other words, if the Institute invites lay teachers to exercise its apostolic mission, it must also make it possible to acquire the spirit of the Institute by which it fulfills its mission.

The Rule (N° 17) tells us that «The Brothers gladly associate lay persons with them in their educational mission.» Then in N° 146 it repeats that «The Institute can associate with itself lay people who want to lead the life of perfection that the Gospel demands, by living according to the spirit of the Institute and by participating in its mission».

It is evident that the Rule does not make a distinction with regard to lay people as our collaborators between the mission and the spirituality of the Institute. Rather, it presupposes them. Further, it could be said that there are two pre-conditions for a lay person to be associated with our mission:

a) A desire to strive for evangelical perfection, (it being understood within the lay or secular state).
b) Acquisition of the spirit proper to the Institute.

Naturally, the first condition can be met by any Christian. However, for the second, some means must be provided: some way to become acquainted with that spirit, in what it consists, the way in which it can be acquired, etc.

3. The responsibility of the Institute and of each Brother

The lay teachers who work in the Brothers' schools have little knowledge of the spirit of the Institute and they are not going to acquire it by osmosis. In this regard, the Rule is very clear: the Institute and the Brothers «are to provide for those who so desire, the means to learn about the Founder and to live according to his spirit» (R. 17).

This article of the Rule is not simply an advisory. It does not say "they may offer", "it is proper to offer"... It says specifically: "they provide". And this is directly in reference to "association with our mission".

Therefore, although "shared mission" is an appealing expression, it cannot remain just a bit of currently popular terminology. While all the Brothers and even the entire Institute become aware of this reality as though it were a new discovery made in this third centennary of our existence as an Institute, we must accept that our lay collaborators have a right to whatever may be necessary for them to fulfill the mission which we confide to them.

It would be easy to yield quietly to the temptation of saying that this should be handled by Superiors, the Region or perhaps each District. We could be satisfied to hear that "a center of formation for lay teachers is being organized", or that certain Brothers "are arranging for it". This might put us as ease, but it is not enough.

If the Institute wishes to be faithful to its mission in the Church and if that mission is fulfilled in large part by lay teachers, then it becomes necessary that we give them all the best possible means to make their work pleasant and effective. It is always possible that some of our collaborators would want no part of it. Others might be satisfied to do their teaching or professional work with no reference to Gospel values... This is sad, but it is not a valid reason for the Brothers and the Institute to neglect «offering them the means of knowing the Founder and of living according to his spirit».

* * *

In view of all that has been said, it might be in order at this point to answer a few pertinent questions:

– What does the statement "The Institute willingly associates lay people into its mission" mean to me?

– Is my community happy to associate lay people into its work?

– What is my attitude with regard to the lay people who work with me in my school?

– Do these lay people know the Founder and the spirit of the Institute?

– What has the community done to provide the means thereto?

– What have I personally done to help lay teachers become aware of the spirit of the Institute?

– What difficulties or obstacles have arisen to prevent it?

– What is the District doing about it? Is this enough?

– What is being done by the Region? Is this enough?

– Are the Brothers in general sufficiently concerned about providing lay teachers with the means to "share" our mission?

– What are the goals of the Community? the District? the Region? the Institute?

– What are my personal goals?

Brother Jose Maria Valladolid

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VILLA LA SALLE

Retirement Living Complex

Southport. Queensland, Australia

In keeping with our Districts throughout the world, the District of Australia has been taking steps to provide for the ageing Brothers. Our Oldest Brother, Br. Anselm Hallam, will celebrate his 90th birthday next year.

Up untill a few years ago, the elderly Brothers, when they could no longer teach or perform some helpful task in the school, have always preferred to remain within an active community. This has been Br. Anselm's choice and he is a member of the Revesby community.

In the past, when the time came for more adequate care than could be given in community, the Brothers were willing to transfer to a Nursing Home staffed by Religious Sisters. This has always been a successful move for them, and they rapidly adjusted to their changed circumstances.

Over the last decade and more, those Brothers who are no longer teaching or in school related endeavours, but are still able to look after themselves and even engage in other apostolates, have had special arrangements made for them to live in a retirement community. Some 12 years ago, a house for retired Brothers was built on our "Oakhill" property at Castle Hill. This has accommodation for 15 Brothers. At the present time, additions are being completed to provide Nursing Home facilities for those who need 24-hour care and supervision.

Other accommodation for elderly but active Brothers was provided in one of three houses on a site at Southport, Queensland, belonging to our Boys Town operation at Beaudesert. Southport is on the coast, Beaudesert is some 70 km inland. This property was the original Cable Station (the "All Red" route from England, through Canada, to Fanning Island in the Pacific Ocean, on to Norfolk Island, and finally Southport.) which operated from 1901 to 1962.

The Trustees of the De La Salle Brothers acquired its 1.2 hectares in 1964 (on which the three above-mentioned houses stood). The central house had been the receiving and transmitting office and equipment; another house was the Manager's residence; and the third one was for the telegraphic staff's residential quarters (there was a staff of 22).

The property had been acquired as an annexe to Boys Town. This was a successful experiment for giving a week's experience of a new and exciting environment for each of the seven Boys Town Cottages (House Parents and twelve boys). Youth Groups from Brisbane and other towns often sought the use of "Camp La Salle" (as it was called) for special live-in session. During the long vacations experienced Brothers, assisted by Brothers Scholastics, volunteered to take children from the State schools for Religious Education and holidays.

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During the early Eighties, the Brothers gave considerable thought to the Camp La Salle site. The wear and tear of some twenty years of use necessitated considerable work if the "Camp" was to continue. Many similar youth camps were now available and Brothers were in short supply. The Brother Visitor and Council came to the decision, in 1981, to continue to use one of the houses for the elderly Brothers –the winters were very mild and the climate eminently stuitable for retirement living–. The entire property was not needed for this special purpose, and so it was a question of selling part of it, or using it for some other purpose. It was decided to develop the remainder of the site for Retirement Living units for people who would appreciate the type of advantages which could be offered –a Chapel, Daily Mass, resident Chaplain, Anointing of the Sick and Elderly each month, Reconciliation twice weelky, a community of Retired Brothers, and all the amenities of gracious, secure and peaceful living.

Br. Peter McIntosh was entrusted with the initiation and development of the scheme –which saw the removal of the three buildings and the construction of an entirely new complex of sixty-one self-contained units and fifty-one studio apartments, landsacaping, administrative and recreation areas, and many associated facilities. The staged development was completed over five years, residents moving in as soon as each stage was ready.

The Bothers' Residence, Chapel, and hostel dining room and kitchen, were the last stage to be occupied in late 1986 and a community of Brothers was established. This became four in 1988 and six in 1989. Two more Brothers will join the community in 1990, one in charge of Nursing Care and other for Pastoral duties. Meanwhile, elderly Brothers from southern colder States come to the Villa for part of the winter months.

At the time of writing, each of the Brothers is able to make a contribution to the life of the Villa –sacristan, Art tuition, Brothers' dining room care, Distrtict publications, bursar, bookkeeping. Five are over 70, and one is in his middle sisties.

The Brothers take their meals in the hostel residents' dining room on weekdays, taking their places as assigned by the kitchen staff. Their presence is very much appreciated by the residents.

In holiday periods, Brothers from other distant communities make use of the accommodation for rest and recreation after their apostolic work in the schools or elsewhere. It is an eminently suitable place for Brothers whose health, physical or mental, requires a period of quiet and rest before resuming their apostolic work.

Villa La Salle has a full-time Manageress and Assistant. Theirs is the responsibility for the day-today management of the entire complex –financial, kitchen and dining room, gardens, maintenance, etc.

Mass is offered each day by the resident Chaplain at 9.00 a.m. with an average congregation of twenty-five residents. The sacraments are available as outlined earlier.

An additional 45 self-contained units are being constructed at the present time and are scheduled for completion in December.

The Feasts of St. De La Salle and our Lasallian Saints and blesseds are celebrated as they occur through the year, so that the Residents become more aware of the Lasallian spirit and endeavours. As the complex develops the Brothers' contribution to the life and welfare of this project can be better assessed.

Brother Baptist Will

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SANGRE DE CRISTO CENTER

Santa Fe, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Nature and Purpose

Sangre de Cristo Center near Santa Fe, New Mexico, is a continuing formation program for men and women religious and priests in their middle years. The Center was founded in 1962 by the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Over the twenty years of the Center's operation, about one thousand persons have taken advantage of the Sangre program to help them understand themselves as humans, as Christians, and as religious ministers in a society and a church undergroing profound cultural change.

The term "refoundation" is used to describe the work of the Center because the program does two things: a) it invites each member to a thorough examination of the fundamental understandings, motives and movements of a lifetime of ministry, and b) it encourages the development of those modes of being and doing which will bring each member's basic faith and central values effectively into his or her future ministry. The program of the Center, therefore, provides opportunities for personal interiorization through religious experience, through theological insight, and through the experience of some degree of psychological integrity.

These three dimensions of the program focus upon and facilitate the development of what is essential to an understanding and compassionate involvement in the society and church of our times.

- A permeating faith in the God who calls, who grants us personal salvation in Jesus Christ, who communicates his Spirit to us, and to whom we respond in a life of daily personal prayer.
- An adult comprehension of contemporary theological, sociological and psychological insights into God, humanity, culture, church, scripture, social needs, morality, and so on.
- A strong sense of personal identity, including the facing and acceptance of personal strengths and limitations, personal successes and failures, along with a reasonable facility in communicating both ideas and feelings.

The Sangre program calls for personal involvement in the theoretical roots of Christianity through reading, discussion, participation in formal presentations and workshops, as well as through the experience of personal solitude and prayer and the dynamics of group interchange.

Persons Whom Sangre Can Help:

The program and style of life at Sangre is designed for a religiuos or priest of middle years (from 38 through about 58 years of age) who is in good health, is adjusted psychologically, who is desirous of some updating in various areas through reading, listening and discussion, and who is willing to contribute generously to interrelating with others in this group experience.

Persons Whom Sangre Cannot Help:

As part of our continual growth toward Christian maturity, each of us must deal with repeated experience of weakness and failure. There are, however, some difficulties which require the assistance of a skilled professional. Sangre cannot be helpful, for example, in the remediation of alcoholism or such psychological issues as dissociation, withdrawal, or severe levels of discontent, authority hostility, depression, etc. Such a person is, in fact, in need of professional psychological or psychiatric assistance.

Location

Sangre de Cristo Center is about twelve miles northwest of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains adjacent to the Santa Fe National Forest. The extensive property in a private valley contains the buildings of the Center, an assortment of mesas and arroyos, two smal spring-fed ponds and two minor waterfalls on a small stream. The site was chosen primarily because of its wild natural beauty, its bracing climate at an elevation of 7,100 feet, and its almost constant sunshine and clear air. For someone not yet familiar with the rugged beauty of the Southwestern United States, the contrast with other greener parts of the world will be startling at first.

In order to take advantage of the distinctive culture of the Santa Fe area, as well as for personal convenience, trips to the city are usually scheduled twice weekly. Optional participation in some of the cultural events of the area is possible at times.

The Program

Presentations/Discussions: One important aspect of the program is the balanced series of presentation in theology, psychology, spirituality, religious life, various ministries, social awareness, intelligence, overall comprehension of the movement of culture, and their ability to comunicate. Presentations are generally given in both a morning interval of two hours and an evening interval of an hour and a half, although not all program segments have both morning and evening presentations. There is a short break midway through each presentation, and discussion is encouraged throughout. Since Sangre presenters are resident at the Center during the time of their presentations, personal consultation and informal interchange is readily available.

Reading: In order to gain the most from the presentation of the visitng staff, as well as to benefit generally from the Sangre experience, a collateral reading program is strongly recommended for each participant. During the orientation period a recommended reading list is distributed and explained; in addition, visiting presenters also suggest particular works relevant to their coverage. A few special mornings are set aside (with no formal presentations) during which some of this reading may be done, but these will never suffice unless some of the other open times in the program are used for the reading. As in all of the program, some specific objectives and a personal plan are part to the overall initiative and self-discipline that make Sangre work.

Prayer and Liturgy: One feature common to all Sangre participants is the desire for a deepening of their regular personal prayer life. Whether this desire results from a sense of enrichment and wanting more, from a sense of dissatisfaction and wanting better, from a response to the word of Jesus in the gospel, from some particular awareness of giftedness

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or need, from the search for ultimate meaning in life –or from whatever source, the desire is there. To confirm in the participants the conviction of the indispensability of a life of prayer and to help them enrich their personal experience of such a life, several presenters treat of the nature and practice of prayer. Although no set time is scheduled for personal prayer, the large amount of open time throughout the program allows for individual differences, vocation, and response to the grace of Christ. Two special measures do, however, facilitate development in this regard:

- Quiet time of about forty-five minutes is ordinarily provided each morning, during which all other activities come to a halt.
- An eight-day directed retreat, somewhere near the midpoint of the program, deals specifically with one's personal prayer life and opens up an opportunity for growth and enrichment.

The Eucharistic Liturgy is celebrated at least six days each week at Sangre. The creativity of all of the participants in arranging readings, hymns, symbols and action gives to this celebration a special quality and also helps to affirm its unique place in the life of a Christian.

Community praise is generally offered each morning. Participants share the responsibility for planning and leading the community prayer. The creativity of all is called into play in the generation and combination of ritual, symbols and word that will give public expression to the presence and action of the Risen Christ in the hearts of all. Finally, about once every two weeks, an opportunity is provided for an hour of shared prayer for those who wish.

Community Life: Community is an analogous term. The word may be used to describe family, school, civic and religious groups, even the "one world" of humankind, yet in each case it connotes different though similar meanings. The Sangre community, both by reason of its relatively short duration and because of its intensive and compressed dynamics within a modified educational structure for the achievement of specific program goals, differs significantly from what is ordinarily meant by the term religious community. The ordinary community norms do not apply, for the most part, especially in the establishment of structures.

On the other hand, the freedom of time and the close association in a common task not only allow but actively encourage the participants to develop a degree of intimacy and sharing at a level of understanding beyond the usual experience of community living. This intimacy and sharing, along with the excellent theoretical and practical assistance of various staff members, fosters a general harmonious relationship among both participants and staff. Some even find the circumstances conducive to the development of a few warm personal friendships that may continue over many years.

There are certain important facets of Sangre life which contribute to this bonding relationship but which are not treated under other headings. Of particular importance among these:

– Social gathering from time to time celebrating the event of Christian brotherhood and sisterhood.
– Regular personal interviews with one of the program directors, both as scheduled and at the initiative of the participant.
– The unique experience of togetherness-in-solitude during the many times when one receives from or gives to others that blend of companionate presence and respect for privacy which supports the solitude sometimes needed to work through issues of personal integration.

Recreation: The opportunity for outdoor activities is a significant part of Sangre life. The area around Sangre and the climate are excellent for hiking, walking and moderate mountain climbing. Sangre also has facilities and equipment for tennis and volleyball.

Five special days are set aside for full-day community outings to some scenic spots of historical/cultural and geographic interest within moderate distance. For those interested, shorter outings to other areas of considerable scenic beauty are also offered on some Sunday afternoons; additional similar activities depend upon the initiative of individuals and the group. The daily schedule, of course, usually includes some open time for physical recreating as well.

Recreation of a more cultural nature is available during the afternoon visits to Santa Fe and its environs, through the house collections of musical and literacy works, through radio and television, through occasional special events at nearby Indian Pueblos, and through attendance at some of the cultural events sponsored by local civic and educational organizations. One free weekend is scheduled for those who wish to travel beyond the immediate area.

Work: The only paid employees at Sangre are an outstanding experienced cook and some part-time help. Each morning there is a short housework period, and dishes are done after meals. Approximately every two weeks, there is a scheduled work period of about three hours during which necessary maintenance, cleaning and some clerical work is done. The work pattern is rooted in necessity and communal responsibility in general, but it also provides a healthy variation from activities that might otherwise deal only with academic and reflective pursuits. Of course, the intrinsic human and Christian value of work itself is something to which we all witness, not just at Sangre but in the labor of our everyday lives.

Length of the Program: One hundred days is an arbitrary span of time. The experience of some twenty years of the Sangre program indicates, however, that these one hundred days seriously undertaken are sufficient for considerable progress in the following areas:

– growth in personal prayer life and the setting of some guidelines for future responsiveness to this continual call of the Spirit;
– digesting much of the rich content of the program, while determining ways to continue this lifelong learning process;
– developing and beginning work on a reading program which is capable of enriching and instructing for a lifetime;
– experiencing the dynamics of human interrelating on an intimate level, then choosing some means of bringing this same style of relating to future dealings with one's self and others;
– accepting and understanding one's need, dependence and vulnerability, while at the same time strengthening the awareness of one's giftedness and empowerment, so as to encourage overall a faith-filled approach to life which is both realistic and hopeful.

The very pace of the Sangre program is itself important to the experience. Open times (for example: Sundays, most afternoons, and some evenings) are as useful and necessary to personal growth during the program as are the formal input sessions. Here, as in all of life, each participant has to find ways of balancing initiative and involvement with discipline and restraint.

Brother Bernard LoCoco

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INTRODUCTION

LASALLIANA BEGINS A NEW YEAR.

LASALLIANA begins a third year in the second period of its existence.

In the first period, 13 issues were published, at the rate of 3 per year, and these were obtained by individual subscriptions.

Publication ceased on account of certain difficulties that had arisen. The General Council, however, received many letters from all over the Institute deploring its disappearance. Those who made use of Lasalliana knew how useful it was.

The General Council saw from the letters it had received how much the publication was missed and requested publication to be resumed. And so it was that issue N°. 14 appeared in January 1989 as an Institute publication. Since then two years have come and gone and the third is beginning.

LASALLIAN IS MEANT FOR:

- Brothers and Brothers' communities
- Staff of Lasallian schools
- Lay staff who work with us in our educational apostolate
- Members of the Lasallian Family.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF LASALLIANA?

- To provide **information** and **thought-provoking** material about
  - The Holy Founder: his life, work and spirituality
  - The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools
  - The vocation and consecrated life of the Brother
  - The educational apostolate, the shared apostolate, the educational service of the poor, the Lasallian Family.
  - Pedagogical topics (education, methodology) with special reference to our own schools.
- To **describe things** that have been done:
  - Of a religious, educational, pastoral nature, etc., in the Lasallian world.
  - In the way of missionary activity, Lasallian Voluntary Service, schemes to improve living conditions and to promote religion, etc.

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Brother José María Valladolid

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THE TERCENTENARY OF THE HEROIC VOW OF 21 NOVEMBER, 1691 (1/2)

A man in a state of «great perplexity»

During the summer of 1691, Blain tells us (1), Monsieur de La Salle found himself in a state of "great perplexity". On the one hand, he had every reason to be proud of the work that had been accomplished in twelve years –ten Christian and free schools under the direction of his Brothers; on the other hand, he saw that, for some time now, difficulties and obstacles of all kinds were piling up.

When, in February 1688, he had come to Paris with two Brothers in response to the request of M. de La Barmondière, parish priest of Saint Sulpice, to take up residence there in the Rue Princesse and assume responsibility for the parish school, he had left behind in Reims a flourishing community, a postulancy and a training college for masters from rural districts. But in the absence of the Founder the situation had deteriorated at Reims: the community had lost half of its members (8 Brothers out of 16), the college had to close and the postulancy was almost empty (the Founder had transferred this to Paris, but to no avail –the last young subjects had left and had not been replaced).

In the capital itself the situation was far from reassuring. True, the success of the Rue Princesse school had led the new parish priest of Saint-Sulpice (M. Baudrand) to entrust a second school to the Brothers, this one in the Rue du Bac. But this had provoked the wrath of the writing masters who took M. de La Salle to court, and even though they lost their case, they did not lay down their arms: further attacks were only too clearly to be expected from them. The parish priest himself had wanted to modify the habit worn by the Brothers, a presumption on his part that threatened the interior liberty of the community. The Superior had replied with his "*Memoire on the Habit*" which was, more than anything else, a defence of the specific nature and autonomy of the Institute.

Added to these worries from outside, the Founder had serious reason to be concerned about his health. A first sign of this occurred in December 1690 on the occasion of a journey to Reims. A relapse followed in 1691, and this time his life was endangered; it needed the energetic and painful intervention of Dr. Helvetius to fend off the threat. Meanwhile another terrible trial had befallen him: Brother Henri L'Heureux, whom he had brought to Paris to prepare him to take over as Superior, had died after only a short illness. Several other Brothers had also fallen ill, while two of the four members of the Paris community quit in a fit of discouragement.

In a word, the "perplexity" spoken of by Blain well expressed a personal crisis for La Salle, a crisis of doubt and disarray: *«after so many sacrifices, so much labour and trouble, after so many crosses and persecutions, he was back where he had been ten years earlier, with only a handful of Brothers. His undertaking had not made much progress and he had reason to fear that it would eventually die out.»* (2)

Growth from within.

If John Baptist de La Salle did experience discouragement, it was of short duration. He recovered his confidence in prayer and reflection and decided to bolster his Institute from within. There could be no move forward as yet, no new foundations, for there was need to strengthen wills, and strengthen bodies too, and so lay firm foundations for the future. This would be done in four stages:
– a new house would be rented, outside of Paris;
– all the Brothers would be given the opportunity to make a spiritual retreat;
– two of the Brothers would be bound to himself in a special and permanent form of association – "the heroic vow";
– a novitiate would be opened to guarantee the future of the work.

Vaugirard

It was in August 1691 that La Salle found the new residence he was looking for; he rented a house at Vaugirard, a property with spacious garden. At that time Vaugirard was only a simple a village situated on the route to Issy, south-west of Paris and about 2 km. from the gates of the capital. The village was a quiet, wooded spot, a pleasant meeting-place for the people of Paris who gathered there in the numerous inns. Today Vaugirard has become part of the capital itself and forms part of the 15th arrondissement.

The property rented by the Founder was at the entrance to the village, coming from Paris. It was about 3 km. from the Rue Princesse and 1 from the parish church, Saint Lambert's. (The present St. Lambert's is a more recent foundation and is a little nearer to the property concerned which, incidentally no longer exists, although historians have situated it in the rectangle formed by the Rues Blumet, Copreau and Vaugirard.

The house stood alone and was in poor condition, but the air was good. Blain describes it in terms of its most wretched aspects and allowance must perhaps be made for exaggeration on his part: broken windows, shutters coming apart, windows letting in rain and snow, furniture almost non-existent, absence of any heating...

At the beginning there was no chapel and for Mass, the Brothers and novices went to a private chapel nearby. In 1697, when this chapel was closed by order of the Archbishop (who was against the current tendency of private chapels to proliferate) the prelate granted the Founder authorisation to have one in the Brothers' residence.

Before coming to the subject of the "heroic vow" it may be of interest to note that, fifty years previously, in December

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1641, three disciples of Père Condren, namely Jean-Jacques Olier, François de Caulet and Jean du Ferrier, had likewise betaken themselves to Vaugirard to pray and meditate there before laying the foundations of the future Society of Saint Sulpice. Was La Salle thinking about this episode when he chose Vaugirard; or was he simply influenced by the solitude and salubrity of the place, as well as its proximity to Paris, not to mention the moderate figure requested for the rent?

The vow of 21st November 1691

Blain is the only one of the first biographers of the Founder to speak about the vow of 21st November 1691. The probable explanation for this is that only the three persons involved were aware of what happened and it was one of them, Gabriel Drolin no doubt, who gave the information to Blain (3)

In his account the biographer places the heroic vow prior to the acquisition of the Vaugirard house, but in so doing he is in contradiction to other facts related by him. Thus, he provides a detailed account of the first retreat of the Brothers at Vaugirard, held in September 1691 (the period of the school vacation). Then he speaks of the "novitiate" (it was a prolonged retreat) as having begun on 8th October of the same year –a session attended by a certain number of Brothers whose places were presumably taken in the schools by teachers trained in the establishment at Reims. All of which shows very well that the house had been rented well before 21st November 1691, the date at which Blain places the "heroic vow". It seems logical therefore to situate the vow at Vaugirard, as all subsequent biographers have done.

Why 21st November?

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin in the Temple is celebrated on 21st November and this was the date chosen for the renewal of vows by the Sulpicians, the Sisters of Father Barré, the Brothers of the Christian Union, the Congregation of Saint Louis, the French Carmelites and others. It is known also that this feast was celebrated with solemnity in the Sulpician seminaries and this had left a deep impression on the mind of John Baptist de La Salle when he was a seminarian there. No doubt these reasons had something to do with the choice of the day for the major engagement we are speaking about. Perhaps also there were particular circumstances that favoured this date. Thus, the 21st November fell on a Wednesday in 1691, and according to the 1705 text of the Rule, which was probably already in use, when this occurred, holiday was given on the Wednesday instead of the normal Thursday. We know also that on the previous day, the 20th, La Salle had made a visit to the notaries in Paris concerning the bequest of his grandmother, Perrette Lespagnol, recently deceased (4). This would have provided an opportunity for him to confer with the two Brothers concerned, whom ovbiously he would have previously contacted about the matter. Their visit to Vaugirard would pass unnoticed since all the Paris Brothers used to go there on free days. No doubt the ceremony took place in the chapel neighbouring the Brothers' house and so the latter, apart, of course, from the two concerned, knew nothing of it.

The two disciples concerned

The Founder, then, chose two disciples to undertake this commitment with him: Brother Nicholas Vuyart and Brother Gabriel Drolin.

The place and date of Nicolas Vuyart's (or Wiart's) birth are not known, but he must have entered the Institute at Reims in 1681 since we find him in charge of the school at Rethel from 1682. Some biographers think that he was principal of the teacher-training establishment at Reims in 1688, when the Founder left for Paris. However that may be, he was of the Rue du Bac school from its opening in 1690, and it is reasonable to suppose that he became the Director of the Rue Princesse community after the death of Henri L'Heureux in 1691. Later on, in 1699, when La Salle, helped by the parish priest of Saint-Hippolyte in Paris, founded a second college for teachers, it was to Vuyart that he entrusted the direction of the undertaking, showing thereby his recognition of the Brother's great pedagogical talents. As we know, the enterprise turned out badly both for the college and for Nicolas himself.

Gabriel Drolin was born at Reims (in the parish of Saint James) on 22nd July, 1664. He entered the Institute in 1684, having previously done classical studies and gone as far as receiving the tonsure. In 1685 he was sent to Laon where, the following year, he fell ill. In 1691 he must have been a member of the Rue Princesse community and was perhaps in charge of the school situated in the same place. We know that he had become the first director of the school at Calais in 1700, before being entrusted, two years later, with the arduous mission of establishing the young Institute in Rome.

We may wonder why La Salle chose these two Brothers to pronounce with him the "heroic vow" of 21st November 1691. No doubt it was because they were then the two senior members of the Institute, but also probably because of their personal and professional qualities. Anyway, they both entered into his purpose and all three pronounced the formula which we are now to read.

F. Hervé Daniélou

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(1) Blain 1, 312.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Blain, 1, 313-314
(4) Aroz, CL 26, 146.

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THE TERCENTENARY OF THE HEROIC VOW OF 21 NOVEMBER, 1691

The formula of the vow.

The formula is given in full by Blain who, no doubt, obtained it from Gabriel Drolin himself. Here it is according to his version, textual except for a simple updating of his spelling and punctuation:

«Most holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before thy infinite and adorable majesty, we consecrate ourselves entirely to Thee to procure with all our ability and efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools, in the manner which will seem to us most agreeable to Thee and most advantageous to the said Society.

And for this purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, priest; I, Nicolas Vuyart and I, Gabriel Drolin, from now on and for ever until the last surviving one of us, or unto the complete establishment of the said Society, make the vow of association and union to bring about and maintain the said establishment, without being able to withdraw from this obligation, even if only we three remained in the said Society, and if we were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone.

In view of which we promise to do, all together and by common accord, everything we shall think in conscience, and regardless of any human consideration, to be for the greater good of the said Society.

Done on this 21st of November, feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, 1691. In testimony of which we have signed...» (5)

The style is certainly that of Monsieur de La Salle and one readily perceives the resemblances with the formula used in 1694 for the first perpetual vows of the principal Brothers. It is noticeable, however, that there is no explicit mention of the vow of obedience nor of the other traditional religious vows. There is question here essentially of a vow of **association and of union** to ensure the permanence of the enterprise. At a moment when the undertaking seemed seriously threatened three men solemnly promise before God to remain **together** in fidelity to the maintaining of the "establishment", even if they remained the only three members and had to live on bread they had begged. It is this last clause which, no doubt, has caused this vow to be known as "heroic" (6).

Significance of the heroic vow.

La Salle was not a man to act on the spur of the moment: his whole life shows him, on the contrary, as acting only after mature reflection and consultation. It is possible that the step he took on 21st November 1691 was inspired by the example of M. Olier and two companions who withdrew briefly from their retreat at Vaugirard and betook themselves to the sanctuary at Montmartre *«to consecrate themselves to the most holy Trinity and to promise to remain united thus and to labour for the education and sanctification of the clergy...»* (7). And in the formula to be used by the future sulpicians we find that they were *«to unite themselves by a sacred promise never to separate nor to abandon the purpose which God had been pleased to reveal to them and even to reinforce this by various guarantees...»* (7). Here, too, the accent is placed on the association and union of persons in view of a common design.

Perhaps also we may think that the Founder, having found himself at death's door a few months before, wanted to ensure the permanence of the work, even if he should be taken from it. And this he could hope to do because of two companions who agreed to join him in this lifelong commitment.

But in this gesture was, more than anything else, an act of total self-abandonment to God. As a recent biographer has written: *«Three men cut the cables and launch out into the ocean of a new "opus Dei", without other sails or oars than the Providence of God».* (8) Their future was to be concentrated on a single enterprise: to keep the Society of the Christian Schools in existence, and that at any cost to themselves. From now on, *«they would remain bound by a special vow, staking their whole well-being, eating the bread of alms, in order to achieve the great objective. And if they should*

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fail in this, at least it would not be due to their own negligence or cowardice. Together, all three, "until the last surviving one" of them, they would share the needs and the labour.» (9)

The fruits of the heroic vow.

Even if the vow of 21st November 1691 remained unknown to the other Brothers, it was not without effect for the future of the Institute. In the three participants themselves it certainly produced a renewed fervour and mutual trust; they found new confidence in the future of the enterprise and each could labour for its consolidation and development with a fresh sense of freedom.

It is a fact that, for the Founder himself, the subsequent years were particularly fruitful. In 1692 a real novitiate was established at Vaugirard, the first in the history of the Institute, and «it rapidly filled up with promising subjects». (10) The Paris Brothers continued to visit Vaugirard on Thursdays and Sundays, to reinvigorate themselves both physically and spiritually. According to Blain, they used to make their way there the evening before the free days and spend the night there. The Brothers of the Reims area met there each year in September for the annual retreat and, in between, they exchanged regular correspondence with Monsieur de La Salle who was thus able to guide them and strengthen them in their vocation.

Pentecost 1694 saw the first General Chapter at Vaugirard, where the twelve principal Brothers assembled with the purpose of ratifying the Rules. They concluded the Chapter by pronouncing, for the first time, perpetual vows, using a formula resembling that of 21st November 1691.

And throughout these years, whenever his direction of the novices or the Brothers and his frequent periods of prayer left him free, the Founder was composing, in addition to the *Rules*, the *Collection*, the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, the *Rule for formators of the new Masters* and the *Memoir on the Beginnings*, not to mention the first pedagogical works which he had printed: the *Syllabary* and the *Exercices of Piety for Schools.*

No doubt life at Vaugirard was austere, the food more than frugal, and the cold often piercing, but this was the second "cradle" of the Institute. No new foundation took place during this period (11) but the enterprise grew strong from within, and when it became necessary to leave Vaugirard it was because the house had become too small. It was then, in April 1698, that La Salle made the transfer to the Grand'Maison in Paris –specifically in the road which has the name of Vaugirard since it led to that village– and in doing so, he opened up a new era of expansion for the Institute. The heroic vow of 1691 had borne fruit.

F. Hervé Daniélou

(5) Blain, I, 313.
(6) It is worthy of note that the phrase, «obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone» was to remain in the vows formula until, at least, 1705.
(7) M. Faillon, "Vie de M. Olier", Part 1, p. 348.
(8) S. Gallego, T. 1, pp. 246-247
(9) Rigault, T. 1, p. 201
(10) Maillefer (MC 56 and MR 84)
(11) The first new opening was to be on the Rue Saint-Placide in Paris, and this took place in September 1698.

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ST. LA SALLE'S

RETREAT RESOLUTIONS

or «Rules which I have imposed upon myself»

(1/3)

A well-known text

The "*Rules which I have imposed upon myself*" are often quoted; they have been published in the form of a small booklet; and the most recent circular (N°. 429) (1) refers to them in the context of our personal programme.

Blain is the only one (2) of the first three biographers to consider these Rules of any importance. He sometimes calls them "Personal Regulations" (3); elsewhere he describes them as "General Regulations". Writing about the "*Rules that I have imposed upon myself*", Brother Maurice Auguste has the following to say: «The texts given us by Blain are so authentic in character that it would be unthinkable to consider them otherwise». He goes on to say: «Several of the rules are astonishingly similar in the way they are formulated to certain Considerations in the *Collection* which were inspired by the work of the Jesuit Hayneufve» (4).

I think that one can look at this question from another angle which is quite enlightening. According to the view expressed by Brother Maurice, although not in terms that brook no argument, the Collection was produced after Hayneufve's work and before the "*Rules I have imposed upon myself*".

Personally, I am inclined to say that the 20 articles written by La Salle were a direct result of his reading Hayneufve's Considerations during the course of a retreat. Our conclusion will be that we are not dealing here with a sort of "life plan" inspired by the mission he was about to undertake, which was to strengthen his new foundation. It is true, of course, that the Considerations are influenced also by the fact he has recently become a founder. There is a sort of ricochet effect.

A retreat manual

Hayneufve's Considerations are part of a larger work which bears the following title: «*Meditations for the time of the exercises which are made during the eight day retreat on the 24 fundamental truths and maxims which demonstrate progress in the spiritual life and which are its perfects rule, according to the order and declaration which will be seen in the plan of this work*» (5).

It is not possible to say in which year La Salle started using this work to help him with his retreat exercises, nor for how many years he did this. What is certain, however, is that he did use it. It is certain this work had an influence on the "*Rules that I have imposed upon myself*"; it is certain also that La Salle thought highly enough of them to adapt them for the use of his Brothers in the Collection, and to impose its reading on them during the retreat they made during the holidays.

Hayneufve had the following to say about his method of making a retreat: «The convenience of this method is that it sets out the whole plan of the exercises and of spiritual life clearly and in summary form, so that in a very short time, in the twinkling of an eye, a person can see exactly what he wants most. He sees how to begin to live spiritually, how to continue and where to stop» (6).

Hayneufve evidently considered the role played by the Considerations to be important: «(they) are the most appropriate basis for the exercises... One should also set aside some time to write down the truths, emotions and **resolutions one has found striking**» (7). The retreat timetable proposed by Hayneufve specifies: «at half past one: serious consideration of the subject indicated for the day». And later: «at three o'clock: write down the result of one's meditations and **considerations**» (8).

In the light of these facts, it would not be too far-fetched to imagine De La Salle on retreat, each day pondering the Consideration indicated for the day, making resolutions inspired by it, while bearing in mind his own particular situation.

That this was the case will become clearer if we juxtapose the text of the considerations and the practical consequences that the Founder draws from them. It will be seen that the "*Rules I have imposed upon myself*" **are the resolutions St. La Salle made during a retreat** and not a cumulative work based on the various events of his life, nor the result of his spirit of regularity, as Blain suggests, and especially not something from his own imagination.

DAY 1 OF THE RETREAT

The first thing to note is that the first article of the "*Rules that I have imposed upon myself*" lays down the conditions for an undisturbed retreat: it is this prerequisite for the success of the time he will spend in prayer and reflection that the Founder establishes by his first point. «I shall not go out without some good reason and without having first spent a quarter of an hour considering in the presence of God whether the need is real or only imaginary. If the need is a pressing one, I shall take at least the time of a Miserere to put some good thoughts into my head». This first point reaffirms his wish that nothing, unless there is a very serious reason for it, should disturb the time set aside for the retreat. (9) It will be useful subsequently in prolonging the spirit of the retreat.

The consideration for this first day.

It is made on a person's status in life or on whatever position he occupies.

1. After putting yourself in the presence of God and asking him for the grace to benefit from making this consideration, adore divine Providence which has cre-

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ated such a large variety of social ranks and positions in the Church and world, and which allocates them to each person as it thinks fit.

2. Consider your own. How did you come by it? Was there any trickery involved? Were your motives bad? Were you motivated by some natural inclinations or human respect rather than by God's order and will?

3. If something wrong was involved, retract it. If your intentions were not sufficiently pure and sincere, make them so now; and just as if you were only now taking up your position, declare solemnly that you wish to remain in it only because you believe God wants you to.

4. Declare that you are happy in your position because God wants you there, and that you do not seek your own interests, nor envy those above you nor consider yourself superior to those less important.

5. Convince yourself **that it is extraordinarily important for your salvation that you be faithful in your position; and that this fidelity consists in your acting carefully,** because you have received it from God and will have to render an account of it to him **in all its details and circumstances** (10).

Surely these first five points for consideration were such as to lead La Salle to think about the new apostolate he was undertaking: that of contributing to «the establishment and management of our community» (11)?

It is quite natural that he should be led to consider at this point the major commitment he has made to consecrate his life totally to God. The **second resolution** he makes would seem to be a logical consequence of these reflections.

«Every day I shall set aside some time for the quarter of an hour that I must spend renewing my consecration to the Most Holy Trinity» (12).

La Salle then reads the 6th consideration:

6. Make no distinction (13) between the activities your position involves and the question of your salvation and perfection; because you will never achieve your salvation more surely, nor acquire more perfection than by fulfilling the duties of your position, provided that you perform them with a view to following the orders of God who decides what you should do. You will also never fulfil the duties of your position better than by seeking only the service of God and your own perfection (14).

After reading this consideration, La Salle composes his third resolution which reflects a certain admiration for it.

«A good rule of thumb not to make a distinction between the activities your position involves (15) *and the question of your salvation and perfection; and to be convinced* (16) *that you will never achieve your salvation more surely, nor acquire more perfection than by fulfilling the duties of your position, so long as you perform them with a view to following the orders of God. Must always try to have them in view.»*

His resolution begins with a value judgment of Hayneufve's consideration and ends by stating the importance of following such a line of behaviour. It is clear that the use of identical words points to a copy made directly from the original. The final sentence (Must always try to have them in view) also confirms this. They are the words a person would say to himself on reading something particularly striking.

Our retreatant continues with his reading of the Considerations, and writes the resolutions they inspire. Point 7 perhaps did not strike him very much:

7. (In one's position) one should never do what is wrong, only what is good; but as there are several kinds of good, consider those entailed by your position: examine your behaviour in their light, note where faults are committed and what the remedies are.

Bro. Gilles Beaudet

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(1) Circ. 429 "The Personal Programme" June 1990; p. 6.

(2) Blain, II, 318-320. Writing about these texts of the regulation, he says: «this regulation was the general one he had prescribed for himself; and he makes us wish for the loss of the private one of which he speaks». It is clear the biographer meant something different: either "wish for" should read "**deplore**"; or he meant to say "to wish to find the private one of which he speaks".

(3) This refers to a daily regulation: one could suppose it fitted in with the "Practice of the daily regulation" or had inspired it.

(4) Br. Maurice Auguste points out the similarity of articles 3, 5, 14, 16-19 in La Salle's work.

(5) By Fr. Julien Hayneufve, of the Company of Jesus, second edition, revised and supplemented by a table in alphabetical order by the author, Paris. Sebastien Cramoisy et Gabriel Cramoisy, 1645, 298 pages.

(6) Meditations, op. cit. Declaration IV.

(7) Meditations, op. cit. Declaration 18, 19.

(8) Meditations, op. cit. Model of a daily timetable.

(9) We will see this practice of the Founder's included in the Rule of the Director but with fewer details: «He will not leave the house either to visit someone or for anything else that is not necessary, and in order that he is not mistaken in this matter he will examine it before God immediately before going out» (CL. 25. p. 156).

(10) Hayneufve, Meditations. op. cit. pp. 32-33.

(11) Cf. Rules that I have imposed upon myself, article 8.

(12) The allusion to the formula of vows (either 1691, or 1694 or even earlier) is explicit here: the formula reads: **«Most Holy Trinity... I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory...»**

(13) We put in heavy print the exact words used by Hayneufve which appear in the Rules that I have imposed upon myself, and which will be different in the text reproduced in the Collection.

(14) Hayneufve, op. cit. article 6.

(15) La Salle keeps most of the words used by Hayneufve, but modernises the spelling before including it in the Collection. The quotation from Blain is also modernised.

(16) The word "convinced" is not found in either Hayneufve's text nor in the 1645 edition, nor in the 1685 edition used by Br. Maurice Auguste. La Salle draws his conviction from Hayneufve's simple affirmation.

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ST. LA SALLE'S

RETREAT RESOLUTIONS

or «Rules which I have imposed upon myself»

(2/3)

This consideration does not seem to have led to a resolution. Later, in point 8, Hayneufve says the following: «What motives and how much interior freedom do you have when you do business?»

La Salle began thinking about the various measures he had to take. There was business he had to deal with and, according to Hayneufve, he needed to assess the extent of his interior freedom and preserve it. It is possible to see a connection also between this Consideration and **Rule 4** of his programme, which runs as follows: *«When I go to see someone, I shall be careful to say no more than what is necessary, not indulge in social gossip or idle conversation, and not stay more than half an hour».* Such a resolution must surely have been made to preserve "interior freedom".

The second part of point 8 of this Consideration also offers a challenge to La Salle. It says: «How do you unite them (business affairs) with the actions and intentions of Jesus Christ?»

Having thought about this, La Salle writes down **resolution 5**: *«I shall unite my actions with those of Jesus Christ at least twenty times a day, and I shall try to perform them only from a point of view and for reasons which conform with his. For this purpose I shall have a small piece of paper which I shall prick as many times as I do so; and for every time I fail to do so each day, I shall say an Our Father and kiss the floor when I do so, before going to bed».*

One can see that La Salle took this recommendation seriously to unite all one's actions (business affairs) with the intentions and actions of Jesus Christ.

The next point, the 9th, reads:

> 9. «How do you behave towards the persons you have dealings with, be they superior, equals or inferiors? This is a very extensive point».

For La Salle, the «persons he has dealings with» are the Brothers, and it is with them in view that he writes **resolution 6**: *«When my Brothers come to ask me for my advice, I shall pray to Our Lord to give it to them. If the matter is of some importance, I shall take a little time to pray about it; and at least I shall be careful to remain recollected at this time and to raise my heart to God for some time».*

Next, Hayneufve asks the retreatant to think about the Rules (if he is a religious or lives in a community).

> «If you have Rules or regulations concerning your position, how do you observe them? Check on this now a little and make sure you read them in a more leisurely way during these exersises».

In the *Rules that I have imposed upon myself*, La Salle refers to community rules. His first reaction to Hayneufve's question is to consider the reference to the Rule in a community context. He considers the occasions when the Brothers will come to see him about their failings, at the Accusation first of all or in other circumstances. However, aware that he is himself a sinner and fallible, the following is the line of conduct he traces out for himself in **resolution 7**:

7. «When they (the Brothers) tell me their faults, I shall consider myself guilty before God for failing to warn them, either by giving them advice or watching over them. If I impose a penance on them, I shall impose a greater one on myself. If the failing is a considerable one, apart from performing the penance, I shall set aside some time in private, half an hour or even an hour, several days running, especially in the evening, to ask God's forgiveness for it. If I consider that I am taking the place of Our Lord in their regard, then I must accept that I must carry their sins just as Our Lord carried ours, and that this is a duty in their regard that God imposes upon me.»

One can see, then, than in this resolution La Salle assumes responsibility for infringements of the Rule. Not only does he implicitely promise to be faithful to it, but he resolves to punish himself in expiation of his community's failings.

This idea of expiation may have been present in his mind also when he stopped at point 12, having read point 11 without making a resolution. Points 11 and 12 read as follows: 11. To what extent do you show equanimity in the face of various successes and events? 12. Are you able to make virtue of necessity, accepting willingly as coming from God all that willy-nilly you have to endure?

Next La Salle stops at point 13 of the Consideration:

> 13. «In your meetings, do you have the discernment to recognise what depends on you and what does not, so as to be able to act effectively with regard to the former and to suffer the latter?»

Recognising what depended on him and what did not must have led La Salle to ask himself questions about his role as the teacher of a community and about the share of work that this function entailed for him. This must have led to his wondering to what extent the work of his salvation depended on himself, for the question of salvation is of paramount importance in Lasallian thinking. He summarises this line of thought in **resolution 8** which is so full of wisdom:

8. «I shall always consider the work of my salvation and that of the establishment and running of our community as the work of God: that is why I shall abandon the care of it to him so as not to do anything in it that concerns me except by his order. I shall seek much advice about what I have to do with regard to the first or to the second (the community), and I shall often repeat the words of Habakkuk: "Domine, Opus tuum!"

It can be seen that La Salle seems to have decided that all (?) depends on God: he abandons it all to his care. As for his own role, it is to respond faithfully to God's call. This is what **resolution 9** says:

9. «I must often look upon myself as an instrument which is of no use except in the hands of the craftsman: I must therefore

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await the orders of God's Providence in order to act (Hayneufve says "effectively"), *and yet not let them pass once they are known».*

La Salle's discernment cannot be improved upon in the resolutions he made in the light of Consideration 13 and 14: «When you act, do you not follow your natural inclinations rather than reason and the light of God?» In the Collection, this becomes: **«In the exercises proper to your state and employment, do you not follow rather your natural inclinations and preferences than the orders and spirit of God?»** (17).

La Salle does not seem to have written any other resolutions inspired by the Consideration for this first day. He must have read, thought and prayed about the last 5 points of the Consideration. We come now to day 2 of the retreat.

DAY 2 OF THE RETREAT

As is the case for all the others, the Consideration for day 2 offers 20 points for consideration by the retreatant. On this second day, the subject for reflection is *«the daily timetable that you can now establish in your position, and putting time to good use».*

It is obvious that not every point led La Salle to make a resolution. Here, first of all, are some points suggested by Hayneufve:

1. Put yourself in the presence of God, and ask him for the light to know his will with regard to your daily timetable.

2. Recognise how important it is to use one's time well; and that to achieve this there must be order in one's life. In order to put order into one's external actions, it is necessary to put order into one's interior dispositions and resolve to live only by reason.

3. If your position entails some order, how do you preserve it? Are you not more concerned for your own convenience than for the community? And in the common things that you do, do you do them in a very special way, a way that is spiritual and is concerned only for God and his good pleasure; or do you do them in an ordinary way, as a matter of form or through human respect?

4. Do you not still have many hours in the day which depend on you and which are not put to good use because you do not follow strictly the order you should bring to them?

There is no need to continue quoting Hayneufve. These first 4 points seem to have been sufficient to inspire La Salle to make 2 resolutions, **N^os^. 10 and 11:**

10. «Whatever my position, I shall always follow an order, a daily timetable, and this by the grace of Our Lord. In this matter, I put my trust in it alone, because it is something I have never been able to constrain myself to (18); and the first thing I shall do when I change my position will be to draw up a new one (timetable), and in order to do this I shall always make a day's retreat».

Resolution 11 also refers to this need to organise his time but it possibly encroaches also on a point which comes on the 3rd day which deals with prayer. The resolution reads as follows:

11. *«When I have to go to the country* (19), *I shall make a day's retreat to prepare myself, and I shall try to make it possible for me to make at least three hours of prayer per day when I am on the road».*

In the same way, **resolution 12** could result from a return to the Consideration for day 1. This may sound complicated, but it is not all that unlikely, especially as the regulations for the retreat recommend the re-reading of notes. As he did so, La Salle would have seen that he could add something with regard to his attitude to people in the light of point 9 of the previous Consideration. And so he says the following in **resolution 12:**

12. «When people, a superior or anybody else, cause me pain and, naturally speaking, shock me by something, I shall be careful not to speak about it; and if someone else mentions it to me, I shall make excuses for them and say they were right».

The Founder then concentrated again on the Consideration for day 2 concerning the use of time and determined to practise what it said. Hayneufve's point 6 reads as follows:

6. Model your conduct on the order that is given you in these exercises. Would you not be happy to live always in the order in which you now find yourself?

Our retreatant does in fact write that he wants to live as suggested by Hayneufve: *«I must be very careful about the time I have lost and never waste any. Only a long retreat can obtain for me such vigilance»* (Rules I have imposed upon myself, N° 13).

La Salle continues thinking about the use of time, and pauses at a point of Hayneufve's which, once again, he copies almost word for word. The point in question is N°. 18 of the Consideration for day 2:

18. Do not let your primary concern be to know how to do what you have to do perfectly, but rather to do it as perfectly as you know how; because by faithfully doing what you know, you deserve to learn and understand more than you do at present.

La Salle is enthusiastic about this point. He shortens it a little and makes it his resolution N°. 14:

«A good rule not to be so much concerned about knowing what to do as to do perfectly what one knows».

We have here a fervent retreatant who furnishes himself with good principles by which to guide his "new life".

Bro. Gilles Beaudet

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(17) Cahier Lasallien 25, p. 96 XI.

(18) This is an extraordinary admission on the part of the Founder about his own personality. At one and the same time he confirms the need to make this kind of resolution so as to organise his day and life better, and he makes it quite clear that this resolution is the result of reading an inspirational text on the same subject.

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ST. LA SALLE'S

RETREAT RESOLUTIONS

or «Rules which I have imposed upon myself»

(3/3)

DAY 3 RESOLUTIONS

Consideration: the first action of the day, rising; then, meditation and the Consideration.

La Salle attaches most importance to point 11 of the Consideration, which reads as follows:

> 11. It is good advice to add to this review (which follows meditation) some thought about the various parts of the day, about some pressing and difficult piece of business, about a meeting at which nature will seek the upper hand if not warned, about the good works one can perform, about the wrong things one must avoid, about the intentions one should form for all one's actions, about the virtues which should characterise actions, about the fulfilment of one's duties, about one's family, and about similar subjects.

La Salle deals now with his own moment of reflection at the beginning of the day, and formulates **resolution 15**:

15. *«Every morning I shall set aside a quarter of an hour to foresee what business I will have to do so that I can act properly, the times when I may fall so as to avoid them, and I shall take measures to guide my actions during the day.»* I think that Hayneufve's inspiration is quite transparent in La Salle's words and the nature of the resolution.

La Salle does not write any more resolutions on day 3 of the retreat. Meditation already plays an important part in his life and La Salle does not need any change of direction.

DAY 4 CONSIDERATION

This is on vocal prayers whether compulsory or devotional.

La Salle reads the first 9 points of the Consideration without making any resolutions. The concrete nature of point 10 catches his eye:

> 10. There are many short prayers that you say every day without devotion, like the Hail Mary (20) at the sound of the bell at three o'clock in the afternoon, and grace before and after meals. Think of all the others and find a remedy.

As La Salle includes the Our Father among these prayers, he makes a resolution, but puts it at the end. He puts another resolution first, one that was inspired by Hayneufve's point 11: «... if you can say the rosary every day, why do you not want to?»

La Salle's **resolution N°. 16** reads:

16. *«In the past (21) I have often failed to say the rosary although it is a prayer of rule in our community. From now onwards, I must not go to bed till I have said it»* (22).

At this point the dependence of the *Rules that I have imposed upon myself* on Hayneufve's Considerations becomes clearer than ever before: Rule 16 is based on point 11, as we have seen; 17 is based on point 12; 18 and 19 are based on point 13; and 20 is connected to Hayneufve's first 10 points. Let us look at this in more detail.

Hayneufve challenges:

«But above all devotions give special importance **to visits to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, which must be frequent, fervent, respectful and unaffected»** (23).

La Salle's **resolution 17** reads:

«Also I must not let a single day go by, except when I am in the country, without visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament. And even then, if I pass near some village church, I shall kneel down and adore the Most Blessed Sacrament, and I shall do this as many times as the opportunity occurs».

Hayneufve recommends: «Never undertake anything, never change what you are doing... do not let an hour go by without saying a prayer. Can your not do this?» (24).

In response, La Salle makes **resolution 18**:

«I shall make sure I raise my heart to God each time I begin some action; and whatever I undertake I shall do so only after prayer»

In same point 13 Hayneufve adds: «Do not leave the house nor even your room without saying some prayer».

La Salle includes in his Rules:

«The Rule of the community is not to enter the house or one's room without praying to God and renewing one's attention to him. I shall be careful not to fail to do this». (R. 19).

La Salle's resolutions or the Rules which I have imposed upon myself end with point 20, which refers to daily prayers which are said without attention. Hayneufve concentrated on the Our Father in ten of the points, and so La Salle makes a special resolution about this prayer:

«Every day I shall recite the Our Father with the greatest possible devotion, attention and faith, through submission to Our Lord who has taught and ordered us to recite it». (R. 20).

La Salle may have had his reasons for ending his collection of resolutions by returning to the **Our Father**. By doing so, he balances the mention in resolution 2 and so frames his whole series of resolutions, putting them under the complete protection of the Father to whom he has vowed his whole life.

I should like to point out also that, in conscious or unconscious imitation of Hayneufve, who follows each Consideration with 20 points, La Salle also sets out his own life programme in 20 points. This is possibly a further indication of the causal link between Hayneufve's text and that of La Salle.

Under the same heading of imitation, it is interesting to note the similarity between a well known work of La Salle on retreats and the title of Hayneufve's book:

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HAYNEUFVE	LA SALLE
MEDITATIONS	MEDITATIONS
FOR THE TIME	FOR THE TIME
OF THE EXERCISES	OF THE RETREAT
	(for the use of all the persons who are involved in the education of youth and in particular)
WHICH ARE MADE	WHICH ARE MADE BY THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
IN THE 8 DAY RETREAT	DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Can we draw any conclusions from the considerable similarity of these titles? I imagine that books dealing with retreats tend to have titles of this kind, but I still suggest it is a point worth considering. And if such similarity proves to be less common than I imagine, then there could be some conclusions to be drawn.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DATE THESE RULES?

It is not possible to date them with as much certainty as a properly authenticated document would provide. What one can do, however, is to read between the lines of La Salle's text and formulate a few hypotheses that will bear examination.

There are certain indications that this text belongs to the period of the Practice of the Daily Regulation (PR). Thus the daily recitation of the rosary is in the PR: «The Brothers who go out to teach in school leave the oratory and then the house without stopping anywhere and reciting the **rosary**» (CL 25, p. 98, N° 16). The resolution which refers to the accusation makes an implicit reference to the PR also: «Grace before the meal is said (at midday) after which the Brothers who are in the middle of the refectory **accuse** themselves of their faults to the superior, something that all the Brothers must do before dinner and supper» (CL. 25, p. 99, art. 19). On the other hand, the PR does not specify any prayer to be said on entering the **exercise room**. However, this practice was already established and this was confirmed subsequently in the rule: «All will kneel down to adore God whenever they enter or leave any room in the house» (CL. 25, p. 25, N° 13). The Brothers were already in the habit of making this adoration on entering their classroom (cf. Conduct 1706). We know also that they did not have rooms of their own but slept in dormitories. One could adore God on entering the dormitory but not "one's" room.

It is good to note also that it was a period of beginnings. La Salle admits that he has never been able to make himself follow a daily timetable. He still has to acquire this habit of organising his time. He has in view his journeys and visits. It is also possible that at this time there was only one house in Rheims, the one in Rue Neuve. If this is the case, then the group of first Brothers lives with the Founder and he can say: "when MY Brothers come and say to me..."

For these various reasons, I am inclined to date these resolutions as belonging to a period that goes from 1683 to 1693, more or less. A period of 10 years. Can we be more accurate? If we take into account the reference La Salle makes to his **consecration**, it is possible he is referring to a consecration made in 1691, without ruling out the possibility that there may have been an earlier consecration. Blain (II, 301) refers to another resolution which was possibly a part of La Salle's general regulation: *«Something I must take very seriously is the renunciation of my own judgment and ideas, never following them in anything that concerns me»*. This text, however, seems to be less closely connected with the succession of Hayneufve's text we have been referring to. It is difficult to see why Blain did not include it with the series of 20 resolutions that La Salle imposed upon himself.

We know that the Considerations were adapted by La Salle and included in his Collection. While Hayneufve gives 20 points per Consideration, La Salle is more restrained with regard to the number of these and more practical in his ideas: he abridges and leaves out where it is sensible and appropriate.

I thought it would be useful to connect the *Rules I have imposed upon myself* to a particular period of the Founder's life, so as not to run the risk of presenting them as something absolute and without a temporal context, and also to provide other points of reference which would help the reader to appreciate them more. My hypothesis is not based only on intuition and guesswork. I have tried to show the close link that exists, and which careful reading makes quite clear, between a pre–1686 edition of Hayneufve's Considerations and the text of the resolution made by La Salle as he read it. Finally, basing myself on internal criticism of La Salle's text, I have ventured to suggest a date for it which is justified by reference to texts which reputable Lasallian researchers have already dated with a fair measure of confidence. (25)

As far as I am concerned, whenever I have occasion to speak of the *Rules that I have imposed upon myself*, I shall not hesitate to place them in an historical context in which this piece of research has shown them to belong.

Bro. Gilles Beaudet

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(19) Littré remarks that the best writers would say "en campagne" where we say "à la campagne".

20) In the Collection, the Founder will put the Our Father first. Hayneufve wrote several articles about the Our Father. De La Salle also resolved to pay great attention to the recitation of the Our Father.

(21) These words clearly express the result of an examination of conscience, and confirm that the Rules that I have imposed upon myself are the result of an examination of Hayneufve's Considerations.

(22) At this point, Cahier Lasallien N°. 16, p. 102 adds the word "pas" at the end of the sentence. It is both suppletive and a mistranslation. Moreover, the text given by Blain (II.319), and Cahier Lasallien 10, p. 116, do not have this anomaly.

(23) Hayneufve, op. cit. p. 135, art. 12.

(24) Hayneufve, op. cit. p. 136, art. 13.

(25) We are forced, however, to revise and correct a certain assertion in Cahier Lasallien N°. 16, p. 100, where we read: «The comparisons we have made preclude any possibility of supposing that any editions of Hayneufve prior to 1663 were used as a basis for the Collection». This assertion, we have noticed, is based on a reading of a 1643 edition (cf. CL 16, p. 98 & 95), but is proved wrong by the 1645 edition which contains the passages which Brother Maurice Auguste thought existed only from 1663 onwards. We pointed out this detail to him in a letter dated December 31st 1976. Perhaps he was waiting for a new edition before bringing the note concerned up to date.

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AN UNJUSTLY FORGOTTEN LASALLIAN BIOGRAPHY

(1/2)

To Fr. Giandomenico Mucci, S. J., spiritual adviser, with gratitude.

The biography of St. John Baptist De La Salle (1) that I mean is the one writen with love and veneration by Fr. Jean Claude Garreau (1715–?) of the Company of Jesus.

In the most recent Lasallian bibliography (2) it is listed second among the works printed about the Founder and is preceded only by that of Canon Blain (3). The other two early biographies are that of Br. Bernard d'Auge (4), which was written in 1721 and remained in manuscript form till it was finally printed in 1965; and that of Fr. François Elie Maillefer (5) O.S.B. This latter work also remained in manuscript form and in two versions, and was printed only in 1966 and in 1980.

The reason why these biographers wrote is easily explained: Blain was the confessor of the Brothers of St. Yon, and it was here that De La Salle died in 1719; Br. Bernard was a faithful disciple of the Founder and worked closely with him; Maillefer was his nephew (6).

But what reason did Fr. Garreau have to write the biography of St. La Salle with such great haste? He tells us himself in the preface to the biography (7): to simplify the text of the first biographer, which was very long and muddled in places; and to make the virtues (8) of the holy Founder of the Brothers better known. And it was the Brothers themselves who asked him to do this work, as they had Blain. Garreau did not restrict himself to shortening Blain's text: he made his own contribution. It strikes me that – *si licet parva componere magnis*, of course – his style is very reminiscent of that of Caesar's Commentary: concise, precise and yet very clear. Perhaps I can illustrate this by comparing extracts from the two works:

> «A deputation was sent to Caesar about this. He ordered that the wapons should be surrendered to him and the chiefs of the cities be brought to him. He set up his seat at the ditch in front of his camp. They bring the chiefs to him there; they deliver Vercingetorix to him, and throw his weapons down at his feet» (9).

Fr. Garreau's text reads as followus:

> «Brother Timothy (10) decided to send the Brother himself (11) to plead the cause of the Institute. He was a venerable old man. He arrived at Fontainebleau where the Court was (12); he presented himself. His pale face and weak appearance made an impression on all who saw him» (13) (p. 506).

Before we go any further, we should perhaps say a few words about the author concerned.

Who was this Jesuit Fr. Garreau who took such an interest in our Founder only barely 40 years after his death?

We have not been able to find a lot of information about him. He is mentioned in two bio-bibliographical dictionaries published by French-speaking Jesuits in France:

1. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* by Augustin de Backer S. J., Liege-Paris 1890.

2. *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* by Carlos Sommervogel, a Jesuit from Strasbourg, Brussels-Paris 1892.

The two works give more or less the same information. They say that Fr. Jean Claude Garreau was born at St. Pourçain (Allier), entered the Jesuit novitiate on September 27th 1733, and taught philosophy at La Flèche (14), and theology at Tours. Information about him ends by saying he lived in Arras in 1672. Information from elsewhere says he was parish priest at Molesme, chaplain at St. Martin de Langres, and finally parish priest at Charmont. Neither the date nor the place of his death is given. The archives of the Jesuit Generalate in the Borgo Santo Spirito in Rome do not have his "*elogium mortuorum*" as in the case of other Jesuits. The archivist I consulted suggested that possibly he died outside the Company.

He wrote the following works: *Manuel ecclésiastique des Mémoires du Clergé* (15) (Paris 1778); *Traité du débit et de l'action oratoire*; several *Sermons*; a large volume in quarto, entitled *Institutiones philosophicae*; and two biographies: the first, *La Vie de Madame la Duchesse de Montmorency, supérieure de la Visitation Sainte Marie de Moulins* (Clermont Ferrand, 1769); and the second, which is of interest to us, *La Vie de Monsieur* (16) *de La Salle, Prêtre, Docteur en Théologie, ancien Chanoine de l'Église Métropolitaine de Rheims et Instituteur des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*" (Rouen, Laurent Dumesnil publishers, in duodecimo, LX–606 pages) in two volumes. It was re-edited in 1825, a summary of the history of the Institute was added by persons unknown, and it was published in Paris (17).

In 1829 it was translated into Italian, and in 1843 into English (18).

My analysis is based on the **first edition** (19) of 1760. The Life proper is preceded by several pages of introduction. This fine book, bound in maroon coloured leather with ornamentation in pure gold, opens with a *Dedicatory Epistle to the Holy Child Jesus*, at whose feet the author places his work which belongs to Jesus, because it is «dear Jesus who took into his hands the interests of the Lasallian undertaking».

The reason for the presence of this Epistle here is that the Holy Child of Bethlehem is by right the personal protector of the children who go to our schools. Also the Founder himself and his first disciples had a tender devotion to him, and this devotion can still be found in most parts of the Institute of the Brothers. There is nothing surprising about this Epistle if we remember that the spread of the true devotion to the Child Jesus in modern times began with our Institute. It was Bérulle (whom the Founder considered to be his spiritual master) who, at the beginning of the 17th century, drew attention, with some insistence, to the mystery of the chilhood of Jesus. And then there was a Carmelite from Beaume, Marguerite du Saint Sacrement (dec. 1648), who was given the mission of spreading devotion to the Divine Child in France and elsewhere, and of basing a spirituality on it.

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Many people went to Beaume to hear her speak. These included the Oratorian Amelote, her first historian, de Renty and Olier (another acquaintance of De La Salle) who imagined seeing the Child Jesus all aflame leaving the tabernacle and entering his heart.

De La Salle, then, drank at the very source of this devotion and with it slaked the thirst of his spiritual sons. The devotion is mentioned in the first point of the Bull of Benedict XIIIth, where it says: «Founded under the protection of the Most Holy Child Jesus and the patronage of St. Joseph, the Brothers should above all devote themselves to teaching children...»

This dedication is followed by a history-cum-apologia of the Institute of the Brothers, divided into five chapters. The author wishes to show the **importance** of this Institute and of that of the Sisters of the Christian Schools; the **service** they give to the public; the **need** for the two Institutes, because of **the necessity to teach boys and girls separately**; the **esteem** that the Monarchy and the Church have always had for these two Institutes. The author ends by kindly offering **to answer the objections** that are normally made to new Institutes.

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(1) **La Vie de Monsieur de La Salle, Prêtre, Docteur en Théologie, ancien Chanoine de l'Église Métropolitaine de Rheims et Instituteur des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes** by Fr. J. C. Garreau, S. J., in two volumes. LX + 606 pages in duodecimo. Published by Laurent Dumesnil. Printer and Bookseller, rue de l'Écureil, Rouen. M.DCC.LX. With permission and approbation.

(2) **Bibliographia Internationalis Lasalliana 1733-1988** by Secondino Scaglione. Rivista Lasalliana 1988. 1.

(3) **La Vie de Monsieur Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Instituteur des Écoles Chrètiennes.** In two volumes, by Mr.*** (Jean-Baptiste Blain). Published by Jean-Baptiste Machuel, rue Damiette, Rouen. M.DCC.XXXIII. With approbation and by Royal Privilege.

(4) Br. Bernard FSC. **Conduite admirable de la Divine Providence en la personne du vénérable Serviteur de Dieu, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Prêtre, Docteur en Théologie, ancien Chanoine de l'Église Cathédrale de Reims et Instituteur des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes**, in four parts. M.DCC.XXI.

This Brother Bernard (Jean d'Auge) was of Swiss origin. He was born in Fribourg on June 24th 1667. He joined the Institute of the Brothers at the age of 16. In 1717, he met Brother Barthelemy in Grenoble. He made his final vows in 1726. From his manuscript we know that he was in Paris from 1721 to 1723 when he was transferred to Rheims. After that no more is heard of him. The **FSC Catalogue** mentions him as having left, without offering any explanations for this. (Cf. Letters of the Founder p. 227).

(5) F. E. Maillefer. **La Vie de M. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Prêtre, Docteur en Théologie, ancien Chanoine de la Cathédrale de Reims, et Instituteur des Frères des Écoles Chrètiennes**. This edition compares the texts of 1723 and 1740.

(6) Dom François Elie Maillefer O.S.B. was the son of John Maillefer and Marie de La Salle, younger sister of Jean Baptiste. At the age of 18, he joined the Benedictines (Congregation of St. Maur) at the Abbey of St. Faron at Meaux. He received his monastic habit on July 8th 1702 and was professed the following year. He was ordained in 1711. He lived successively in the monasteries of St. Basle, St. Jean de Laon and St. Nicaise. From 1723 to 1761, the year of his death, he lived in the Abbey of St. Remi in Rheims.

(7) The opinion that the first Brothers had of Blain's biography is still held today. He is still appreciated for the mass of information he gives but it is recognised he lacks precision and clearness.

(8) The consideration of the virtues of Fr. De La Salle take up more than 300 pages in Blain's Life, the whole of Book 4, which has for title: **His spirit, his sentiments and his virtues**.

(9) Julius Caesar. **The Gallic War** VII, 89.

(10) Brother Timothy Bransiet (1682-1752). A Parisian by birth, he made his novitiate under the direction of the Founder. In 1720 he was elected Superior General. He obtained Letters Patent from Louis XV which officially recognised the Institute of the Brothers throughout the Kingdom of France. The following year, he and the Brothers had the great joy of seeing the Institute recognised by the Church in Benedict XIII's Bull "In apostolicae dignitatis solio". The one who pulled all the strings was just an ordinary Brother. Neither Garreau nor Blain gives his name, and it was left to Rigault to tell us that it was Brother Onore (Nicolas du Moutier) who pleaded this cause before Cardinal de Rohan. In about 1707, before entering religion, this good Brother had been a servant in the household of Prince de Soubise, the father of Armand Gaston, the future Cardinal de Rohan. And so he went to visit his Eminence, accompanied by Brother Barthelemy. The Cardinal recognised him and showed a great deal of kindness to him and the Superior General. He promised he would deal with their business as soon as he got to Rome (he was going to Rome as King Louis XV's special ambassador to the Holy See). When he reached Rome, however, he found that Pope Clement XI had died. He remained there to help with the Conclave which elected Innocent XII. This latter was not able to do anything as he too died shortly after. Rohan waited, and finally the new Pontiff, Benedict XIII, promulgated **perlibenter** the Bull of Approbation. This happened in late January and the first snow was falling in Rome.

(11) Garreau does not give the name of the Brother mentioned here who was sent to Fontainebleau to plead the case for the purchase of the Manor of St. Yon. We know, however, that it was Brother Thomas Frappet, the "legal owner" of St. Yon. But Rigault (II. 66) who gives us this information also expresses some doubts, because this Brother who was born at the end of 1670 was barely 50 years old at the time of the journey to Fontainebleau. The age hardly fits the description given by our biographer. It is quite clear that either Blain or Garreau has mixed things up. The Court was at Fontainebleau at the time and the venerable old Brother went there.

(12) You can imagine the surprise of the courtiers when they saw this old man in his black robe and white rabat walking through the vast halls of the chateau. He was received by His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, Regent of the Kingdom during the minority of Louis XV. On that day, this good old Brother provided a spectacle, for at Fontainebleau as at Versailles, everything was a spectacle. On this occasion, however, it proved to be a moving one, and made a great impression on the illustrious onlookers.

(13) I should like to remind readers that all the quotations from Fr. Garreau come from the **first edition** and are given in the spelling of the time (French text).

(14) La Flèche, chief town in the Arrondissement of Sarthe in Anjou. In the 16th century, the Bourbon-Vendomes inherited property here and built a chateau which, renovated by Henry IV, was given to the Jesuits who turned it into a school which subsequently became famous. Its pupils included Marsenne, Descartes, Prince Eugene of Savoy and... Fr. Garreau.

(15) This Ecclesiastical Manual dealt with everything that concerned the discipline and regulations of the Church in France.

(16) In the second edition, the editor has changed Monsieur into Messire, an ancient noble title.

(17) By the publisher Mequignon Junior, bookseller to the Faculty of Theology at 9 rue des Grands Augustins, in the middle of the Latin Quarter.

(18) The frontispiece of the Italian edition reads as followus: **Vita di D. Gio. Battista della Salle, tratta dal francese, opera del Padre Giovanni Claudio Garreau.** Roma, 1829. 362 p. The incomplete nature of this biographical reference caused me some doubts. I contacted Brother Secondino, who said he had come across it in a work by Fr. Dante. I consulted Fr. Dante. I received his answer on June 7th 1990. He wrote: «I didn't know it had been translated into Italian». And so I began a long trek around libraries in Rome – the National, the Gregorian, the Civiltà Cattolica, the History Institute of the Company of Jesus, the archives and library of our Generalate and those of the Jesuits – and nothing: none of them had the Italian translation. Finally I consulted the two encyclopedias (Sommervogel and Baker) about the Jesuit writers, who devote a whole column to Fr. Garreau. The two French editions are mentioned and so is the English translation, but not a word about the Italian translation.

That of the English Edition reads: **The Life of the Ven. J. B. De La Salle, founder of the Christian Schools, with an historical sketch of the Institute to the present time, translated from the French of Pere Garreau, S. J., and also an account of the rise and progress of the Society in Ireland.** By the Christian Brothers. As can be seen on this frontispiece, the translation was made by the Irish Christian Brothers and was published in Dublin by William Powell, 68 Thomas Street, in 1843. The Christian Brothers of Ireland were founded in 1802 by Edmund Ignatius Rice, and they had opened a house in Dublin by 1818. They have close links with our Institute and St. La Salle, whose Rules inspired them.

(19) Although the approbation was given in 1753, the book was published only in 1760.

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AN UNJUSTLY FORGOTTEN LASALLIAN BIOGRAPHY

(2/2)

Then finally, on page XLIII, we find the Preface. It is of special interest to us, for it contains the answers to numerous questions that spring to mind, given the lack of bibliographical information about the author and his work. In the space of six pages, the author tells us that his main aim is to make known the great benefactor of youth, and that he wants to «present an accurate picture of his work and virtues». He realises his work is not perfect, but he hopes it will find its way to the shelves of the most important libraries. His only wish is to edify pious and truly Christian readers. There then follows the most interesting piece of information: «What is certain, is that it was the Brothers of the Christian Schools who asked me to write a new history of the life of their Founder...», a piece of information that is confirmed on page 573: «I hope that the accurate account I have given of the principal actions of his life is such that the careful and unbiaised reader will form the impression that he should of it».

Fr. Garrèau confesses also with honesty and sincerity his dependence on the Canon's biography «the first history of the life of M. de La Sale (sic), which in the present work is only **revised** and put in order a little».

Blain for him and for everyone else is a mine of precious but superabundant and jumbled information. Garreau, on the other hand, is pleasant, attractive and encourages one to linger without ever being bored. His beautiful, classical prose attracts the reader immediately. His clear and lofty style enchanted me from the very first page and I was immediately filled with admiration.

And so I disagree with the anonymous critic of the "*Ami de la Religion*" who baldly states that «this life was written without craft or feeling». Nothing could be further from the truth. As one of the best modern biographers (20) stated at the end of the last century, with all his authority: «This beautifully written book...»

And so I re-affirm that Garreau revised the style of Blain and put order into the chaotic mass of his interminable work, but he did not stop there: he has given us a new book which can be read now and always both easily and with interest.

The language is always clear, sentences are well-constructed and balanced, and syntax is always sure. There are many beautiful pages in the two volumes, and at the very beginning there is one that Bossuet would have been proud to call his own:

> «The Servant of God whose life I am about to write was one of those extraordinary men that the Lord gives the world in his mercy for the salvation of people and the edification of his Church». (p. 1)

As one can easily see, the musical quality of the prose is linked to a Cartesian clarity of expression.

Then there is the page that describes the young John Baptist's application to his studies:

> «With courage, he overcame all the difficulties of scholasticism. (21) He made himself familiar with all the subtle distinctions that error opposes to the unshakeable truth of Catholic dogma. To make himself completely hardened against its dangerous sophistry, he applied himself to careful reading as well as to frequent practice: when he debated, it was not with the vivacity and self-assurance born of pride and selfconceit, but with such as inspires zeal for truth» (p. 16).

The pages dealing with the adventurous life of Mme. de Maillefer are also very fine. Particularly good and marked by great economy of language are those that tell the story of her wild years of depravity followed by the years of grace and astonishing conversion:

> «Sure of the success of her charme, which she was the first to admire; convinced that they would outshine those of any other society lady who might care to challenge her; she would make her entry and with her brazen looks challenge her rivals» (p. 42).

Often, instead of describing what happened, he would dramatise it, putting words of evangelical beauty into the mouth of the Saint:

> «Men of little faith, what makes you so bold as to put limits on infinite goodness where none exist?» (p. 96).

The resignation from the canonry is told in clear and dramatic terms:

> «I no longer feel attraction for the vocation of a canon; it left me before I resigned the position. This state is no longer for me; and although I entered into it in a completely legitimate fashion, it seems to me that God is inviting me today to leave it, that he is **urging me** to do so» (p. 108).

Another good example of this sober and clear style can be found in the fine portrait he gives of M. Tallon (22):

> «M. Tallon was the most important man the archbishop could choose. He was highly esteemed in the diocese; and with the ability he had to speak well, he was able to create whatever effect he wanted. He gave the impression of great piety, and there was something soft and seductive about his voice» (p. 127).

Other pages marked by great liveliness and clarity tell the story of the Chevalier d'Armstadt (23), head of a famous German noble family (p. 509-516).

Pages full of drama can be found in the account of the Brothers' total refusal to accept the superior imposed upon them by the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal de Noailles (p. 343-369).

The account of the Clement affair (24) is very moving. The author calls it «the cruellest to have ever befallen the Servant of God», and in it the Saint was tricked by two crooked opportunists, a father and his son (p. 437-443).

Everyone knows that De La Salle was always solemn and serious, and yet on one occasion he showed he could be humorous. It was in connection with the reading, during

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meal-times, of the Rules he had composed for Directors. Fr. Garreau writes:

«These Brothers found this practice too humiliating; he replied it was up to them to remove whatever might be shameful in it by fulfilling all their obligations faithfully».

And the author concludes:

«Such was the wisdom of the Servant of God, whom respectable but ill-informed people wanted to pass off as a man without ideas, without the ability to govern, and whose only quality was to be excessively stubborn» (p. 537-538).

The Jansenists are a group of people to whom the author makes very frequent reference. They were the most hardened enemies of our Saint. He, however, would never gave in to any of their fallacious arguments or blandishments, but rather always proclaimed himself to be a devoted and obediente son of the Pope in Rome, and liked to sign his name as De La Salle, Roman Priest.

it is really worth reading the marvellous pages describing the Saint's discussions with them in Marseille, especially page 461, one of the most dramatic:

«A man like himself would be such an important victory that it was worth the trouble to make more than one attempt. And so they came back to the charge more than once. They brought the conversation round to the Pope and the bishops and spoke of them with the utmost contempt.

The Saint shook and avenged the Lord's anointed who were being treated with such disrespect. He no longer had any doubts about the real feelings of these so-called friends of his Institute. He saw the trap they had wanted to set for him, and he broke off relations forever with these rebellious souls».

Page 553 reveals a quite unexpected characteristic of the Saint: his gentleness and love for the adolescents he met every day in the corridors and property of St. Yon.

«The young boarders were a delight for the saintly man. He gave them advice; he went to see them from time to time; he organised their little games; and then, adapting his manner to his audience, would tell them edifying stories».

There are other things I could say, but I think I have sufficiently illustrated the talent of our biographer. Having spoken of him it remains only to introduce his religious family, for the Jesuits were always the good friends of St. La Salle and his Brothers, as they are to this day.

Fr. Garreau often speaks of them and their Founder. The Founder of the Brothers owes a lot to him, and here and there, especially in the Rules and Meditations, one comes across his teachings. Young John Baptist did not have the good fortune to go to the famous Jesuit College in his native town, but instead went to an equally famous Rheims school, that of the Bons Enfants. St. La Salle was on very good terms with several Jesuits Fathers right up to the time of his death. His last confessors were two Jesuits. There was Fr. Pierre Louis Froger, a great preacher of the Exercises, "charity itself", as Fr. Rayez calls him. On the manuscript page, yellowed with age, of the **Elogia Mortuorum** that I was able to consult in the Jesuit archives on the Borgo Santo Spirito, it says that he was much given to "sacra contemplatio". He was the Saint's favourite confessor. When the latter died in 1717, St. La Salle turned to Fr. Paul Bodin, (dec. 1725), a 3rd year lecturer. He was a person noted for his piety and wisdom, and had a lot of experience as a spiritual adviser. It was he who was advising the Founder when he was writing the definitive version of the Rules (Blain II, 143-144).

But there were many Jesuits who appeared in the life of the Saint. Not only were they generous with their good advice, but they also helped the Institute to develop in France.

For example, there were «the Gentlemen from the Congregation of the Jesuits in Rouen who, among other good works, maintained a teacher at the school in Darnetal...»

There was Fr. Beauchamp from Alais who in 1707 sang the praises of the Brothers before the Vicar General of the diocese.

There was also the anonymous Jesuit who "gave a sermon" for the purpose of recommending «this charitable undertaking», that is, the opening of one of the first schools in Paris. And one could go on for a long time.

The Jesuit Fathers deserve our undying gratitude for the help they gave our Saint and the newly-born Institute.

To this gratitude which the Institute of the Brothers has always felt towards them, I must add my own: to Fr. Giandomenico Mucci, who was good enough to introduce my Italian translation of the Meditations; and to all the religious of the Civiltà Cattolica, who have always made me welcome in their midst and have always shown me kindness.

And my final wish? It is to see this fine biography by Garreau reprinted. It would be a further source of glorification for our Founder, for it is a glorious example of good clear French writing.

(20) This was Jean Guibert, whom Rayez does not hesitate to call «the most conscientious biographer of the century which is coming to an end». In the same year as the canonisation, he published a monumental **History of St. John Baptist de La Salle**. Guibert was also himself a Sulpician, and venerated the Saint as one of the most famous students of the Grand Seminaire. The following year, 1901, the second edition appeared, and it is from this edition that quotations are normally taken.

(21) In the second edition this noun has been replaced by "theology".

(22) M. Tallon was one of the Vicar Generals of the Archbishop of Rheims, Mgr. Le Tellier, and Superior of the Seminary. He was sent to the Brothers to try and convince De La Salle to pass on the position of canon to his own brother, Louis, rather than to his own choice, M. Faubert. The latter was in fact appointed canon to replace him.

(23) The Chevalier d'Armstadt fought under the imperial colours at Denain in 1717. With great difficulty he recovered from his a many wounds, and went to France with the intention of becoming a Catholic (he was a Lutheran). On October 8th 1714, he took lodgings with the Brothers in Paris, and asked La Salle to be his spiritual adviser. One day, however, his wounds reopened. He had a vision that lasted four hours. In it he saw a great many demons, in a variety of terrifying forms, who threatened to kill him if he did not immediately leave the house where he was staying. And so, he was forced to leave and thus gave up his vocation.

(24) Garreau does not give the name of the two "delinquents" but subsequent biographers tell us it was a certain M. Clement "a beneficiary", aged about 22, and his father. The young ecclesiastic came to the Founder of the Brothers suggesting he should open a seminary to train country teachers. He, the ecclesiastic, would pay – which he never did. De La Salle thought it was a praiseworthy scheme. But it was a most unfortunate affair with all the characteristics of a typical Italian imbroglio. When the young ecclesiastic found he was short of money, he disappeared, leaving the Saint in a very awkward position. At that point, the father appeared on the scene to defend the honour (?) of his son, thus adding his own wickedness to that of his son.

Br. Serafino Barbaglia

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La Salle?
de La Salle?
de De La Salle?

As a result of an article which appeared in **"Vita Nostra"** a Rome District publication, I was asked to comment on the French use of the preposition "de", a topic of some importance when it comes to speaking about our Founder. Should we say La Salle? de La Salle? or De La Salle?

My apologies first of all to French-speaking Brothers especially to the philologists, for daring to invade their territory, but allow me to say with Dante:

"*Vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande amore*" (1)

which I have always had for the French language and which has encouraged me to involve myself in this discussion.

Experience and learned studies show that the particle **"de"** denoting nobility is always placed between the title and the surname, and that in a large number of cases, the actual title of nobility is left our:

Le Prince DE Ligne
Madame DE Maintenon
Madame (la comtesse) DE Grignon
Henri (marquis) DE Sevigne.

These examples prove, therefore, that the particle "de" is used as a link between a Christian name and a surname, between such nouns as **Monsieur**, **Madame**, **Monseigneur** and the surname, and between noble titles and the surname. For example, it is correct to say:

It is **Alfred de Musset** who says so.
Le **comte de Vigny** was elected.
Monsieur de Pourceaugnac often gets angry.
Le **Cardinal de Retz** gave a malicious description of le **duc de La Rochefoucauld.**

However, when these titles are left out, one should say:

It is **Musset** who says so.
Vigny was elected.
Pourceaugnac often gets angry.
Retz gave a malicious description of **La Rochefoucauld.**

To complete the picture, I would add that, according to Littre, the particle **"de"** should be kept in two cases only when the Christian name, noble title or any other title are omitted:

1. before a monosyllabic name, or before a disyllabic name ending in a mute final **"e"**:

De Thou wrote well.
I saw de Seze.

2. before names beginning by a vowel or a mute **"h"**:

The son of d'Orleans.
The armorial of l'Hozier.

That is what Littre says, and he wrote the famous "*Dictionnaire de la langue française*" in 7 volumes. Writers, however, and they create the language, do not always agree with him.

Proust, for example, was inclined to keep the particle under all circumstances. This is clear from one of his letters to his friend Prince Antoine de Bibesco. After some clever banter the latter agrees with his point of view:

> «Mr. Cosmo Gordon Lennox is related to the Duke of Richmond whose portrait, a work by van Dick (sic) – according to him, one should perhaps say, a portrait by Dick – was once upon a time the object of my greatest admiration...»

Princess Marthe de Bibesco, Antoine's cousin, makes the following remarks about the letter in her fine book "*Au bal avec Marcel Proust*" (Paris, Gallimard, 1928):

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«It was from Antoine that Marcel learned that you should not say the "de" Rohan, the "de" Noailles and the "de" Guermantes. Proust did not understand this suppression of the particle. At the beginning of their great friendship, it is Antoine who advises and Marcel who makes fun of current usage, but he ends up by accepting it...»

Finally, he gives in to his friend for the sake of friendship.

There remains one last thing for me to say: if the particle is joined to a definite article (du, des, etc.), it can never be omitted:

«I used to read to myself some nice poetry **de** du Bellay» (A. Daudet).

«The land **de** des Lourdines» (A. de Chateaubriand).

* * *

Let us now turn to the name of our Saint. Taking into account what has been said above, we should say and write:

It is La Salle who says so.
La Salle is the patron of all teachers.
La Salle is the true friend of the poor.
La Salle has always been an exemple of piety.

The real name of our Saint is **La Salle. "de"** is only a particle, and that is why it should always be written with a small letter.

That is why it is wrong to write, and why it sounds wrong to say:

It is de La Salle who says so.
De La Salle is the patron
Le de La Salle has always been...
Let us have recourse au de La Salle.
Let us admire the spirituality of De La Salle.

I know that Americans always say and write DE LA SALLE, but it is not correct – non è giusto! to use my own language.

So, are we going to follow these simple rules once and for all?

It is not difficult. You simply have to take a little care!

Bro. Serafino Barbaglia

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(1) Inferno I, 83.

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«THAT THE WORD OF GOD CONTINUE TO SPREAD» (2 Thes 3:1) (1/2)

THE WORLD OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN BROTHER

My considerable experience as a catechist has brought me to some important conclusions concerning the passage of Scripture which opens these reflections. My numerous meetings with Brothers in our communities, faculties of our schools and Lasallian groups have served to confirm them. As a result, I hear within myself the insistent echo of the questions posed by Pope Paul VI to the entire Church in the document "Evangelii Nuntiandi".

– Is the power of the Gospel really stirring the conciences of men today?

– How can the power of the Gospel truly transform mankind today?

– What methods can we use to teach the Gospel so that its power can be effective?

THE WORD SPREADS...

All of these experiences have also thrown new light on the life and the teaching of our Founder. It seems to me that we must now read some of his teachings from a different perspective, and apply his teachings to the situation that exists today in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Lasallian Family.

In the Rule of 1718 he wrote:

«In order to acquire this spirit and to live by it, the Brothers of this Society shall have a great respect for Holy Scripture. Therefore they shall always carry the New Testament with them and shall pass no day without reading some of its passages, through a sentiment of faith, respect and veneration for the Divine word contained therein, looking on it as their first and principal Rule».

In Meditation 159 for the feast of St. Bartholomew De La Salle says: «How happy you are to be able to carry the Gospel with you always... Be faithful to this practice... Fill your souls each day with the holy maxims of this Sacred Book and become familiar with them by meditating on them frequently».

Fortunately, today there are many Brothers and Lay persons who follow the advice of the Founder: «Attentively read the Word of God each day» (M 178, 3). In this way they are coming to realize the power of the Divine Word in the world today. Although the words of De La Salle were written for the Brothers, many groups of lay persons are also hearing them and following his recommendations. The result is that they are experiencing what St. Paul says «The Word of God is a power in those who believe» (1 Thes 2:13).

With the encouragement of Vatican II, many Christians are spreading the power of the Word. «Through the Sacred Scriptures, the Father comes to His children to speak with them, because He loves them. Such is His omnipotence and the power of His Word that it becomes the foundation of the Church, the firmness of the faith of its members, food for the soul and the clear and ever flowing fountain of spiritual life» (D. V. N° 21).

TO PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS...

Truly the Word of God displays its power because the Lasallian world receives it openly, puts it into practice and allows it to effect our conversion to God.

- In school A... several groups of Lasallian teachers meet weekly, either before or after class hours, to read, share, pray and apply the Word of God to their responsibility as teachers.

- Parents B... do not leave the house in the morning before having read the Word of God and prayed. Whenever possible, the children join in...

- In school C... youth groups begin their meeting with a reading from the Word of God, followed by a discussion, sharing and prayer. The Gospel of the Sunday is the usual text.

- In school D... the Mothers' Club organizes social activities and teaches catechism. Their meetings begin with a reading, discussion and prayer, also using the Sunday Gospel.

- In school E... all meetings of the Board of Directors begin with a reading from Scripture followed by a commentary and a prayer. Thus the members inspire themselves in their own personal lives and guide themselves in the search for adequate school policies and programs.

The same can be said for Parents' Clubs, janitorial and grounds crews and the secretaries. Through them the Word of God is ever present in our schools.

I am personally convinced that the Word of God is a positive force in personal, community and institutional living when it is "free" to exert all its power and creativity. Using it we will acquire the "sentiments of faith" which are characteristic of our Institute. Two passages of the "Declaration" express this idea very clearly:

«The exercice of our authentic apostolate is the source of our spiritual growth... By listening to the needs of men we can better hear the words of God» (N° 25-2).

«The Word of God reveals the ultimate meaning and the infinite value of human existence. In turn, the mystery of man is really solved thanks to the mystery of the Incarnate Word» (N° 42-1).

These quotations were written in 1967, but are still relevant to the life of the Institute.

DE LA SALLE: A MAN OF SCRIPTURE...

His entire life as «a man of faith» is based on Scripture. The Word of God is "living and effective" (Heb 4:12-13) because it is read daily, meditated daily and accepted with joy and hope. De La Salle listened to the Word and it became his teacher and guide.

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He taught it with confidence because it taught him. By meditating on it he learned its mysteries and these he then taught to his disciples. That is why he could speak to the hearts of those who listened. As presented by De La Salle, Scripture was joy and peace for his Brothers. Together they shared the Word, meditated on it, prayed it and lived it. The Lasallian Family, like the early Church is a "community of the Word" (Acts 2:42).

The Word is salvation because it is first of all conversion. Between 1679 and 1684 the first Brothers experienced the same thing which was expressed 300 years later in the Declaration: «The Word of God does not come down from on High in an abstract form to anonymous individuals, but it always comes to complete, reveal, clarify human experience» (N° 40-5).

Since De La Salle is converted to Scriptures and is converted by them, he can use the language of faith with his first Brothers as he speaks about: trust in Providence... true poverty... community life... the new approach to the school... Christian...

Following the line of thought of the Declaration we can say that the first Brothers and teachers "found the God who called them by name, not in books or in words but rather in His teaching... John Baptist de La Salle... man of Scripture... (cf. N° 40-5).

IN A CHURCH MORE SACRAMENT THAN WORD...

It was not clear for John Baptist de La Salle what «being a man of Scripture» might mean, in the light of his epoch. In his day, the Church, like the Church of Trent and Vatican I was more sacrament than Word. But within this setting, La Salle undestands that the Word must be at the basis of Christian education if it is to be solid and lasting. He had the experience of his "spiritual directors" in the Seminary of Saint Sulpice and the French School of spirituality. His love for the Word was well founded in a broad experience. He understands that Christian life must be sustained and supported by the Word –a Word which is taught, heard, shared, prayed and lived– and that the Christian teacher must first be a "man of Scripture". Thus the life of the Christian teacher formed by De La Salle gradually assumed the character of a ministry. For La Salle this is the very logic of the Church which is born of the Word and exists to teach the Word. He learns this from experience and the Epistles of St. Paul which are solidly based on Scripture: «How will they believe if they have not heard? And how will they hear if no one teaches? And who will teach if no one sends them?» (Rom 10:13-15).

De La Salle well understands discipleship and wants his Brothers to imitate him as "men of Scripture" because in their turn they are to be catechists "ministers of the Word" in the Christian schools and for the students who attend them. For De La Salle the model of the Church is "the faithful people" of the "disciples of Jesus Christ". He was foreseeing Vatican II.

IN A PERIOD OF CLERICALISM...

De La Salle distances himself from the vocation of the ministerial priesthood to form "ministers of the Word" so that this ministry could be exercised there where the Word would find a privileged place, where it could be taught, heard, meditated on, prayed and lived... in the Christian School...

For De La Salle there is no "Christian school" unless there is explicit teaching of the Word, without challenging our life with the Word...

Besides, in this age of clericalism, the Word was not always available to the faithful believers. They were not always free to read the Word, to be educated by it and to be formed by it. De La Salle saw that the "Christian School" was the ideal place to bring the Word to children because they understand it easier, because they better understand the mystery of the kingdom. (Cf. Lk 10:21).

De La Salle understands that within the Christian school the Word finds an ideal situation in which to form the heart and attitudes of ordinary people. In the Christian school the Word can be heard in the language of the people... It is the right atmosphere to meditate on it and to share it. In fact, the Christian School is a privileged place where "the Church of the Word" can grow.

Such is De La Salle's undestanding, and this is what he explains to his disciples. The Word is at the very center of every school day.

Everything starts with the "Reflection" when the whole of existence takes on new meaning by the light and power of the Word.

Then come the "maxims of the Gospel" which are prayed and meditated in order that they may later be memorized and then lived. The Christian brings the "living memory" of the Gospel into actual daily living.

Then follows the catechism on the principal mysteries which gives Christological dimension and meaning to systematic catechesis. This brings a better understanding of the presence of the mystery of Christ in daily life.

THE WORD AND THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

De La Salle is a return to the early days of the Church in which the Word had priority and taught the faithful. These were times when the Word dominated the ecclesiastical structures as well as the liturgy, preaching and catechetics...

De La Salle reads the history of the Church from the perspective of the "Ministers of the Word" – the Apostles, evangelists, Fathers and Doctors of the Church... And he does not hesitate to say to the Brothers these words which many lay teachers are applying to themselves: «You have the happiness of sharing the ministry of the apostles by daily teaching catechism to your children... instructing them in the maxims of the Gospel» (M. 159.2).

In this way, De La Salle associated the Brothers and all Christian teachers with some of the greatest teachers in the Church like Barnabas (M. 134), Augustine (M. 161), Cyprian (M. 166), Gregory (M. 109), Jerome (M. 170), John Chrysostom (M. 100).

Bro. Genaro Sáenz de Ugarte, Vicar

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«THAT THE WORD OF GOD CONTINUE TO SPREAD» (2 Thes 3:1) (2/2)

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Today, we never tire of speaking of the "new evangelization". Neither should we, today, tire in daily seeking effective instruments for that new evangelization. We must base ourselves on the Word. The Congress of Puebla (1979) said it for the Church of Latin America: «Scripture must be the soul of evangelization» (N° 374).

Before Puebla, it was Medellín (1968) that affirmed: «Our pastoral mission must first of all be based on the Word of God» (14-14). For this purpose it made some catechetical specifications: «A continuous effort is necessary in order to demonstrate that the message of salvation is today a Word of life» (8-15). Then it goes on to ask for a better preparation for native catechists and deacons as «ministers of the Word» (8-14).

For Christian teachers, the words of Paul VI in Evangelii Nuntiandi (19, 5) are still valid:

- To evangelize means that the Church must bring the Good News to all parts of the world so that its power can transform them from within and thus renew the whole of humanity... (N° 18).
- It is important to evangelize cultures... (N° 29).
- Since «the gap between the Gospel and culture is the great problem of our time... cultures must be converted by being introduced to the Gospel... But this meeting cannot take place if the Gospel is not made known» (29).

Therefore, there will be no New Evangelization without the Word, without Dialogue, without MEETING... The Rule clearly states: «Lasallian institutions are characterized by the determination to make the means of salvation available to young people through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ.» (13).

This proclamation of Christ holds priority among the Christian Brothers, a priority which extends to other activities besides those in which we are "ministers of the Word".

The Declaration says: «In no way do we neglect to proclaim Jesus Christ. We believe that the youth of today needs to hear the Gospel and is ready to listen to it» (39-4).

John Paul II has given us a general idea of the New Evangelization: «It is new in its zeal, new in its methods, new in its expression».

What does this mean for our lives, and for our schools?

NEW IN ZEAL: This means that we base our faith in the newness of God the Father. Then we will be able to show our love and our fidelity even amidst all the idols which surround us...

NEW IN METHODS: Everywhere and always present, the Word is GOOD NEWS, hope, salvation. We make it a Word which attracts, supports, corrects because it is always with us; a Word which never condemns because it always hopes; a Word to which we grow accustomed...

NEW IN ITS EXPRESSION: a dynamic Word, close to us... which enters into the lives of persons and groups, of Educational Communities... so than many can see the novelty of the impact of the Word on our lives and our institutions.

It is evident that we will not be effective agents of this "New Evangelization" until we become "men and women of the Word", "Communities of the Word"...

«MEANWHILE THE WORD SPREAD...» (Act 6:7)

This is another result which the Church sees each time it frees the Word, each time it puts the Word within reach of the faithful, each time the Word is placed in the hearts of the People of God.

It was the observation of St. La Salle. It is what the Rule means when it says: «Together they listen and meditate on the Word of God» (50). «Daily they read and meditate on the Word of God» (67).

As we familiarize ourselves with the Word, we will live what the Rule says in N° 48... (and to which we are not always able to measure up). «The distinctive character of the Brother's community is to be a community where the experience of God is shared».

As long as we are not open to the Word of God and we refuse to let ourselves be taught by it, it will be more difficult to share our faith with each other. We will continue to be shallow men and women...

Sometimes I ask myself why we seem to be afraid of the Word when our spirituality and our mission urge us to absorb it; when we are the spiritual sons of "a man of the Word"... Why do we not let it free us?

And meanwhile, our spiritual lives seem to languish as if they lacked sustenance... What should we do?

AS DISCIPLES...

We have already mentioned that "discipleship" is a given in the teaching and practice of De La Salle. «Jesus Christ has chosen us to be his co-workers in the salvation of souls. When reading the Gospel, you should study the manner and the means he used in order to bring his disciples to the practice of the truths of the Gospel» (M 196, 2).

The Gospel contains many images of the "disciple" which complement each other.

– The disciple seated at the feet of Jesus in order to hear his word (LK 10:39).

– The disciple who has an intimate experience of the Lord and therefore who can see and hear what others would or could not... (LK 10:23-24).

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– The disciple who shares the interior experience of the Master (Jn 15:15). In this way the disciple becomes a friend of the Master because through his intimate experience of His person he knows the secrets of His life, that which sustains Him, that which gives Him strength, joy and hope. «Those who hear My voice are My mother and My brothers and sisters...» (LK 8:19-20 and 11:27-28).

We should not be surprised that this should be so, but rather rejoice in it. Often in our ministry we may have noticed that "Faith comes by the Word" (Rm 10:17).

FREE THE WORD...

«The word of the Lord cannot be chained» (2 Tm 2:9) says St. Paul, basing himself on his own experience. It is not always thus. We Brothers must promote, respect and insist that the Word of God remain available to all, especially in our own lives and schools. It might cost us something to have Paul's experience. We are always tempted in various way to "chain the Word" in Community and School...

– When the Religion period gets the least desirable spot in the schedule because it is not a priority.

– When we fail to help catechists prepare themselves and when we fail to support them...

– When we do not provide a good place or atmosphere for listening, meditating, praying the Word...

– When we teach the Word theoretically without showing how it truly works through living experiences.

– When we teach the Word professionally, as a subject for study and analysis rather than as the mystery of God in Christ and the Church...

– When we proclaim the Word timidly, hurriedly or without enthusiasm...

– When we get lost in technical points instead of opening hearts to the Word,... be they the hearts of persons, of communities or schools.

– When we try to "control" the Word instead of letting its influence flow powerfully and freely...

"To free the Word" according to the language and the practice of De La Salle is to hand it on, to present it simply as the reality of God; to give it wide berth so that it is not constricted by schedules, structures... or by "the letter..." and then let it move hearts to conversion. (Acts 2:37).

"To free the Word" as far as teaching Christian Brothers are concerned is to listen to it, accept it, yield to it so that it becomes our guide and our teacher...

In certain ways we are living in times in which it is not easy to proclaim the Word. The demands of the New Evangelization will make us enter more and more into the approach given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Phillipians:

«...be innocent and genuine, perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhanded brood, and you will shine in the world like bright stars because you are offering it the word of life» (Phil 2:15-17).

For this purpose you must acquire the mentality of "the man of the Word", daily perusing the Scriptures (Acts 17:11).

IN THE POWER OF THE WORD

The Church which is Mater et Magistra teaches us discipleship. I like to point out the liturgical practice which is very realistic in its teaching. Frequently the Alleluia or the Gospel Song which introduces to Gospel reading during the Mass indicates either the attitude best suited to that reading or the power and creativity of the Word itself. Thus:

– "The Lord opened his heart to receive the Gospel" (Acts 16:14)... is a practice of the early Christian Church.

– We are always in danger of "hardening our heart" (Ps. 94, 8).

– The Lord gives us "a noble, generous and patient heart" (Lk 8:15)... in order to receive the Word.

– In us lies "the incorruptible seed of the Word" (I Pet 1:22-23).

– We are disciples like "sheep attentive to the Word" (Jn 10, 27).

– We must not allow "the Word to degenerate" (Jas. 1:18).

– Thus we can enter into the intimacy of our God (Rv 3:20).

CONCLUSION

"That the Word continue to spread" (2 Thes 3:1).

For this to happen let us enter on the road to conversion thanks to the Word. It will be good for us. We will be closer to our Lasallian origins. What must we do?

● Continue to increase "experiences of the Word" in our communities, schools, Lasallian groups...

Give more time to community meditation on the Word. Enrich our community prayer times with the experience which the Church offers us in the "Lectio Continua". Renew our community and group prayers and celebrations so that the Word of God may be more evident as the Word proclaimed, received, interiorized, shared, heard...

● Likewise, we must be promoters and animators of "Groups for the Word". Here I have in mind what is done in several Regions of the Institute with reference to efforts being made to provide biblical formation for adults (Parents, teachers, friends, neighbors...):

– Introduction to the Bible concentrating on the Sunday Gospel.
– Systematic biblical catechesis.
– Courses on the Bible stressing study and prayer.
– Groups using biblical prayers.
– Basic ecclesial communities.
– ...

In this way our communities and school will grow as "the people of the Word", "relishing the Word" (Hb 6:5), making "the Word active within them" (I Thes 2:13), because "the Word of God remains among us in all its richness" (Col 3:16).

Then, following the logic of the Acts of the Apostles each time the Word is announced and spread, the Church grows proportionally (cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 13:49; 19:20).

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ISSUES OF EVANGELIZATION IN A CULTURE

In the film *Mission* one is given the "treat" of hearing Guaraní children singing European polyphony in such crystal clear voices, of seeing European art work imitated in the construction of building, and Greco-Roman concepts set forth as the vocabulary of faith. In missionary centers all over the world converts recited formulas that were the fruit of the lived faith struggles of Europeans, Byzantines, and Mediterranean local churches in the course of their respective inculturation of the Gospel. The stories of the power struggles of the first centuries of Christian communities and how these communities struggled to live out the gospel in their lives are the stuff of history. The struggles of the present day which are now a source of confusion as far as the issue of the Gospel and cultural context in which the Gospel has been presented, will become likewise the stuff of history. As other cultures and peoples dealt with their issues here and now, so must we. The end results –both past and present– of many of these struggles are and have been a disservice to the Gospel, to the world Church, and to the local churches. They have been a source of division among the believers in Jesus. Basically at the bottom of all of these horror stories –the *Mission* story is but representative– one finds the issue of control: who controls the language and the symbols by which the Gospel is made known. There is much that has happened in the local churches and the universal Church throughout the centuries that is not in the Spirit of the Gospel. In this article I would like to examine some of the consequences of this issue of control as far as evangelization and its cultural context are concerned.

When control becomes an unacknowledged and unadmitted issue in the events of human life, the Gospel and Gospel principles get short shrift. It seems that the power/authority issue and who is in control must be established at any price, including that of the Gospel itself. As in the Mission, when distant authority intervenes using its moral authority to establish control in ambiguous situations, the local worshiping community –the community of faith that is trying to deal with life issues in the light of the Gospel and make its decisions accordingly– is caught in a bind. Local issues and possible ambiguous solutions that are judged as inadmissible by the international governing body are perceived as sources of division. It is the local Church that has to live in faith with the consequences of any decision made. Many times these local or regional communities find the decisions made at a distance –be it physical, spiritual, psychological, emotional, or cultural– very difficult to assent to and tend to dismiss them in practice if to do so openly and institutionally would be too painful. When control becomes the prime factor of decisions at the local level, the consequences at the community of faith level are even more wrenching because there are either no alternatives or the alternatives are too painful. The fruit of all of this is to set-up different levels of "reality". There is a church triumphant level which puts the institutional church as "always having recognized what has been the best for the human race and always having promoted what has been good, noble, and beautiful." There is the historical reality which has had churchmen on the side of empire and western colonialism –cultural, economic, social, intellectual and religious. Today as yesterday ecclesiastical authority, which is consciously or unconsciously identified as coterminous with the Church, says that since it has always been on the side of right, it should be listened to. It is the present day protector of revelation. Besides, what it says comes from God who protects the church, of which it is the protector here and now. It is a no-win argument with enough truth fused with control issues that it becomes a stumbling block to many educated believers. One of the crucial issues, then, is how to make the gospel reality of power/authority in the Church live in such a way as to diminish the temptation to substitute the death-giving use of control in the process of evangelization and Church life. Perhaps the multi-cultural reality of today's Church will call forth life-giving expressions of gospel authority in Church institutions as the Gospel interacts with the different cultural understandings of power and authority.

Another issue of missionary reality is that the Gospel is presented more as a tradition than the living reality that sheds light on concrete personal and community decisions taken in faith, which is indeed the Tradition of faith and faith communities. I have asked many religious men and women in various parts of the world involved in the area of religious education, «What are the basics?» Invariably I got the 10 Commandments, the Sacraments, the prayers, Catholic Social Doctrine, etc., as the basic things to evangelize about. I found it incredible that these things would be considered the basics about the good news of the Gospel. God's unconditional love, the relationship that Jesus showed with the poor, the outcast, women, children, as well as his completely new way of looking at authority and power, the freedom of life and con-

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science, and the forming of community to share His Body and Blood, a sign of the covenant God is making with human beings were not even in consideration. Until these dimensions are presented in a way that will dialogue with the local culture and grow with it, the Gospel clothed in Western traditions will remain extraneous to the lived reality of the culture instead of being the leaven that transforms.

The inner freedom to grow in relationship with God –I will be your God and you will be my people (Ez. 36:27), the Spirit reveals to our Spirit that we are sons and daughters (Rom 8:16), I no longer call you servants but friends (Jn 15:15)– and the different cultural forms to express that are the issues of faith and mission practice today. Vincent Donovan in his recent book, *The Church in the Midst of Creation* (Orbis) develops some of Rahner's ideas about different critical times of the Church and points out that ours indeed is a critical time –passing from being basically a Church rooted and orientated in Europe to being a world Church. To be a world church asks people of faith to explore the images they use to understand their relationship with God, their operating sense of Church and community, and the sense of cultural boundaries rooted in self-knowledge and self-respect. These elements permit a culture to grow and develop while respecting the growth and development of other cultures. These are the elements that are needed to effect the kenosis in the leadership and in the communities that are the cutting edges of missionary and intercultural work today. Hopefully the serenity which is the fruit of these elements will neutralize the tendency to substitute illusory power of control for the power of the Gospel.

It is by images, conscious and unconscious that we understand things. These images are charged with emotions and values. The unconscious ones may or may not belong to the personal experience of an individual in the culture, but the emotive and value intensity can be just as strong, e.g. prejudice, national and regional stereotypes. When images are not accessible to the consciousness of the individual they are indeed more powerful because they reside in the person unackowledged. Both the power of the media in the first world and the power of storytelling in the areas of the world where technology is not accessible give credit to the power of the image. It is by powerful images that we can communicate our faith and Gospel practice. Assent requires that these images be rooted in the Spirit of Jesus and free from need to manipulate and control others.

Without a chosen pursuit of the knowledge and love of God on the part of pastoral agents it is difficult to establish an effective relationship with God that transforms life, and opens one to the Good News. Germane to this is the story of the guru, who after talking to his disciple about God and the significance of life, held the head of his disciple under water until he almost drowned; after he recovered, the disciple asked, "why?", to which the guru responded, "When you want God as bad as you wanted the air, you will have Him". It is this singleness of purpose that finds God in all human experience.

The sense of Church and Community and the images used to communicate this sense are crucial. The symbols and liturgies of personal, religious, and cultural self understanding are vital to establish a world community and a world Church that has significance on the local level as well as on the global level. The different cultural incarnations of gospel-rooted values in communion with each other, respectful of each other, calling each other to greater love, reconciliation, and fidelity need to develop as the world cultures learn how to live with each other. They will have to learn to provide and mutually share the resources of the earth for the benefit of all of the earth's inhabitants.

The sense of cultural boundaries rooted in self knowledge and self respect that permits one culture to grow and develop while respecting the growth and development of other cultures is what is needed to facilitate multi-cultural living in what is becoming a smaller and smaller world. As missionaries become aware of their own religious and cultural bounderies and are respectful of the host culture, they see that God can be found in their own heritage and in that of the host culture. Does this take away from the revelation of Jesus Christ or make it irrelevant? Of course not. Will this change the way of understanding the western Church of the past 450 years? Very much so. Just as it was, as Karl Rahner points out, when the Jewish Christian Church was supplanted by the romanization of the Gentile Church. As Church membership is less and less European, communities and local churches in communion with the world church are going to have to discern what is of the Gospel, what is of European western cultural heritage, and what in their local customs and institutions must enter into dialogue with the Gospel in order to be transformed by it. They will have to discern and choose what are the appropriate symbolic, liturgical, and cultural expressions of the Gospel and Gospel faith within a given culture. Then the Gospel will have been preached to all nations.

Bro. William McDonald

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THE OFFICE OF POSTULATOR GENERAL OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (2/2)

Brother Leone Morelli

- **BROTHER ROBUSTINIEN: 1829-1917, fifth Postulator General.**

Until 1877, Brother Robustinien worked in France, then on 16th October 1878, he was posted to Rome as director of the Community of San Antonio, to lighten the burdens of Brother Floride, who was now quite old and whose health was rather poor. Brother Robustinien soon learned Italian in spite of his age. The rest of his story can be learned from his obituary notice:

"Our colleague spent only a short time in his previous post, for Providence ordained that he should fill for many years a role of great importance for our Institute in Rome. Brother Floride, at the period Procurator General to the Holy See and at the same time Visitor of the French District, cum Director of the community of Madonna dei Monti, was getting old and was suffering from poor health. Brother Superior General Irlide therefore wanted to relieve him of some of his work, by appointing Brother Robustinien director of the community, with the chance also of gaining experience in the task of Procurator, with a view later of taking over from Brother Floride. Brother Robustinien made no comment on his appointment, since he was content to allow Providence to dictate affairs. So off he set for the Eternal City arriving there during the second half of October 1878. He was in his fiftieth year. The community was at the time running three separate schools, one where the community lived and two others in the same area of the town. As in the other schools where he had been headmaster, Brother Robustinien would regularly visit the classes to encourage the teachers. He also set up periodic examinations to keep the students at their work.

On the 8th January 1880, God called Brother Floride to himself and Brother Robustinien, on 23rd February, was appointed to the triple roles of Procurator General, Postulator for the cause of Venerable de La Salle and Visitor of the French District. He often used to remark how embarrassed he was to have to undertake certain tasks for which he had had inadequate preparation. However, he did not lose heart, since he had confidence that Providence would give him the help he needed. In 1885, the two Districts became one, and, as a new Visitor was appointed, Brother Robustinien was able to concentrate on the jobs of Postulator and Procurator General, posts which he filled for 33 years.

One of the constant preoccupations of Brother Robustinien was the beatification and canonisation cause of our Holy Founder. Although he had been sent to Rome eventually to succeed Brother Floride, the latter seemed likely to survive for quite some years. Therefore his collaborator took active care of the community and classes, but did not receive much training in the role of Procurator General and even less in that of how to deal with canonisation causes. Hence when, in 1880, he found himself occupying the post of Postulator General, one could say that he had to begin learning right from the beginning.

Providence, in which Brother Robustinien had great trust, had reserved for our colleague a consolation which surely is unique for Postulators, that of arranging the actual beatification and canonisation of the Founder of our Institute. Brother Robustinien spared himself no labour; no difficulty or upset discouraged him, provided it was for the "Cause" of our Founder. Recognising that he was not sufficiently informed, he began with youthful fervour to study how Causes were dealt with; he consulted lawyers and other postulators and thus gradually acquired a remarkable competence.

On 19th February 1888, he enjoyed one of the greatest days of his life. The Sovereign Pontiff beatified Venerable de La Salle, thus allowing him public veneration. The successful Postulator was overjoyed, less for the part he himself had played in bringing it about, than for the glorification itself, and the spiritual benefits which would now come to the Institute. The same motives made Brother Robustinien yearn for the day when Blessed de La Salle would have his name on the list of Saints. It seemed to Brother Robustinien that the Institute would then be confirmed as the work of a Saint, and the Brothers would be motivated to try more and more to be filled with the spirit of their father, thus solemnly honoured by the Church. He hardly dared hope to see that supreme day himself; however, he did see it, and earlier than he expected.

The canonisation of the Holy Founder marks the high point in the active career of Brother Robustinien."

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On 22nd April 1903 Brother Robustinien also obtained the introduction of the cause of Brother Benildus.

Brother Robustinien died in Rome on 19th February 1917.

• BROTHER ALEXIS FRANÇOIS (1870-1938): 6th Postulator General.

He was born in the province of Oviedo, Spain, where his parents were at that time working. When they returned to France Alexis joined the Brothers' school, then, at the age of fifteen, he went to the novitiate of the Mother House in Paris.

He followed his studies in the scholasticate directed by Brother Perrin-Thomas. He requested to go as a missionary to Indochina, but his health gave way under the rigourous climate, so he returned to Europe in 1885.

When Brother Perrin-Thomas was appointed Visitor of the District of Rome, he took along with him his former student Brother Alexis, who became secretary to Brother Robustinien. In the month of March 1913, Brother Superior General, Gabriel Marie, appointed him successor to Brother Robustinien as Procurator and Postulator. It was not difficult for him to carry on the work which he was in fact already doing. By his calm dignity he impressed and attracted the good will of the Roman Congregations. A prelate of the Congregation for Saints said: "*We counted him here as one of the best prepared Postulators*".

He did all he could to advance the causes of Brothers Exuperien and Mutien-Marie, once they reached Rome; the same can be said of Brother Miguel's cause. In 1928 he arranged the recognition of the heroic virtues of Brother Benildus. When Pius XI expressed the wish to see a Mother House for the Brothers built in Rome, Brother Alexis was put in charge of finding a suitable piece of land, where in fact later was to rise the Mother House of 476 Via Aurelia.

Brother Alexis died on 17th May 1938 after an operation.

• BROTHER LEONE DI MARIA NAPIONE, 1892-1969: 7th Postulator General.

Brother Leone entered the novitiate in 1907 and made final vows in 1920. He did his educational work in Milan then in Turin, where he became Director of the College of San Giuseppe.

He was appointed to the Mother House in Rome as Postulator General on the 21st May 1938. At the same time, he was Italian government inspector of religious teaching in schools.

In 1956 he was elected Assistant for Italy and its colonies, whilst retaining the office of Postulator and becoming Councillor Delegate to the AEI (The Italian Educational Association). After the General Chapter of 1966, he continued as Postulator and as president of the Catechetical Commission for Italy and as Councillor Delegate to the AEI.

He died suddenly in Genoa on 26th February 1969.

As Postulator his name is linked with the beatification of Brother Benildus –4th April 1948– and with his canonisation on the 29th October 1967. To these must be added the preparatory work for the causes of Brother Miguel Febres Cordero, Brother Mutien-Marie and the French and Spanish Martyr Brothers.

• BROTHER RUGGERO DI MARIA, (Michele Morelli, 1914-1975), 8th Postulator General.

Brother Ruggero took the religious habit in Albano Laziale on the 6th October 1930. In 1934 he was appointed to the College of San Giuseppe. In 1947 he was transferred to Milan and in 1948 became director of the Istituto Leonardo da Vinci in Catania. In 1954 he went to Benevento, where he remained as director for seven years.

In 1961 he was named auxiliary visitor of the Rome District and the following year, whilst retaining the post of auxiliary visitor took over the headship of the College of San Giuseppe.

In 1965 he was made full Visitor, and the following year, at the General Chapter of 1966, he was elected Assistant for Italy, Libya and Ethiopia.

In number 400 of the Institute Circulars we read the following:

"*Upon the death of Brother Leone di Maria, the Institute asked Brother Ruggero to add the post of Postulator General to those he already had. He brought to the task all his skills as well as a remarkable energy for the success of our beatification causes:*

that of Brother Miguel, in which he displayed tremendous energy in face of quite a few difficulties; that of Brother Mutien-Marie, which he brought to its closing stages; and, following the appeals of the religious authorities of Reunion, that of Brother Scubilion, whose cause he asked to be reopened. These matters did not make him forget the cause of our Spanish martyrs, which was very dear to him and that of Brother Teodoreto of Turin."

The great courtesy and dignity which marked all his relations with the Roman authorities caused him to win the esteem of Cardinals and other Prelates of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints".

He died in Rome on the 1st April 1975 at the age of sixty-one. •

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AN ETHOS OF FEAR

Is it possible: an «apostolic succession» of teachers who pass on the same wounds to students year after year?

A year ago I experienced one of those rare educational exchanges which, like a recurring musical theme keeps teasing the mind, will sooner or later break out for others to hear.

The setting for this meeting was an apartment on the outskirts of Madison, WI. The dramatis personae were Parker Palmer, Robert McCann, FSC, and I. Palmer, a Quaker Writer, teacher, lecturer and sociologist, introduced us to the Quaker approach to education and shared with us his strong personal insights on the art of teaching. We were impressed! Bob and I, in turn, spoke of Lasallian Christian Education which is being kept alive by Brothers and Associates in our schools today. He was impressed! We sipped herbal tea, talked of our roles in education today, and energized one another through the experiences which we shared.

Palmer spoke of his concern about the ethos of fear which pervades some classrooms today. He felt that fear weakens learning and that it should be foreign to Christian schools where "Be-Not-Afraid" Christians have gathered to learn. He wondered if in some schools there is something like an "apostolic succession" of teachers who pass on the same wounds to students year after year.

Our meeting prompted me to recall the story that the Russian writer, Anton Chekhov, once told about a man who tried to train a kitten to catch mice. Whenever the kitten refused to give chase, the man beat it. After the kitten grew up into an adult cat, it always cowered in terror in the presence of a mouse. «That man who beat that cat,» says Chekhov's character, «is the man who taught me Latin.» (1)

Fear, as described in this paper, is the straight dictionary definition –a feeling of agitation or anxiety which is caused by the perceived presence of or nearness to danger. Removing fear in the classroom does not mean removing orderliness or discipline. A healthy respect for the teacher, for fellow students, and for the whole learning process is essential to a good school. A consideration of fear does, however, have something to say about the bearing and stance of the teacher, the style and method of teaching, and the attitudes which the teacher projects to the students about their personal worth.

Anxiety and agitation may be introduced into a class in many ways. A teacher's authoritarian approach, a shouting and screaming technique, the constant "mark-book" threat held over the students, corporal punishment or the promise thereof, and that sometimes forgotten conveyor of fear, sarcasm. Sarcasm (from the Greek Sarkasmos –to tear the flesh) may, in the long run, be more hurtful to the students than a slap or two. Secure teachers will never belittle students in the process of teaching or correcting them.

It seems reasonable to assume that fear resides in every student at some time during the learning process. So why not find out why and where it exists? A very helpful method is the use of an anxiety scan sheet (sample enclosed). Brother David Delahanty introduced me to this technique years ago at one of the Huether Workshop sessions. I have been forever grateful to him and have used it in every class since that time. Its power to set the stage for real learning came quickly to my attention in a class of public school teachers in a northern Minnesota community. The course, Ethics in Education, was an elective these teachers chose as a group. By this selection they felt they were daring to add a stronger ingredient to their graduate program though they were not quite certain what this would demand of them. I credit the anxiety-scan-sheet-approach with creating a most positive teaching/learning experience.

These anxiety scan sheets should be home-made with each teacher adding his/her own personal flavor and adapting them to the class, subject, and other variables. The enclosed sheet is so drawn up that if a high rating is given to either A, D, or G, the course itself is the cause of the anxiety. If B or H received a high rating, it would mean that the teacher is perceived as the cause of the students' misgivings. A high rating to C, E, F, or I indicates that the students feel some personal inadequacy or lack of preparation for the

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course. In each instance the fear expressed needs to be addressed for better learning.

If the course is the culprit, it needs better sketching. Methods for studying the content will certainly be part of the correction. Fear of the teacher must be dealt with up front. The teacher must be secure enough to explain his/her teaching style, the demands of the course, and then listen in an understanding way to the students. Students need to realize however, that their growth depends upon challenges and that removing fear does not mean removing hard work. If the fear arises because of the students' personal doubt about success they will need strong affirmation and encouragement. This comes quite naturally if teachers are running classes where kids are free to make mistakes without fear of ridicule.

The school year is in progress. Is it possible to introduce this approach now? Yes, and please do! You may find that you are in tune with the class, and this is great. It is also a possibility that you have been working off your own agenda and have presumed a readiness in your students which is not there. A certain byproduct is that the students will feel honored that you consulted with them in their struggles. In this way your classroom will be an amiable place for the «BE-NOT-AFRAID» learners to gather.

Bro. Terence McLaughlin

(1) Patrick Welsh, Tales Out of School, p. 50.

ANXIETY SCAN SHEET

ED 807T – LEADERSHIP 6 ETHICS

Rank in order three topics which are listed below and which might be giving you the greatest anxiety as you begin this course. Number them, #1, #2, #3.

_____ (a) The topic, ethics, scares me.
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_____ (j) Other: _____

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My personal goals for this course are: _____

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CHARACTERISTICS

OF LASALLIAN EDUCATION

My role this evening is to give an introductory overview of the characteristics of Lasallian education. I would like, therefore, to offer a twofold invitation. First, I ask that, over this weekend, you affirm the many ways your experience is Lasallian. I hope that you will realize that many of the things you already do, we name them Lasallian as a way to characterize them as carrying on the living tradition that started with St. La Salle and that we hope all of us, the Brothers, our colleagues, everyone who is interested in real education, will share in.

Although the term, Lasallian Education, comes from an emphasis on a tradition, the original vision of St. La Salle and the ways that tradition has grown and adapted itself to the present, is a tradition that is shared by others, both within the Catholic tradition as well as those who really understand education. So it is a way of naming something and perhaps is a symbol for us, a way in which we can share something in common.

Secondly., the invitation is that you consciously name and join with us, the Brothers, in that participation of keeping alive St. La Salle's initial vision; keeping alive those definite and certain characteristicas of the education we provide. It is an invitation to all of you that you would incorporate the Lasallian tradition into your own tradition, way of thinking, your religious tradition and the tradition of faith from which you operate; that you would make it your own, that you would share it with us and therefore, we would keep it alive and adapt it to the students entrusted to our care.

This is an invitation and a carrying-on of the tradition that is going on throughout the world. It extends cross-culturally and to seventy-two countries. The vision or goal, finally, is to have a world in which, both on a politcal and social point of view, one will come across colleagues and students who will have heard the same invitation, who will have heard the same message, who will participate and will finally share a common set of values that we hope will make the world a better place.

We will talk, then, about two different ways in which to look at the characteristics of a Lasallian school. One will be about the school in general, the overall philosophy, the ways in which you, as belonging to a community of teachers, participate in the overall movement. The other will be to draw attention to a few specific characteristics as they apply to us as educators.

For a Lasallian school, the most important principle is it is centered on the young. It is centered around their needs, not ours. The ways in which we make decisions about curriculum and schedules, the ways in which we order our own lives is centered on what is best for them. We take into account that the young have to live in a world that keeps changing quickly and they need to be prepared to take their rightful place. Thus, the concept of quality comes out of a concern for the young and everything we do, the expenses that are involved with it, the degree to which we personally rearrange our own lives, is because we are looking forward to what their needs are and the kind of world in which they will live.

What we hope is by coming to us and being with us in elementary school, secondary school, and the collegiate world, they will not only have a better chance of taking their rightful place in the world, but they will take it with a certain set of values. They will take it with a certain set of priorities about how to use the kind of power we give them through an education. We want to give them the means of salvation through a quality education.

Their education is not solely for their own benefit, it is also for the benefit of the society in which they live. This is their salvation –to love their neighbor as themselves. This is an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ and we need to be faithful to this message as Jesus was. The same ways in which He combatted all forms of prejudice and exclusion must be our ways.

There are implications then for us as Lasallian educators. The Rule mentions that we are invited to look upon our professional work as a ministry. It is not just a job. It is not just something for our own benefit in terms of the glory, prestige, or power we receive. It is a ministry, meaning it is ordered for others. It is for other's benefit. It is through us that our students are going to hear and experience the love of God. So, how we relate to them and how we teach them becomes as important as what we teach. We need to be attentive and available in a brotherly and sisterly companionship.

We want them to discover, appreciate, assimilate, both human and Gospel values. It is very important that we experience both these values in an integrated fashion. The best there is about being human needs to be available to them and be integrated with a set of Gospel values. Sometimes there is conflict and we need to think about it and we need to assist them to think about it and work their way through it. Compassion is often in conflict with competition, so sometimes we are going to have to make a choice. The Gospel ways of accepting people is not always going to be supported very well by the demands we see made on people in society. So there will be a conflict. By modeling and helping them think their way through to decisions, we will assist them to come to know that they are the children of God.

If we define them and ourselves as a family under God, then there is a set of implications about how we treat and relate to one another. It is an invitation, the invitation of Jesus. He does not force Himself on anyone, he just keeps offering, keeps announcing. In the same manner, so should we.

As from the beginning, our Lasallian emphasis on a concern for the poor has to be constantly present. If, for practical reasons and historical circumstances, we find ourselves

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committed to other groups in society, this particular characteristic still has to ring true. We have to constantly examine what is causing the problems of poverty in our society and then turn our, and our students', attention to the best ways to promote justice and human dignity.

Let me turn now to a few implications. It seems to me that what ought to be foremost in our minds, as Lasallian teachers, is: Am I teaching in such a way that I am fostering critical thinking? Am I teaching them to use authority as the least of the arguments for validity? Am I teaching them to examine several alternatives before making a choice about what seems to be best?

There is a need to insure that students see connections between areas of study, rather than learning isolated units of information. For example, at some point, the students need to see that learning Euclidian geometry is really only the beginning and the kind of physics that comes our of Euclidian geometry is very limited. If it were not for Lobachevski in geometry, we would not have the kind of physics we have today. For them to get a sense of this kind of connection is very important.

I think our discipline and our grading have to give testimony to justice. If we say that part of their responsibility is to promote and work for a just world, and if that is not their experience when with us, then there is real trouble; for there exists a real contradiction. So the ways we grade and discipline will say more to them about justice than what we say to them.

Interest and availability to individual students is an important characteristic of the Lasallian teacher. Because of their individual needs some students will need more attention from us than others. All of this must be balanced in an appropriate way with your other responsibilities. But for so many of them, the fact that we care whether they learn or not, makes all the difference in the world.

Perhaps the most important characteristic is that we pray for our students. The are things that are beyond our capability and there are things that happen to them that are beyond our way of taking credit. So, to have the habit of actually thinking about individual students in prayer and saying a prayer for them is an integral part of what it means to be a Lasallian educator. St. La Salle wanted us to make sure that we always had the best interests of the students at hand and the way we can come to that is with the help of the Holy Spirit. So, keeping them in mind, one by one, face by face, name by name, in prayer is essential.

As science teachers you are concerned about methodology being balanced against the pressure for covering content. The pressure comes from parents and the students themselves. The pressure comes, sometimes, from your own sense of how much they need to know before they go to the next level. And yet, the question of methodology is very important. Are they learning in a competitive or cooperative mode? Are they at one another's throat in lab or are they actually helping one another? Our methodology has all kinds of messages and values embedded in it and so it is imperative that we constantly review our methodology.

Fostering wonder and awe is important. To destroy the sense of wonder and awe for them is a terrible thing. Darwin wrote that he had great regret that he allowed that part of his mind and his sensitivities to be atrophied by only applying certain laws of reason and rational thought and that he no longer could respond to poetry or music in a way he had experienced in an earlier time in his life. His mind had become such that he simply took in information and ground out generalizations and he saw himself as having been much poorer.

The question of faith and science is a major concern, obviously both in our culture at this present time, as it has been throughout history. Faith experience, organized religion, and science have not always had a harmonious relationship. Yet, there are examples of the ways in which it has. D'Chardin is a marvelous testimony to the ways in which a faith life can be integrated with competence in science. So for us to read the "Divine Milieu" or the "Phenomenon of Man" and to work our way through the questions of faith and science so as to help our students is a very important responsibility.

There are moral issues that confront us either because they are in direct relationships to Church teaching or they are larger questions with which the whole society has to deal. We have a responsibility to not just shove off these questions onto the Religion Department. There may be a need to pursue ways to have a dialogue with the Religion department or the Social Studies department so that with the students a real learning experience develops for everyone.

If we really are saying the touchstone is to prepare the student for the kind of world they are going to live in, then we need to be attuned to what kind of world exists now and what kind it is becoming. Most of our students are going to live in a world where cultural differences and geographic boundaries mean nothing. So the ways in which they are to learn about and adapt to different cultures and people is a major responsibility of ours.

In conclusion, while we know that the purpose of education is, of course, the development of the mind, we Lasallian educators are equally interested in touching hearts. We wants them to be certain kinds of persons at the end of the educational experience they have with us. We accomplish that mission with an ardent zeal for the work of the Lord. We generously place at the disposal of those whom God has entrusted to us, our time, our talents, our energy. We seek to improve our competence, the quality of our relationships, the witness of our lives, and the vigor of our faith.

Bro. Mark Murphy

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FAILURE IN SCHOOL

The question of failure in school is not taken sufficiently seriously by those in positions of responsibility in education. Too often, this anomaly is considered at school level as just a natural retribution which inevitably catches up with the stupid, lazy or recalcitrant pupil. And yet, any child in the hands of a good teacher is capable of making progress, showing interest and being cooperative.

This is why at the Ostia Congress in March 1990 a workshop concentrated the attention of European Lasallian headmasters on this problem. It was realised that the annual number of failures in some countries is very worrying. Figures show that Belgium has among the highest numbers in the world. This may, however, be explained by the fact that the school leaving age is 18 and education is of a very high standard.Figures for 1986, for example, show that:

* 32% of pupils are below standard on leaving primary school;

* 58% of pupils are below standard on leaving secondary school;

* 54% of pupils are 2 years or more behind in their studies on leaving secondary school.

To these figures should, of course, be added the many pupils who leave school without any qualifications or certificates. If we consider working class or immigrant children, figures show that, depending on the schools involved, 30%, 40% or 50% of pupils who leave primary school with their certificate fail in their first year of secondary school or are immediately put in for technical courses.

It is a complex problem affected by numerous factors:socio-cultural factors; difficulties involved in transferring from one type of course to another; school policy with regard to advice on choice of courses and to assessment; the way a school is organised and run, and whether, as some, it operates a strict selection procedure. The problem has, therefore, to be considered in its widest sense. First we need to say more precisely what we understand by failure in school.

The school failure is above all the pupil who fails the end of year exam and has to do the year all over again. But personally, I think that any pupil can be considered "a failure" when he is not happy at school, when he goes to school reluctantly, when he does the bare minimum, when he finds himself in a position that does not suit him, when he wastes time and disturbs the others. For older pupils, failure means plans for further studies and so on falling through. Failure can be defined as the inability of a pupil to master the knowledge and skills offered him by a course of studies. Why does failure occur?

There are innumerable reasons. Some lie with the child himself; others with the family, social background, teachers,the school system, society. It is easy enough to trace the origin of difficulties:

* the pupil:

  Did he have the ability to cope?
  Was he interested, motivated?
  Did he apply himself?
  Was he followed up and encouraged?

* the studies:

  Were they within the capability of the pupil?
  Were the teaching methods used appropriate?
  Was assimilation ensured by means of lessons, exercises and revision?

* assessment:

  Was it done properly?

These somewhat technical questions give rise to a number of more fundamental ones:

* What values does our society offer young people today? In a world where money, competition, material values and selfishness count, why should students study and for whom, when what they expect of us is an example of disinterestedness, solidarity, generosity, and respect for nature?

* What is family life like? Do mothers still exist who pick up their children after school, chat with them, make them tea and encourage them to do their homeworks? How many parents are capable of making their

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children stay in the house and regulating their use of the television and personal radios?

* How does the school function? Does it make allowance for the changing behavioural patterns of young people today? Does it take into account what they know already, what they can do, what they really are, what they accomplish as a group? Much of this is often quite remarkable but the school set-up cannot make use of it. The curriculum is often too general and sometimes overloaded, and this makes it hard for teachers to structure their courses and the work set for pupils. There is still much research to be done on how young people learn and organise their knowledge in a world dominated by audiovisual input, and one in which the media impart much more information than the school and are much more expert at doing so. The traditional method of teaching - the teacher standing in front of his class - is still all too frequently used, because it is easier for the teacher. It is forgotten that pupils learn by doing and by making mistakes. The social and financial status of the teacher has been devalued: he has lost his standing and has become a civil servant whose work and pay depend on the number of pupils.

Continuous assessment which checks on progress and remedies problems is still not widely practised. Final exams are often badly organised: papers are too long; questions are wide of the mark, lack balance, are sometimes illegible and different from the kind normally asked; and marking schemes are not fair. It happens also that exams are set with the express intention of sorting pupils out and settling accounts with such as have been thought difficult or awkward.

Each of the problems we have considered presents us with a challenge because, in one way or another, in each case we are all able to furnish at least a part of a solution. Failure in school can be ended under certain conditions: if pupils are put in for courses that suit them; if teachers, happy to be teachers, well-trained and better paid than at present, give interesting lessons; if parents and teachers agree to attend refresher courses, and genuinely work together; if they make use of the services of medical, psychiatric and social centres; if teachers work as part of efficient teaching teams, more concerned for the success of each individual child than for the reputation of their school; if the research that has been done on the psychology and sociology of young people, in education, on teaching methodology and on testing do not remain in the realm of theory, but lead to practical applications which can help all adults involved in education.

Failure in school is a source of suffering for the pupil;it can ruin his future; it is the source of much bad feeling in the home; and it costs the State a great deal of money.There has to be a widespread campaign against failure in school, especially in Lasallian schools. Every child is a child of God, a young prince, especially if he is in some way underprivileged. To be a Lasallian teacher means making use of the latest advances in education in one's work.

Br. Maurice de Coen

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THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Questions leading to a Response

The Pope has issued a call to the entire Church to undertake a new evangelization. He first mentioned it in Latin America in the context of preparing for the Fifth Centenary of the evangelization of that continent. Then the idea was extended to the whole world. The call is universal.

The Christian school, by its very nature evangelizes and therefore it must examine itself to discover its role and responsibility in the light of the call of the Vicar of Christ. Does it or does it not have something to say, something to do, in the work of evangelizing the modern world?

Both as an examination and a study, let us try to answer some questions, keeping in mind that the Pope is talking about an evangelization "new in its enthusiasm, new in its methods and new in its expression".

1. The Call of the Pope.

- A large part of the world still does now know the saving message of Christ.
- In Christianized societies there are large areas which live only on the fringes of Gospel values. Many have lost the faith or are indifferent to it.
- All Christians need to increase their faith by means of a continuous evangelization.
- The Gospel must provide answers to the questions raised by men at the present moment.
- The transmission of the message must be adapted to the needs and situations of today.

– Does the call of the Pope to undertake a new evangelization mean that the previous evangelization was inadequate or insufficient?

– Is the Gospel sufficiently proclaimed in the so-called Christian societies?

– Does this proclamation of the Gospel reach the generality of Christians or only a part of them? Which Christians do not hear the message?

– Does the Gospel reach the non-believers of "already Christianized" societies?

– Does it reach peoples who have not yet heard of Christ?

– Are Christians involved in the diffusion of the message of Christ? Or do they consider it the responsibility of others, especially the clergy and religious?

– Does the Gospel that is presented respond to the actual problems of men?

– Is the language used in proclaiming the Gospel adequate?

– In what measure are different cultures impregnated with Christian values?

– In general, is the diffusion of the Gospel message widening, stagnant or vanishing?

2. The Christian school and the New Evangelization

- The purpose of the school is to provide formation for the whole man. His person is a single, whole entity. The body, mind, attitudes, spirituality... nothing can be excluded.
- The Christian school bases its education on Christian values which are presented in such a way as to elicit a personal and positive response from the student.
- Christian education tries to form the citizen and the believer as one and the same person.
- The Christian school is both: a school because it transmits culture and knowledge; Christian because its perspective in all things is based on the Gospel.

– Is the Christian school, in general, a situation, a place and an instrument of evangelization?

– Is the Christian school a witness to lived Gospel values?

– Are there schools which are called Christian but which do not transmit the Gospel message?

– Do the structures of the school foster the presentation of Christian values or hinder them?

– Does the school as a whole evangelize or is this done only in Religion classes?

–In what measure is the entire school program evangelizing its clintele, even the secular teaching and activities?

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– Does the Christian school need specific programs for religious formation? Or are these considered unnecessary?

– In the school situation as I see it conducive to the proclamation of the Gospel?

– What difficulties do I find at present which are an obstacle to the presentation of the Gospel message?

– What methods and procedures would be recommended for the proclamation of the Gospel message in the school situation today?

– What would be the difference in this school between the New Evangelization and that which is going on at present?

– How would you differentiate between a school which evangelizes and one that does not?

3. The Christian Educator and the New Evangelization

● The Christian educator is an educator, teacher, professor who teaches and forms students; but he does does it from a lived faith, from Gospel values.

● That is why he is an agent of evangelization, by means of his entire ministry, not only when he teaches Religion or when he speaks about God.

● The Christian educator not only transmits knowledge but his personal life also impresses his students as a true example of a believing man.

● The Christian educator is an agent of the pastoral ministry of the Church. His work becomes an apostolic ministry.

● In a Christian school, the Christian educator is part of the educational project of the entire community, to which he brings his life and his experience.

– In what measure is every Christian educator an evangelizer even when he is not a teacher of religion?

– What internal and personal demands fall upon the Christian educator by the fact he is an evangelizer?

– What is the role of the staff in a evangelizing school?

– What preparation is necessary so that a Christian educator can be effective not only as a teacher, but also as an evangelizer?

– How far does group commitment among the faculty go in order to achieve its evangelizing purpose.

– In other words, what must be the degree of living a community of faith for it to consider itself an evangelizing community?

4. The Student in the Christian School and the New Evangelization

● The student of a Christian School gradually discovers Gospel values. It is not just for himself, but it must be shared.

● Through the Christian values he acquires, the student grows as a believing person while accomplishing his daily duties. They reflect in his life, his school, his family, his environement.

● Christian values must bring the student to a commitment to social justice and a just order.

● It is the student of a Christian school who must be a real witness to human and evangelical values.

– Is the evangelized student capable of evangelizing?

– Does the student of the Christian school commit himself to the apostolate?

– Does the student who is evangelized feel that he possesses values which he must communicate?

– Is the student of the Christian school aware that the commitment to transform the world is a consequence of his faith?

– Does the student of the Christian school feel the need to always practise his religious formation in his daily life?

* * *

These questions can first be answered by considering the total picture, and then making specific applications to actual situations.

Bro. José María Valladolid

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PRAYERS
OF A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR (5)

**(1: 16-9–C-63; 2:17-13–C-73;
3: 18-15–C-79; 4: 19-12–C-81)**

* * *

GENTLENESS, PRUDENCE...

Lord,
the children we educate are persons.
We must remember that when we correct them.
Grant us, Lord,
the spirit of patience and understanding
so that when we correct or scold them
it will be for the good of the student
rather than
the relief of our frustration
or to get even.

Punishment and scolding when done with love
though they may hurt,
are like medicines that heal.

Lord, it would be so nice to know
that children and young people understand
that their faults and disobedience
must be corrected;
that the constraints and punishments
will be determined
by justice, kindness and understanding,
for their own real good.

To be an apostle-educator is a sublime mission;
it also has its suffering and difficulties.

Show us, Lord,
how to correct with gentleness and charity.
Move the hearts of our students
to admit their faults.
Strengthen their wills
that they may change their ways.

The prophet Nathan approached David kindly
when he upbraided him,
and David recognized his sin and repented.

Lord, keep us from giving vent to our anger
when we must correct or punish.
On the contrary,
help us to keep in mind the good of the student.

When we proceed with kindness and charity,
children and youth profit more.
So did David with Nathan:
«Lord, I have sinned».

Prudent correction helps those who receive it
to correct their faults.
When done with anger or passion,
the students withdraw from the teacher.
Corrections and punishments
given with love and zeal
are accepted
and become effective.

Lord,
make our hearts big enough and good enough
to correct with kindness
for the good of the students.

Lord,
prepare the souls
of these children and young people
to accept the soft sting of discipline
and to help them see how it will better
their lives.

Lord,
We really want the best for our students
and we are willing
to educate with discipline and gentleness.

* * *

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A MINISTER OF SALVATION

We are your co-workers, Lord.
Children are the field You wish to cultivate
through us
because You, Lord,
have confided to us the ministry of education.

Search the depths of our hearts;
grant us the strength to be your ministers,
grant us fortitude in the use of the talents
which You have given us.
And keep us from becoming mired in routine.

Each day we pray to You.
Each day we examine who we are and what we do..
Thanks for what You have done in us,
and we ask Your forgiveness for our forgetfulness.

You, Lord,
have given us numerous gifts and graces
to do what is right in our mission.
Grant us the will to live our consecration fully.

Lord,
You make no distinction
between the duties of our salvation
and the duties of our ministry.
As we lead and guide our students
we are at the same time saving our souls.

Lord,
we accept the responsibilities of education.
We also count on your help and support
for the success of our efforts.
Send Your grace and Your light
to make up for our ignorance and weakness.

Jesus, when You said:
«Go and teach all nations»
You sent us to instruct children and youth,
You sent us that they might learn piety.
You gave us the mission
to build the Young Church.

We thank You, Lord,
for giving us Your WORD – the Gospel,
and Your SACRAMENTS,
which sanctify and purify our lives
and which move the hearts of our students.

Children are special to You,
«Let the little children come to Me».
They are ready to receive Your grace.
Show us how to educate them to holiness
that they may be in Your image, Lord Jesus.

Children are weak and fragile.
They are easily led by their peers,
by comfort...

Lord,
we will be Your hands, Your eyes, Your lips
to sustain their wills
to direct their lives toward You.
We rely on Your grace.

Bro. Celestino Hernando

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THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

AND THE LASALLIAN FAMILY (1)

«We are in a new historical era. It demands:
clarity of vision
insight to analyze
united action» (Medellin 1968).

1. A GRAND PASTORAL PROJECT

Pope Paul VI said that to evangelize was the «joy and vocation proper to the Church, its deepest meaning» as he presented the Church that magnificent document Evangelii Nuntiandi which after 16 years continues even today to enlighten and inspire every Christian who aware of his Baptismal commitment and his responsibility to teach the Gospel.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II has called on the Church to undertake a grand pastoral project. We referred to it as the New Evangelization called it the «most important and fundamental task of our times». However, this project, in fact, does not originate with John Paul II. He, himself, says that «The Spirit has spoken to the Churches of today and His voice has been heard through the Ecumenical Council which it can rightly be said represents the foundation and commencement of the gigantic task of the evangelization of the modern world. We have reached a new turning point in the history of humanity where immensely varied and serious questions face the Church» (1).

The Pope, then, is shouldering the heritage of the Council of Vatican II and of Pope Montini as he formally announces the New Evangelization with these words: «The present time in the history of mankind requires a revivified transmision of the faith in order to announce to the men of today the perennial message of Christ, adapted to the actual conditions of living in today's world" (2).

It seems that it was on March 9, 1983, in an important speech to the assembly of CELAM in Port Au Prince (Haiti) that for the first time there was explicit and clear mention made of the New Evangelization. The talk was directed specifically to the Churches of Latin America which, numerically, will soon constitute half of the Catholic Church. It says: «The commemoration of a half millenium of evangelization will be truly significant if it is your commitment as Bishops united with your clergy and faithful, not to a re-evangelization, but to a new evangelization – new its zeal, in its methods, in its expression«.

The following year, on October 12, 1984, at the inauguration in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) of a novena of years in preparation for the celebration of 500 years of evangelization, the Pope presented another very important program to «the continent of hope» by making a very thorough analysis of the situation and identifying the challenges which existed in Latin America. He ended by stating: «The next centenary of the discovery and first evangelization calls us to a new evangelization of Latin America which can unfurl its energy as it did in its beginnings as

- a potential for sanctity
- a magnificent missionary effort
- a vast catechetical creativity
- a fruitful collegiality and union
- an evangelical struggle for the dignity of man

in order to awaken from the heart of Latin America a future of great expectations. It has a name: the civilization of love».

However, this grand project is not limited only to Latin America. Old Europe is also questioning itself about «the best way to announce the perennial message of the Gospel effectively and courageously at this time, and to reveal to the modern mind the the inscrutable riches of the mystery of Christ.» On October 7–11, 1985, the VI Symposium of the Council of Episcopal Conferences of Europe was held in Rome. The Pope addressed to the participants the famous discourse of October 11 in which he recognized that Europe «has undergone so many and such cultural, political, social and economic transformations that the whole matter of evangelization must be considered in completely new terms. We might even say that Europe «as it has been shaped by the complex events of the last century presents the most radical challenge encountered by the history of Christianity and of the Church». Therefore, he affirms that «the work of evangelization within the situation of Europe as it is today calls for a creative new synthesis between the Gospel and life».

If we were to continue quoting the texts of the present Pope we would never end, so much has he spoken on the subject. We might conclude with a quotation from Christifideles Laici which, as a document which synthesizes a path for the Church in modern times, says with great power and precision: «A great, challenging and magnificent enterprise has been confided to the Church: a new evangelization of which the modern world has dire need» (N° 64).

2. WHY A NEW EVANGELIZATION?

The above quotations already indicate the basic reasons why the Pope is proposing to the Church a new direction for its energies and mission in our contemporary world.

Nevertheless, for me it is important to develop this aspect a bit more because from the analysis of the situation and from the presentation of the needs we will draw the outline of our apostolic labors in such a way that they may truly be a response to actual problems.

Many of the addresses of the Pope subtly contain very astute analyses of the present situation of society and the Church. He does it humbly but clearly and without flinching when the Church is involved negatively in the process. On January 13, 1986 he said to the Pontifical Council on Culture: «Yes, we are on the threshold of the gigantic work of evangelization of the modern world which must be done on different terms. The world has entered an era of profound changes due to the amazing quantity of man's creations which threaten to destroy him unless he can integrate them into a spiritual and ethical vision. We are entering a new period of human culture and Christians find themselves faced with an enormous challenge».

On the 26th of November, 1986, in Sydney (Australia), he said: «In many ways the Gospel is firmly rooted in the life of society, but it is also true that the gap between the message of the Gospel and culture requires a new evangelization, a second evangelization. Sixteen years ago, my predecessor, Paul VI came here to this very place and spoke of the temptation to "reduce everything to an earthly humanism, to forget the spiritual and moral dimension of life and have no concern for the necessary relationship of man with the Cre-

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ator of all the good things he possesses, and with the Supreme Legislator for their use." This temptation is as old as life itself. But today we are being called by the Church and each of its members to come up with a new response. in many parts of the world, the most important problem is not the preaching of the Gospel to those who have not yet heard it as it was for the Apostles and for the many missionaries who have come after them. Today, the problem lies in preaching to those who have already heard it but who no longer respond to it.»

Representatives of the Catholic laity of the United States listed them in the Cathedral of San Francisco on September 18, 1987: «Every age poses **new challenges and new temptations** for the People of God on their pilgrimage, and our own is no exception. We face a growing **secularism** that tries to exclude God and religious truth from human affairs. We face an insidious **relativism** that undermines the absolute truth of Christ and the truths of faith, and tempts believers to think of them as merely one set of beliefs or opinions among others. We face a **materialistic consumerism** that offers superficially attractive but empty promises conferring material comfort at the price of inner emptiness. We face an alluring **hedonism** that offers a whole series of pleasures that will never satisfy the human heart».

At the Plenary Assembly of the Secretariat for Non-Believers which took place May 5, 1988, it was noted that the atheistic utopias of the Nineteenth Century were on the decline, and that the dangerous wave of secularization which was sweeping over the world had its dangers: «It reveals itself in consumer societies by hedonism, pragmatism, the search for efficiency without regard for ethical norms and by the neglect of the sacred character of life. All this leads too often to moral relativism and religious indifference.

One might think that this phenomenon exists only in the developed societies of the so-called First World. But this is not true. Even the developing countries find themselves enmeshed in this process, principally in the urbanized areas and among the intellectually cultured social classes where there is leadership from the economic, political and social sectors. And this is happening rapidly. The Pope calls attention to it in Christifideles Laici when he refers to those regions of the world which have preserved intact their traditions of piety and popular Christian spirituality, adding immediately that «this spiritual and moral patrimony today runs the risk of vanishinsg under the impact of many forces, the most outstanding among which are secularization and the growth of sects. Only a New Evangelization can assure the growth of a deep and pure faith which can make these traditions a powerful force within authentic freedom» (N° 34).

3. THE RESPONSE OF THE INSTITUTE.

Our Rule is the mature fruit of the 40th General Chapter. After 20 years of thought, experimentation and evaluation as suggested by Vatican II, the Brothers have produced a text of the Rule which is the «faithful expression of the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle and of the tradition of his Institute».

One of its most dynamic Articles clearly reveals what the Institute of the Brothers is determined to be. It is article 11:

«John Baptist de La Salle was deeply moved by the way in which "the children of the artisans and the poor" were abandoned and left to themselves. As a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this fact in relation to God's plan of salvation, he came to discern, in faith, what God wanted the mission of the Institute to be».

To respond in this same vein, to the same needs, the Institute is determined to be the presence of the evangelizing Church in the world today.

This solemn declaration places the mission of the Brother at the very heart of the mystery of the Church, a messianic people, sacrament of salvation, born of the evangelical life of Jesus and sent by Him to the whole universe as the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

But it is also a declaration made at a specific historic moment with its own characteristics to which we have previously referred. Therefore, the Institute takes up a specific commitment which it must implement, develop and bring to a successful conclusion. How will the Institute fulfil this determined commitment and by so doing respond to the urgent call of the Pope for a New Evangelization?

The Institute responds with a bold project of a Lasallian Family.

This grand evangelizing project would gather ideas together, stir up determination, revitalize the spirit of hundreds of Religious, seculars and priests who, within the Church, look upon themselves as spiritual followers of John Baptist de La Salle. Together they can respond with courage to the 6 needs of our times which the Brothers capitulants of 1986 clearly identified and presented as strategic challenges which the Institute should face with creativity and effectiveness for the extension of the Kingdom:

- The needs of the new generations
- The calls of the new evangelization
- The permanent calls of the poor
- The renewal of the Christian school
- The development of Christian educators
- The evangelization of culture. (Circ. 422, p. 32).

Since 1986, the Institute has committed itself to the growth and consolidation of all the members and the diverse groups which form the spiritual family of De La Salle. This was ratified with the publication of the "Letter to the Lasallian Family" of Feb 2, 1989.

Such a family is aware of its specific mission in the Church and desires to be guided by the Holy Spirit along new paths toward sanctity, apostolic commitments and witness.

True Lasallians, that is, all those who «find that we have a clear, strong and common reference point for our lives in St. John Baptist de La Salle» must say "yes" consciously, actively and responsibly to the invitation of the Church and especially the Institute, to work at the Christian education aspect of that wonderful adventure which is called "new Evangelization".

In conclusion, it is important to recall that «if abstention from commitment has always been inacceptable, our times make it even more so. It is not licit for anyone to remain idle» (3). «These are not times for fears, nor for leaving to others such difficult but sublime tasks» (4)..

Bro. Hernando Sebá López

(1) Sixth Symposium of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences. Oct. 11, 1985.
(2) Address in Santo Domingo, Jan. 25, 1979.
(3) Christifideles laici, 3.
(4) Address of John Paul II to Domund, 1985.

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«TRUE COOPERATORS WITH JESUS CHRIST»

HOMILY AT THE USA – TORONTO REGIONAL CONVOCATION II

(August 13, 1990)

Almost a year ago now as Hurricane Hugo was heading up the east coast of the United States, at the novitiate in Central New York tremendous winds preceded the storm; and I remember sitting in our glass-walled chapel on that particular Friday morning looking out at the white caps on the lake and at the leaves being torn from the surrounding trees. One of the novices was unsuccessfully attempting to secure our boat which was being pulled away from the shore, and so two of us went down and out into the water to help. All three of us working together were barely able to bring the boat to shore.

As I reflected later that morning on the experience, it suggested to me the image of so many parents today caught in the stormy conditions of our present social and cultural reality – parents finding their children being pulled away – and increasingly unable to bring their sons and daughters back to shore – parents overwhelmed and children in danger of being lost – parents in need of someone willing to accompany them into the turbulence – someone willing to assist them in the Christian guidance and formation of their children.

What also struck me on that particular Friday morning in Skaneateles was that the boat wasn't doing anything wrong; the boat was only doing what a boat does in a storm; and I believe the same can be said about the young people with whom we work today. Their behavior is most often an understandable response to the tremendous social and cultural upheaval of these final days of the twentieth century.

Far too many of these young people find themselves tossed about in a society replete with a tremendous cultural diversity and an unfortunate moral ambiguity and confusion. Too many are consumed by their own materialism and pursuit of instant gratification. For many, a tremendous peer group stress, rampant substance abuse, chronic low self-esteem, and poverty of love and affection are a daily reality. Many find themselves without sufficient or appropriate role models. Unfortunately, the time and energy of so many parents, an increasing number of whom are single, is dominated by the task of meeting the material support of their families; and so once again, as in the time of our Founder, we see parents in urgent need of our support and assistance.

Within this context, I suggest we hear again today the exhortation of John Baptist de La Salle to understand ourselves as one with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd of the gospel, who goes in search of the lost sheep to bring it back to the fold (MTR 4.1). In the real "poverty" and "abandonment" of North American youth today, we glimpse the awesome responsibility of our mission as true cooperators with Jesus Christ for the salvation of children (MTR 4.2).

For God so loved our world that, when we were in danger of being lost, God sent the beloved son Jesus Christ to bring us home (John 3:16 and Romans 5:1-11). De La Salle believed that God so loves these children that the Holy Spirit raised up our family in the Church and sent us out among them to help bring them home (MTR 1.3). I

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believe that, in the deepest center of so many individual Brothers today and in the heart of our aging and much humbled Institute, this same Holy Spirit continues to cry out and pray: Father, bring me home (Galatians 4:6) – a Spirit which cries out in the abandonment and needs of young people and their parents today – cries out among the too often fatherless urban poor, whose champions we once were – cries out from among an upwardly mobile middle class youth, so often lacking affection and spiritually abandoned by parents who know of God but too often don't know God – A Holy Spirit who cries out and prays to us from the depth of their distress: Bring me home (MSF 37).

I suggest to you tonight that with the prophet Jeremiah this Institute has in recent history – as our numbers have dropped by more than half and the entrance of new candidates has slowed to a trickle – been invited with Jeremiah to the potter's shed. «And so I (Jeremiah) went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at the wheel. And whenever the vessel he was making came out wrong, as happens with the clay handled by potters, he would start afresh and work it into another vessel, as potters do» (Jeremiah 18:1-8).

Brothers, can we any longer afford to doubt that it really is God who is acting decisively in the circumstances in which we find ourselves to recall and reclaim us to a more honest and authentic living of our own unique identity in the Church? In a world where teaching religion is like teaching a foreign language, the catechetical evangelization and re-formation of poor and abandoned youth in the lived love of God is our principal ministry. And yet, how many of us here tonight really believe the words of the Declaration that this world in which we live has more need than ever, even at the center of humanity's temporal pursuits, for a witness given by people who know and love God as a living being (11.4)? How many of us here tonight are really willing to pay the price, re-establish the priority, and allow Jesus Christ to be so wholly alive in us that everything we do gives unambiguous and irrefutable witness on behalf of the gospel... that who we are becomes a clear invitation to the people with whom we work to leave behind the glamour of worldliness and enter more fully into the glory of God's children? How many of us are willing to stand here together tonight and pray: Your kingdom come... your will be done here on earth... in my life and for these children?

In a few minutes, we stand again to renew the promises of our baptism. We stand around this table of eucharistic remembrance and pray with Jesus: Father, I remain committed – not my will but yours (Matthew 26:39). We stand with John Baptist de La Salle to re-consecrate ourselves to procure God's glory – the salvation of children – as far as we're able, without counting the cost, and in the manner required of us because we have the confidence that what we do is truly God's holy work.

And so in this moment of re-commitment, I invite you to be supported and strengthened by the very real cloud of witnesses that surrounds us on every side (Hebrews 12:1) – by our beloved Founder, by our saintly brothers (especially Benilde), surrounded by the young people for whom and with whom we toil, by the parents of our students and our Lasallian colleagues, and by the humble and very human brothers and sisters who surround us tonight and with whom we have the courage to stand tonight and continue to work and struggle, impelled by that mighty energy of Christ's which is so powerful a force within us (Colossians 1:29).

Br. William Mann

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A COMMUNITY

OF FAITH AND APOSTOLATE

(University of «El Bajio», Leon, Mexico)

«God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be save.» (John, 3:16-17).

The beginnings of the community

Our community began in October 1988 after two pastoral sessions directed by some married people. Among them was a professional, Ing. Jaime Palacios C. At this time, the community was composed of 14 university students majoring in Hotel Management and Tourism, Computer systems and Veterinary Medicine. The group held two meetings per week with these married people in order to prepare for entrance into pastoral work. In February 1989 it gave its first retreat.

Since it is very necessary to be well prepared and to grow in the Lord, the community itself made another retreat in May of the same year. However, this time it was a «Charismatic Initiation» session: i.e., an introduction into the movement of renewal in the Holy Spirit. Thus the group became Charismatic. From then on, the community meetings became prayer meetings and in this way adopted its own style of spiritual growth.

In June, the first Charismatic retreat took place in the University, only this time it was open to the entire student body. Earlier ones had been restricted to specific groups. 30 students attended, and decided to join our community. This enlarged group began to meet at two o'clock in the afternoon, which was the most convenient time for everyone, given the diversity of class schedules.

In October, another such retreat was made available, and this time 70 more students with a variety of majors attended. They also joined our community.

At present we have 90 members, all students of the University, and even a few alumni. It is a community of young people for young people divided into 5 ministries. It is led by three general coordinators plus a coordinator for each ministry, all under the general direction and with the support of Father Alfonso Garcia, a priest of the Order of Missionaries of the Holy Spirit.

The ministries of our community

The ministries we have at present are:

PRAYER: This supports all the activities of the community through dialogue with Our Lord and Our Mother Mary. Our special focus in this area is continuous prayer for the sick.

MUSIC: Its principal purpose is to praise the Lord. This group selects the songs for Masses at the University chapel, meetings of the community and for retreats.

LITURGY: Preparation of the liturgies are designed to make known the Liturgical Year as well as to enhance the meaning of the Mass. This group assists the priest, chooses readers, presents the petitions, and arranges for the presentation of the gifts at the Offertory of the Mass.

WELCOME AND SERVICE: This group assures a cordial reception to those attending the Mass, retreat or other University activities. They prepare the site to be used and see to its cleanliness and order.

EVANGELIZATION: This ministry gives the retreats. Its principal purpose is to "evangelize the baptized"; i.e., to bring the good news that Christ is alive! He is the Savior and Lord of all who receive Him.

Each ministry holds its own meetings, usually from 1 to 3 per week. There is a general meeting of all ministries from 2-4 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Evangelization

At this point, we will try to explain how this evangelization is carried out.

In order to decide on the time for each session, the community prays in order to discern which would be the most appropriate date. With the date set, the next step is to prepare those yet unkown whom the Lord will choose to meet. This is done by inviting individuals indirectly with expressions like: «You may be seeking, but there is also One who seeks you», etc. If the person is interested, he/she is told when the next meeting will take place. All the while, the committee for the ministry of evangelization is praying to discern who will be the ones to lead the session. The choice is made by a discernment on the part of the three general coordinators and the coordinator of the ministry committee. When the decision is announced, the chosen evangelizers begin to prepare the specific theme of the Kerygma.

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The Kerygma is the first news that Christ is living, that new life is growing, that it is an experience of faith, that it is really **the** good news and that it is the power of the Holy Spirit at work.

It is a **new life** because whoever has met Christ and has felt the first thrill of liberation is not only different but totally new.

It is **an experience of faith** because it is by faith that God manifest Himself to us in many ways.

It is really **good news** because the Gospel is news. It is the joyous proclamation of the salvation of each man through the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ Jesus.

It is **the power of the Holy Spirit** because through Him we belong to Christ. He gives witness to Christ in our hearts and enables us to proclaim Him as our Lord. It is He who enriches the community with a variety of fruits and charisms to proclaim the Gospel with power.

The object of this presentation is to try to begin, with the power of the Holy Spirit, a kingdom of justice and love in which men, as the people of God, can live here and now with that new life given to us by Jesus.

The Kerygma comprises nine themes:
1. The love of God
2. Sin
3. Jesus Saviour of the world
4. Faith and conversion
5. The kingdom of Jesus
6. Toward a new life
7. The promise of the Father to you
8. Pentecost today: the Holy Spirit, His fruits and charisms
9. Community, the body of Christ.

Each theme is developed by two evangelizers who must also give witness by their own lives to the change the Lord has wrought in them.

The retreat lasts two days, generally on a Saturday and Sunday. During the retreat there is a renewal of Baptismal promises, renunciation of esoteric practices, astrology, etc., and a public proclamation that Jesus is the Lord of our lives. Both days, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed the whole time and the Prayer Committee (ministry) maintains a continuous vigil. There are also dynamic group sessions as well as discussion periods to clarify points of doubt and uncertainty. A prayer for interior healing is offered for all who are making the retreat. It ends with the Holy Mass and the imposition of hands as a sign of the effusion of the Holy Spirit.

Our experiences

Within our community, the Lord has manifested Himself in various ways through the different gifts and charisms with which the Lord has gifted us. For example: the gift of tongues, prophesy, visions, interior healing, prayer, and in most of us, the gift of the word of the Lord through the reading of the Bible.

Once the whole community was asked to pray for a young man who had just been diagnosed for leukemia. During two general meetings, we prayed for him, that the will of God be fulfilled in his regard, but we had complete confidence that He would hear our petition that he would get well. We had all had an experience of His wonderful love and we wanted our brother to feel it also. A week later, at our general assembly, we learned that, having completed his courses of study, the young man was completely cured. Our merciful Father had heard our prayer and performed His work of love.

Plans for the future

For this semester, we plan another retreat for initiates and also one for continuous formation. These latter retreats foster growth in our knowledge of the faith as well as closer union with God. God willing, it will be on initiation to the Scriptures.

The Prayer Ministry will begin visiting hospitals and nursing homes. As a Lasallian group, we will work in the missions of Durango and Saltillo. We are remodelling a hall which has been assigned to us as a chapel. We intend to combine Lasallianization with charismatic activities through the formation of new communities in our sister schools. We consider Evangelization as the specific apostolate of Lasallianism. In all this, we have the authorization of the Institute through the Superiors of the Congregation and the District.

INDIVISA MANENT

In the name of the community,
Ing. Edel Maria Espino Ledezma

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40 DAYS

IN TOGO

(A Missionary Summer – 1990)

It is not easy to say a few words about an exceptionally vivid experience which lasted for 40 days. Well they know who have experienced it previously, as this gratifying venture is really not that uncommon.

For the summer of 1990, the project offered to the District of Catalonia was located in TAMI, north of Togo. Some useful information for future participants would indicate that TOGO is a Republic of Western Africa, situated between BURKINA FASO (formerly Upper Volta), GHANA (formerly THE GOLD COAST), and BENIN. Geographically it is a corridor 700 km long funnelling down to a 52 km wide strip of Atlantic seacoast. Its entire width varies from 45 to 140 km. Its surface covers 57.000 km^2. Its tropical climate varies from North to South. In the North we find the sahelian plain which is the poorest and most undeveloped area. During the dry season from October to April the scarcity of water is very acute because of the lack of springs, water-holes and dams which could hold the abundant waterfall of the rainy season from May till September.

Our Rural Formation Center is in the northern region, about 35 km from the border with BURKINA FASO. It belong to the diocese of DAPAONG and since its foundation in 1973 it has been run by the Brothers of our Institute.

This Rural Formation Center is designed to accommodate 24 families, in very simple houses. Besides these, there is a residence for the native supervisor and his family, plus the residence of the Brothers. There are classroom buildings and other provisions for the storage of products and machinery. About 120 acres of land are under cultivation and at the end of the growing season (which coincides with the rainy season) all that is produced reverts to the "students" known as "stagers". This includes cotton, peanuts, corn, rice, millet and soy beans. Because of an absolute lack of water during the dry season, all cultivation is at a standstill and the "students" return to their villages. The Brothers work at digging wells wherever that is possible, with the help of the local people.

PROJECT «TAMI 1990»

The possibility of doing something in the missions during the summer is coordinated through the District, which pays for the round trip air fare. In my case, the very efficient arrangements were made by Brother Auxiliary Visitor Juan Lluis Casanonas in conjuction with PROYDE. It is the responsibility of those in charge of the Missions in the Central District to propose projects with the advice and consent of the Council of the missionary Subdistrict.

Project «Tami – 1990» consisted in the "reforestation of a sector in the Rural Center", working and living with the Community of Brothers and with the local people, particularly the 24 families who are called "stagers" at the center.

The objective was easily attained by the target date. However the most important part of this experience for me was not so much my contribution to the labor involved, which I greatly enjoyed, but especially the personal impact of my direct contact with the difficult realities with which these people must live daily. From a distance it is impossible even to imagine... with hindsight, I can honestly say that I did not go "to give" but rather "to receive".

"The missionary experience" this summer provided two basic experiences:

The first was an experience of community in the most authentic sense of the "Lasallian Family" as we conceive of it today. In fact, the members of this group (4 Brothers and 4 laymen from La Salle in Catalunya, plus a young couple – he a teacher and she a doctor – surgeon and student of medicine) joined the Community of Brothers of Tami and shared the work and the pangs of adaptation common to missionaries everywhere. We shared daily prayer, Mass, meals, meditation and relaxation... as members of a family. Elbow to elbow , we were witnesses of the total commitment of the true missionary, the surrender of self to the reality of Africa, the simple and generous effort to live the African way, the close and easy social contacts between the various missionary communities, both male and female, and the belonging to the Church of Togo – the whole diocese of Dapaong. We worshipped with the people on Sundays, in their many villages, the African way, to the rhythm of tom-tom and dance.

Every two or three days we had a meeting to review our group living and to share our personal impressions.

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This experience alone would be sufficient to consider 40 days in the missions as time well spent.

Still, an even greater benefit came to me. I had the opportunity of living close to the people of this place; i.e., to the 24 families whose homes as "stagers" were all around the Brothers' residence. The three doctors in our group had an intimate experience of the life and death of these persons as well as of the sanitation problems endemic to their situation.

As a final summary of all these thought-provoking and unforgettable experiences I can testify to:

- The extreme simplicity and poverty of this people and their way of life.
- Their capacity for suffering.
- Their humble and open approach to all of us.

Even admitting that our own values sometimes do not make much sense, we were deeply shocked to see the degradation to which the women are sometimes subjected. Unfortunately they are treated as mere slaves, as simple instruments for work and reproduction, entirely subject to the whim of the men who can buy them, sell them and even mutilate them at will...

What is the role of the Center in this context? Right off we could say that it addresses the work of elevating the human person by realistic and practical means which are bearing fruit very gradually – African style.

This Center at Tami, placed in an essentially agricultural region is arouing the awareness of the farmers to new possibilities and providing them with the means to improve. Concomitsantly, the intellectual foundation is being provided through classes in which literacy is being stimulated and a higher view of humanity, both men and women, is being acquired, which will directly influence the position of women.

All this is fundamental when coupled with the witness of a Religious community whose commitment adds the dimension of the values of God's Kingdom. Here too everything is at "the rhythm of the African way".

The diocese of Dapaong is only 3% Catholic. Preaching the Gospel is not something easily done in a region which is dominated by an ancestral religion of animism and fetiches with the added complication of an aggressive moslem infiltration.

Accordingly there is only a small number of Christian "stagers" at the Center. However, everyone respects the small Christian group with its own native catechist. These people meet weekly to devoutly offer the Sacrifice of the Mass in their own language and style with the presence of the Brothers, whose prestige among them as good and devoted men, is very apparent.

The matter of language does not make the work any easier. In Togo, with a population of 2 1/2 million, there are about 50 dialects. In the North "moba" predominates. Yet, the cultural language is French which is taught in every school.

The school holds a very important place because it is considered as the essential factor in determining the future of the country, and it is also the main instrument of evangelization. Togo is a young country because 60% of the population is under 20 years of age. The Christian Brothers have an active role in the academic development of the country, especially in Togoville and Dapaong. For some time, now, a Brother is the Director of Catholic Schools in the diocese of Dapaong, as well as the coordinator and supervisor of a considerable number of teachers of rural schools. Presently, this is Brother Enrique Cepero. His predecessors were Brothers whom we knew and respected very highly: Brother Jaume Godoy at the beginning, and later, Brother Fernando Izaguirre who died recently in Zaire.

I will close with a very sincere observation which, I am sure, is shared by all those who worked at "missionary Summer – 1990": It is very worth our while to help these good people in any way that we possibly can. They need it desperately and receive it most appreciatively.

AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE

We did not expect to find an English-speaking group in TOGO who, like ourselves, had come to contribute a summer of work. They were in the same diocese of Dapaong in the mission of Boma. We had several get-togethers with them. The group was comprised of 3 Brothers of whom 2 were from Great Britain (Bros. John Deeney and Anthony Rothwell) and 1 from Malta (Bro. Mario Zammit). They were accompanied by a lay teacher and 8 Seniors from our schools in Great Britain (4 boys and 4 girls). They worked for 5 weeks at the construction of a meeting room, 2 small sleeping rooms and a kitchen for the Parish of this mission.

Bro. Angel Cirera

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INTRODUCTION

LASALLIANA is an Institute publication of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

It contains articles providing information and research, and stimulating reflection
about topics of interest to Brothers
for lay teachers who work with the Brothers
and for those belonging to the Lasallian Family who wish to know the Institute better.

LASALLIANA welcomes contributions from members of our Lasallian Family.
Articles come from all over the world.
They are intended to help readers know and understand the present-day situation
of the Institute with its rich diversity of persons, countries, cultures, thinking and experiences.

LASALLIANA seeks
to reach all Brothers' communities
all Lasallian educational establishments.

Would like to be available in all our reading rooms and places where meetings take place.
Would like many of its articles to provide material for reading and for personal and community reflection.

LASALLIANA publishes
studies on the Founder, his times, his life, his writings, his spirituality, his achievements...
on the Institute, its history, its evolution, its commitments, its members...
material for reflection on the educational apostolate,
on how it is exercised, its demands, the different forms of involvement...
on the educational process, on pedagogy, on advances in education...;
describes the work being done by the Institute, celebrations, events, etc.

LASALLIANA reaches
communities, Lasallian establishments and other persons and organisations linked to the Institute,
through the Brother Visitor of each District,
who orders, receives and distributes copies.

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These will be provided while stocks last (certain issues are no longer available).

Br. Jose Maria Valladolid

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THE TERCENTENARY OF A FORGOTTEN EDUCATOR

CHARLES DEMIA (1/2)

1989 was the tercentenary of the death of a priest and educator, Charles Demia, who upset the peace and quiet of Lyon by publishing a fierce little book describing the plight of the children and young people of the town and suggesting solutions for this problem.

In 1966, in a Lyon library, I had an opportunity to examine the writings and biographies of this eminent and determined educator who was a contemporary of De La Salle and 14 years his senior. I myself had written about him in my book "La Salle, Patron del Magisterio". Brother Saturnino Gallego, in his two volume work on De La Salle (published by BAC), refers to Demia on 18 separate occasions. The writings of Demia, he said, "made an enormous impression all over the country" (Vol. 1, p. 112). As a result of reading him, Canon Roland of Rheims was inspired to involve himself with education to the extent of founding a Congregation of Sisters. Shortly before his death, he entrusted this Congregation to the care of De La Salle, and it is still in existence today. It was on the threshold of these Sisters' house that there took place the historic, or rather, the providential meeting which led De La Salle progressively to devote his entire life too to education. Thus there are three links in the chain: Demia, Roland and De La Salle.

In 1687 and 1688, De La Salle wrote four times to Demia, even sending him some money for some books he wanted him to buy. It is a pity than none of these letters has been found up till now, but Demia's notes refer to an exchange of letters.

Demia was born in Bourg, to the north of Lyon, in 1637. He was educated by the Jesuits in his native town with its population of 6.000. When he was 23 and had completed his law studies he entered the seminary in Lyon. A few months later, he joined the seminary of St. Sulpice in Paris. Three years later he was ordained.

For several months he preached at Blois, Tours, Poitiers and in the surrounding area.

He finally settled down in Bourg. Here he gave proof of his great apostolic zeal by teaching children catechism, helping the poor and by organising monthly talks for the local clergy.

In 1664 he was living at Laon, a town of about 70.000 inhabitants. The archbishop, Cardinal de Neuville, Primate of all the Gauls, soon realized what an exceptional person Demia was, and gave him various responsibilities, the last of which was to be "The Promoter General of the archbishopric". This entailed having personal contact with the clergy, the parishes and the work they undertook. «It was during his visits as Promoter that he was struck by the ignorance and depravity of young people, especially among the working classes. It was then that the idea of the educational apostolate came to him, and he set to work to organise it» ("Charles Demia", Rynois, Lyon 1937, p. 31).

In 1666, he wrote his famous "Remonstrances" to the town authorities, drawing their attention to the problems involved in the education and instruction of working class children.

The Larousse definition of "remontrance" is "a reproachful remark, warning, reprimand". Formerly, "Remontrances: remarks drawn up by the Parlement of Paris to draw the King's attention to the possible disadvantages of an edict".

Demia wanted to "demonstrate" the mistake the authorities were making by neglecting the education of the poor.

Gabriel Compayre, an expert in this matter, writes as follows: «reading it, you would think it was setting out the reasons for a modern piece of primary education legislation which called for the creation of schools» (Rynois, op. cit. p. 35).

Its title is quite long, especially when you realise how short the actual work is: "Remonstrances made to the Provosts of the Merchants, municipal magistrates and leading citizens of the town of Lyon with regard to the need and usefulness of Christian schools for the instruction of poor children».

What was the result of this? In spite of the author's eloquence and the soundness of his reasoning, «there was no reaction... But if the authorities did nothing, private enterprise was moved to act... The first school... opened on January 9th 1667» ("Souvenir des fêtes du troisième centenaire", Mgr. Lavallée). «Following the reading of the "Remontrances", the Gentlemen belonging to the Company (name not given) promised to give annually the sum of 200 livres to pay the salary of a schoolmaster in the St. George district» ("Vie de M. Demia", Faillon, Rusand, Lyon 1829, p. 55).

Demia returned to the charge. He wrote another paper in 1668 explaining his reasons, this time more fully and more subtly than in his first. It is this second edition, which we think is better, that we will analyse rapidly and illustrate with some extracts so that the reader can judge its merits for himself. Demia's reasoning is still relevant for a big part, even perhaps a major part, of Brazil. The edition of the "Remontran-

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ces" we shall be referring to is the one contained in Faillon's biography (pp. 487-504) which we have already quoted: «This text is very important and not very well known in our days. We reproduce it in full at the end of this work» (Faillon, p. 56). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in this article are taken from here.

Demia begins by praising the interest shown in the town by the leading citizens: «The outstanding proofs of zeal given at all times by the Provosts of the Merchants and by the municipal magistrates of the city of Lyon to make it one of the best policed in all the Kingdom, and the piety of its leading citizens, have caused some persons to draw to the attention of the Gentlemen of the Consulate and other important people living in Lyon, that the best way of crowning the splendour and magnificence of this great city is to establish Christian schools in it, where the poor of both sexes can be instructed without payment while they are still young» (p. 487).

Next the author shows the importance of such an undertaking: «There is nothing more worthy of the attention and care of the magistrates, since on it depend happiness and public tranquillity. These can be maintained only if individuals fulfil their duties to God, their country and their family. Now, it is imposible to do this if young people are not instructed at an early age... since all they bring into this world is ignorance, sin and a great inclination to evil» (p. 487).

«Is it not remarkable», says Compayre, «that a man living in the 17th century should use the grand word "country" (patrie) which was hardly used in his days, and that on the other hand, he forgets sometimes to speak of the King and of duties to the King?» (Rynois, p. 35).

The rich have the wherewithal to become educated. «But the poor... their preoccupation with staying alive makes them forget to teach them (the children) to live well. Having been brought up badly themselves, they cannot pass on a good education they have never had» (p. 488).

A little further on, he remarks with some bitterness: «This education of the children of the poor working class is totally neglected, although it is of the highest importance for the State, since they outnumber everybody else in it; and since it is as important, and even more important, to run public schools for them rather than colleges for children of well off families» (p. 489).

What are the results for young people of such negligence? «An extraordinary ignorance of God, whom they are nevertheless obliged to know, love and serve, if they wish to share in his Kingdom. But how will they know if they have no teachers to instruct them? How will the teachers instruct them is no one supports them? Who will support them, if the city authorities, the parish priests and the churchwardens in each parish do not shoulder this cost?» (p. 489).

He then rejects what must have been a standard,objection that «young people could certainly obtain this knowledge by means of sermons and parish catechism lessons» (idem).

Why does this solution not satisfy him? The zealous champion of schools then indulges in a little exaggeration: «Since some do not go to them and those that do get no benefit from them at all, either because most of the lessons given there are beyond their grasp, or because the divine seed that is sown there is often stifled by corrupt nature and bad company...» (p. 490).

Demia, it would seem, was aware that some people did not value theological arguments very highly, and so he hastens to describe the disastrous social consequences of a lack of education. The picture he paints is a truly distressing one:

«Badly brought up young people normally become indolent. The next thing that happens is that they spend their time in the streets, they gather at crossroads and indulge most often in licentious conversation. They become rebellious, free-thinkers, gamblers, blasphemers, argumentative. They become drunk, lascivious, they steal and they rob... As the most corrupt members (of the State), they will contaminate the rest of the body if the torturer's whip, the galleys of princes or the gibbets of Justice do not rid this world of these poisonous serpents...» (p. 491).

This is a picture of childhood and youth. What about adults? «It is difficult to find trustworthy servants and good workmen... you see so many layabouts and drifters in the streets. The only thing they know how to do is to eat, drink and give birth to unhappy wretches» (p. 492). This was the truly vicious circle that the school had to break.

Demia does not forget girls, whose «good education... is no less necessary for the glory of God and the public good» (idem). Then, with great pathos, he asks the following questions: «What do you think the origin is of so much disorder and jealousy in homes, of so many houses of ill-fame, of so many abandoned children in hospitals, of so much public immorality, if not the fact that too little attention has been paid to the education of girls, who have been left in ignorance? They fall into idleness, then into deceitfulness, rebelliousness, inconstancy and finally into that wretched state which is the usual reef on which a girl's virtue normally founders» (p. 493).

And so just as «the means has been found to improve the clergy and religious houses by establishing schools called seminaries and novitiates, so there is no other way to dry up the source of so many disorders except by setting up small schools to instruct the children of the poor people» (p. 493).

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THE TERCENTENARY OF A FORGOTTEN EDUCATOR

CHARLES DEMIA (2/2)

And what are the fruits of these schools? Demia becomes enthusiastic when he starts describing the society of the future made up of well educated and instructed members: «By this means, factories and workshops will be gradually filled with good apprentices who will subsequently be able to become excellent master craftsmen... It will not be difficult to rid the town of houses of ill fame, since idleness and poverty, which are the two causes of prostitution among women, will be banished from it...» (p. 494).

The author speaks also of gifts that are wasted for want of cultivation. One would discover in the ranks of the poor «people who were as much, and at times more, gifted in the arts, sciences and virtue than the rest of minkind» (p. 495). «These public schools would be also like academies of perfection for the poor children. In them the fiery passions of youth would be tamed and submitted to reason, their minds enlightened by the virtues they would be taught, their memory filled with all the good things they would hear, and their wills stimulated by the examples of virtue they would see practised there» (p. 495).

This enthusiastic educator realises that some people will stray from the path that has been traced out, but he thinks they will eventually return to it. His optimism knows no bounds with regard to the results of education: «It is absolutely certain that good habits acquired in youth are only rarely lost, and that the seed sown in their minds at an early age will bear fruit sooner or later, so much so, that, if sometimes you see them straying from their duty at a certain time, they return to it much more easily at another. One can say that they have been sanctified by the yoke of the Lord that they have been made to bear since childhood» (p. 496).

Also he sees the school as a sort of job centre or professional advisory centre. The schools «would serve also, if you like, as skill centres. Well-off people could go there and sign on someone to work in their house, or somebody else to work in their shop. Some even could be helped to continue their studies. Thus one could send out these little workers, made perfect in this academy of virtue, into the Lord's vineyard (Matt. 20), and employ them, each according to his talents and ability» (p. 495).

In his enthusiasm to prove his point, Demia advances overwhelming arguments in favour of establishing free schools for poor children, and he paints a marvellous picture of the city in which the inhabitants have been properly educated. Having let himself go for a while, Demia adds other arguments based on authority to support his point of view: «Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church are full of passages which confirm the need for a good education. It is enough to indicate here a few instances as in Job chap. 2, Jeremiah chap. 3, the whole of Ecclesiastes. St. Chrysostom wrote a treatise on the subject. St. Jerome wrote the epistle "Ad Letam...". The great Gerson, although chancellor of the first university in the world, had such great esteem for these small schools that he was not ashamed to be involved with them» (p. 497).

He draws attention to the recommendations of the Council of Trent, and invokes the decrees of Sovereign Pontiffs (Alexander III) and royal statutes.

Whose responsibility is it to establish these schools? It belongs to the parishes and the holders of authority, «commonly called the fathers of the people. Certainly, by establishing these schools, they would have an extra claim to this title, and would be so in a more excellent way than their natural fathers, since these latter, having given them their being, have left them only misery and vice as their inheritance in a life that often ends in everlasting death. The former, however, make up for what is lacking in means and ability on the part of the others, by providing them with instruction which procures for them a second life which is much more precious than the first, and whose conclusion can only be very happy» (p. 500).

That is why «the alms of a good education would be more profitable and worthwhile than any other» (p. 501).

With a great deal of tact, he wants to harness the good will of the «magistrates (who) worked so successfully to bring prosperity to the citizens of Lyon, making it one of the most important cities by its trade, one of the most harmonious by its building, one of the best policed by its regulations. Their vigilance extended even to the condition of the streets and the mud at crossroads. There is good reason to hope that they will not let such a favourable opportunity pass by to make their name famous for posterity, but will work for the spiritual good of this city through the good education of poor children» (p. 502).

Finally, and the tract ends in this way: «It is to be hoped also that His Lordship the Archbishop, whose zeal for the salvation of his flock is matched only by his solicitude for the good of this city... will not let this occasion pass by to give paternal signs of his piety and zeal to so many poor children who implore him by means of this crude piece of writing; and signs also of

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his authority in support of this work which is so important for the glory of God, the good of the State, the benefit of the individual, the advantage of the city. Having become endowed, by means of this establishment, with the crowning mark of beauty, which was seemingly the only thing lacking to make it perfect, it will be able to serve as a perfect model for the other cities of the Kingdom» (p. 504).

What repercussions followed this new offensive? «The magistrates, taking note of these remonstrances, met together on December 30th 1670, and decided to pay the sum of 200 livres each year out of public funds, to be used to establish a public school where children would be taught the principles of the Christian religion **and even** reading and writing» (Faillon, p. 61). The ending of this paragraph is strange, because Demia never separated secular studies and religion in the schools.

Beginnings were difficult, like the departure of a sailing boat. Once clear of the port, however, the sails fill with wind from the open sea. Demia founded 16 schoos in Lyon, and others in the surrounding area and towns: at Bourg, Saint Etienne, Villefranche, Saint Chamond...

let us now look at how the day was organised in Demia's schools (Cf. "Reglements"):

In the morning, there was class from 7.30 to 11. Prayer, catechism, lunch, reading, writing. On Mondays: arithmetic. On Tuesdays: politeness. On Saturdays: spelling.

In the afternoon, class started at 1.30 (2 in summer) and went on till 4. Same programme as in the morning.

From time to time, "debates" were organised, covering the parts of the programme that had been explained in each subject. This exercise obliged the pupils to assimilate what they were taught.

The teaching was free (the teachers were not allowed to accept either money or presents from the parents) and compulsory. Demia seems to have been the first person ever to acknowledge the State's responsibility in this matter.

He recommended methods that appealed to the imagination like, for example, teaching reading by using little cubes of wood (like dice) with letters or syllables written on them.

With regard to spelling, he suggested a form of simplification which is still being called for in France today: the elimination of letters without any phonetic value (for example, the "p" in "bapteme"), the suppression of useless or double consonants ("afaire" instead of "affaire", "aporter" instead of "apporter"), the replacement of "y" by "i" ("moien", "emploier").

One thing he insisted upon was perhaps revolutionary for his day: all pupils had to have a medical examination: «No child will be accepted without having been previously examined by a doctor or surgeon to make sure he is not suffering from a contagious disease» (Rynois, p. 45).

The training of teachers was also one of his basic concerns: «His responsibility as Director General gave him the right to inspect all schools... He found that most of the teachers (men and women) were ignorant not only of the methods of reading and writing properly, but also of the principles of religion. There were heretics among them, ungodly people, and some who had exercised vile professions» (Faillon, p. 81). Would this be the reason why «Mr. Demia did not want his schools to be run by lay people»? (idem p. 80). He trained his teachers in the community or seminary of St. Charles.

He founded a congregation of teaching Sisters, the «Sisters of St. Charles» who «are still an important and flourishing congregation to this day» (Rynois, p. 53), with a number of houses in particular in Brazil (Petropolis, Parana and S. Catarina). They have inherited the enterprising spirit and zeal of this great and dynamic apostle of popular schools in the second half of the 17th century, Fr. Charles Demia.

He died in Lyon on October 23rd 1689, at the age of 53. «The great city organised a magnificent funeral for him. The 1.600 pupils of the schools he had founded were there, with their schoolmasters and mistresses, heading a triumphal procession made up of an immense crowd and of the leading citizens» (Rynois, p. 32).

Bro. Henrique Justo

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THE HEROIC VOW

or

The daring of a man of faith and obedience

When John Baptist de La Salle suggested to two of his Brothers to join him in an irrevocable commitment «to bring about with all their ability and efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools», he was, according to Blain, in a state of great perplexity.

The word "perplexity", which is used again a few pages later in connection with M. Baudrand's refusal to authorise the opening of a novitiate at Vaugirard, is at the same time strange and revealing. Blain does not use the word confusion or despondency, much less discouragement. One has the impression of almost hearing the words of the Most Holy Virgin Mary saying to the Angel: «How will this come about?» In fact De La Salle had received a mission «to establish the Society of the Christian Schools», and everything seemed to be collapsing.

Through obedience John Baptist discovers his mission

He was not yet 40 years old and for 12 years now his life had taken a direction which was quite different from what he had imagined. And it was not his doing. When he looked back on his life (Mary comes to mind again: «she pondered all this in her heart») as he did in his «Memoir on the Beginnings»: «I would never have thought of it before. It was not as if anyone had ever suggested the idea to me»; or at the end of his life in his last words: «I adore in all things the conduct of God in my regard», he was aware that it was God who had called him to establish this work. This was so much so that, when he speaks to the Lord of it, it is in terms of OPUS TUUM.

There had been in fact a whole series of unforeseen events:

1678: The death of M. Rolland and the responsibility he received from him to take care of the Sisters of the Child Jesus.

1679: The meeting with Adrien Nyel on the doorstep of the Sisters' house, and the opening of the first school.

1680: The care that he is led to take of the schoolmasters.

1681: Taking them into his own house so as to be able to follow them more closely.

1682: The move together to a house in the Rue Neuve, and the beginning of a community. They call themselves Brothers.

1683: He gives up his canonry "which leaves him".

1684: He distributes his goods to the poor after the intervention of the Brothers.

1685: The replacement of a Brother in class. By this date he has already buried at least two Brothers.

He did all this after much discernment and prayer, and consultation with spiritual counsellors and directors. He never made decisions casually.

He was convinced, therefore, that this was God's will. In Meditation 57, second point, he has the following to say: «Compare what you do purely through obedience and what you do through your own impulse, and look upon the former as the work of God...»

Is this failure?

In the early days, in Rheims, Rethel, Laon, Guise and Paris, everything went well though not without difficulties.

And then «the seminary for country schoolmasters which he had begun with such great success... disappears... The seminary for the young Brothers he had called to himself in Paris» also disappears. Of the sixteen Brothers he had left in Rheims and

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the surrounding region, eight had gone. «An additional source of sorrow was that for four whole years only one subject joined». What is more, Brother Henri L'Heureux had died, he himself had been seriously ill. What was happening?

In faith John Baptist reflects on his obedience

And so, what was happening? He was in the same situation as he had been when he started, or almost.

Had he not done all that was necessary? And yet, he was aware that he had done all that he could or had to. What was there still to be done? «More?» as Vincent de Paul had said before him.

He does not want failure, if failure it is, to be put down to his deficiency, negligence or his weakness.

Not that he is afraid of failure in itself, if this is God's will. But he believes the work is willed by God, and so he must do everything in his spower to ensure that the work succeeds.

He takes stock:
- some Brothers have left
- some Brothers are ill or tired
- some Brothers are weakening spiritually
- there are no more candidates

So these are the areas he will tackle with the means at his disposal.

There has to be a commitment: even if only three of us remain. Some means has to be found to enable the Brothers to rest and to nourish them spiritually.

A novitiate has to be set up.

These are the areas in which he can do something.

The rest:
Brothers leaving
the death of Brother Henri L'Heureux
the opposition he encounters
his health problems

It all depends on God.

And so, this is what he undertakes to do and this is the enterprise in which he associates the two Brothers. It is a challenge thrown down to the Lord, if one can speaks in such terms.

A creative obedience: «Domine, Opus tuum».

At this point we can take up the 3rd point of Meditation 77: «Despite the irregularity of a community, God always has some faithful servants who maintain its true spirit. The Lord reserves to himself some men, as he told Elias, whose «knees have never bowed to Baal», that is to say, men who are on their guard against the spirit of the world and who observe their Rule and the practices of community as far as they can. They keep the fear of the Lord, and prevent God from destroying the community, as he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah... It is to these that Jesus Christ (says) that they must avoid the company of the others in order not to share in their irregularity, and in order not to be affected by the contagion of their bad example. They must raise their mind to God in mental prayer. Pray that God may always preserve his spirit in your community, and often repeat with David: «Do not banish me from thy presence; do not take thy holy spirit from me».

This cry is full of pathos and reveals a critical situation. When did he express himself in this way? Was it at that point? And if not, what was it in connection with, or was it simply inspired by the Gospel for the 24th Sunday?

This is not the impression given by the decisions he takes. They are all very positive: they do not hark back to the past but look forward to the future. The task ahead is to ensure that this Society is established and firmly established, because «the need for it in the Church is very great».

A fortunate crisis, when all is said and done, even if all the circumstances are not completely clear. It shows us a man of God, sure of the mission entrusted to him, and who seeks by all the means he can to respond to it effectively.

A good lesson for all of us today, who tend so much, if one can say so, to fall into despair. On this third centenary of the Heroic Vow, what remains for us is one single conviction, a conviction that was re–affirmed by the last General Chapter: «God does not abandon "his work", but "it pleases him to make it bear fruit day by day"» (Rule 141).

Brother Joseph Le Bars

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SAINT DE LA SALLE – PATRON OF TEACHERS

When, in 1950, Pope Pius XII responded to the suggestion that teachers all over the world should have their own patron saint, one whose life and example would inspire them in their daily work among children and young people, he offered them one of the great pioneers of education, a Frenchman, Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

At the time when only privileged children, whose parents could afford to pay fees, went to school, he made it possible for boys, whose parents were struggling poor, to receive basic instruction in schools where reading, writing and arithmetic were taught, and a good Christian education provided. But, much more than this, he saw how necessary it was to have competent teachers, and spent his life providing them. In doing so, he became the father of teacher training and the founder of a teaching Order, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, now generally called De La Salle Brothers. He was not an academic theorist, but a practical organiser.

His gentleness and sensitivity came from the refined upbringing he enjoyed in the cosy atmosphere of a loving family, sufficiently well-off to be insulated from the hardships of the seventeenth century, and intensely Christian in its understanding of life. His father was a magistrate of the Presidial Court of Rheims; his mother, as can be imagined, loving and busy, with seven children to care for; she was of the Moet family, a name that evokes vineyards and champagne. They lived near Rheims Cathedral in a mansion called "La Cloche", which happily has survivied the bombings of wars.

He had the privilege of a good education during his eight years at the "College Des Bons Enfants", which might be translated "School for young Gentlemen", a short walking-distance from home. A few months before he left school, not yet sixteen, he was made a Canon of the Rheims Cathedral Chapter, with a healthy benefice to cover his training for the priesthood.

Many might be surprised to hear De La Salle called the father of teacher-training. Before his day, and even stretching back to medieval times, the idea of preparing teachers for their work had been considered. But these were simply armchair considerations, and, of course, with classical pupils in mind, not children of working-class parents. No one had given a real thought to training teachers for Charity Schools.

De La Salle saw clearly that the children who came to Charity Schools simply had to have good teachers or the whole purpose of these schools would lose its meaning. In his practical way, he started with the schoolmasters in Rheims. They were as raw as could be imagined. Blain, a writer, and friend of De La Salle, describes some of then as "illiterate men, without education, without ability to express themselves, without manners, incapable of conversing agreeably..." De La Salle rented a house for them and gave them meals in his own home. He draw up a daily timetable for them, with morning and night prayer said together. He helped them to educate themselves, gave them much of his time, joined them for meals, and encouraged them in their work. They were laymen, family men, interested in making a career out of teaching. After one year De La Salle brought a house for them and moved in himself. There he trained them to teach young children. It was a residential teaching centre. They emerged as trained teachers, prepared and able to face a class of boys, and handle them effectively.

Some of them resolved to make education in schools for the poor, not only their life's work, but their life's mission, and to set about it, not as individuals, but as a group, as a Community of Brothers, with vows and a distinctive dress. From this Community a world-wide Religious Order of teaching Brothers developed. Others sought employment on their own. Of these, De La Salle wrote: "they remain one or two years until they are taught singing, reading and writing thoroughly. They have full board and lodging and laundry. They are then placed in a village school for a period of probation, and, once they are employed they have no further connection with the community apart from friendly contact. They do not wear any special dress and so are not distinguished from other people...".

Word soon spread that De La Salle had set up a centre where men were being trained as teachers for Charity Schools, and that a Community of Teaching Brothers was available to staff them. What was interesting, was the growing idea of teachers being trained together under the guidance of a responsible person, and the concept of a number of schools having a reserve of schoolmasters to serve them. Almost cer-

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tainly, they were the first group of lay people ever to be specifically trained to teach. The venture is an important landmark in the history of education, and this establishment can well claim to be the world's first teacher training institution. There were two others founded by De La Salle, some years later, both in Paris, one in the parish of St Hippolyte in 1699, the other at St Denis in 1709. Both had schools attached where the students in training could do their teaching practice under supervision. There they learned from experienced Brothers how to manage a class, the value of quiet in the classroom, how to ensure it gently, how to teach the basic subjects, how to maintain discipline and yet maintain a happy classroom atmosphere, how to teach the boys their religion and encourage them to pray, how to encourage them to be well-mannered and polite. These teaching-tips were eventually put together and published in the "Conduite des Ecoles", or School Management.

"La Conduite des Ecoles" is, and will always be, one of the great educational classics of all time. Its place among them is assured, not only by the practical topics it discusses, but because it appeared so early, in 1705, when the Charity School movement was just beginning to win sympathy and attract benefactors. The title is not easily translated into English. It is to do with running schools for boys of junior age, roughly 6 to 11, but it is not so much to do with the administrative running of schools as with practical matters of the classroom. The author is De La Salle himself. But he would be the first to admit that the content was gleaned from the thoughts of other writers and particularly from his own Brothers' experience. He wrote it, not for the general public, but for his hard-working Brothers. He was thoroughly acquainted with actual classroom conditions and the problems of teaching lively boys of varying ability, and inability. He offered practical answers to practical problems at a time when contemporary writers expounded their theories in general terms. This is what makes the book a classic.

De La Salle devoted his life to educating boys from the poorer families of France, and was personally responsible for founding around thirty schools for them up and down the country. This is an impressive record on its own. Yet, though the general demand, at the time, was for basic instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and catechism, he went further, when the need arose. In Calais and Boulogne he set up maritime schools where seamanship was taught. In Paris, at the request of King James II of England, he started a school for the sons of Irish soldiers and friends who had followed him into exile. In Rouen, he founded a boarding school, St Yon, for the sons of the rising middle class, whose future careers were likely to be in commerce and industriy, and who therefore needed a practical form of education which the classical schools could not provide. Besides the basic subjects, the school taught geometry and architecture and draughtmanship. Later a more comprehensive curriculum evolved. In 1867, the Goverment Report to the Corps Legislatif referred to St Yon: "It is to De La Salle that France owes, if not the original idea, at least the first working establishment and a prototype of secondary technical instruction. From the first attempt there emerged a teaching which, if it had been generalised, would have advanced by a whole century, the organisation of specialised education".

School discipline at St Yon was excellent, so much so, that parents sought to solve their family problems by sending their difficult sons to board there. De La Salle met the challenge with extra supervision, even arranging for these boys to have their meals with the Community. His success impressed Camus de Pontcarre from the Municiplaity who pursuaded De La Salle to do something for delinquents. The outcome was a centre where youths, who were bound over by the magistrates, were boarded, and schooled in the basic subjects, and given a practical course in horticulture and farming.

The name De La Salle is symbolic of all that is enterprising, practical and caring in Christian education. His fame is timeless and international, his dedication and humility universally acclaimed. A teacher, a trainer of teachers, founder of a Religious Order of teachers, and now the Universal Patron Saint of Teachers.

Brother Charles Gatt

Prayer

In your providence, Lord God,
You chose St John Baptist De La Salle
to educate the young in Christian faith.
Raise up, Lord, in the church of today
teachers who will devote themselves wholeheartedly
to the human and Christian education
of our children and young people.

In your providence, Lord God,
you chose St John Baptist De La Salle
to be the Patron Saint of Teachers.
May we,, who teach, be inspired by our Patron,
to live completely in your love,
and bring our children to know and love you truly.

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DE LA SALLE'S SENSE OF HUMOR

What is a Sense of Humor?

«the mental faculty of discovering, expressing, or appreciating ludicrous or absurdly incongruous elements in ideas, situations, happenings, or acts.» Webster's

«the sense within us which sets up a kindly contemplation of the incongruities of life and the expression of that sense in speech, literature, or art forms of various kinds.» Arbuckle, Strategies for Growth in Religious Life

«Irony: humor, ridicule, or light sarcsm that adopts a mode of speech the intended implication of which is the opposite of the literal sense of the words (as when expressions of praise are used where blame is meant).» Webster's

Humor is kind, gentle; irony is a form of humor; sarcasm also focuses on the incongruous, but it is harsh and often crude and contemptuous. See Random House Dictionary.

The hearty laugher is not always humorous, gigglers and snorters are more authentically humorous.

Some Incidents of De La Salle's Sense of Humor:

1. He played a joke on Reims when he took Nyel home with him. Nyel was planning to organize a school for poor boys which those in power would oppose. De La Salle made it appear that Nyel was only another priest staying with him. They could have chuckled, but it wasn't necessary for the humor of the situation.

2. De La Salle accepted Barré's pun, «If you found the schools (i.e., endow them), they will founder.» (les écoles fondées seraient fondues) To rely entirely on Providence is a joke.

3. It took a sense of humor (laughing at himself) for De La Salle to accept seriously the remark of the early Brothers that he could speak eloquently about Providence when he had so much guaranteed security in his wealth.

4. In 1712, when his trip to Rome was canceled at the request of the bishop of Marseilles, «he rejoined the Brothers, to whom he said, "God be blessed. Here I am back from Rome."» (CL8:94)

5. When he was retired at St. Yon De La Salle was not always treated respectfully by one of his oldest disciples. Blain recounts that on one occasion this Brother told him that he was being fed and lodged at St. Yon out of charity as a penniless priest who was no longer good for anything. «On hearing this "compliment" the Servant of God could not help laughing (ne put s'empecher de rire de ce compliment).»» (CL 8:166; Arnandez BK 3, 194)

Examples of Irony in De La Salle's Letters:'

12:17 (Hubert): «So you are ready to let the Brothers lose their vocations because you are not courageous enough to reprimand them, and you let Brother Quentin do as he pleases. Through your easygoing attitude you will bring him to the state where he will leave.»

18:5 (Drolin) «You say that you do not like being in debt. It would be nice to know if you are in debt, and how much you owe, to whom and why. That's just what you don't tell me.»

23:8 (Drolin) «Do you think I would let you starve?»

38:6 (Robert) «It seems to me that you want nothing to be lacking that will give you pleasure. Well, who wouldn't be poor under those conditions? ... Please remember that you did not join the Institute to enjoy every comfort and satisfaction, but to embrace poverty and its consequences. I say its consequences, because there is no point in loving virtue unless you love all that comes with it and gives you the means of practicing it.»

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81:4 (Anonymous) «Now I see quite clearly what you want, my very dear Brother. You very much want to profess that you are a great lover of humility and that you have a great esteem for it, just as long as you can avoid humiliations as much as possible. What good will it be for you to love the virtue and refuse to practice it?»

85:5 (Anonymous) «You complain that others haven't enough charity, but you don't complain that you haven't enough humility. What good is that great desire you have for this virtue if it does not help you be more aware that you are culpable before God?»

85:6 (Anonymous) «You will tell me, perhaps, that you very much want to observe (silence), but that the situation in which you continually find yourself of having to answer those who ask you questions does not allow you to do so. What a trifling excuse! Don't you know the occasions when you should reply and those when you should remain silent?»

105:11 (Woman religious) «You commit plenty of serious faults which you will have to account for, without putting a wrong interpretation on what others do... You want others to be reprimanded for their faults, but do not wish to be reprimanded for your own... You can see the splinter in your brother's eye, but cannot see the beam in your own.»

107:7 (Woman religious) «A fine sort of religious perfection that would be, to be ready to do only what pleases you!»

120:3 (His nephew) «I am surprised you have not arranged that the chalice and the surplice be restored to you with appropriate ceremony by some officer of the court, as if recognizing in him as much right to restore to you your priestly faculties as your bishop had in bestowing them in the first place.»

126:4 (Bartholomew) «I do not think I have seen, at least for a good many years, a novitiate like this in the Community, and yet with such a situation you hope to establish new foundations!»

129 (Bartholomew) «...I did not vow obedience to do what I like...»

132 (Director of Calais) (Perhaps unintended, but pointed out by Brother Felix Paul.) De La Salle quotes St. Augustine (Rome has spoken, the case is closed) against Quesnel and the Jansenists whose primary book was Augustinus.

Bro. Augustine Loes

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PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDER (1/5)

OVERALL VIEW

Gamboust's plan of Paris drawn 1649-52, includes a panoramic view of the city as might be viewed from the hill of Montmartre, then well outside the capital. Paris looks so small that Robert Mousnier calls it «an urban blob in a sea of corn.» (Paris au XVIIè siècle: Cours de Sorbonne). It still had largely the aspect of a medieval town crowded within its walls, with the spires and steeples of its many churches and monasteries marking its skyline.

The city walls

Philip Augustus from 1190 to 1210 had built a defensive wall around the little commercial town on the north bank and around the smaller university area on the south bank. Charles V had later built a new perimeter wall or dyke further our to protect new suburbs to the north, and Louis XIII had added defensive walls west and east of this, ending at the river; so that Paris north of the river had in La Salle's day the shape of a semi-circle extending from the present Place de la Concorde to the royal arsenal south of the Bastille: about two miles and a half. South of the river, i. e. on the left bank, the walls of Philip Augustus still enclosed only the Latin Quarter in an arc running only from south of the Louvre to the present Panthéon and then back to the river at the eastern end of the present Boulevard Saint-Germain.

The main arteries

Two north-south arteries, Rue Saint-Denis and Rue Saint-Martin, ended at the river, the one at the Châtelet (then a policing centre and a prison) the other by the Town Hall (today much enlarged) and the Place de Grève (now the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville). Each was continued by streets across the Île de la Cité to link up, the one with the Rue de la Harpe, now straightened and widened as the Boulevard Saint-Michel, the other with the Rue Saint-Jacques, the main thoroughfare of the Latin Quarter.

The main east-to-west artery was made up of the Rue Saint-Antoine, running from the Bastille to join up through the streets of central Paris with the Rue Saint-Honoré.

Suburbs and districts

On the south bank, west of the University area, a market-town had long since grown up around the great abbey of St Germain-des-Prés; it was by now a suburb of the capital. To south and southeast were the growing suburbs of Saint-Jacques, Saint-Marcel and Saint-Victor, while east of the Bastille lay the faubourg or suburb of St Antoine.

For city and suburbs there were thirty-four parishes – forty-two by the end of the reign. Twelve were tiny medieval ones on the central island, while some of the newer ones covered twenty times their territory. Saint Sulpice, for instance, was the only parish in the suburb of Saint-Germain.

The capital was also divided into sixteen administrative and policing districts or quarters, augmented to twenty in 1702. Traditionally Paris proper was divided into the "Ville" or Town, meaning the commercial area north of the river; the "Cité" on the main island in the river where royal administration and ecclesiastical power were concentrated; and south of it, the "University".

Dwellings

All three sections of the city had their characteristics, but all had many churches, some magnificent; religious houses with their vast domains acquired long before the town developed, charitable institutions and taverns. Squeezed among these properties and the great private residences of the nobility, were the constricted houses of merchants, craftsmen and wage-earning dependent artisans. These would live in the same building, the poorest at the top (as in the house known as Gladstone's Land in Edinburgh) Pierre Petit, in his introductory note to Gamboust's plan, writes: «There are plenty of houses of five or six stories all of them full to the roof with various families and professions, who are nothing more than barbarians, and who do not even know one another's names, just as they don't know, from one place to another and from suburb to town, anything unusual that happens; and you are just as unknown and hidden when changing quarter as if you changed province.» (Most houses, it seems, however, did not go beyond three or four stories.)

Amidst its squalor and teeming streets, Paris had seen new royal buildings and many palaces of the nobility arise earlier in the century; they were still gleaming white when La Salle first went there in 1670. John Evelyn, who visited Paris in 1642 and 1650, moving among the aristocracy, was full of admiration for the noble buldings he was shown: Paris was «one of the most gallant Cittyes in the world.» From 1661 to 1715 Paris was further embellished, mainly to glorify the king while new palaces were built by the rich in more spacious properties in the suburbs; but its inner core changed little.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE THREE DIVISIONS OF PARIS.

1. The "Town"

The central area of the "Ville", beginning from the Châtelet, was one of narrow, stinking streets of fishmongers, fruiterers, craftsmen and traders, of abbatoirs and shops of butchers who were rich and lived in good, clean well-fur-

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nished houses. In this area, opposite Notre Dame was the Place de Grève, so called because it gave on to a little strand along the river. It was the square where executions took place, and also where men without jobs congregated, hoping to be hired, even for the day or by the hour. They were said to "faire la Grève"; in time, "faire la grève", has come to mean to be idle through strike action. On the north side of the square is Place de l'Hôtel de Ville. The main food market of the capital was north of the intersection of the Rue Saint-Denis and the Rue Saint-Honoré. Here Philip Augustus had put up two great plain buildings – inmmediately called "halles" by the Parisians – as a great covered market that increased with the years, and has now been replaced by the great underground shopping complex known as the Forum des Halles.

Here was the famous "Cour des Miracles" or thieves' underworld described by Victor Hugo in "Notre-Dame de Paris" (1831). D'Argenson is said to have cleaned it up, but it was described in the eighteenth century as a great open square with a very long cul-de-sac, stinking, muddy and winding. But there were other places in Paris where the police patrols would hesitate to go.

Further northward along the Rue Saint-Denis was the better area, where cloths and silks were sold and exported, and confectionery and food obtained. Westward along the Rue Saint-Honoré were the rich haberdashers and sellers of works of art and of the finest furniture. For just beyond them, north of and around the Louvre, ministers, beginning with Richelieu, had built their palaces, followed by the many of the lords in the royal service.

The Louvre (the meaning of the term is unkown) began as a royal keep and developed into a royal residence. In La Salle's day it comprised the palace of the Louvre with a wing beginning to extend westwards towards the Palace of the Tuileries, then forming a huge facade facing the present gardens. This had been built for Catherine de Medici between 1564 and 1608 on the site of a twelfth century tile-factory, whence its name. That palace no longer exists, having been burnt down in 1871. Louis XIV moved to the palace of St Germain-en-Laye, 23 km northeast of Paris, in 1660, after the death of his mother, Anne of Austria, and finally left Paris for good to go to Versailles in 1682.

Northwest of the Louvre, on the Rue Saint-Honoré, Richelieu began in 1629 his spelendid cardinal's palace; at his death in 1642 he bequeathed it to his sovereign; Louis XIV and Anne of Austria took it over in 1643, so that it has since been known as the Palais Royal, although its present sweep of galleries and gardens came later.

At the opposite end of the "Ville", the arsenal along the river and the Bastille north of it (then a defence point comprising eight towers surrounded by a moat), marked the military area. Not far from this Henry IV provided Paris with its first public square, the Place Royale, now called Place des Vosges. It became in the first half of the century the centre of an extraordinary development of great town houses of courtiers and statesmen, their limestone fronts gleaming among the houses of the lesser bourgeoisie and the artisans. This was the origin of the very upper-class triangle known still as the Marais, «which had its greatest hours in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, with the driving of coaches, the clash of swords, the hum of "salons" frequented by all the personalities owning famous literary or political names.» (Guide Bleu: Paris, p. 363) Here Madame de Sevigné wrote charmingly about the dukes and nobility of the area. The Duchess of Guise had a palace here, now part of the Archives Nationales. So did court nobles, but they began to move away with Louis XIV. In La Salle's day, the area was inhabited by the noblesse de robe and the great financiers. Nevertheless, a cross-section of the population lived in the Marais. On the eastern side of this area, in the Rue des Minimes, two streets north of the Place des Vosges, was the well-known Minims' Friary with its great church, now gone. Here Nicholas Barré spent most of his life. A gendarmerie now occupies the site. When he was called back from Rouen in 1675, he opened a school for poor girls in the crowded quartier east of the Place de Grève, and in 1678 set up a training centre for his Brothers in the Rue de la Mortellerie, now Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, not far from the interesting old church of Saint Gervais.

The "City"

At the eastern end of the island known as the Cité, stood the cathedral of Notre--Dame, dating in its present form from the twelfth century onwards, and south of it Archbishop's house. South of the little cathedral square, along the waterfront, was the Hôtel-Dieu or hospital, extending over the bridge (Pont au Double) in a set of wards two-storey high, and then along the other bank of this little southern arm of the Seine. (The present Hôtel-Dieu, on the other side of the cathedral square, dates from 1877.) The middle of the island was a criss-cross of medieval streets; then westwards came the old royal palace, for long the Palace of Justice, an area enclosing a great number of buildings housing the various royal departments of justice and finance, including the Parlement of Paris with its six courts or chambers. In their halls and galleries moved crowds of magistrates, lawyers and other members of the legal fraternity and their clients. The western end of the island was occupied by the triangular Place Dauphine, created in 1607 in honour of the Dauphin, later Louis XIII. Across the tip of the island the Pont Neuf linked both banks of the Seine, and was the only one of the seven bridges of the Cité not to have houses several storeys high built on it. Both it and the Place Dauphine were built on two little islets made in 1601 into one fine triangular area. (On these two islands «used to be found the turbulent Irish students, both martyrs and rogues.» Guide bleu, Paris, p. 203.)

Brother Alfred Calcutt

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PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDER (2/5)

3. The "University"

The Université or Latin Quarter was still, at the beginning of Louis's reign, within Philip Augustus's crumbling walls. It had virtually the same aspect as in the fourteenth century, a packed area with its sixty colleges («but they in nothing approach ours in Oxford for state and order», writes John Evelyn), abbeys and churches, many of outstanding size and architecture, set in narrow streets. Richelieu's rebuilt Sorbonne chapel was resplendent in its limestone and huge dome. Apart from the necessary tradesmsen and craftsmen, a few private houses and the printing houses and bookshops along the Rue Saint-Jacques, the area was given over to studies. The Latin Quarter today, although still tightly built on, has little to remind us of how the Founder saw it. To reach the Sorbonne from the seminary of Saint Sulpice when he was a student there, he would have entered the Latin Quarter through St Michael's Gate (Porte Saint-Michel) in the walls, at a point on the present Boulevard Saint-Michel some way south of the Rue de Cujas. Of the buildings he knew then, the Revolution destroyed some and disaffected others that became the prey of demolishers and road-wideners throughout the 19th century and who have left practically nothing of the religious, architectural and artistic treasures of the area. The Jacobin, i.e. Dominican house where St Thomas wrote for some years, has gone as well as Franciscan, Carmelite, Augustinian and Bernardine houses. A lycée stands on the site of St Genevieve's abbey, rebuilt in 12th century, although its tower remains. The massive Pathéon – as it later became – was built on the orders of Louis XV as a more fitting church of St Genevieve, patron of Paris, in the abbey garden, and was unknown to La Salle. But the beautiful chuch nearby of St Etienne du Mont, so rich in history, is practically as he knew it, for it was rebuilt in the 16th century and consecrated in 1626. Several colleges have disappeared as well as eight churches. St Victor's abbey, outside the walls on the east side, where Abelard, St Bernard and St Thomas of Canterbury studied, was levelled in 1811.

There were about 30,000 students in the University which formed a religious guild of masters and students; its rector had the same rank as princes of the blood and took precedence over bishops, for the University depended only on the Pope. The Jesuits, on the Rue Saint Jacques behind the Sorbonne, excelled by their courses which drew sons of the aristocracy and even of royal blood, and attracted students away from other colleges; theirs numbered 3000. The king attended the inauguration of new extensions and allowed the name of the college to be changed from College de Clermont to College Louis-le-Grand. It was the richest college of all but never formed part of the University. The Jesuits proclaimed that «the College of Louis-le-Grand is full of boarders of the first quality, who leave only to take up the first dignities in the state, the Church, the nobility and the magistracy.» To give them the required boldness and assurance for public speaking they trained them to act in plays and ballets. Their prize-giving ceremonies were spectacular. Their success created jealousy and imitation by the other colleges.

Life in the Latin Quarter was now fairly quiet, thanks to the firm hand of the lieutenant general of police, but there were fights between colleges and the rare duel. Gates were supposed to be closed by nine o'clock, and students were not to go out without a supervisor, but day students felt free enough of regulations to frequent the many taverns around the Rue de la Harpe.

SUBURBS ON THE LEFT BANK.

Saint Germain

The oldest by far and the most important of these was that of Saint Germain, and which interests us specially because its sole parish church was that of Saint Sulpice.

The Abbey

When La Salle and two Brothers settled in the Rue Princesse, close to the church, they were only three minutes' walk away from the great monastery of Saint Germain, of which only the great church and some abbey buildings remain. It was founded in the 6th century in open country outside Paris by Childebert, son of Clovis, king of the Franks, and became the burial place of the early Merovingian kings, which explains why it was donated with widespread gifts of land. It was destroyed by the Normans in 886 and was rebuilt throughout the Middle Ages to become one of the finest Benedictine abbeys.

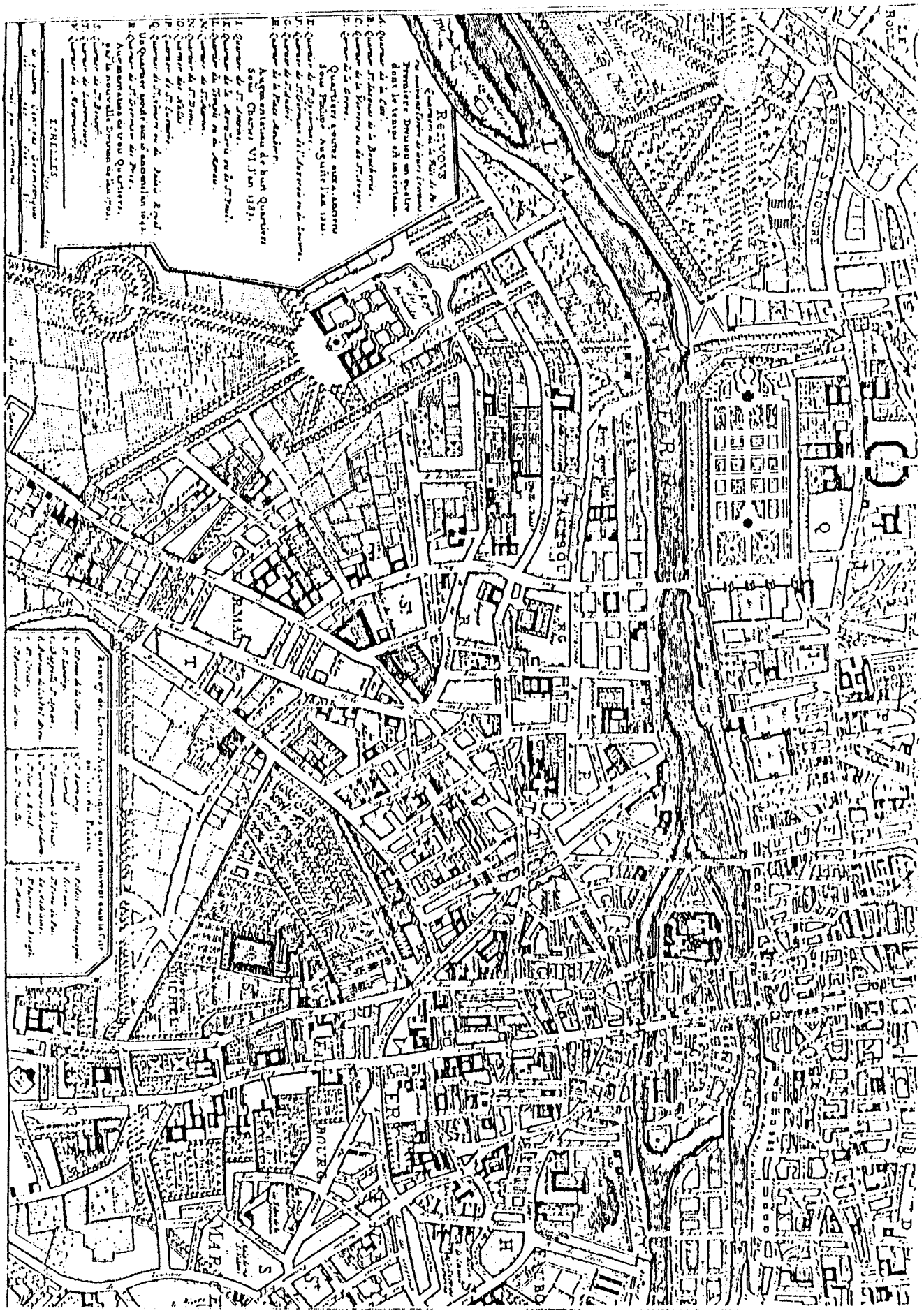
It declined during the Wars of Religion, but after the council of Trent it reformed and became the centre of the new Benedictine congregation of St Maur and became the home of many scholars whose names are commemorated in streets of this quarter. Even some of the roads leading out of it have a Benedictine origin. Thus, the Rue de Vaugirard, which figures in our story, led to a village and lands owned by the monastery and named Val Girard after a twelfth century abbot; the village came to be called Vaugirard. The Rue de Sèvres, in which there is now a Lasallian Centre, ran to the village of Sèvres also owned by the abbey; along it, not far from the Brothers' house, you will meet streets named after St Romanus (Romain); the Rue de l'Abbé Gregoire, which used to be called after St Maur; and Rue St Placide.

Bro. Alfred Calcutt

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A part of the plan of Paris in 1705, drawn up by Nicolas de Fer, geographer to His Majesty the King.

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PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDER (3/5)

In 1644 the area was open land; the Abbey had leased that year to a merchant grocer several acres of it on condition that he made two roads through it, to be called after St Maur and St Placid.

As you continue along the Rue de Sèvres towards St Sulpice's, you pass through the crossroads known as Croix Rouge (Red Cross): an abbot had a red-painted cross transferred there in 1514.

It was at no. 8 in the former Rue Saint-Maur that Fr Barré acquired the house that still stands, as the central training-house for his Sisters, who had now several schools in Paris, including one or two in the parish of Saint-Sulpice. Because of the street their training-house was in, they became known as the Sisters of St Maur.

St Germain Fair

The settlement that grew up around the abbey and in dependence on it became by the twelfth century a township administering its own justice and holding its own annual fair. It had long become one of the events of Paris life. It was held from February 3rd till Palm Sunday in a huge rectangular enclosure across the street from the north side of St Sulpice's. It contained 24 covered market halls, the passages in between being covered by a very high wooden framework. It was only a stone's throw from the Rue Princesse and was in full swing when the Brothers arrived that February 1688.

This was a high-class fair, offering silverwork and jewellery, objets d'art, lacquers, silks and porcelains from India and China,... Cafés, the boards of tightrope walkers and acrobats, groups of musicians and actors of comic opera added to the attraction. The ordinary people crowded in during the day, but the upper class preferred to come only at night, their carriages parked along all the nearby streests. For several hours elegant women and their escorts toured the stalls lit by thousands of candles, and getting away in their carriages in the bottleneck of the tiny streets took them into the early hours of the morning. Perhaps the tired Brothers slept through it all for the next few weeks. They could not but have known all about it, certainly from the boys they taught; some of whom would have had a field-day as pick-pockets.

St Sulpice

The church of Saint Sulpice that had been built in 1211 on the lines of the present St Severin's church, was being replaced by a new one, begun in 1646, as we have seen. But when La Salle saw it again in 1688 it was not much further advanced than in 1672, for the construction stopped in 1678 for lack of money and was not pursued till 1711. La Salle and the Brothers therefore only knew it as having a chancel and side-aisles, and it was not finally finished till 1788. The chancel was the only part in use, and people crowded into it for Mass.

On its northeastern corner is the small chapel of the Assumption with its curiously shaped roof; it was built for holding catechism sessions and was originally called the chapel of the Holy Child Jesus. St de La Salle often celebrated mass there for the Brothers and their pupils.

The seminary buildings were where the square and fountain in front of the church now are, with an interior garden on the south side, towards the Rue de Vaugirard.

Fashionable life in the area

Just across this road the Luxembourg Palace had been built for Catherine de Medici between 1615 and 1625, and enormous gardens had been carved out for it on what had been open ground. The Duchess of Guise owned it from 1672 to 1694, and then Louis XIV. The public were allowed to take walks in it.

The creation of a royal palace in the quarter meant that the great lords who served there found it convenient to build their great houses in the open spaces beyond it, along the Rue de Vaugirard and the Rue de Sèvres; they were built round secluded courtyards, presenting only the coach entrance to the street.

New religious and charitable institutions were founded also at this time, each in its spacious grounds. This developing quarter of St Germain also housed many high society foreigners who attended its horse-riding and fencing academies, and there were also many fashionable eating-places.

The cabaret in the 17th century was the equivalent of a restaurant; a "taverne" was a cheaper place where you could get wine and to which you brought your own food. But after 1698 the taverner could lay tables and sell cooked meats, and the tavern and cabaret now differed little. There were 1847 cabarets in Paris in 1670 and the number kept increasing. They were mostly in the suburbs. St Germain, the most elegant suburb of all, had 204 cabarets, some very high class.

Cafés, i.e. shops where ready-made coffee was sold, first appeared in 1669, and there were over 300 by 1715, providing also tea and chocolate, wine and liqueurs. They were numerous around the theatres, especially around the Comédie Française. This had moved into the area in 1688.

Many local people made a living hiring out carriages for foreign princes, lords and ambassadors. It was in the suburb of Saint-Germain that tennis (jeu de paume) in indoor courts, cards and billiards were most played. By the next century it was to become one of the favourite residential quarters of the aristocracy.

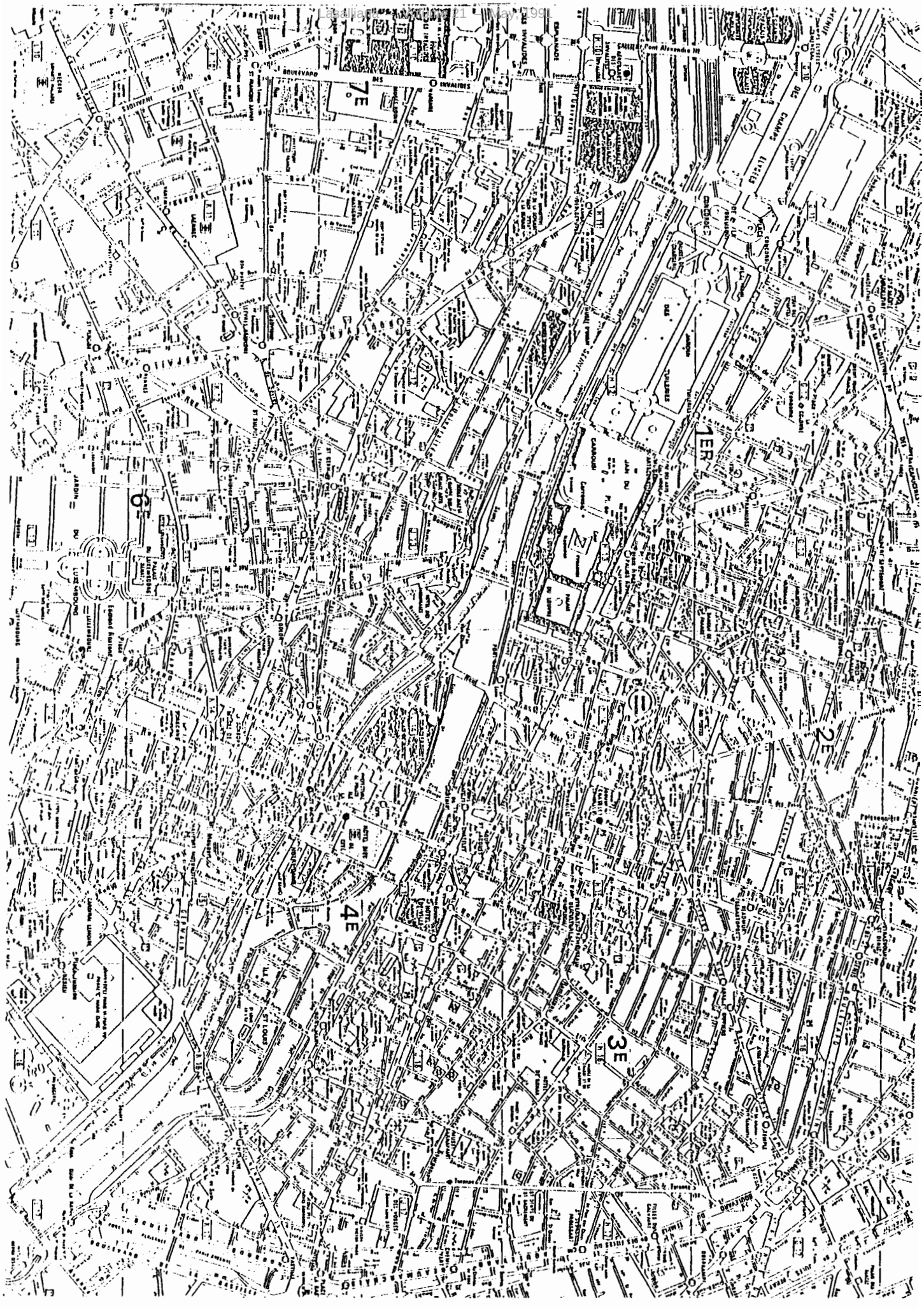
Brother Alfred Calcutt

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PLAN OF THE CENTRE OF PARIS AS IT IS TODAY



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CREATING THE INSTITUTE

OF THE 21ST CENTURY (1/3)

Regional Convocation of the
Brothers of the Christian Schools
of the USA/Toronto Region
14 August 1990

Brothers, the theme of this Convocation is now well known to all of us: «In Lasallian Association for Christian Education in the 21st Century.» My contribution to development of the general theme is a presentation on our life as Brothers within the context of Lasallian Association for Christian Education.

I welcome the opportunity to reflect with you on our consecrated life and mission. Ironically, however, convinced that we cannot grasp and appreciate our own identity and mission without a sound understanding of the role of the laity in the Church today, I am going to devote considerable time to the vocation of lay Christians, with whom our mission will be shared in the 21st century.

My intention is to articulate what I think the Institute ought to look like in the future and to propose some lines of action that can help us to realize that vision. But the vision and lines of action I am going to propose will not surprise you. Their elements are already evident in Church and Institute orientations of the past twenty-five years.

The Title

«Creating the Institute of the 21st Century.» I am happy with this title because the accent is on "creating", and, consequently, on "doing". Gabriel Moran wrote more than twenty years ago that what we need is vision together with tactics for realizing that vision. We have to be men who ACT, men who participate in the creation of our future. If we fail to act, if we limit ourselves to REACTING, we forfeit the possibility of shaping our future. Our future will indeed be created, but without our collaboration.

In this process of creating our future, we have to avoid, on the one hand, longing nostalgically for the «good old days» and, on the other, day-dreaming romantically of an idealized future, all the while neglecting to live fully in the present. We must avoid also falling into the deadly "self-fulfilling prophecy" trap: predicting the future with apparent absolute certitude, then indicating with insistence what, in consequence of this "certain" future, must be changed today.

Then, too, to participate constructively in the creation of our future, we need to recognize the complex of feelings we have about the past. During the evolution of the Institute these twenty-five difficult years, some of us have experienced hurt, disillusionment, betrayal, anger, and even bitterness. Awareness of such feelings is the first step towards liberation from them. We need to be conscious also of a tendency to shield ourselves against further hurt by adopting a posture of indifference, fatalism, or a kind of *Waiting for Godot* passivity.

My Story

Last friday we were asked to tell our stories to one another. Brother Luke Salm traced our evolving understanding of the Lasallian charism. He helped us, I am sure, to understand better our experience during all or part of the past thirty-five years. Permit me, Brothers, to share with you some of my own experiences and to use them as points of departure for reflection.

In the year 2000, first year of the new millenium, I shall, God willing, begin my fiftieth year as a Brother of the Christian Schools. It is particularly interesting for me, therefore, to reflect on my own life as a Brother, a period which parallels to a large extent the period which has been in focus throughout this convocation.

As a grade school youngster I began to take seriously the recurrent thought that God was calling me to serve him in a special way. But as I knew nothing whatsoever about the Brothers, I was considering the priesthood. At the same time, however, I was already aware of a keen interest in teaching and in working with youth.

When I met the Brothers for the first time in the year 1947, I found exactly what I was looking for: the opportunity to give my life to God and to serve him by teaching and working with youth. My conviction that God was calling me to be a Brother grew and deepened during my four years of high school. I entered the postulancy in June, 1951, with a clear idea of what I was looking for.

I mention that initial motivation, Brothers, because it has stayed with me and has sustained me over the past thirty-nine years. I have no reason to think that motivation will have changed by the time I begin my fiftieth year in the year 2000. The vocation of the Brothers is for me a life of consecration to God, a life of educational and pastoral service of youth, and a life lived together and by assocation. These essential dimensions so beautifully described in the *Declaration* and in the *Rule* have been the constants of my thirty-nine years. Nevertheless, I am certainly aware that something has changed. What has changed is the manner in which I have lived these dimensions.

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It is not my purpose, Brothers, to dwell in a comprehensive manner on the changes I have experienced in my lifetime. What I want to do is to focus on one change, the change which will impact significantly the shape of the Institute of the 21st century. That change is the new way of understandig the Church and consequentlky the vocation of the lay Christian. This change in ecclesiology is compelling us, Brothers of the Christian Schools, to rethink our vocation in the context of the call to all baptized Christians to holiness and to apostolic service.

Four Significant Decades

Nearly all of my teachers at Christian Brothers High School, Memphis, were Brothers. The exceptions were specialists in sports and in music. As a Brother myself I began teaching in the year 1955 in St. Joseph, Missouri. There were eleven Brothers and one lay teacher at the service of 340 high school boys. After three years I was transferred to De La Salle, Chicago, a high school for 1200 boys, conducted by nearly thirty-five Brothers and perhaps twenty or so lay men and women.

These three schools were truly "Brothers' Schools," that is to say, schools animated by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, with an important but secondary level of collaboration of a certain number of lay associates.

In the late fifties and earlies sixties, however, the situation changed rapidly. The demand for Catholic education was intense. Numbers of students increased significantly in existing schools and an extraordinary number of new schools were constructed, particularly in the old St. Louis District. Because of this demand for Catholic education, both the Church and the Institute began to look more favorably upon the presence of lay teachers. By the mid-sixties the percentage of lay teachers in the schools had increased dramatically. Nevertheless, our schools were still perceived as "Brothers' Schools".

Similar changes were occurring in varying degrees in other countries as well. By the time of the General Chapter of 1966-67, the percentage of lay teachers, both male and female, was very high. Nevertheless, a study of the documents of the Chapter, generally of very high quality, reveals that Brothers were still operating out of a "Brothers' School" model. The work of Lasallian education was the work of the Brothers. The lay collaborators were responsibile for important tasks in the schools, but neither they nor the Brothers questioned seriously the fact that the schools were Brothers' schools.

Years of confusion and frustration

But then the years of confusion and frustration began. An extraordinary number of men left us and the numbers of new members dropped significantly and rapidily. Among the many vivid memories I have of my service as Visitor of the St. Louis District from 1971 to 1976 was that of visiting schools and finding Brothers confused, discouraged, frustrated, and even angry. Many, of course, were disturbed by what had happened generally in the Institute and District in less than ten years. But a particular and very important focus of a rather widespread discouragement was the school. «This school is called a Brothers' School,« they said to me, «but where are the Brothers? We are six Brothers teaching with forty-five lay teachers. How can this school be called a Brothers' school?»

But the questioning was not limited to the Brothers. Lay teachers also, a number of whom were already occupying secondary positions in administration, raised similar queries.

What these Brothers and their lay colleagues were coming to realize was that the model of "Brothers' School" – that is to say, a school animated by the Brothers with a secondary level of collaboration of the laity – no longer made any sense. That model was no longer helpful in understanding the nature of the school or in shaping its character. But no other way of conceptualizing a school in the tradition of John Baptist de La Salle was available. I personally remain convinced that this crisis of identity and consequent crisis of confidence has had a profound and negative impact on the pastoral ministry of vocations.

From Brothers' Schools to Lasallian Schools

At the convocation in 1984 I described this model of Brothers' schools as a triangular model, with the Brothers at the top and their lay colleagues at the base and said that it was collapsing everywhere. This model has continued to collapse in the six years that have passed. It is gradually being replaced by a new model, that is to say, a new way of understanding Lasallian education. This model can be visualized as a circle that is parallel to the ground. On points of the circumference of the circle are the Brothers, lay associates, priests, members of other religious institutes, parents, former students themselves. This model is the "Lasallian School" model, that is to say, a school that is animated not primarily by the brothers with others in a secondary role, but by the educational community, in which the brothers make their specific contribution.

This model of Lasallian School is described vividly in the *Rule*:

> «The Brothers' community is ever mindful that its apostolic activity takes place within an educational community in which all the functions, including positions of responsibility, are shared... the Brothers make known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition. The Brothers offer to those who desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality, encouraging such persons to make a more specific apostolic commitment.» (*Rule, 17a, 17c*)

I believe that these articles express the most significant change in our life as Brothers since the fundamental changes of 1966-67. What is implied in these articles is a new way of understanding our role as Brothers, that is to say, the manner in which we exercise our ministry. These articles express clearly the shift from a model of "Brothers' Schools" to a model of "Lasallian Schools".

Bro. John Johnston,
Superior General

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CREATING THE INSTITUTE OF THE 21ST CENTURY (2/3)

Regional Convocation of the
Brothers of the Christian Schools
of the USA/Toronto Region
14 August 1990

A new understanding of Church

It is important for all of us –Brothers of the Institute and those who join us in constituting the Lasallian Family – to see our own remarkable evolution of recent years in the context of the evolution of the Church itself.

The Church today describes itself as the People of God, as the communion of all those who have been incorporated in Christ through baptism. All Christians are equal in terms of their dignity as sons and daughters of God. All are called to holiness and to participation in the mission of evangelizing the world. In the document which followed the *Synod on the Laity,* John Paul II insists that

> «Everyone in the Church... shares in the common vocation to holiness... On equal par with all other members of the Church, the lay faithful are called to holiness.
>
> The call (to the mission of evangelization) is a concern not only of pastors, clergy, and men and women religious. The call is addressed to everyone... Jesus wants... all his disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.» (*Christifideles Laici: 16, 2, 3*)

There are, of course, different charisms, ministries, and functions among the faithful. What is of great importance is the quality of relationships that exist among the lay faithful, religious men and women, and ordained ministers. As Brothers, we are particularly concerned about the quality of our relationships with our lay colleagues. Claretian Father Jose Garcia Paredes, editor of an important publication in Spain on religious life, describes four possible relationships between religious and lay faithful:

> 1. The laity in schools or hospitals are considered "necessary evils", to be tolerated only when there is no alternative. Lay people are "used" as needs arise.
>
> I think that we have to admit that these words are a just description of the relationship which often existed between Brothers and their colleagues thirty-five or more years ago. I hope that the description is no longer applicable to any school in the Institute.
>
> 2. The laity participate substantially in the life of the institutions, but primarily because they have become so numerous. Their presence is still perceived by many religious as a threat and is, therefore, resented. There is no accepted model which permits the religious and the laity to function together meaningfully and constructively.

I suggest that this is a fair description of what existed in the sixties and seventies. Unfortunately, I am obliged to say that this attitude is far from dead among the Brothers.

> 3. The charismatic potential of the laity is recognized, ackowledged, and encouraged. But the religious do not really "let go": they remain "in charge". They feel, perhaps unconsciously, that shaping and controlling the participation of the laity in the Church belongs by right to them. They fall into the trap of paternalism, victims of an unrecognized superiority complex.

I think that paternalism is indeed a problem among us, but I am neither surprised nor discouraged by this fact. I think that with the passage of time, this difficulty will be corrected. The important thing is that we be sensitive to this tendency and work together with our lay colleagues to eradicate it.

> 4. Religious and the lay faithful stress first "what is common"; they see themselves in terms of equality, fellowship, and authentic mutual relations. Religious demand no special privileges nor recognition; they welcome the laity without any sense of superiority. The laity understand and accept the specific contribution religious are called to make in the institution.

While I readily acknowledge that we have a significant distance to travel before we can say that that paragraph is a valid description of our reality, I am very encouraged at the evident progress that has taken place in recent years.

But there is a difficulty which cannot be ignored: that of finding language that satisfactorily expresses relationships among Christians in the Church today. I am pleased that a number of participants at the synod in 1987 questioned our manner of describing the members of the Church as clergy, religious, and laity. These words of Bishop Fernando Sebastian, Secretary of the Spanish Episcopal Conference, are particularly appropriate:

> «Calling normal Christians "lay people" strikes me as using a subtly clerical language... It is better to speak simply of Christian. They are the common members of the People of God and of the Church... Priestly ordination or religious profession is what differentiates some Christians. These are the vocations which must be explained in relation to the whole Christian community rather than the other way around.» (*In The Laity and the Religious, pp. 72*)

This problem of language admits of no easy solution. I shall continue this morning to employ the words "laity" and "lay", but I wished to share with you my discomfort.

Summary: Communion Ecclesiology

Brothers, the following words of Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, President of the Pontifical Council on the Laity, summarize beautifully what I have been saying about mutual relations among Christians:

> «...when we speak of "communion ecclesiology", we simply mean the Church as the People of God, among whom there are various ministries, various charisms, and various functions. What seems very important to me is to know that we are all disciples of Christ... we need to overcome this separation of the Church into sectors such as the clergy, religious, and the laity, and to replace this with a more communitarian ecclesiological vision where the various charisms and ministries are integrated in the one communion of the People of God and the unique evangelizing mission of the Church.» (In *The Laity and the Religious, pp. 104-105*)

The Role of Religious

This understanding of the role of the laity is effectively forcing members of religious institutes, such as our own, to

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reflect seriously and profoundly on their own particular role. Certainly it is clear, as Jose Garcia Paredes says, that religious have no "monopoly" on the Christian vocation, holiness, or mission:

> «What is happening is that religious life is re-situating itself within the ecclesial organism. Instead of being "a single or outstanding voice", it is becoming an important voice within the symphonic choir which also includes other important voices. It is rediscovering itself as a "charism" within a Church "community of charisms".» (In *The Laity and the Religious, p. 2*)

But what exactly is the nature of this "voice" of consecrated religious men and women in the Church today. Brazilian Jesuit Marcello Azevedo says that "there is nothing in the Gospel that may be specific to the lay faithful, nor is there anything that may be seen in the evangelical counsels that must be realized by religious only." It seems clear also that the identity of religious men and women is not to be found in the particular services they render. After we exclude those ministries which are reserved to the ordained clergy, we can say that there is no ministry that is specific to and limited to members of religious institutes. In *Christifideles Laici* the Pope makes his own a synod proposition which "praises teachers and professors, now lay people for the most part, for their dedication to maintaining institutes of Catholic education." Nevertheless, he continues, "the simultaneous presence of clergy, the lay faithful, and men and women religious, offers students a vivid image of the Church." (CL 62)

It seems clear, therefore, that the nature of our identity and specificity in the Church is not be found in the particular ministries which we perform. There is no educational service that is reserved to the members of religious institutes. What then is our identity and specificity in the Church? I think that it is essential that each of us be able to answer this question. But it is not enough to have a theoretical response to the question. The important thing is that on the level of our experience we "know" who we are and what we are all about. If our vocation makes sense to us, if we find meaning in it, if we are proud of it, if we want young people to join us, then it is clear that we "own" the answer to the question I posed. If, on the contrary, we are inordinately disturbed and confused, ambivalent about the value of our life, hesitant to speak of our vocation to others, afraid to invite youth to follow us, then it is clear that we have not yet interiorized the answer to the question.

Identity and Mission

As we begin to formulate our response, we can say with no ambiguity that while our role in the Church has changed – almost before our very eyes – our fundamental identity has not. Nor has our essential mission: that mission is to make Christ's loving and saving presence a visible and effective reality among the young.

In writing of religious life within the context of apostolic vocations in the Church, Marcello Azevedo says that

> «...its distinctive character is not the vocation to holiness (common to all Christians), but the public profession –recognized, legitimized, and appreciated by the Church – of the will to live the Gospel fully, radically, and coherently as the primary objective of one's life.» (*Vocation for Mission, pp. 8-9*)

We have consecrated ourselves totally and publicly to God. We have made the following of Christ the primary objective of our life. By profession we are "public Christians". by our very life style, if we live it authentically, we "say", so to speak, to all who observe us, "We believe. We take Jesus Christ seriously." Our vowed commitment to chastity, poverty, obedience, association for the service of the poor through education, and stability, lived in community, gives both form and visibility to our consecration.

Our vocation is apostolic in its very nature. But we evangelize first and foremost by being who we are supposed to be. As public followers of Jesus Christ, we make his loving and saving presence a visible and effective reality in the world of education. I am certainly not saying that what we do is unimportant. It is extremely important. But the specific work we do does not distinguish us. Nevertheless, it is obvious that we witness to Christ in and through the service which we render.

What is of fundamental significance is the quality of our lives. What kind of people are we? Are we earnestly striving to be the men we profess to be? We can be sure that – as individuals, as communities, and as Institute – we communicate a message. But what is that message? How do people read us? Our vocation is to be "messengers to the young to proclaim the truth that sets them free." (*Rule* of 1967, ch. 9) That is a succinct but accurate description of our call. How authentically are we living it?

The future

To prepare for the future, Brothers, we have to live the present as wholeheartedly as we can. We have to respond positively and enthusiastically to a certain number of challenges. The following are some of them. I say "some of them" because it is not possible to reflect on the entire *Rule,* all of which is pertinent to our discussion of the Institute of the 21st Century.

1. We must be men of faith

To be men of faith is to "walk with the Lord," that is to say, "to live in fellowship with him."

It is to live a relationship with the Father whose presence is real to us; a Father who loves us; a Father who has chosen us to be his sons and to be Brothers.

To be men of faith is to live a relationship with Christ – the Christ who has risen and is present to us in our everyday life; the Christ who is for us the WAY, revealing to us by his life and teaching what being human is all about; the Christ who is for us the TRUTH, revealing to us by his life and teaching who God is and what he is like; the Christ who is for us the LIFE, imbuing us with his Spirit, enabling us to live as sons of his Father and as his brother; the Christ who wants us to radiate his presence to youth.

To be men of faith is to live a relationship with the Holy Spirit, who leads us as he led Jesus and as he led our Founder; the Spirit whose gifts make ir possible for us to manifest Christ to those confided to our care; the Spirit whose presence and gifts will enable us to touch hearts.

Brothers, we have made PUBLIC PROFESSION of our faith. If we are not believers, our life is a contradiction. De La Salle said that if we are not men of faith, we are dead members. There is nothing else distinctive about our life. Following Christ, making his presence a reality today – that's it. If that element is lacking, our life makes no sense and we have no reason to exist in the 21st century.

It is obvious then that we have to be men of daily personal prayer. Furthermore, we have to take very seriously the Rule when it tells us that "The distinctive character of the Brothers' community is to be a community of faith where the experience of God is shared."

Bro. John Johnston,
Superior General

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CREATING THE INSTITUTE OF THE 21ST CENTURY (3/3)

Regional Convocation of the
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of the USA/Toronto Region
14 August 1990

2. We must be BROTHERS

To be BROTHERS is our vocation: brothers to one another, brothers to those with whom we are associated, older brothers to the youth confided to our care. (*Rule,* 53) To be brothers we have to live interdependently. The great enemy of authentic brotherhood is individualism. In shaking loose from the patterns of dependence in our past, many of us stumbled into a spirit of independence. Our own goals of self-interest and self-fulfillment have taken precedence over all other loyalties. In the most recent issue of *Review for Religious* Brother William Mann writes: "The future of our Institute will rise or fall on the question of interdependence. Too many of us are trapped in an overly individualistic and independent life stance." (*Review for Religious,* May-June 1990, p. 376). I agree.

3. We must "be attentive"... we must "be moved"

Several times the Rule refers to a characteristic of the Founder that we Brothers urgently need as we prepare for the 21st century (*Rule, 1, 11, 19*). *De La Salle, by God's grace*, became "aware" (rendu attentif à) of the human and spiritual distress of the children of the artisan and the poor. He was "seized by" (saisi par) the way in which the children of the artisans and of the poor were abandoned and left to themselves. This experience led him to change the direction of his life. (Because it is difficult to translate the word *saisi* literally, the translators of the Rule rendered the expresion "deeply moved.")

Brothers, as we think of creating the Institute of the 21st century, we must be aware of the needs of our own day. We must be free enough, loving enough, creative enough to respond: «The Institute establishes, renews, and diversifies its works according to what the Kingdom of God requires.» (*Rule,* 11)

Six years ago I spoke of the danger of living off the creativity and boldness of our predecessors. That danger is enhanced by the fact that our numbers are declining. The tendency is to retreat and consolidate. But when this tendency becomes the governing policy, we have a formula for slow death. As paradoxical as it may seem, we need new initiatives. Of course, this policy means that we must turn over to others some of the work we are doing, either by reducing the numbers of Brothers in some schools or by withdrawing them altogether. As threatening as this sounds, it is precisely what the Church and the Institute have asked us to do. Twice the Rule makes reference to the Vatican II invitation to religious institutes to turn over some of the things they are doing and to respond to those whose needs are not being met. (*Rule, 19a, 40a*)

Brothers, we are exposed through television to so much human suffering. But are we really attentive? Does this constant exposure lead us to awareness? Or do we perhaps shield ourselves psychologically from really "seeing"? Do we protect ourselves from the "threat" we perceive to the *status quo* with which we have become quite secure and comfortable? Do we have the faith and courage to allow ourselves to be moved to the point of responding in one way or another, perhaps even by a willngess to change the current patterns of our life?

The number and quality of Brothers of the region serving the poor both at home and abroad is significant. But I think that all will agree that we have to do more. We have to be more generous with our resources. We need to continue to develop new and creative approaches to the educational needs of poor youth within the United States and Canada. In addition we need to provide Brothers for the human and Christian education of young people in poor areas of the world. The *Rule* insists that missionary activity is integral to our mission in the Church.

For this reason, Brothers, I encourage you to give serious consideration to a missionary commitment in any of the many areas served by the region. In a particular way I ask you to think of the new Delegation of East Africa, as well as of Ethiopia where the need for personnel is critical at the present time. I ask you to consider also service at Bethelehem University, where, unfortunately in my opinion, the number of Brothers from the United States has decreased in recent years. If there are Brothers willing to serve in other communities in the Holy Land, I can assure you that they will be welcomed.

4. We must continue the process of renewing our schools

The attention the region has given in recent years to the characteristics of Lasallian Schools has had an enormous impact. There is interest everywhere in clarifying and promoting the Catholic and Lasallian identity of our primary and high schools, of our colleges and universities, and of our specialized institutions.

Brothers, our Lasallian schools must be different – otherwise, they have no reason to exist. Our *Rule* says correctly that our schools are themselves a message. (*Rule, 3*) What is the message they communicate? How do people read them? I hope that they are perceived as unambiguously Catholic. I hope that it is clear to all that our religion, youth ministry, and service programs enjoy high priority – in choice of faculty, scheduling, and budgeting.

I am happy that a significant number of young Brothers are preparing themselves at the Master's level for the teaching of religion and that a number of other Brothers, who for one reason or another, stopped teaching religion years ago have returned to the religion class or are preparing themselves to return.

But even if we decide that teaching religion explicitly is not feasible for us, we can, with creativity and generosity, find concrete ways to make significant contributions to the religious growth of our young people. There are many possibilities: leading school prayers, participation in school liturgies, animating retreats, working with Lasallian youth groups, etc.

Brother Joseph Hendron and I were very impressed by your Christian service programs. They are effectively helping your young people to grow in sensitivity to injustice and poverty and to their responsibility to work constructively for a better society. Such programs are in no way marginal to the work of the Lasallian school: they are integral. (*Rule, 14, 40*)

5. We must share our Lasallian spirituality

So much has happened, Brothers, since the Convocation of 1984! The shift from Brothers' schools to Lasallian schools is occurring. The many initiatives you have taken to intro-

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duce your lay colleagues to our Lasallian heritage are having an impact. You yourselves have been pleasantly surprised at the positive response of a significant percentage of lay members of your faculties. What has been accomplished is admirable. We have to continue to give this movement high priority.

I thank God that the *Lasallian Volunteer Movement* has made great progress. This movement has tremendous potential for good in the Church today. It has been a joy for me to meet a number of volunteers, living and working with the Brothers "together and by association." It is my hope that this program will soon be truly regional in scope and that what you are accomplishing here will be a model for other regions.

I am encouraged also by the steadily growing interest in the *Lasallian Youth Movement*. We need to provide structures which will permit young people to live their faith in small communities. Boys and girls (and young men and women) who are serious about their faith need to be able to gather regularly and frequently to reflect on the Word of God, to pray together, to share apostolic experiences, and to plan future apostolic activities. The structured religion programs of the school are essential. So are the pastoral activities of the youth ministry programs. But more is necessary. Young people who really believe and are serious about living their faith need close association with other young people who are committed.

Furthermore, our world-wide experience indicates that young people are finding in the story of John Baptist de La Salle inspiration and motivation. The *Lasallian Youth Movement* is very alive in many sectors of the Institute and, thanks be to God, growing rapidly. We should make its development on local, national, international, and intercontinental levels a high priority.

Conclusion

Brothers, at the meeting of the Visitors of the United States/Toronto Region last April, I expressed my appreciation of the many signs of vitality which Brother Joseph and I found during our vitits. In his presentation to the LCWR/CMSM Assembly a year ago, Brother Charles Reutemann suggests that «after a careful critique of our congregational group, there might be cause to have a major celebration, a convocation or something similar, where the message would be: "We are on the right track; let us continue, though we might want to give some special consideration to such and such a strand."»

I don't know whether or not Charlie had this convocation in mind, but here we are. Brothers, I can say to you in complete honesty that I think you are indeed on the right track and I can urge you to continue. During the twelve year interval between my visit to the region as Vicar and my visit as Superior, there was evident progress in a number of areas: the personal renewal of the Brothers, the strengthening of prayer and Eucharist, the intense interest in the Founder, a number of new and well-conceived community and apostolic initiatives, the growing commitment to educational service in Africa, the concern for the Catholic dimension in your schools at all levels, the striking renewal of the religion and pastoral programs in the schools, the acceptance of the Lasallian School model, the programs for Lasallian education of your colleagues, the Lasallian Volunteer and Lasallian Youth Movements...

An area of disppointment

There is one major area, however, that is disappointing: the meager numbers in formation. On the other hand I am encouraged by the quality of the vocation and formation programs, the quantity and quality of the Brothers assigned to vocations and formation, and the quality of the candidates and young Brothers themselves. I am encouraged also by the attitude of hope and the persevering effort that is so evident. Without in any way closing my eyes to the long list of explanations of the decline in vocations, I remain convinced that one of the most important factors has been and still is our own crisis of confidence in who we are and what we are about. I am convinced that if we can "get our own act together," we shall once again radiate confidence, inner peace, and pride, sentiments that will attract young people and stimulate them to ask themselves if God might be calling them to be Brothers of the Christian Schools.

There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the evident progress in so many areas of our life and mission in the united States/Toronto Region is a strong and positive reflection on the priority the region has given over many years to developing and supporting outstanding programs of continuing formation and education. I won't attempt a list of the many programs that have been available to the Brothers during the past twenty-five years, but I do want to mention and praise one of the latest, the Buttimer Institute.

Brother Charles suggests that «we might want to give special consideration to such and such a strand.» That's what I have tried to do this morming. I am very well aware, however, that there are a number of other strands that I didn't consider. I think, for example, that we might very profitably give explicit attention to the nature and obligations of each of our five vows.

Brothers, in my reflections on "Creating the Institute of the 21st Century," I have expressed my conviction that we have to understand what being a consecrated religious and being a Brother of the Christian Schools means in an age when the Church declares that all Christians are called to holiness and to participation in the mission of evangelization. I have insisted that we do indeed have a role to play but one that is different from what we knew in the past. I can't find a better summary of this new way of viewing ourselves and our mission than article 17a:

> «The Brothers' community is ever mindful that its apostolic activity takes place within an educational community in which all the functions, including positions of responsibilities, are shared.»

Communion generates communion

This reference to the Brothers' community in relation to the entire educational community is a reminder of the mutual relations which must characterize all communities in the Church. Relations must be such that true communion is formed. "Communion generates communion," the Pope says in *Christifideles Laici.* That simple but profound sentence expresses succinctly but accurately a truth which is at the very heart of the mission which God through his Church has confided to our Lasallian Family today. We, members of the Institute together with all who join us in Lasallian Association, are called to communion –communion which in turn will generate communion.

When a journalist asked Cardinal Pironio what he expected from the Synod on the Laity, he responded: «Simply this: that we may learn to walk together in the Church.» My prayer is that we members of the Lasallian Family learn to walk together – walk together with the Lord and with one another. My prayer is that our life as Lasallians be really and truly an experience of communion, communion which in turn generates communion.

Bro. John Johnston, Superior General

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CARACTERISTICS OF THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL
(Regional Education Committee of The Christian Brothers U.S.A.Toronto)

The Lasallian school has 3 principal distinguishing marks:

1. Teaching is considered to be a ministry of grace.

2. Association makes it possible to attain the educational goals of the school through the collaboration of teachers who share the same outlook and Gospel values.

3. Schools have well-defined aims: they seek to provide pupils with an education that is intellectual, cultural, religious and vocational, by means of courses that are suited to their needs and which are based on Christian values.

1. THE TEACHER, A MINISTER OF GRACE

LA SALLE wrote as follows:	AIMS		Activities suggested to achieve this
«Let it be clear, then, in all your relations with the children who are entrusted to you that you look upon yourselves as ministers of God, acting with love, with a sincere and true zeal, accepting with much patience the difficulties you have to suffer...» (MTR 9, 1).	The teacher has the central position in the Lasallian school. De La Salle sees the teacher as a special minister of God's grace for the pupils, and as someone who is called to play a specific role in his providential plan for young people. The Lasallian teacher grows in sanctity by exercising his educational ministry with zeal, and by accepting his share of responsibility for the work done in the school. The Lasallian teacher sees his educational ministry as an integral part of his spiritual growth. Consequently, his personal commitment to the spiritual, academic and vocational education of his pupils is a means for him to lead a life totally directed towards God. In the Lasallian school, this educational ministry is shared by teachers, the administrative staff, the planners and the school staff as a whole.	1. To show a spirit of faith by living in the presence of God, by recognising the action of God and by responding to it under all circumstances. 2. To show a spirit of faith by seeing one's ministry as a part of one's own spiritual growth.	1. In class, share prayer with the pupils. 2. Pray, asking for the grace to answer for the pupils before God.
«Your zeal towards the children you teach would not go very far and would not have much result or much success if it limited itself only to words. To be effective, your teaching must be supported by your example» (MTR 10, 3).	De La Salle wants teachers to look upon everything with the eyes of faith. He encourages them to become aware of the constant presence of God who guides them and guides also the minds of their pupils. Faith is shown by zeal for the spiritual and temporal good of the pupils, as well as by a fervent commitment to what is seen to be best for their complete education. This zeal makes the Lasallian teacher work with love for the good of all the pupils, and to show special consideration for those most in need of it.	3. To show a spirit of zeal by a total commitment to the education of the pupils. 4. To show a spirit of zeal by a sympathetic attitude and concern for all the pupils. 5. To show a spirit of zeal by one's efforts for the education of the poor.	3. Prepare lessons carefully and enhance them with Gospel values. 4. Make an effort to get to know each pupil personally and take his needs into account. 5. Help poor pupils to grow intellectually and socially...

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2. ASSOCIATION

LA SALLE wrote as follows:	AIMS		Activities suggested to achieve this
«Union in a community is truly a precious gem. For this reason Our Lord recommended it to his Apostles with insistence before his death. When this is lost, all is lost. Hence, if you wish your community to continue, preserve this virtue carefully» (Med. 91, 2).	In the Lasallian school, teachers act as the brothers and sisters of the pupils. They do this by ASSOCIATION, on the basis of commonly held Gospel values and a shared desire to make these values a part of their lives and of those of their pupils. Their work is characterised by mutual charity, that is, by tolerance, generosity, patience, good humour and humility. Lasallian teachers help to stimulate the spiritual, personal and professional develpment of each pupil. They cooperate with others to create a team spirit in the running of the school and in decision making. They bear witness publicly to their Lasallian character, and welcome those who are interested in sharing their ideals. The living expression of shared values attracts pupils and other people, inviting them to share in the life of the Lasallian school.	1. Commit oneself to a shared undertaking which conforms to New Testament ideals. 2. Live and work in a spirit of mutual charity. 3. Work for the spiritual and personal growth of each person. 4. Create a collegial approach to administration and decision making. 5. Involve parents, pupils, former students and friends in the Lasallian Family.	1. Reflect on the New Testament with the teaching staff. 2. Provide mutual support in a variety of areas, by contributing one's own talents and energy, and by doing all one can to forget mistakes and to correct them. 3. Provide the teaching staff with opportunities to update themselves spiritually and professionally. 4. Hold meeting periodically to consider common worries and the life of the school. 5. Offer parents, pupils, former students and the local community an opportunity to take part in school support programmes.

3. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

LA SALLE wrote as follows:	AIMS		Activities suggested to achieve this
«You must, then, look upon this work entrusted to you by pastors, by fathers and mothers, as one of the most important and most necessary services in the Church» (MTR 7, 1). «Consider that it is only too common for the working class and the poor to allow their children to live on their own, roaming all over... God has had the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune by the establishment of the Christian Schools» (MTR 2, 1). «This is also why you must have an altogether special esteem for the Christian education and teaching of children... (which) is the very foundation and support of their religion» (MTR 7, 3). «Are you thoroughly committed to their making (all these truths) a strong impression on the minds of these children?... From this moment take the steps to make it your main concern to teach perfectly the truths of the faith and the practical maxims of the holy Gospel to those who are entrusted to you» (MTR 6, 1). «You too can perform miracles... by touching the hearts of the children... by rendering your pupils obedient to and faithful in the practice of the maxims of the Gospel... and industrious in school and at home» (Med. 180, 3).	The Lasallian school is a Christian school which shares in the mission of the Catholic Church. Among its primary responsibilities one can mention: religious instruction, religious training, the education of pupils and their cultural development. Teachers provide courses that are adapted to social changes and individual needs. The Lasallian school is characterised by the importance it attaches to education, and especially to that of the working class and the poor. With energy and enthusiasm, it seeks to attract pupils from a variety of economic strata, of varying intellectual ability, and from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Also it encourages the pupils to be tolerant, to show respect for the individual, to make a genuine commitment to work for justice and peace, as well as for the good of their fellow-pupils and that of the other members of the educational community. The Lasallian school gives priority to the Christian instruction and education of the pupils. It provides a professional course of religious instruction, and integrates Gospel values in all the subjects taught. Against the background of a traditionally Catholic religious atmosphere, it encourages apostolically inspired forms of service, personal and community prayer and liturgical celebrations. The Lasallian school strives to provide teaching of a very high quality so as to cater for the needs, the aims and the abilities of the pupils who choose to frequent it. It provides courses which enable pupils to develop their intellectual and personal potential so that they can subsequently be of benefit to society. It provides courses that bring pupils into contact with the physical and social sciences, with mathematics and the arts. The teaching methods used encourage pupils to think and discriminate. De La Salle advises his teachers to pray for the gift of touching the hearts of their pupils. In the same spirit, Lasallian association seeks to create structures which will lead young people to take up their responsibilities as pupils. By their affection and concern, teachers encourage pupils to face up constantly to their personal obligations and to the possibility of exercising a leadership role.	1. Work with the local Church and support it without, however, losing the specific identity of the Lasallian school. 2. Help to fund the education of the less well off. 3. Draw pupils from a variety of economic, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. 4. Promote the following values: tolerance, sensitivity, concern for the poor, for justice, peace and responsibility. 5. Give priority to the religious instruction of the pupils in the Christian faith. 6. Create conditions which will favour a good religious education of the pupils in the Christian spirit. 7. Strive to achieve high educational standards. 8. Set up disciplinary structures which will promote the growth of the individual, the development of a sense of responsibility, and the training of leaders.	1. Motivate the pupils to take part in schemes to help the local Church. 2. Enquire about the sources of income of the poorest pupils. 3. Recruit pupils from all social strata. 4. Include in the curriculum courses dealing with justice and peace. 5. Give priority to religious instruction courses. 6. Encourage pupils to look upon the events of their lives with the eyes of faith. 7. Create courses adapted to the personal needs of pupils and suited to their intellectual ability. 8. Provide pupils with a chance to train as leaders to serve others. **REMARK** **These activities are only suggestions to help you think of others that will suit the circumstances in your particular school.**

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AS A PLACE FOR A LIFE OF HOLINESS

Seen from the perspective of the spirituality of Hugh of St Victor (1130-1141) and St John Baptist de la Salle (1651-1719)

Preamble

The Christian tradition is full of richness of different spiritualities. Yet, they appear in a spiral as there are nearly always certain elements in one form of Christian life which reappear in another separated in time by several centuries.

It is in the light of the above that I, as a Brother of the Christian Schools today identify with certain elements in the spirituality of the Canons of St Victor (Victorine School). Hugh of St Victor interests me for two reasons:

a. His spirituality and theological teaching are strongly that of an educator, whose rule of life has an augustinian flair such as ours has.

b. His teaching directly and explicitly provides for the full restoration of the fallen man to the dignity of the child of God through education. It also provides for a strong possibility of contemplative friendship with God.

So, by developing an aspect of the theological teaching of Hugh, I strive to:

a. Corroborate the vision of St John Baptist de La Salle with an earlier vision in the Church, for the purpose of

b. providing an impetus for the ministry of an educator today.

Hugh acclaimed by Bihlmayer as the most outstanding theologian of the 12th century, is a canon regular. He belongs to the Canons of St Victor begun about the year 1112 A. D. by William of Champeaux. The Canons adopted the rule of St Augustine and their monastery soon became an outstanding School of theology. It followed the practico-speculative method of St Augustine. Hugh's deep and lengthened study of the works of Augustine enabled him to present an Augustinian synthesis that had never before been accomplished, hence his appelation: alter Augustinus. Hugh's major work is on the Sacrament of the Christian faith which is an introduction to the understanding of the Scripture. His other works include treaties on meditations, on methods of prayer, in praise of charity, on the formation of novices. Still others include commentary on the Celestial Hierarchy of the pseudo-Dionysius and homilies on Ecclesiastes and "De Contemplatione et ejus speciebus". The latter is attributed to him but not with certainty.

It is thus evident from the above that Hugh of St Victor is a scholarly and contemplative person. This makes him attractive to me. His spirituality and the development of his theology with regard to studying as a means of contemplating God is worth examining with the hope of encouraging all involved in the establishment of Christian education, especially in our Catholic Schools today.

Hugh's Theological teaching

This will be fleshed out in what follows and used as I progress, to illustrate its relevance as applied to today's Catholic school.

Briefly stated, Hugh notes that original sin has left a disastrous effect on man, but not without traces of the memory of God. The memory of God that remains is a point of departure. This enabled him to enter into a knowledge of God in a sequential manner. The first stage is the Symbolic Knowledge. This is followed by Rational Knowledge and finally by Mystical Knowledge.

Chaos and Restlessness.

Some of the disastrous effects of original sin are chaos and restlesseness. St John Baptist de La Salle, a pioneer of modern education and Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools observes this phenomenon in children when he writes: «God so loved the souls he created that when He saw them involved in sin and unable to free themselves, His zeal and desire for their salvation led Him to send His own Son to rescue them from their wretched condition.» (1). Poverty is another effect of sin of society and De La Salle observes that this is an indirect cause of restlesseness in children as their parents who could not afford to send them to school allow them to wander around aimlessely like vagabonds. (2) However, Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos in their study of the Lasallian spirituality indicate that the childrens, hopeless lives would have been transformed by the concrete presence of their teachers who are for them sacrament of God's saving love. (3) The ten Black Bishops of the United States of America also recognise the chaotic condition of this world and see a hope of remedying this in the existence of the Catholic School. They write: «It (Catholic School) also represents – and this is no less important – a sign of stability in an environment of chaos and flux. It should be a source of legitimate pride that our schools are sought after by many who are not Catholics as well as Catholics because of the religious and morals values considered as part of quality education.» (4).

What then makes Catholic education capable of arresting the restlesseness of youth and the chaos of the environment? What elements in the Catholic School respond to the needs of world youth? Does the Catholic School have the potential of restoring the damaged man to the full image of Christ? These are areas I intend to examine in what follows.

As earlier stated, according to Hugh the disastrous effects of original sin leave traces of memory of God. This prompts him to explore further the concept of God through the knowledge of Arts, Scripture, philosophy and other sacred sciences. All these are to promote the mind's enlightenment about God as well as to increase the practice of virtues. Augustine had said that the whole world is a book that must be read rather than be admired. I believe, through its graded and systematic instructions, the Catholic school strives to meet this requirement of providing knowledge. In this regard, the Fathers of the Vatican Council II have this to say: «All men 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 conditions, and should be conducive to fraternal relations with other nations in order to promote true unity and peace in the world. True education is therefore directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs.» (5) This final end that education or knowledge aims at bringing about is the restoration of man to the image of Christ talked about by Hugh of St Victor.

Still talking of symbolic knowledge, I think about this also in the realm of all types of knowledge which serves man in many positive and meaningful ways. These include the physical, intellectual, moral and social as well as spiritual dimensions of man's needs. The Church Fathers write: «Due weight being given to the advances in psychological, pedagogical and intellectual sciences, children and young people should be helped to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual qualities.» (6) Corroborating this, the Black Bishops say in their pastoral letter: «The education of a people being the greatest and fundamental means of elevating it to the higher planes to which all Christian civilization tends, we pledge ourselves to aid schools in establishing wherever we are to be found, Catholic, schools embracing the primary and higher branches of knowledge.» (7)

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Rational knowledge.

Man can ascend and attain the Invisible through the tangible, the visible. Hugh, in the tradition of the Fathers, believes that there must be a rational and reflective study of the Scripture and scriptural matters such that knowledge already acquired can lead to a greater understanding of God in the light of faith. The appreciation of symbolic things earlier described must be through rational knowledge. It is the stimulation of the minds of the children through appropriate teaching techniques available to the modern man that this can be achieved. Vatican II affirms that: «Children and young people have the right to be stimulated to make sound judgements based on a well found conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment.» (8) I submit that through the practice of making consistent sound moral judgements, rational knowledge is attained. In addition, the elements of education mentioned above, namely arts and sciences, need be unified rationally such that what is learnt in one area can be meaningfully integrated within the person with what is learnt in other areas. Thus the task of making integrated human beings belong properly to the Catholic school with its dedicated staff. I believe this is very much in the mind of Pius XII when he said of the Catholic school: "Life is a synthesis".

Mystical knowledge.

Reflection on the knowledge acquired as explained above is necessary for meditation. This is especially true when the subject of reflection is the Sacred Scripture done in the light of faith. Although the Scripture is a privileged starting place to reflect about God, one does not stop there. «The reflective Catholic should be able to distinguish his religious community with its distinctive faith and cult from the outrageous failures of many of its members.» (9) This is to say he will avoid rhetorical questions such as "Has the Church a future"? and "Can one continue to accept the Church"? (10) The education of the person becomes truly reflective when it is directed towards ensuring an entry into knowledge of the mystery of salvation leading to a more deeply appreciation of the gift of faith which he has received. Thus he learns to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth.

However, according to Hugh, reflection on knowledge must not be merely speculative: it must be an understanding (intus legere) that stimulates effective love and eventually leads to contemplation, which is mystical knowledge. Mysticism, however, is an intense experience of God which is not earned, deserved or merited. I believe it is a gratuitous gift of God given by the Spirit as it wills. Still, needless to say that the person who seeks a greater understanding of knowledge can possibly, more readily appreciate the gift of contemplation than the unenlightened mind. In the words of Dermot A. Lane «God is co-experienced and co-known through the different experiences and knowledge of the human subject.» (11)

God is present to us from the outset in all our experiences. With Thomas Aquinas, we would want to hold that God is known implicitly in everything that is known. Also, Lane quotes Schillebeeks as saying: «God is the transcendent third in all our human experiences and above all in our interpersonal relationships.» (12) Still, it is important to stress the fact that God takes the initiative in all experiences involving Him and the created world. The point I am making is the need for man to do the groung work by nourishing his mind with appropriate knowledge which may better prepare him for the possibility of a mystical experience.

Models of dedication to the Ministry of Education.

None of the developments outlined above can take place in a Catholic school without the guidance of outstanding, knowledgeable and dedicated teachers, teachers who are proud of their profession and are willing to give their best. The Victorine school to which Hugh belongs, to my mind, exemplifies the attribute of exceptional dedication of staff and faculty to the cause of education. First, its founder, William de Champeaux is a professor of repute at Notre Dame in Paris (†1122). Secondly, the School produced luminaries such as Adam of St Victor (†1192) who was the poet of the school; Archard (†1171) a spiritual writer who wrote treatises on the Trinity as well as on Christology to mention a few, not to mention the illustrious and famous sons in the person of our hero, Hugh and Richard of St Victor, the latter of whom is a student of the former.

It is my contention that the role of teachers cannot be overestimated in bringing the students to a greater knowledge of God. And this is especially true of the Catholic school. For «Catholicism knows that man is so essentially social that his capacity for a human life can only be actualised through living with others and that the more rational a truly human society is, the better it will be for the individual development of any and all of his potentials including the religious.» (13)

In addition, the Fathers of the Vatican Council realise the importance of having similar calibre of men and women as teachers in the Catholic school when then say: «Priests, religious and laymen carefully chosen and prepared for their task should provide permanent centres of guidance, spiritual and intellectual for the students. Special interest should be taken in young men of outstanding abilities whether they be students of Catholic or other universities who seem to be suited to teaching or research and they should be encouraged to adopt academic careers.» (14). Other important persons in history have exalted the ministry of teachers notably amongst them is the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, John Baptist de La Salle. By his life he showed how important it is to spend one's life generously in the task of education of youth. (15) Not only that, he vigorously exhorts school masters, his disciples, later called "Brothers" to give all their lives to the ministry which is God's calling for them. He writes in his meditations: «God diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge throughout the world of human ministers. Just as he commanded light to shine out of darkness, so He also kindles the light to shine in the hearts of those whom He has called to announce his word to children, to enlighten them by making the glory of God known to them. Since God in His mercy has given you such a ministry, gain glory before Him by proclaiming His truth to those whom you are called to teach.» (16)

Conclusion:

The acquisition of knowledge, symbolically or otherwise, to be rationalized and internalised need the assistance of capable and generous teachers. It is then that the knowledge acquired can be used as a path towards God. This makes the Christian school relevant in the context of evangelisation today.

Bro. Peter Anifaloba

• Life of Hugh of St Victor and references to the School of St Victor taken primarily from Jordan Aumann: Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Church.

(1) De La Salle: Meditations for the Time of Retreat. (Med. 9/3) English translation, printed by St Mary's College Press. Winona. Minnesota, 1975.
(2) Ibid, cf Med 2/1.
(3) M. Sauvage and M. Campos: De La Salle: Annoncer l'Evangile aux pauvres. p. 301.
(4) A pastoral letter of the Black American Bishops: "What we have seen and heard". 9th September 1984; p. 28.
(5) Austine Flannery: Vatican document II: On Christian Education, p. 726-27.
(6) Ibid: p. 727.
(7) "What we have seen and heard" p. 28.
(8) Vatican II: document on Education. p. 726.
(9) John Donohue, sj: Catholicism and Education; p. 80.
(10) Ibid p. 9.
(11) Dermot A. Lane: The Experience of God. p. 15.
(12) ibid.
(13) John Donohue - Catholic Education. p. 80.
(14) Vatican II, p. 736.
(15) De La Salle relinquished his canonry of the cathedral of Rheims in 1682, in order to be fully available to the ministry of the school. Cf Sauvage and Campos: p. 32.
(16) De La Salle: Meditations for the Time of Retreat, p. 47.

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IMPLICATIONS

OF THE NEW PEDAGOGY

FOR TODAY'S EDUCATOR

1. Respect for the person is the basis for a proper understanding of the student.

– Promote integral and harmonious development.

– Recognize and promote originality.

– Help the student toward a rapid and progressive adaptation.

– Be optimistic, observing, understanding and discreet.

2. Encourage self-activity in the student.

– Stimulate and form attitudes and habits.

– Concern for the interior activity of the mind must be a priority.

– Avoid superficial activism.

– Foster depth, reflection, critical examination in the student.

– Avoid nervous agitation, doing for doing's sake.

– Give him/her a taste for work well done.

3. Be a guide, not a teacher.

–The title is EDUCATOR: "E-ducere" = draw out from within, stimulate, awaken, motivate...

– Pedagogue: one always present to accompany, neither in front of nor behind, but **beside.**

4. Begin from the keenest interests of the students.

– Have an interesting program which is adequately motivated.

– Equidistant from a pedagogy of pleasure (what I want) and the pedagogy of duty for duty's sake.

– Not the avoidance of effort, but drawing out well motivated personal effort.

5. Keep the school in contact with life.

– Establish intimate contact with the reality being lived by the student.

– Don't give ready-made what can be discovered by the student.

– Let observation and experimentation substitute for the book.

– Stimulate the development of critical examination.

6. Make the class into a true community.

– Create a family-like atmosphere of educational spontaneity.

– Encourage work in groups and teams.

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7. Include work-with-hands in all work with the mind.

– Opens sensitivity to true beauty.

– Evaluate the aptness of expressions done through moulding and movement.

8. Develop the creative faculties.

– Encourage the use of intuitive, invention and imagination.

– recognize the primacy of the need for self-expression and communication.

9. Adapt learning to each individual.

– Create a school which "fits" the individual".

– Encourage individual and free activities.

– Respect personal rhythms, qualities and situations.

– Promote self-evaluation as a means, a system, an ideal.

10. Guide towards self-discipline.

– Instead of forcing, promote interior discipline which is active and self-demanding.

– Encourage self-government within the group.

Brother Alfredo Morales

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TO EVANGELISE THE POOR...

TO EVANGELISE EVERYBODY

Jesus evangelised everybody

When people who are obviously inspired by the Gospel say that the Church has made "a preferential option for the poor", we feel reassured because we know that it is the poor who are called to the Kingdom of God. This was what was meant by the parable of the guests who were invited to the wedding feast but who did not come because their hearts were full and "rich" with other concerns.

And yet, when Our Lord sent his Apostles to evangelise he told them quite clearly: «All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you» (Mt 28, 18-20). «Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned» (Mk 16, 15-16). «You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth» (Ac 1, 8).

Jesus evangelised all those he met on his way. Some had no material possessions, probably most, in fact. Others, like Zaccheus for example, had possessions. He called even one of the better off people of the time to be his Apostle – Matthew the tax collector. He evangelised the centurion who had great wealth and which he had invested profitably... And one cannot doubt that his evangelisation bore good fruit.

However, when he wanted to give John a proof of his divine mission, he said to him: «The Good News is proclaimed to the poor» (Mt 11, 5). Were not "all" evangelised?

All must be evangelised

Yes, all were evangelised; but in some the Word did not produce any fruit because they "were rich", because their hearts were already filled, occupied. «The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word and so he produces nothing» (Mt 13, 22). The ones who bear fruit are the poor, those whose hearts are ready to receive the Word of God; «Go back and tell John.. the Good News is proclaimed to the poor».

And whom are we, the disciples of Jesus, to evangelise: the poor or everybody?

I think the answer is given very clearly in the Gospel: we must proclaim the Word of God to all without distinction. The fruit that God produces in the hearts of all will follow. If a person does not produce fruit, it is a sign that he is not poor and that it will be difficult for him to enter the Kingdom: «It will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven» (Mt 19, 23).

It should be quite clear, however, that riches are not only money and material goods. There are persons who have neither money nor goods, and yet they are rich in worries, desires, dreams and ambitions! In these too the Word does not grow because «the worries of this world... choke the word». On the other hand, there are people who have money and goods but whose hearts are not blinded: they are capable of receiving the Word of God, and it produces fruit. For example: Matthew, Zaccheus and the centurion.

* * *

The Christian school evangelises without discrimination

When John Baptist de La Salle founded his schools they were schools for the poor. They were free schools which provided education and evangelisation for those who could not afford to pay for the teaching they received. As for the others who had money, they already went to other schools and paid for their education.

De La Salle's free schools, however, soon became known for the quality of their education: the children in them learnt and made progress. When people became aware of this, they said to themselves: "Why spend money in fee-paying schools when you can learn the same things and even more in the Brothers' school which is free?" And so children began transferring from the fee-paying schools to the Christian schools.

This gave rise to conflict: the Brothers' school was beginning to take in pupils who were not poor and who could pay tuition fees. At school, no one was asked if he could pay or not. This meant that the fee-paying schools were losing their clientele. There were complaints.

The solution arrived at by the authorities was that pupils had to be poor to be able to attend the Brothers' school (Decision of the Grand Chantre of Paris, February 14th 1704, during the third court case against their schools). The parish priest was to provide a certificate of poverty. This solution did not satisfy De La Salle. His schools were free, of course, but they were open to all who wished to come. De La Salle did not want any discrimination. It was the court decision which imposed it, and not the Brothers.

For John Baptist, gratuity was the key principle. The Brothers of the Christian Schools conducted "free schools". They consecrated themselves to God «in order to conduct gratuitous schools, together and by association, in whatever

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place, even when in order to do this I were to be obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread only, or to do in the said society the work I am given...» (Formula of perpetual profession, June 6th 1694).

It is obvious that the poor will go to a free school, since they cannot go to a fee-paying school. But what is to prevent those who are not poor from going there also?

This is what happened in the Brothers' schools and what caused the writing masters of Paris to bring court cases against the Founder (1690, 1698, 1704-1706).

* * *

When gratuity is impossible...

Throughout the history of the Institute, gratuity has been a subject that has been fought about.

«The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society in which profession is made of conducting schools gratuitously» (first Rules, ch. 1, art. 1). «The Brothers will conduct schools gratuitously everywhere, and this is essential for their Institute» (first Rules, ch. 7, art. 1).

That is the will of the Institute. Unfortunately, the social and political situation in many countries makes this unfeasible or impossible. The only schools that are free are those organised by the public authorities, using money contributed by all the citizens. Schools run by other people must be self-supporting, that is, charge tuition fees. Citizens who do not choose the State schools are aware of this and are resigned to the fact they have to pay. A few countries give equal financial support to all teaching establishments, recognising thus that they all provide the same public service.

What is the consequence of this politico-social attitude? If you want to be able to provide teaching, very often there is no other solution than to charge fees. This is against gratuity.

So this is the dilemma: give up schools or give up gratuity... If you have no schools you cannot evangelise. If you have schools without gratuity, access to them, is often barred, or very restricted, where the poor and the most needy are concerned. And if there is no gratuity, how do you put into practice the preferential option for the poor?

* * *

Contradiction or realism?

What the Institute has done in such cases throughout its history has been to get as close as possible to gratuity. Quite often this has been done by asking for a token payment only for tuition, or by making it free by means of scholarships set up by the schools themselves. However, some had to pay.

This is something of a compromise which causes problems for those who would like a radical solution: complete gratuity, «even if it were necessary to live on bread alone...»; a gratuity which would make possible total and absolute commitment to the most needy and the most poor.

Could this be possible?

Let us return to the point we started from: should we evangelise and educate only the poor, or everybody?

The answer is not complicated: everybody!

If social situations do not make it possible to do so gratuitously, at least let us not stop evangelising and educating. While waiting for these socio-political situations to change (because one day they will have to change!), we cannot indulge in discrimination as we sow the Word of God.

* * *

The preferential option for the poor

The preferential option for the poor does not mean that the "non-poor" have to be excluded from evangelisation. It means that the poor are a priority, but not that the "less poor" should be abandoned.

My "preferential" option for the poor means also finding the poor wherever I evangelise. Discovering the poor means finding those lacking something: affection, parents, intelligence, qualities, human resources... If I look for them with the eyes of faith, I will find the poor in all groups.

This is not an escape clause to tranquilise our conscience. The Declaration on the Brother of the Christian Schools in the world today says the following: «This fidelity requires in the first place a change of attitude so that we can see, for example, in our ordinary classes how many poor students there are and how we can help them or, even more importantly, how we can better direct our teaching of religion so that all our students become sensitive to the problems of the poor» (N°. 29, 2).

If this is our attitude, then the following words of De La Salle will make sense: «We are poor Brothers, forgotten by the world and esteemed of no importance. Only the poor come to us, and they have nothing to offer but their hearts prepared to receive our instructions» (Med. 86, 2).

Let us proclaim our mesage to all without discrimination as Jesus did. God will produce fruit in the poor of hearts, and we will be able to say constantly: «That is the sign of our ministry: the poor are evangelised».

Brother José María Valladolid

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PRAYERS

OF A CHRISTIAN TEACHER

(6)

(1: 16-9–C-63; 2: 17-13–C-73; 3: 18-15–C-79; 4: 19-12–C-81; 5: 20-16–C-90)

* * *

TO TEACH... TO EDUCATE...

Lord,
You have called us to be ministers
in the work of education
To procure your glory,
To inspire children
With the spirit of wisdom and light;
So that they may come to know You.

Our mission is:
To teach and to bear witness,
To concern ourselves with the spiritual needs
of our pupils
To bring them up in the Christian faith,
each according to his age,
To take more care
of the poorer and less-gifted pupils.

Lord, you wish us to be
True professionals in the field of education,
But above all, to be Christian educators;
To teach our subjects competently,
And give a Christian education through faith.

We will never become true Christian teachers
Till we dedicate ourselves, body and soul,
To the work of giving a complete education
To young people and children.
We need to fill ourselves with God
In order to make him known.
We need to continue our own education
In order to teach others worthily.
We need to give our time
To be able to go forward together in the faith.
Forgive us, Lord,
For all the times we have neglected
To prepare our catechisms properly;
For all the times we have sought ourselves
Instead of seeking your Kingdom;
for all the times we have not shared
Our time and affectionate care
Because we were too concerned about ourselves
And our own comfort.

Lord,
Give us the strength to watch over
The conduct and behaviour of our pupils:
We are responsible for these children
For their persons and for their faith.
We must guide them
So that they live as good Christians.

Lord,
To be a Christian teacher
Is to do and say everything
For God and for the good
Of children and young people.
It is to do this without seeking
The approval or gratitude of others
But thinking only of serving God.

To be a minister of the Gospel implies:
- Zeal for teaching,
- Virtuous living and witness
- Prudence and moderation,
- Patience and affection,
- Control over one's passions,
- Good judgment
when reprimanding or punishing.

We wish to work
for the extension of the Kingdom.

* * *

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Lord,
Thank you for the Christian school,
Because, thanks to its existence,
Children and young people grow in faith and piety.
Thank you, Lord,
For bestowing the gift of the Christian School
Upon your Church,
And through it, extending your Kingdom.

Lord,
Your goodness is so great,
That you have sent us as your apostles and teachers
To bring about the salvation of souls.
Our greatest prize and reward, Lord,
Is to know you and love you.
It is our joy to make others know you,
And to make children and young people follow you.
We are your servants,
But you have made us your sons.
You have sent us to work in your vineyard

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To preach your Kingdom.
Give us the generosity and the dedication we need
Not to bury your talents
But to sow your seed open-handedly.

Lord,
What joy it is to see you loved
By those who have received our message.
For it is in you alone, Lord,
That we wish to glory, as the Apostle says.
We are happy to extend your Kingdom
And to preach your Gospel freely.
Count on us to instruct children and young people
In the truths of the Gospel.
Count on us, even though we know
this is difficult to do.

Your work, Lord,
Cannot be completed in one day,
In a period of time:
It is a life's work.
It is not enough for us, Lord,
To proclaim the Gospel only to children:
We must work also
With young people and adults.
To persevere in piety and faith in Jesus
Needs much time:
Time to sow, to water, to hoe and to fertilize.

Teach us, Lord,
To proclaim YOUR word and not our own.
Teach us, Lord,
To speak the words of YOUR Gospel
and not those of our own.
Lord,
You founded the Christian Schools
To instruct children and young people:
Send us, Lord,
New teachers and new De La Salle Brothers
So that we can pursue the work of salvation
Among the children and young people of our day.

* * *

STARS

Lord,
We are happy to be your apostles,
We are happy to work for your Kingdom.
We could never be happy to save simply ourselves.
The joy of sharing
In the education of children and young people.
Makes up for all the problems
We experience in teaching.

Our mission is to instruct and educate
Children to be pious;
Our mission is to train them in the Christian spirit;
Our mission and our glory
Is to make them know and love you,
Christ Our Lord.

Lord,
The prophet Daniel said:
«Those who instruct many people to be just
Will shine as stars for all eternity».
Our glory and our joy are not measured
By external results,
But by the children and young people
That we lead to God.

Our joy, Lord, is to proclaim your message;
Our joy, Lord, is to see children and young people
Believe in you;
Our joy, Lord, is to pursue our God-given vocation;
Our joy, Lord, is to see children and young people
Going to you;
Our joy, Lord, is to share your Word.

In this life, you fill us with your joy by your presence.
How boundless will our joy be
In the glory of Heaven;
You, Lord, enter into the very depths of our soul.
Fill us, Lord, with yourself
So that we can share you with others.

Teach us to keep our pupils innocent;
Teach us to share in the salvation of their souls;
Teach us to be their guardian angels;
Teach us to work generously for their salvation.

When we die, Lord,
And find ourselves in your presence
Surrounded by those
Who reached your Kingdom before us,
We hope you will welcome us by saying:
«These men – these De La Salle Brothers,
Are the servants of the Most High.
They have worked for the Kingdom,
Proclaiming the way of Salvation».

At that decisive meeting, Lord,
You will judge us by the love we have shown:
- By our dedication to the work of education;
- By our generous sharing;
- By our willingness to announce your message;
- By our fraternity and community life;
- By the time we have devoted
To being with young people;
- By our example and the witness we have borne.

Thank you, Lord,
For my vocation as a De La Salle Brother.

Brother Celestino Hernando

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NEW EVANGELISATION

AND THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

(2)

At the end of our previous article (cf. 20-17–D-51), we showed how our Institute's desire to be «a presence of the evangelising Church» in the world of today had led the Brother capitulants of 1986 to launch the great worldwide plan of the Lasallian Family. They did so in response to the invitation of the Pope to enter fully into this new phase of Church history which is that of the **"New Evangelisation".**

1. THE PROMOTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LAITY

The Institute has understood that this New Evangelisation cannot be done without the laity. What is more, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit, the laity will play the leading part in this Church action.

For this reason, the Institute has made a serious commitment to promote the Christian laity (*cf. Rule 17*). It is by means of this promotion that the Institute means to contribute to the preparation of the vineyard workers invited by the Lord, in the context of the New Evangelisation, to work for the building of the Kingdom of God (*cf. AA 33; LFL 2*).

In fact, **promoting the Christian laity** means to «accompany, sustain and educate numerous groups of Christians – above all Christian educators who wish to derive their inspiration from De La Salle in order to grow as men and women of faith, at the service of the local Church, and as people particularly committed to the field of education» (*Circ. 422, p. 13*).

The promotion of the Lasallian laity has thus become one of the priorities of the Institute for the final ten years of the 20th century in order:

1, to make more effective the ministry of Christian education, a mission entrusted to the Institute by the Church. «Thanks to this integration of Brothers and lay people working together in a common ministry, our schools will be better and we will be able to offer a service of greater quality to the Church» (*Circ. 422, p. 13*).

2. to contribute to the vitality of the Church by leading authentic Christian communities of faith made up of Lasallian lay people. «We are of the opinion that all establishments and Lasallian groups should be moving in the direction of becoming such communities of faith, each organising its own life, its own pace and its own ways of expressing itself, and working with the local Church. (*Letter to the Lasallian Family, p. 24*).

2. A DEEP SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

It is clear this process cannot take place unless certain requirements are fulfilled. We shall mention just two of these:

The most obvious one is that the Institute will not be able to succeed in this great enterprise without **a deep spiritual renewal** on the part of the Brothers. As early as 1966, the General Chapter, the Chapter of renewal, had laid down this pre-condition. We should re-read and meditate again on the marvellous section 3 of the Declaration which describes for us what spiritual renewal consists in. Rather than reproduce such a long text, we include just the first idea: «For a person to renew himself spiritually, he must first be aware that it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the renovation of men and of institutions».

That is why the 1986 General Chapter launched once again «an urgent call to conversion – a conversion which will come about through both personal renewal and through a re–founding of our mission» (*Circ. 422, p. 20*). The Brother capitulants noted «signs of a disturbing loss of spiritual vitality» and wondered if we should not «commit ourselves even further to our quest for God». In this connection, they recalled the words of the Founder: «You must be holy, uncommonly so».

Basically what they ask of us is to be more authentic:

* in our **witness**: «The first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life» (*Rule 24; cf. EN 21*).

* in our **community life**: «The Brothers make every effort to model their community life on the relations of knowledge and love that constitute the life of the Holy Trinity» (*Rule 48*).

* in **prayer**: «Each Brother has the primary responsibility for his personal prayer. Each one and all together are responsible for community prayer» (*Rule 72*).

* in our **apostolic commitment**: «As ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ, the Brothers

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participate in the Church's mission by consecrating their lives to God in order to bring the Gospel to the educational world» (*Rule 12*).

Ever since his first Pastoral Letter, Brother Superior General has never ceased to insist on this most important aspect of conversion and spiritual transformation. He invites us to be truly men of faith and of prayer, zealous in our apostolate, having a preferential love for the poor, sharing our mission with lay people, sensitive to the problems of the world and allowing ourselves «to be impressed» by human suffering.

In this context, the words of Paul VI in "Evangelii Nuntiandi" (*N° 8*) are admirable: «There can be no new humanity if there are not first men new with the newness of baptism (cf. Rm 6, 4) and with life according to the Gospel (cf. Ep. 4, 23-24; Col 3, 9-10)».

3. NEW RELATIONS WITH LAY PEOPLE

The second requirement (implicit in what we have been saying) is a radical change in our relations with lay people.

There is no doubt that a noticeable evolution has come about with regard to this in the Institute. If certain texts are examined and comparisons made, for example, between that of the 1946 General Chapter (*cf Circ. 318, p. 90*) and those of the 1986 General Chapter, it will be clear that in the space of 40 years some extraordinary changes in language have occurred. That is already something, but has this been matched by a similar change in attitude towards the laity by the Brothers? In this area, progress has not really been noticeable, although we should not paint too black a picture. We could say rather that we are in the process of making continuous progress in the improvement of these relations.

Care has to be taken to formulate correctly the question of changing our relations with lay people. If we are to turn to the laity and look upon them differently, it is not principally, as some say, because there is a scarcity of vocations in certain parts of the Institute, or that the number of Brothers has decreased dramatically. These are undeniable facts which may have provided the catalyst, but they are not the fundamental reason.

The principle and basis are of a theological order. It is part of the new ecclesiology which was encouraged by Vatican II. The bishops at the 1985 Synod said the following: «The ecclesiology of communion is the central and fundamental concept of the Council... The ecclesiology of communion is also the foundation of order in the Church and above all of a correct relationship between uniformity and pluriformity in the Church» (*Final Report, C, 1*).

This ecclesiology of communion is then one that affirms the fundamental equality between all the members of the People of God, as well as the diversity and complementarity of vocations, states of life, ministries, charisms and responsibilities within this People (*cf. LLF 20*).

It is this ecclesiology that highlights the importance of the laity within the Church, and what has returned to it its important position of responsibility in the latter's mission after centuries of overwhelming and sterilising "clericalism", for which we Brothers had some responsibility.

This new vision of the Church as a communion brought about great changes in the community and government structures of religious congregations when the Chapters of renewal called for by the Council took place. It gave rise quite naturally to a new style of relationship with lay people.

I am not saying anything new when I point out that not all in the Church (bishops, priests, religious, lay people) are equally in tune with the Council documents. Many, through indifference or lack of time, have neither read nor studied thoroughly this rich Council teaching. When the 1985 Synod bishops assessed the extent to which the second Vatican Council had been accepted, they noted in all honesty «the need to accept the Council at a much deeper level. This acceptance has to pass necessarily through four successive levels: a more extensive and deep understanding of the Council, its internal assimilation, its reaffirmation in love, its translation into actions in life» (*Final Report I, 5*).

This surely means that we Brothers too should further deepen our theological studies of the ecclesiology of communion so as to better undestand the present-day movement of the Institute towards the laity in order to be more creative in our practical approach to the «shared mission», and towards the more enthusiastic and more convinced leaders of lay groups which form part of the Lasallian Family.

The consequence of the ecclesiology of communion for us Brothers is that in our educational communities and in the exercise of the ministry of education we are not superior to the laity. It is on the basis of equality and respect for our respective identities that we must share tasks and responsibilities with them (*cf. Rule 17a*), and joyfully associate them with our educational awareness of being members of the Church of Jesus Christ and of participating in his mystery of communion and his apostolic and missionary energy» (*LLF 64*).

Br. Hernando Seba Lopez

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THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR TODAY

BASIS OF THAT SPIRITUALITY

Christocentric and Evangelical

* Christ the Son of God come to earth offers Himself as the strength and model of his disciples. His words and example are the basic criteria for all believers:

– Those who wish to participate in His Kingdom and salvation which are open to all men, for He gave Himself for all.

– Those who receive the **Divine Call** (vocation) to consecrate themselves without reserve to work for His Kingdom which extends throughout the whole world.

The Christian Educator should know that he is a witness and apostle of that same Christ.

* By Baptism he is incorporated into Christ. He bears within himself the commitment to announce salvation and conversion. Baptismal spirituality becomes a challenge for those who feel themselves called to the service of others.

* Christ says He is the **Way**, the **Truth** and the **Life**.
– As the Way, He indicates the ideal toward which we should strive.
– As the Truth, He establishes Himself as the program which guarantees integral fullness of life.
– As the Life, He offers His own supernatural riches which are His very Person.

The sense of Community within the work of Jesus.

* The Church is the work of Jesus which He left us when He returned to the Father so that it might be the guide and support of our search for truth and goodness. To live the spirit of the Church of Jesus is a necessity for the Christian Educator.

– To participate in the spirit of the Church is to be aware that we are members of the pilgrim People of God who help each other along the way. It is to know that we are members of the Mystical Body which nourishes all its parts.

– To foster life is not just to participate in it. It implies accepting the apostolic challenge and responsibility as they ought to be accepted.

* The Christian educator feels that he is responsible for the well-being of the Church because he knows that it is the work of Christ to which he should contribute his own interior riches.

– The Christian educator is aware that he is sent by the Church.
– He commits himself and accepts responsibility for the good of the Church.
– His own personal spiritual life has meaning only within the context of the Church which nourishes it.

* Love for the Hierarchy of the Church as a source of inspiration; because the true believer sees the signs of Providence in the real persons who incarnate the service of authority.

– Inspiration is sought in the Pope who has the mission of directing the Church and of confirming the faith of his brothers.
– Held in respect also are the Bishops and ministers who are most committed to the work of salvation because they are like "sacraments of God in the midst of men".

Attitude of continuous conversion and continuous improvement.

* This attitude is sustained by the loving awareness of **Divine Providence** which we know can be found in all the circumstances of life, even the most adverse.

* **Christian Virtues** are appreciated as instruments which draw us ever closer to God. These virtues become the daily strength which inspires and directs our conduct within the sphere of the educational apostolate.

* Among the virtues, those which most consciously develop the fullest expression of the radicality of the Gospel are:
– the detachment of the poor of the earth
– obedience to the designs of God for our person.
– renunciation of sensual pleasures, as a sanctifying offering.

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THE SANCTITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR

SOURCES OF HIS INSPIRATION

1. The Word of God.

It is the light which illumines the educator because it presents him with the Divine Will in the form of the history of salvation.

God speaks of the life of mankind through His works and in them He traces a path of many generous encounters which record Divine intervention in human history.

– The Old Testament: interventions, psalms, hymns, ethical norms, bits of wisdom, prophecies, announcements, hopes.
– The New Testament: parables, discourses, miracles, travels, letters, advice, prophecies.

One who desires holiness is always in an attitude of listening for God to speak.

2. The Tradition of the Church.

It serves as a meeting place within the life of the Mystical Body and of the People of God who are growing in the likeness of Christ.
The Christian is aware that he is a protagonist in the midst of a generous and indestructible people.Therefore he is encouraged by the heroicity of the martyrs, the wisdom of confessors, the purity of virgins, the generosity of the apostles, the conversion of sinners and in the hope inspired by outstanding people.

A holiness isolated from the holiness of the members of the Church would be suspect as fictitious or as individualism.

3. The Magisterium.

The Christian feels diffident, humble and respectful toward those who come to him as the successors of the Apostles to whom Christ confided the spread of the Gospel.

That is why he has recourse to the Popes, past and present, to the Councils, Bishops and the structures of Ecclesial government. He is careful about their directives, accepts their teachings and respects their authority.

4. The Community of Believers.

To participate in the life of the Church is to live the spirit of Community of the Faithful in the firm conviction that the Holy Spirit works therein because Christ clearly promised to send Him to us.

THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR GIVES OF HIMSELF TOTALLY

In the name of the Father.
He is aware that he is a son of God and grows in the spirituality of the Son Whom he recognises in others who are also sons of the same Father. All inherit the same eternal destiny, loved by Him Who made all things, cares for all things and makes all things work together unto good.

In the name of the Son.
Who is Christ always present in his life and all its circumstances; Who is the courage which sustains him in all his difficulties and the source of happiness which brings him joy in the friendship of God.

In the name of the Holy Spirit.
It is the Spirit of Love Who gives meaning to his own desire for sanctity and Who bestows the richness of his wonderful Gifts and their magnificent Fruits. The Christian educator feels such a love for the grace of God that he will do anything that others may live by its glorious richness.

Brother Pedro Chico

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THE DYNAMIC ELEMENTS OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR

INTERIOR DYNAMICS

ESSENTIAL:

- **The spirit of Faith.**
  It is manifested by that trust in Divine Providence which impels him to consider all things with reference to God. He is aware that God is present everywhere (Divine Presence) and he knows that all that happens in this life bears the seal of God's action (Divine Providence).

- **Hope in God,**
  because He has promised to help those who place their trust in His Divine action. Thus, there is no such thing as "failure" for those who trust in God. He knows everything that happens and often leaves the real results hidden while He misteriously preserves the seeds which have been sown in view of the eventual fulfillement of His designs which do not always coincide with the plans of men.

- **An ardent zeal for the sons of God,**
  which is the manner in which true charity in incarnated. The love of God in the Christian educator is manifested through his expressions of love for others, especially for those whom Providence has confided to him through his professional work.

COMPLEMENTARY:

- **The prayer of the Christian educator** which consists in asking that his work to promote human and spiritual values be efficacious and that his trust in God move hearts to truly spiritual results.

- **A generous spirit of self-sacrifice** which leads him to place no measure on his commitment or his efforts, in the form conviction that God is at work among men and that He relates spiritual results with the sacrifices of those He sends.

- **Sufficient humility** to recognize that there are limits to what he can do and that he needs the unseen action of Christ Who, in fact, is invisibly present in our midst.

- **Disinterested and unflagging courage**, which is called fortitude in those who work within the freedom of men and their constant potential for resistance to grace and to the opportunities which are offered to them,

- **A clear witness**, which brings the educator to speak more through what he is than with eloquent words, giving voice to his virtues, incarnating the Gospel and being the living radiation of Christ Himself.

- **Union with the Church**, since the educator is aware that he is sent by the Church in the name of Jesus Himself to carry out His missionary mandate to teach the Kingdom of God to all nations.

- **Incarnation in his milieu**, striving to avoid utopias and unrealistic projects, working to re-produce the mysterious reality of the Incarnation of Christ by his burning desire to be present to men.

- **Respect for man** whose dignity he contemplates as a desired ideal in each of his students, even in those in whom the image of God seems hidden by intellectual, social and especially moral limitations.

- **Unshakeable perseverance** composed of fortitude, prudence, order, moderation and professional responsibility, which preserves him from vanity and discouragement and which keeps the flame of his idealism burning brightly.

- **Expecting no spectacular results**, which is a form of necessary penance for educators, because it is not possible to have worthwhile results if these are only apparent; nor that hearts be profoundly converted to God when they are limited to exterior efforts even when they are designed to help the mind, the conscience or the will to consider the true and the good.

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EXTERIOR DYNAMICS

The Christian educator uses his work in education as the basis of his own plan for holiness. He makes no difference between his tending toward holiness and his professional work, because he is convinced that God acts through our daily undertakings.

- For it a duty in conscience to be **professionally prepared,** generally and specifically, because he realizes that he must offer **excellent teaching and education** in order to have an evangelical influence on hearts and minds.

- He easily goes beyond the demands of ordinary **human culture** (literary, scientific, social and academic) and uses everything at his disposal, beginning with **information** in order to achieve the **formation** of free individuals, which is, after all, his principal professional objective.

- He speaks about God with simplicity and persuasion, making himself a **catechist and evangelizer**, convinced that in order to do this he must have God in his own heart.

- **He frequently celebrates his faith** with the believing community to which he belongs. He also does all he can to bring his disciples to an awareness of the sacramental dimension of Christianity. He himself focuses his spirituality on the Sacraments so that those around him will participate in these signs of grace.

- He is always **striving to improve**, because his inner richness redounds to the spiritual betterment of his students who imperceptibly weigh his convictions, attitudes and feelings as a committed believer.

- **He acts with the community**, even in developing his personal devotions, because he knows he is a member of a Church which expresses faith together. For this reason, his prayers, his practices of piety and his traditions have an apostolic radiation because he is aware of his educational influence.

- He always gives the impression of a **happy, dynamic and captivating** believer through the responsibility he has accepted, through the truly exciting prospect of the Gospel he teaches, and his confidence in the Divine Presence which brings peace, joy in the Spirit and happiness as far as these are possible in this life.

The spirituality of the Christian educator is out-going.

It never closes in upon itself. It is always open to providing excellent educational service to all who come into contact with his person, his life, his thought and his witness. Through his experience, he knows that one educates more **by what one is than by what one says.** The same thing happens in the order of faith. He communicates more spiritual life through what he personally and genuinely lives than by all the good advice and abstract presentations which he learnedly expounds.

The Christian educator is not afraid to use his personal program for holiness as possible orientations for the sanctification of others. This is merely the logical consequence of his **Baptismal awareness** and more especially of the marvellous profession with which God has favored him. As a response to this Divine predilection, he places his own spiritual attainments at the service of the sons of God who pass so close to him on their way through life.

Brother Pedro Chico

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SANTIAGO (CHILE)

INAUGURATION OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE SQUARE

On may 15th 1990, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Brief "Quod ait" by which Pope Pius XII proclaimed St. John Baptist de La Salle «Principal patron before God of all teachers», the town authorities of Reina (which is part of the capital Santiago) inaugurated a square named after this French Saint who in 1680 founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

French also are the robes we wear, we religious of this congregation which was the first in the history of the Church to be formed of men committed by vow, but exclusively lay, to devote their lives to education seen as an apostolic service worthy to occupy the whole life of a man and to motivate a life of sanctity.

It was at the request of Mgr Rafael Valentin Valdivieso, archbishop of Santiago, that President Jose Joaquin Perez gave legal status to our congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1862, authorising us to establish ourselves in Chile.

In 1877, the Brothers took over the St. Vincent de Paul Workshops house, founded in 1855 by Mgr Jose Hipolito Salas who had introduced the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to Chile and had been consecrated bishop of Conception in 1854. The members of the community were Brothers Amedee (from Paris), Theophile Justin (from Avignon) and Donatoris (from Quimper). Shortly after, the arrival of a Canadian, Brother Xavier (James Peter Davis Mulhall) strengthened its universal character which is proper to our congregation and the Church. These Brothers belonged to the District of Ecuador, the first Latin American country in which the Brothers established themselves (in 1863). The first Director of this house was Brother Jucondus (from Bordeaux).

Confirmation that the Brothers of the Christian Schools had taken root in Chile came quickly: two younsters, Juan Francisco Rivas and Luis Gonzaga Romero, entered the novitiate and took the habit in 1879. The increasing numbers of those wanting to imitate these religious educators forced the latter to open a house of formation in 1888. Located first in Providencia, it was transferred in 1916 to the countryside of Tobalaba, by the side of a minor road leading from the town to the foot-hills of the Cordillera.

Close to the place where the square, which has just been inaugurated, is located, the Brothers had bought a country house standing in its own property which included gardens and an artificial lake. Its former owner was a Frenchman, a certain M. Hippolyte Pinaud, with whom quite naturally the Brothers were on good terms. The architect Joannon, whose origins were French also and who had a great influence on the architecture of Santiago at that time, built what is now the central building of De La Salle College. Built on land which, since 1963, has been part of the town of Reina, it was intended to house the novitiate, the postulancy, the scholasticate for the professional training of the young Brothers, the residence of the Provincial of the Brothers in Chile and the infirmary for old Brothers. Building began in 1914 and the auxiliary bishop, Mgr Miguel Claro came to bless the building on March 19th 1916, the feast of St. Joseph. It was one of the first buildings in Santiago to be constructed of reinforced concrete. It was in open countryside, several kilometres from the town, a peaceful area where several congregations had come to find tranquillity, and after which a number of streets has been named: the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, the Augustinians, the Mercedarians. On the side of the square there stands the convent built by the Poor Clares, which is now a retreat centre run by Franciscan nuns.

In 1869, Mgr Rafael Valentin Valdivieso had founded the Society of the Catholic Schools of St. Thomas Aquinas which he subsequently entrusted to the Brothers of the Christian Schools along with its schools: St. Luis, San Carlos, Ruiz Tagle, Providencia, Mercedes Guzman and Juan Francisco Bravo. He died in 1878 and one of his sucessors, Mgr Mariano Casanova (responsible in his turn for this vast archdiocese which would be split up only in 1925 when Church and State were separated), entrusted to the care of the Brothers of the Christian Schools the diocesan training college which ran from 1901 to 1925, and then in 1909, the Instituto Arturo Prat de San Felipe, the Instituto Zambrano, and then the Blanco Encalada de Talca School (founded in 1912). This latter school numbered among its pupils the future Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez, Rafael Retamal, future President of the Supreme Court, Osvaldo Iturriaga (at present the Controller General of the Republic), Sergio Molina (at present the minister in charge of the ODEPLAN). In this and other schools there studied several respected political figures like Luis Pareto (at present Mayor of Santiago), Admiral Jorge Martinez Busch (Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces), and the only chiropractor in the country, Doctor Victor Hugo Aguilera Altamira, a former student of the San Lazaro school, who did specialist studies in the United States.

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The work of the Brothers founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle, inspired by the Christian spirit, concentrated in particular on gratuitous schools. And so, in 1889, there were founded the Arturo Edwards de Valparaiso School (its first Director, Brother Gagelinus, was taught for 6 years in Ecuador by Brother Miguel who was recently canonised); the San Vicente de Valparaiso School and the San Vicente de Limache Workshops, which were destroyed during the 1906 earthquake. In 1891, the first Chilean Brother, Br. Gumersindo Vasquez Alamos opened the San Luis Gonzaga School, and the following year the San Carlos de Santiago School was opened. In 1897, a former pupil of the San Vicente de Valparaido School, Brother Luciano (Jose Ismael Turriz), became the first Director of the Manuel Jose Irarrazaval de Santiago School. A former pupil of the Arturo Edwards School, Brother Simeon, taught for 37 years at the Blanco Encalada School (now De La Salle de Talca College) till his death in 1954, having greatly impressed his many former pupils.

The work of St. John Baptist de La Salle has become very well known in the country thanks to the school textbooks produced by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the H.E.C. Series. Brother Clarence Francois (called Br. Pancho by the pupils) published some very successful arithmetic, algebra and geometry textbooks in the Series under the pseudonym "Omer Cano". The updating of successive editions has been ensured by Br. Cornelio who, at the age of 83, continues to work at the free Arturo Edwards de Valparaiso School. Br. Teodoro Soulie (who had Santiago Bruron, Rene Pienovi and Jose Miguel Silva as his pupils) produced textbooks on the history and geography of Chile in collaboration with other experienced Brothers, thus continuing a tradition that goes back to the beginning of the Institute.

To be present for this occasion, delegations have come to De La Salle College from the Francis de Temuco School (founded in 1955) and from the former Instituto San Jose (founded in 1904 and which also is now called De La Salle College). Pupils have come from Talca but also from our free schools: San Gregorio de La Granja (founded in 1983), the Instituto La Salle de La Florida (founded in 1954), and the San Lazaro de Santiago School (opened in 1955). Pupils and teachers have come who have been inspired by the example and the pedagogical and mystical teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Since 1909 we have been running an agricultural school at Macul, and since 1936 another one in Las Condes, and since 1943 yet another one near Puente Alto. Urban expansion, however, has changed the unspoilt setting and teaching methods.

Brother Leopoldo Galvez Saavedra, who died in 1936, had organised Catholic teachers' associations in Valparaiso and Santiago. Since 1976, a group of lay people who joined together under the name of "Signum Fidei", have been applying to their daily lives the lay spirituality for the service of education formulated by St. John Baptist de La Salle. Our schools have begun taking in girl pupils, and already one of our former pupils has joined the Carmelite missionaries.

After the transfer of the novitiate to Cordoba (Argentina) in 1940 and that of the juniorate to La Florida, successive Directors of De La Salle College have collaborated with the municipal authorities of La Reina (founded in 1963), hence the splendid idea of naming a square in honour of St. John Baptist de La Salle. In the square, a symbolic monument has been erected, the creation of the architect Cesar Lazcano: the three columns at the centre of the monument symbolise the three pillars of the spirituality of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. These three elements they transmit to the pupils, the parents, the teachers, the members of the administrative team and their helpers. Faith is translated into consecration and prayer, the community extends its brotherhood, and their mission urges all on to render apostolic service to others.

Br. Enrique García Ahumada

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OCTOBER / 1991

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N° 22

3 / 1991

INTRODUCTION

• This issue of Lasalliana, N22, is the last one of 1991. With it, **the third year of publication** (second period) comes to an end. (After the first period, publication was discontinued for two years.)

• This year, the Institute is celebrating the tercentenary of the **heroic vow** made by St. John Baptist de La Salle and two of his companions. By it they committed themselves before God and for his greater glory, to support the young Society, and they declared themselves ready to face all sorts of sacrifices resulting from poverty and desertion. This act of generosity was blessed by God and had important consequences for the Church, for evangelisation and education. In this year's three issues we have included a certain number of articles relating to this event, treating it from an historical, spiritual and community point of view.

• This year also saw the publication of the **Guide for Formation**. This had been asked for by the last General Chapter and the finished product is the fruit of much hard work all over the Institute. This important document will be studied in a variety of articles in future issues of Lasalliana.

• 1991 was likewise the **centenary of "Rerum Novarum"**, an encyclical whose pastoral influence was very great in the sphere of labour relations. Pope John Paul II commemorated the occasion by publishing another striking document, the encyclical "Centesimus annus".

In future issues, we intend to offer some considerations on this matter. Our Institute, in fact, is much involved with working people, either by training students for trades, or running youth associations based on schools or establishments offering technical and vocational teaching.

• This year began shortly after the publication of **"Redemptoris Missio"** (it appeared on December 7th 1990). This encyclical calls on the Church as a whole to commit itself resolutely and seriously to evangelisation in all parts of the world.

Lasallian schools have to respond to this call. There has already been a number of articles on the subject. Others are in the pipeline for future issues.

• The **42nd General Chapter** has been officially announced. This means that the Institute will be preparing for this important event. We too will be considering it.

• As can be seen, all these various topics concern not only the Brothers, but **also the Lasallian Family** as a whole, that is, all those that belong to movements that have grown up around the Institute and who live according to Lasallian spirituality and the Lasallian charism of Christian education.

Certain Districts have asked for extra copies of Lasalliana so as to be able to supply not only communities, but also Lasallian schools, staffrooms, all kinds of Lasallian associations, affiliated members, collaborators, etc. This will be of great benefit to them. We thank them for the interest they show in this publication and we hope their example will be followed!

Br. José María Valladolid

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A. De La Salle: Life, work, teaching...
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C. Teaching. Mission. Pedagogy...
D. Laity and Institute. Lasallian Family...
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LASALLIAN STAMPS

Year	Country	N° Yvert	Number	Subject
1951	France	882	1	Tercent. SJBS: portrait
1951	Brazil	494	1	Idem. Patron of teachers. Statue
1951	Panama	281A/281B	2	Overprinted: Tricentenario SJBS
	Panama	"	2	Idem. Inverted overprint
	Panama	281Ba	1	Idem. error in overprint
1954	Monaco	402/404	3	Subjects in silhouette of SJBS
1954	Ecuador	269/73	4	Different subjects: Br. Miguel
	Ecuador	"	1	Colegio El Cebollar de Quito
1958	Nicaragua	825/31-A387/394	2	Portrait of SJBS
	Nicaragua	"	2	Lasallian coat of arms
	Nicaragua	"	2	Instituto Pedagogico de Managua
	Nicaragua	"	9	Founding Brothers (4x2 +1)
1961	Philippines	516/517	2	50th Anniv. La Salle College, Manila
1962	Belgium	1214	1	Br.Alexis Marie Gochet geographer
1966	Argentina	777	1	SJBS and Colegio La Salle Riobamba
1969	Upper Volta	198/202-A66/67	7	Fish identified by Br. Benigno Roman 1966
1971	Hong Kong	253/255	3	Scouts La Salle College
1977	Ecuador	644	1	Beatification Br. Miguel
1979	Spain	2157	1	Centen. in Spain: SJBS, children, coat of arms
1979	Upper Volta	481/483	2	Fresh water fish, Br. Benigno Roman
1980	Ireland	417	1	Centen. in Ireland: SJBS
1980	Bolivia	602	1	Lasallian tercen: SJBS
1981	Venezuela	1088	1	Lasallian tercen: SJBS
1981	Sri Lanka	568	1	Lasallian tercen: SJBS
1981	Panama	897	1	75th anniv. Lasallian education: SJBS
1981	Canada	774	1	Br. Marie Victorin Kerouac, botanist
1981	Madagascar	655	1	Br. Raphael Louis Rafiringa, pioneer
1984	Niger	636	1	Fish identified by Br. Benigno Roman
1984	Niger	653	1	Snake identified by Br. Benigno Roman
1984	Ecuador	1058A/B	2	Canonisation Br. Miguel
	Ecuador	sheet 61A	1 sheet	Parents and birthplace of Br. Miguel
1985	Burkina Faso	3303	1	Reptile catalogued by Br Benigno Roman
1986	Philippines	1509	1	75th anniv. La Salle Univ: SJBS
	Philippines	1510	1	Idem. St. Miguel Febres Cordero
	Philippines	1511	1	Idem. St. Benilde-Pierre Romançon
	Philippines	sheet 26	1 sheet	Portrait 9 founding Brothers
1986	Colombia	756	1	Centen. Colombia: SJBS
1988	Philippines	1510	1	Overprint new value.

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LASALLIAN POSTMARKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

	Locality	Date	Reading
1	Rheims	28-29/04/1951	TRICENTENAIRE DE ST. J. B. DE LA SALLE
2	Rio de Janeiro	30/04/1951	SJBS FUNDADOR DOS IRMAOS DAS ESCOLAS CRISTAS
3	Monte Carlo	12/04/1954	FDC-PJ (ord)
4	Quito	9/12/1954	HERMANO MIGUEL ("Signum Fidei")
5	Jerez de La Fr.	9-12/10/1957	75 ANIV HH. DE LAS EE. CC. ("Indivisa Manent")
6	Managua	13/07/1958	HOMENAJE A LOS HERMANOS CRISTIANOS - ORDINARIO
7	Managua	13/07/1958	HOMENAJE A LOS HERMANOS CRISTIANOS - AEREO
8	Manila	16/06/1961	LA SALLE COLLEGE - GOLDEN JUBILEE - FD OF ISSUE
9	Tamines (Belgium)	19/05/1962	FRERE ALEXIS MARIE GOCHET
10	Buenos Aires	26/11/1966	DIA DE EMISION (badge of Colegio La Salle)
11	Monte Carlo (flame)	6/11/1968	CENT DE L'ETABLISSEMENT DES FRERES A MONACO
12	Ougadougou	17/10/1969	PREMIER JOUR: POISSONS DE LA HAUTEVOLTE
13	Buenos Aires	15/08/1972	5 CONGRESO MUNDIAL EXALUMNOS DE LA SALLE
14	Bilbao	21/11/1974	EXP. FILATELICA (At the Colegio Santiago Apostol)
15	Barcelona	13/12/1975	EXP. FILATELICA ASOCIACION CONDAL (star)
16	San Asensio		(regular use) NOVDO. LA ESTRELLA
17	Malta	27-31/08/1976	VI KUNGRESS MONDJALI TAL FED. LASALLJANI
18	Cuenca (Ecuador)	30/10/1977	BEATO HNO. MIGUEL. 1854-1910
19	Madrid	14/02/1979	PRIMER DIA DE CIRCULACION (Servicio filatelico)
20	Madrid	26/02/1979	CIEN ANOS DE "LA SALLE" EN ESPAGNA
21	Ougadougou	10/06/1979	PREMIER JOUR: POISSONS D'EAU DOUCE (Br. Roman)
22	San Asensio	from /08/1979	(ord) M. STA. MA. DE LA ESTRELLA - S.AS (LOGRONO)
23	Puerto Real	4/10/1979	BODAS DE DIAMANTE LLEGADA HNOS. LA SALLE
24	Dublin	19/03/1980	FDC-PJ (gaelic alphabet)
25	Porto Alegre	15-21/05/1980	TRICENT. DA CONGREGACAO DOS IRMAOS LASALLISTAS
26	La Paz	2/07/1980	P.D.CIRCULACION-SECCION FILATELICA
27	Nancy Gare (flame)	/07/1980	TRICENT FONDATION ECOLES DE SJBS
28	Caracas	15/05/1981	TRICENT. LASALLISTA-COLEGIO LA SALLE - LA COLINA
29	Colombo	15/05/1981	FDC-PJ special
30	Panama	15/05/1981	FDC-PJ
31	Ottawa	22/07/1981	DAY OF ISSUE (flower framing Br. Marie Victorin)
32	Antananarivo	10/08/1981	FDC-PJ ord (Br. Raphael Rafiringa)
33	San Asensio		(like N22 but with SAN ASENSIO (LA RIOJA)
34	Mons	6/11/1982	10e ANNIVERSAIRE C.P. SAINT LUC - MONS
35	Mons	8/05/1983	CERCLE PHILAT. ST. LUC
36	Cuenca (Ecuador)	/1984	CANONISATION ST. MIGUEL FEBRES CORDERO
37	Niger	/1984	FDC-PJ (fish, reptile and Br. Roman)
38	Burkina Faso	20/06/1985	LES REPTILES DU BURKINA FASO (BR B. ROMAN)
39	Amiens	22/06/1985	COLLEGE J.BTE. DE LA SALLE - CENT. DES BATIMENTS
40	Celles sur Durolle	29/09/1985	CENT ECOLE ST. JOSEPH
41	Manila	16/06/1986	LA SALLE 1911-1986 DIAMOND JUBILEE
42	Bogota	23/07/1986	LA SALLE - PRIMER DIA DE SERVICIO (star)
43	Romilly s/Seine	/10/1987	(flame) EXP. 100 ANS D'EDUCATION A ROMILLY
44	Romilly s/Seine	/10/1987	as above with addition of PP on date stamp
45	Bilbao	11-12/1987	(flame) CENT. DE LOS HERMANOS EN BILBAO
46	Bilbao	30/04/1988	LASALLETARREN MENDEURRENA BILBON
47	Metz	03-06/1988	(flame) 50re DE L'INSTITUTION DE LA SALLE
48	Metz	4-5/06/1988	CINQUANTENAIRE DE L'INSTITUTION DE LA SALLE
49	San Fernando	10-12/06/1988	EXP. FIL. PROVINCIAL - CENT. LA SALLE - S. FERNANDO
50	Reunion	1-2/06/1989	BEATIFICATION DU FRERE SCUBILION
51	Rheims	27/12/1989	Postcard with the «HÔTEL DE LA CLÔCHE»
52	Malonne	30/01/1990	CANONISATION DU FRERE MUTIEN-MARIE
53	Saugues	10/08/1990	ST BENILDE. PELERINAGE INTERNATIONAL DES ACCORDEONISTES
54	Los Corrales de Buelna	17-17/11/1990	CENTENARIO DE LA LLEGADA DE LOS HERMANOS
55	Santander	16-18/05/1991	50° Y 100° ANIVERSARIO DE LA ENSEÑANZA EDUCATIVA DE LOS COLEGIOS DE SANTANDER Y LOS CORRALES. EXPOSICIÓN FILATÉLICA.

Bro. Juan Oliva

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PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDER (4/5)

The St Sulpice's area

In the area around St Sulpice to which the Brothers came, the poor lived in the same tenements as artisans and traders. But the Brothers also became aware, as they got to know the area and walked daily to their schools, of the comfort, elegance, wealth and ostentation that others enjoyed. Even if they took their weekly walk into the country, they passed by brand new "hôtel" of the rich and noble. The domes of great new royal buildings drew their attention. Unsophisticated as most of the Brothers and later novices were, they would "stand and stare"; how more appreciated and leisurely a life these people must lead, compared with theirs.

In teaching them how to adopt the life of faith and views of faith, it is not surprising that their Founder suggested to these beginners that «if we would look upon a beautiful building with the eyes of faith, we should remember that its beauty is external; that its end is only to please the senses, and that this beauty is only a passing thing of such little stability and duration, that there shall not remain a stone upon a stone, nor any idea of it.» By his upbringing, he was sensitive to beauty and the value of things, but he had to begin where his novices were; he was also aware of the adulation and imitation of royal gloryseeking that the new buildings represented and indifference to the poor.

Other southern suburbs

The suburb of Saint Jacques, south of the Latin Quarter, had developed since the beginning of the century, for many religious houses and hospices had been built there in open country, able to be surrounded by large gardens and cultivated plots.

Half a mile south of the walls of the Latin Quarter Anne of Austria had founded in 1621, along the Rue Saint-Jacques, the Benedictine monastery of Val de Grace in fulfilment of a vow when her son Louis XIV was born. The present monastic buildings rose from 1645 to 1665, with a great dome over the chapel.

They are now part of the army training hospital. Just further on, on the other side of the road, the convent of Port-Royal was transferred here to new buildings in 1625. They are now a maternity hospital; Mother Angélique Arnauld is still buried in the chapel. Such buildings attracted the artisans and buyers and sellers of all kinds, and the poor looking for a job.

Further east was the growing suburb of Saint Marcel and north of it, on the west side of the Latin Quarter, that of Saint Victor.

Half a mile southeast of Val de Grace there still is (opposite the Metro Gobelins) the "manufacture des Gobelins", the royal factory founded by Colbert to turn out tapestries, gilt furniture and the like for the Crown instead of having to depend on foreign imports. 700 highly qualified workers were employed, many of them Flemish or Italian, and the Catholics went to the church of St Hippolyte.

This was a little to the north, between the Rue des Gobelins and the present Boulevard Arago, but disappeared in 1798. The parish grew throughout the century, and we shall see La Salle sending two Brothers to run the parish school in 1698, and even opening a training-centre for village schoolmasters. The school was originally on the Rue Broca, which crosses the Rue Saint Hippolyte.

Another half mile eastwards along the present Boulevard Saint Marcel brings you to the great hospital of La Pitié-Salpétrière, next to the Gare d'Austerlitz, and that was used, under edict from Louis XIV in 1656, to confine beggars and the homeless. In other words, it became a workhouse. Children also were confined under the Board; their policy towards the children of the poor and La Salle's were at variance.

LOUIS XIV'S MARK ON THE CAPITAL.

There had been much development in the capital, therefore, in the decades before Louis XIV's time, and that continued afterwards. But Louis also left his own mark: although he left Paris in 1682, he was interested in a capital that would reflect his greatness and maintain his prestige with the Parisians, and he had the good fortune to be served by some very great architects.

Christopher Wren who did much to rebuild London after the fire of 1666, came to Paris from 1663 to 1666; the Louvre for a time was his daily study, where (he wrote) the activities in extending it «make a school of architecture, the best probably at this day in Europe.»

The boulevards

Louis had the old walls of the capital pulled down; the ramparts or boulevards in front of them were flattened and made into long tree-lined avenues to which the name boulevard was transferred. This began for the eastern half of the northern walls in 1670, and was taken up again in 1684. The walls around the Latin quarter began to be pulled down in 1672, so that La Salle would notice this remarkable change when he returned in 1688.

But the simple bank of earth further out, no further south than the present Boulevard du Montparnasse, and that corresponded in size to the northern arc of walls, only began to be planted in 1705, and not much was completed by 1715. The Metro Duroc, in other other words, close to the present Brothers' Centre in the Rue de Sèvres, marks a southwest point on this limit; there would have been few buildings yet in the area: the hospital for incurables, now part of the Laennec Hospital (the chapel dates from 1663); further up, where the Bon Marché stores are, were the "Petites Maisons" or Little Houses, where the Poor Board catered for 500 poor old women and 300 others variously diseased, including the senile.

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The new northern boulevards provided splendid walks for all classes of the town, being only a quarter of an hour's walk from its centre. In 1670 also Louis had the open space beyond the Tuileries made into a wide tree-lined avenue that has become the Champs-Elysées.

The "Invalides"

For the retired and wounded veterans of his armies he built the great Hôtel des Invalides, west of the suburb of St Germain. It was, in reality, an enforced residence in a building exalting Louis's military victories, for wounded and sick veterans to keep them off the streets. The officers, except the highest, were three or four to a room, the private soldiers to a far greater number. The hospital wards were tended by Sisters of Charity. Everything was run on monastic lines. The great gilt dome was not begun till the turn of the century.

Louis had the small circular Place des Victoires northeast of the gardens of the Palais Royal, laid out in 1685, and that year the Pont Royal, linking the Louvre to the south bank, was begun.

Because of the Pont Royal and the Hôtel des Invalides, Saint Germain came into favour, and the aristocracy moved there from Le Marais. Things were changing in this district; more people were coming in, there were more jobs of all kinds – the poor still remaining poor.

Changing character of the capital

Paris at the end of the century within its new boulevards, already planted or still projected, together with the suburb of Saint Antoine on the eastern side, and new suburbs beginning to push out from the north, was a city of perhaps half a million inhabitants; it had moved from being a medieval walled town at the beginning of the century to having the first appearance of a modern sprawling metropolis. Even though much slower than in our day, it was a time of change.

The atmosphere of public life had also changed. When La Salle took two Brothers with him to Paris in 1688, Louis XIV's period of direct rule had lasted nearly thirty years, during which he had created a system of unchanging absolute government. While his domination of western Europe was coming to an end, nothing changed in his cultivation of his personal glory and its radiation over society. The emblem of the Sun King was on the doors of his palace at Versailles, and he instituted a punctilious etiquette from his rising to his retiring that created an atmosphere of worship in which the great nobles fawned on him, and being kept at court were rendered harmless and useless.

His improvements to the royal palaces and his creation of new squares in his honour were met with adulation. When the statue to him in the Place des Victoires was erected, representing Renown placing a laurel wreath on his brow, one of his greatest flatterers went round the statue three times at the head of a regiment of guards. «He had the ridiculous idea of establishing perpetual lamps to light up the statue day and night.» (Abbé de Choisy.)

Court life

Louis loved magnificence and obliged the nobles continually to impoverish themselves buying magnificent costumes for themselves and their wives. Saint-Simon says that on one occasion it cost him 20,000 livres. Court life was artificial, boring and idle as the great nobles waited around hoping for pensions, posts and other royal favours. Yet it enchanted and dazzled contemporaries. It created a totally false atmosphere and led the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie to build in Paris and elsewhere palaces or town houses in keeping with their rank and wealth. The present Carnavalet Museum in Le Marais, in one of the palaces Mme de Sevigné lived in, gives an idea, through its paintings and furniture, of the status-conscious style of costume and living of the "yuppies" of the late seventeenth century, for whom, however, place in society mattered more than wealth.

The great thing was what rank of people you associated with, what salons you attended, whose notice and patronage you might get. The wage-earning poor had no part in this. New jobs would be created, paid wretchedly; manual work was despised, and so was this rabble. Yet they would envy those above them. La Salle saw his work both as lifting the poor out of their inhuman, unjust situation and yet leading them to live by Christian values, including evangelical poverty. And in a culture where status mattered and where the hard work of teaching the poor was despised, the Founder had to lead his Brothers to live by the light of faith.

In his last recommendations to them he wrote: «If you wish to persevere and die in your state of life, never have any dealings with society people; for little by little you will acquire a taste for their ways of doing, and you will be drawn into their conversation to such an extent that you will not be able, through policy to refrain from applauding what they say, very harmful though it may be. This will cause you to fall into unfaithfulness, and being no longer faithful in observing your Rules, you will lose taste for your condition and finally you will abandon it.» He had seen it happen; somehow Brothers got into conversation with people whose dress, style of life, knowledge, and experience of the world was so much better than theirs; who could often only express their regret that the Brothers were not using their talents elsewhere than in classrooms crowded with ragammuffins; who regretted their hard life or their fidelity to the Pope or their rejection of Jansenist ideas. These well-placed, well-spoken people could unsettle the Brothers. As their education improved, – a result in time of the widening educational opportunities the Brothers themselves pioneered and developed – theywould be able to place in better perspective what society believed in and answer it. But they would derive most support from their faith that their work was a ministry of basic importance to the Church and to society.

Brother Alfred Calcutt

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PARIS AT THE TIME OF THE FOUNDER (5/5)

THE ROYAL HAND ON ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE IN THE CAPITAL

La Salle, having a very different experience of social life, sensed more than the Brothers the false aura of adulation of the monarchy and the cult of status. But he also soon realised – and to his cost and that of the Brothers – that since his student days in Paris the hand of the monarch over every sphere of administration had become heavier, and that people could not protest without danger of immediate imprisonment. Far more than in provincial Rheims, the power of the king was strongly felt in Paris, since nearly all the judicial and administrative departments of the kingdom were concentrated in the "Palace" on the island of Notre-Dame. The present "palais" gives little idea of the original complex, due to four ruinous fires since 1618, and demolitions under the pretext of modernisation.

Royal agencies of law and order

All posts were delegations of the king's justice; all royal office-holders were magistrates, for all forms of government of the country were seen as functions of law and order, and all the royal departments were in fact courts. All the decrees came from the king: the courts merely applied these and existing royal law. There was the Great Council (which sat at the Louvre), the high court of appeal, for the greatest cases affecting the king's rights. The next most important court was the Parlement of Paris, with a jurisdiction covering the whole of northern France except Brittany. Princes of the blood and peers lay and ecclesiastical had the right to be members. This Court registered and promulgated royal acts; it controlled all those in public functions in its area and had the overall responsibility for law and order, involving Paris and its suburbs. There were five other departments or courts: they comprised between 350 and 400 magistrates and court officials who were often seen in the streets of Paris in their robes of a strict hierarchy of colours and quality.

The Châtelet

A more immediate centre of law and order for the Paris region lay north of the Palace, the other side of the Pont au Change. It was the Châtelet, a name meaning small castle or fortress, for as such it had been built in 1190. Now it was a centre of justice under a royal provost: the Châtelet came to mean the body of courts and departments which operated there. It published royal decrees for the region; it was a court of appeal; it dealt with property leases and wages; it inspected the "Halles" and other markets and hostelries. It had a crime section and a department for highway crime. It had several lieutenants, the most important being the civil lieutenant; 48 superintendants inspected the different quarters of Paris. Its criminal court dealt savagely, according to the practice of the times, with those caught red-handed. It was normal to interrogate under torture. John Evelyn describes in his diary under March 11th, 1651, how a man accused of robbery was first racked and then had two buckets of water poured down his throat through a horn. According to the crime, a person could have his ears cut off, or be sent to the galleys, or burnt alive, or have all his bones smashed before being spread-eagled round a cartwheel laid on the floor and finally being stabbed to the heart.

The lieutenant of police

In 1667 Louis XIV eased the burden of the civil lieutenant, but also brought the function under his control, by creating two new royal posts (that had to be bought): that of civil lieutenant dealing only with civil matters, and that of lieutenant of police, seeing to general policing of the capital, which meant its security and administration generally: seeing to law and order, cleansing of streets and public places, the capital's food supply and prices. He was responsible for religious, social and economic affairs and control of public behaviour; he was the judge in final appeal of beggars and people of no fixed abode. It was in fact a ministry for Paris. Kept in touch by his 48 superintendants, their sub-officers and sergeants, and by informers and spies, the lieutenant of police always knew what was going on. The post was made effective by its having two long-serving, able incumbents: La Reynie from 1667 to 1697, and d'Argenson from 1697 to 1715.

Lettres de cachet

These two often had a hard and cruel task to perform, for thieves, crooks and hired killers acted in daylight but especially at night, and hid in the suburbs. But they softened or even avoided carrying out some of the pitiless orders coming from the king, Colbert or Louvois after him. Nevertheless, when La Salle came to Paris in 1688 he found that what was hardly organised when he was there as a seminarian, was now a well-organised, well-informed police force with powers of suppression that came from being able to employ directly the royal lettres de cachet. These bore the king's name, but it was a signature imitated by a special secretary. These letters were issued for matters in Paris by the Secretary of State and ensured a more rapid executions of royal justice and hence of administration, and were very much used. When the post of lieutenant-governor of police was created in 1667, the Secretary of State delegated to him this function. Reynie in turn had the work done by a private secretary, and gradually organised an Office of Lettres de cachet. D'Argenson developed it into a ministerial department.

There were lettres de cachet coming directly from the king, or made out by the police; but they were also asked for, especially as a request to protect family honour: to check a loose-living member of a noble family; to prevent a marriage between a good girl but of no social standing with a man

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higher up the social scale; even a joiner, a small stationer, might petition against disobedient daughters too free in their socialising. Important families would have their plea considered by the king in Council, but even the poor would be heard by the Secretary of State. D'Argenson, however, speeded things up by having the enquiry made by himself, drawing up the letter and having it countersigned by the Secretary of State.

Detention

The use of lettres de cachet meant that the matter did not have to go through the public courts and become common knowledge. The accused was put away for as long as the petitioner wished, with a regime, mild or severe, as he indicated. People were detained in the Bastille or in the fortress of Vincennes, a mile or so outside modern Paris. Some were sent to convents or monasteries. There were also boarding-houses for the purpose, run privately. The system interests us because of an innovation in the matter by La Salle and the Brothers later in Rouen.

For the general range of infractions, not involving lettres de cachet, there were many prisons, and they were always full. Usually you were tried next day, but a lettre de cachet required another one for the person to be set free – and he could be forgotten. Debtors had to stay till they paid up, which might mean for good. The condition of prisoners was dreadful: they were hardly fed; the jailers were often brutal, and had to be paid for every thing. But the most ominous symbol of royal despotism was the Bastille: you could be sent there by decision of the king by himself, or because you were accused of being in some way "seditious" to the royal mind. La Salle and the Brothers at one moment were close to being sent there.

The Bastille

The Bastille was the only one remaining of a number of square forts (called "bastilles") built into Philip Augustus's wall. It was seen in 17th century as the state prison that gave meaning to the lettre de cachet. Many Jansenists were kept there and many Protestants, especially between 1685 and 1700. Many preferred to die there rather than win freedom by accepting Communion from a Catholic priest.

Spies were kept there; so were noble courtiers, like the two who quarrelled in the king's drawing-room and were confined for a few days "for having lacked respect for my apartments."! Such persons could be given a spacious, heated room, good meals with two bottles of wine, and be received back at court with good grace.

Anybody who might be considered seditious or who simply spoke against the royal power could be incarcerated: taverners, women of the people, peddlars and especially gazetteers or publishers of gazettes, for journalists were considered especially dangerous. (A gazette was a news sheet or a pamphet: many could be scurrilous or satirical.) Many printers and booksellers were sent to the Bastille for publishing lampoons revealing too great an independence of mind with regard to the royal power. Anything to do with religion could be treated as dangerous: in 1681 several priests were sent to the Bastille for the clandestine publication of an attack on the character of the archbishop of Paris. A bishop found applying for a lettre de cachet a very convenient way of exiling or imprisoning a priests or a confessor who had his own way of interpreting matters for his penitents.

Blain corroborates this by telling us this story, but without any date: «One day someone came on behalf of a priest imprisoned for several years between four walls, where somehow he had heard of the great virtue of M. de La Salle, asking him to come and hear his confession.» La Salle went and found him in a deplorable condition «dressed in a cassock that was falling apart, and wearing a shirt that was torn, black, filthy and crawling with vermin.» After hearing his confession, La Salle proposed they should swap clothes, which the other priest accepted, and La Salle returned to the community "decorated", as Blain has to put it, «with the spoils of the victory over himself.» The priest died a few days later, he was told. It is surprising that Blain got away with this description, for everything was kept secret about the Bastille: those who were released had to sign an agreement not to say anything about prison life. So imagination could run riot.

One of the most important prisoners in La Salle's day was the Man in the Iron Mask who was brought there from the isolated fortress of Pignerol in Savoy in September 1698 and died there on November 19th 1703.

For La Salle and the Brothers, the threat of the Bastille from the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris was still far away. There were more immediate problems that February 1688...

Brother Alfred Calcutt

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The above account is not a Lasallian guide to Paris, but some idea of Paris as La Salle and his Brothers found it. The last two Guides mentioned above are two excellent short guides to follow the Founder's footsteps in Paris. There is also the detailed compilations of Brother Nicholas Hutchinson, District of Great Britain.

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THE 1691 VOW: A WELL-KEPT SECRET (1/2)

"After much thought about how to prop up a building which was threatening to collapse as it was being built, (De La Salle) was inspired to associate himself with the two Brothers whom he considered most suited to support the growing community, and to bind himself with them by an irrevocable commitment to pursue its achievement" (Blain I, 312).

A sole witness

Canon Blain's book, published in 1733, is our only source of information with regard to the vow pronounced on November 21st 1691 which we call "heroic", but whose primary characteristic could really be its secrecy.

Brothers sometimes write the to the Archives of the Generalate, asking for a photocopy of the heroic vow for an exhibition.

The Archives jealously guard the *book in which are written the thirteen first perpetual vows of the Brothers of the Institute pronounced with De La Salle on the feast of the Holy Trinity in 1694.* In the iconography published by Br. Rousset ten years ago, the 1694 formula of vows, written in the hand of the Founder, is prominently displayed.

There is nothing similar in the case of the 1691 vow: there is no document, no reference even except to Blain's text.

Maillefer's silence

The biography written by Maillefer in 1723 about his uncle is completely silent with regard to this vow.

"All that De La Salle had done up till then to establish his free schools was good only for a limited time. Thought had to be given as to how to ensure their survival" (54). The measures that he takes in 1691-1692 - novitiate, house at Vaugirard, annual retreat - are those described by Blain, with the exception of the heroic vow.

If he had known about this vow, Maillefer would not have hesitated to speak about it. To be convinced of this it is sufficient to read the preface of his book: *"He is a holy priest whom God has led along paths that are simple but hard for nature. As he formed him in virtue, he revealed to him the true nature of good and gave him the necessary experience in order to practise it. It is in the light of this idea that I see him establishing a Christian society which owes its existence solely to his great trust in God"* (1).

When he returned to his work in 1740, Maillefer did not dare include a mention of the 1691 vow in his text: this would would have been to acknowledge a debt to Blain whom he had accused of copying certain passages of his work word for word without any reference to him (V).

The Memoir on the Beginnings

Between 1721 and 1723, Brother Bernard had composed the "Admirable Conduct of Divine Providence in the person of the Venerable Servant of God John Baptist de La Salle". His complete manuscript was submitted to the brother of the Founder, Jean Louis de La Salle, who never returned it to him. This text is doubtlessly Maillefer's principal source.

All we have is a copy of a draft Bernard made in 1721 and which stopped in 1688. Among the memoirs that had been passed on to him to do this work there was one "written in the hand of the Servant of God" and which we call the "Memoir on the Beginnings". Bernard tells us that "It is from this manuscript that we will draw all that we will say up to the fourteenth year of his institution, because he did not go beyond this point in his account. We will add only what his humility made him omit" (22,23).

What point marks the beginning of the Institute of the Christian Schools? 1679, the opening of the first school by A. Nyel? 1682, when the Founder went to live with his teachers? Whichever it is, the

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14 years covered by this Memoir bring us to 1693 or 1696.

If therefore Bernard *did not mention* the 1691 Heroic Vow, it was because the humility of the Founder made him keep silent about this important commitment when he wrote his Memoir on the Beginnings, and because no other memoirs mentioned it.

The Brothers were ignorant of the existence of this vow

It is clear that the Brothers were unaware of the very existence of the vow pronounced on November 21st 1691: John Baptist de La Salle jealously guarded the secret of the commitment he made that day with his two companions.

Blain expected the Brothers to be astonished on discovering in the book certain events which had taken place possibly during their lifetime. "*The Brothers themselves are warned not to be astonished at seeing here several things of which they were unaware. Only those were aware who had a closer relationship with the holy Founder and in whom he had the greatest confidence or who were involved with him in dealing with certain affairs*" (I,115).

And so Blain could have received the text of the Heroic Vow only from one of the two Brothers who pronounced it with the Founder.

The pillars of the Institute

"*The commitment of these two Brothers whom De La Salle considered as the two pillars of his Institute was the only resource on which he founded his hopes at that time. In case death came before he could consolidate it, he entrusted the task of completing what he had started to the zeal of* **his two principal disciples.**

"*He was mistaken in his choice, because one of them subsequently became a Judas, as people called him. Forgetting the vow he had made and the Father to whom he owed obedience, he broke off from the Society and abandoned it*" (Blain I, 312).

A few chapters later, the biographer describes the beginnings of the Seminary for Country Teachers which lasted five or six years in the parish of Saint Hippolyte in Paris. Without naming him, he points to Nicolas Vuyart (or Wiart) as the Director of the establishment who, at the time of the trial instigated by the writing masters in 1704, broke away from De La Salle and the other Brothers and then appropriated for himself the house the parish priest of St. Hippolyte had bequeathed to him.

"*This Brother was one of the two that the pious Founder considered to be his two arms and whom he had chosen to be the solid pillars of his Community. This Brother with De La Salle and Brother Gabriel Drolin composed the Triumvirate which had obliged itself by vow never to leave the Institute and to procure its progress till the death of all his strength, as we have seen above*" (Blain I,336).

Nicolas Vuyart's move brought about the ruin of the establishment that had been entrusted to him. Brother Gervais, who had consented in court to the withdrawal of the Seminary from the establishments under the control of De La Salle, did not follow Vuyart in his schism.

The latter remained alone in the parish of St. Hippolyte and earned his living for about twenty years by running a primary school the Brothers had had to leave. "*For some time after, he sought to rejoin the body he had so shamefully left. De la Salle, always full of charity, welcomed him with open arms, but was dissuaded from accepting him back by the advice of wise and prudent persons*" (Maillefer 1723,101).

And Blain, who also mentions this vain attempt, tells of the sad death of Vuyart, five months after that of De La Salle. He did not obtain the formula of the 1691 vow from the Judas, because he would have made the most of such a discovery to make the circumstances appear in an even worse light.

Br. Alain Houry

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THE 1691 VOW: A WELL-KEPT SECRET (2/2)

Brother Gabriel Drolin, the last survivor

It has to be Brother Gabriel Drolin who made the vow of November 21st 1691 a part of history. After 1719, he was the only survivor of the three who pronounced it.

From 1702 onwards he was in Rome and alone after the return of his travelling companion to France. He remained alone till 1727.

He must have heard of the desertion of Nicolas Vuyart, because De La Salle wrote to him on April 27th 1705: "*I know you are far from doing what Brother Nicolas did, and that is why I have put so much trust in you*" (Letter 17, 12).

Blain shows Brother Gabriel as the exact opposite of Vuyart: "faithful to his promise, fixed in his vocation, inseparably united to his virtuous Superior, nothing in the world could tear him away from his holy state" (I, 313).

"*This good Brother, older than everybody else and their doyen, now almost 72 years' old and back from Rome where he has been sent and spent 26 years on the orders of De La Salle, is now living in Avignon*" (I, 314).

The vows according to the Bull of Approbation

In 1728, Brother Timothee, Superior General since 1720, began a **"register of vows"** in which the formulas of vows of the Brothers of the southern province were written down. On page 90, dated September 21st 1728, the formula is signed "*Brother Gabriel, in the world Gabriel Drolin*". Like his fellow Brothers at St. Yon in 1725, he pronounced his vows "*in conformity to the Bull of Approbation of our Institute given by our Holy Father Pope Benedict XIII*" (Rigualt II, 115 and 184).

Brother Gabriel finished his days in Auxonne, where he died on January 11th 1733, just at the time when the printing of Blain's book was beginning (the agreement with the printer is dated the 17th).

Among his papers there was discovered the precious collection of 19 letters which the Founder had written to him during his stay in Rome. "*Blain knew of their existence, since he speaks of a letter which the doyen of the Institute kept in his pocket, but he could not have used them because several of the things he says about Brother Gabriel are contradicted by these autographed letters of the Saint*" (Circ. 335, 183).

Only then did the Brothers know

Unlike the Letters, Blain did have the 1691 formula of vows signed by Gabriel Drolin. This was the original and not a copy, otherwise the original would be in the Archives. A copy could not have been made as it was not foreseen that all the documents made available to Blain would vanish completely.

It is not unreasonable to think that when Brother Gabriel met Brother Timothee in 1728 he informed him about the existence of the Heroic Vow and gave him **the text he always kept in his possession**. Doubtlessly, with the promulgation of the Bull of Approbation, there had come about "*the total completion of the establishment*" of the Institute, an expression which for him always went together with "till the last survivor" of the three who pronounced the vow in 1691. The secret that had been kept for so long now came into the possession of another Brother who happened to be the Superior General.

It is from him that Blain was able to hear about this text and reproduce it in his biography of the Founder (Blain says "*Institutor*") of the Brothers. Only then did the Brothers know that at a critical moment at the beginning of their Institute, De La Salle and two Brothers chosen by him committed themselves irrevocably and in the greatest secrecy "*to do unanimously and with common consent all that (they believe) in conscience and without any human considerations to be for the greater good of the said Society*".

This pact is one of association, of a union recognised before God as a sacred obligation:"we vow

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association and union to procure and maintain the said establishment without being able to leave it, even if there remained only the three of us in the said Society, and we were obliged to beg for alms and live on bread alone".

The heroic aspect of this commitment is the expression of a mystical dialogue with God who wills that all children be evangelised by the ministry of the Christian Schools: "*We consecrate ourselves entirely to you to procure with all our power and all our efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools in the way which will seem TO US to be the most agreeable TO YOU and be of the greatest advantage to the said Society*" (Blain I, 313).

The reason for silence

It is easy to understand the reason for silence in 1691. To broadcast publicly such a decision would have shown everybody how critical the situation was. Not only had half the Brothers just left the Institute, but by choosing two Brothers, the Founder seemed to lack confidence in the others. This could have shaken the less solid ones and worried the others.

Human prudence? Not only. To commit oneself irrevocably like this, when De La Salle had refused up till then to allow the Brothers to make final vows, was not simply to realise very clearly the indispensable role of the Christian Schools for the salvation of children and of the Society of the Brothers in order to give stability to the teachers. It was also to have discovered that one is called oneself to play a key role in the establishment of this Society.

There are various personal charisms: it was necessary to discern who were called to be the "*solid pillars*" of the Institute. A few years earlier, the choice of the Founder and of the assembled Brothers had fallen on Brother Henri L'Heureux. Here it is no longer the case of the providential person suited to become the Superior of the Community, but the embryo of a "Community of Government" formed of persons with complementary qualities.

In 1694, when twelve Brothers (including Vuyart and Drolin) were preparing to make perpetual vows, Blain notes: "*perpetual vows are being introduced into the Brothers*" (I, 341). No allusion to the 1691 precedent. It was not for De La Salle to speak of it since he was considering giving up his position as Superior. To make known the special situation of two of the twelve would have been dangerous for the coming election. Perhaps also, neither of the two had the charism for such government.

And so, once this chance to speak about the 1691 vow had passed, it became impossible for the Founder to speak of it later. In 1705 it would have meant crushing Brother Nicolas. In 1717, it would have been attracting attention to himself at a time when he was managing to get Brother Barthelemy elected as the first Superior General. There was nothing left to do but to leave this secret with God.

Our thanks are due to Brother Gabriel for taking us into his confidence in his twilight years and revealing to us the existence of the Heroic Vow.

Br. Alain Houry

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THE MEDITATIONS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE – I – (1/2)

PREFACE

These introductory remarks are directed especially to those readers who take up this book of **Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle** translated into italian with little or no knowledge of the author, his work, his spiritual doctrine, the historical period in which he lived nor of his other written works.

Given that we have here an author who is not writing for a vast public, but rather a **Founder** who has in view a specific formation for his spiritual sons, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a few clarifications are necessary for those who are not Christian Brothers. Instead of stressing the difficulties which some readers may have, it would be more advantageous to offer some information which would make it easier and more profitable to peruse these Meditations which were written three hundred years ago, for a well-defined audience, with a clear intent toward the formation of a young religious family dedicated to the apostolate of Christian Schools within the historical framework of France in the 17th and 18th centuries...

This background should be kept in mind by those who, today, desire to know the perennially valid teaching of the Founder of the Christian Schools, to touch the essence of a spiritual experience which preserves its freshness and its creative, apostolic inspiration in the pages of these Meditations. Of course, on some pages this may be somewhat obscured by the dust of time and a style proper to a period now long past. But it is not difficult to wipe it away and restore the brilliance of a treasure of experience and doctrine which the Meditations offer and which is still extraordinarily relevant today.

The pages that follow are an introduction to a **personal reading** of the Meditations and therefore the techniques of scholarship were avoided as far as possible.

Omitted also is the listing of editions because they are already in the Italian translation. Likewise omitted are all the scholarly notes which go beyond the scope of this presentation.

1. AN OPERA IN THREE ACTS

As far as subject matter is concerned, the Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle form three distinct series:

a/ **Meditations for the Sundays of the Liturgical Year (1–77).**

b/ **Meditations for the Principal Feasts of the Year (78–192).**

c/ **Meditations for the Time of Retreat (193–208).**

The difference between the three series arises not only from the general source of inspiration of the meditations; i. e., the Gospel of the Sunday Mass for the Sunday series; the lives of the Saints or the religious theme of the anniversary for the series on the Feasts; the ministry of education in the Catholic School for the Retreat series.

There are more important differences to be considered by the reader who seeks to profit from reading these works.

A very astute observation was made by one who has studied the Founder in depth: *«It is best not try to read the Meditations in the order in which they are presented, and certainly not to start off with N° 1. Perhaps it might be a good idea to begin with the series on the Saints»* (Saturnino Gallego, *San Juan Bautista de La Salle*, Vol. II, p. 286. Madrid, 1986).

What are the reasons for such practical advise to a reader who is not a member of the Congregation of De La Salle?

They may be summarized as follows.

a) The **Meditations for Sundays,** by and large, take up themes which refer to the personal and community lives of the Religious addressed, in this case the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They are often a continuous series of thoughts on the same topic; for example, that of obedience (Med. 7–15), difficulties in the spiritual life (30–36), prayer (36–39), religious and community life (57–60 and 62–77), etc.

Even though the «ministry of education» is always present in the background since the persons addressed are all educators, this aspect is not particularly stressed except occasionally (Med 33, 37, 56, 61...). Therefore, at first glance, this series would seem to have less interest for the majority of non-Religious readers.

b) **Meditations for Feast Days**, on the other hand, and in particular in reference to the lives of the Saints, lend themselves more easily to practical applications in a spiritual and apostolic life dedicated to the educational ministry with all its demands and circumstances.

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Of the 115 Meditations in this series, at least 90 refer to the teaching of children. Consequently, they are closer to the experiences and the spiritual needs of a wider circle of readers.

Although they were composed for the Brothers of the Christian Schools and have specific reference to the Religious State, still they are well suited to guide and foster a spirituality for Christians dedicated to the ministry of teaching.

«The meditations on the saints inspire admiration for the creative power of the Holy Spirit in God's people and invite the Brothers to increase their zeal during their daily contact with the students they teach...» (Sauvage–Campos, *To announce the Gospel to the poor.* Paris, 1977, p. 283).

c) A precious jewel apart are the 16 **Meditations for the Time of Retreat.** In contradistinction to the two previous collections in which each meditation is complete in itself, here we have an extended and systematic development of the **theme of education** with a clearly unified structure and a very original balance between a serious theology of education and practical suggestions for the development of the Christian teaching profession.

These meditations represent the most immediate and direct way for educators, lay or not, to approach Lasallian spirituality. In this case, from the very beginning, it was stated that the author had in mind an audience far beyond the Brothers: *«For the use of persons dedicated to the education of youth and in particular, for the retreat which the Brothers make during the time of vacation»* is the sub-title for the first printed edition.

As far as those **for whom De La Salle destined** his works are concerned, the observation of Saturnino Gallego is pertinent: *«Does De La Salle address himself to all Christian educators or only to the Brothers? Let us make a clarification. For the Founder of the Christian Schools, the Brother is the "analogatum princeps" of the Christian teacher. He writes first of all for him, not as a consecrated Religious, but as a Brother; i. e., as a consecrated teacher. Therefore, all that he writes is valid also for the Christian lay teacher who can read and apply to himself this doctrine which, without doubt, was directly thought through in view of a particular educator, the Brother.»* (Gallego, Op. cit. p. 24).

After this brief introduction, we can now suggest an approach to the actual texts of the Meditations of De La Salle by those readers who wish to read them more carefully.

2. The Structure of the Meditations.

The purpose of the Meditations is **to suggest ideas** for personal or community mental prayer.

They present fundamental truths for reflection and prayer. Originally they were designed to serve as an introduction to the period of mental prayer which the Brothers made each morning. One of the Brothers read the meditation aloud for the whole community. Therefore, it is clear that the book was not destined for personal reading.

Even when read very slowly, the reading of one meditation only took about five minutes and the rest of the time was spent in personal prayer acording to the **"method"** taught by the Founder in another of his works. *«The Explanation of the Mathod of mental Prayer»* (Cahiers Lasalliens N° 4 and 50).

The **structure** of the meditations is uniform throughout. Each meditation is divided into three points. Saturnino Gallego explains, «The style is original –one fact from the Sunday's Gospel or from the biography of the Saint whose feast is being commemorated (in this case each point focuses on one of his virtues); a brief **reflection** on this fact: then a **practical application** to the life of the Brother who is directly addressed as **"you"** in a very pointed question. Given De La Salle's temperament which was practical rather than imaginative, we find scarcely any paragons of virtue or heroes. Rarely do we find exclamations and still more rarely any emoting. There is a heavy predominance of indicatives, imperatives and interrogations» (Gallego, Op. cit., p. 286).

As far as the **Meditations for Feast Days** is concerned, «De La Salle has proceeded in the same fashion». Each point is developed in reference to the well-specified theme stated at the beginning. In the case of the Saints, he stresses a particular virtue, or he shows how the cause of God or of the Church was championed within his sphere of influence. From this, De La Salle makes an application relative to the spiritual lives of his disciples or the way they should act in their profession. Frequently there is a brief exhortation, inserted among the examples given, together with a recommendation to do in like manner. (J. G. Rodrigue, Cahier Lasallien 47, p. 26).

In spite of their limited theme, even the **Meditations for the Time of Retreat** which were the first to be composed, follow the same pattern of three points and the same internal development of each.

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THE MEDITATIONS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE – I – (2/2)

3. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LASALLIAN STYLE.

A few remarks are in order, here, concerning the characteristic style of the Meditations. A few were given above, but they call for further development.

We must repeat that De La Salle is not a professional writer nor a literary figure seeking recognition. Each of his works has a precise practical purpose to which his writing is adapted, at least to a certain extent.

Certainly Lasallian works such as **Devoirs d'un chrétien** (a catechetical treatise with questions and answers, Cahier Lasallien 20) or the **Rules of Christian Politeness** (a treatise on courtesy, Cahier Lasallien 19), which were written for a wider audience gave him quite a reputation because about a hundred editions appeared. They have a more accurate composition and a more literary turn of phrase. As for the Meditations, probably the Founder did not even plan to have them printed.

However, the basic style, which reflects the man and his character, especially when he writes with no literary pretentions and no intention of going into print remains recognizably constant in all his works.

In particular with regard to the Meditations, we can point out the following principal characteristics:

Brevity

His style straightforword, with no trace of grandiloquence. J. G. Rodrigue remarks: «Brevity seems to be the outstanding characteristic of the writings of this Saint, especially in his Meditations. Basically, it flows from his very personality. Nothing in De La Salle even hints at his being inclined to oratoRy, apologetics or bantering (Op. Cit. p. 27).

Compa ctness

This is the co-relative of brevity and flows from his profound and personal understanding of those for whom he wrote the Meditations, as well as the circumstances of their life. He knows that there is no need to establish background before discussing anything with them. Their experiences together are reflected in the Meditations which often evoke them without the need to describe or explain them. Of course, many expressions were better appreciated by the first Brothers than they are by modern readers who are not familiar with the events lived during the first 40 years of the Institute. I will come back later to the importance of reading the Meditations in the light of the lived biographical experience of the Founder and the spiritual reality of the founding of the Christian Schools in order to appreciate all the richness which is buried in some of the texts of the meditations. The full resonance of certain texts will then achieve their true vibrancy.

Discretion and balance

These result from a judicious use of adjectives, and carefulness to avoid exaggerations; i. e., in qualifying the actions of people or in expressing admiration, etc.

De La Salle is also very prudent about qualifying as "miraculous" those happenings which are difficult to explain from a merely human point of view. The calm and prudent consideration he gives to important matters according to his biographers, is reflected in the pages of his meditations.

Decisiveness and realism

These stand out in a special way in the examinations of conscience which he proposes and in the manner of applying the results of a meditation to daily life.

The decisive and realistic tone is achieved especially by his constant use of **"you"** (it appears at least in 95% of the points for meditation). This turns the reader in upon himself as he feels himself personally involved in what he is reading or hearing.

Incontrovertibility

The theme is presented as incontrovertible, an absolute. De La Salle strongly identifies himself with the aspect of the spiritual life he is dealing with in the meditation, especially if it deals with a virtue or an attitude which is essential and very important for his disciples. «He loves to stress very strongly the idea he is developing, but without losing his eloquent balance» (Gallego, Op. cit. p. 5).

Some expressions, like "the most important...", "the first...", "the principal...", "the fundamental...", which appear from time to time concerning certain topics (poverty, mental prayer, piety, penance, obedience, regularity, Spirit of Faith, humility...) may bother some readers who are overly concentrated on the literal text.

Actually, De La Salle is merely trying to stress the importance of the matter, rather than establish fixed priorities oR hierarchies.

Syntax

Finally, a word about the syntax. This is sometimes complicated because of the excessive use of subordi-

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nate clauses and quotations from the **Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church** (1) which make certain sentences too long and complicated.

This is more of a problem in the original French editions. The translations try to make the thought clearer by a freer use of punctuation.

These and other stylistic elements are better observed and discovered by a direct experience with the texts themselves.

4. THE MEDITATIONS REFLECT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE AUTHOR.

I have already stressed the fact that in order to really understand the Meditations it is necessary to read them against the background of the life of the author and the events which brought into existence the religious family of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, composed entirely of lay Religious who are totally committed to the ministry of Christian Education. It is the key to a very interesting and profitable reading experience because it is these Meditations which best reflect the autobiography of the Founder. On many pages, besides the objective development of the theme, we can sense the strong stirrings of life in a man and the coursing of events in the special vocation which was his.

The Meditations are not so much the result of study and sporadic thought done at the table in his room, but rather they are a faithful mirror of situations and states of soul, of experiences which constitute the Providentially planned spiritual paths of the Founder and the life of Faith by which he discerned them.

Sauvage–Campos (op. cit. p. 31) insist on this autobiographical element and even include events which preceded the work of founding the Christian Schools: «As we try to unveil the intimacy of his relations with God, the only facts we have are all posterior to his definitive commitment to the work of the Schools. However, many passages from the meditations on the Saints lead us to believe that his youth, his education, his priestly vocation contained a rather precocious experience of God as a compelling presence and an invitation to give himself entirely to Him.» They cite as examples Med. 122.1, 177.1, 180.2, 98.1, 186.1...

However, the evidence of an on-going experience is very clear in the happenings which characterize his work as a Founder and his day by day relationships with others and with the realities of life, of virtue, of spiritual values, etc.

Only by reading carefully from this point of view can we come to realize the continual interplay between spiritual teachings and daily experiences. Bookishness and theoretical considerations are very rare.

A few examples may help to clarify all this. Consider the teachings and advice of the Founder in the following areas which were very much a part of the way he experienced life.

- An unwavering fidelity to God in difficult situations and persecutions.
- seeing all things from the point of view of Faith.
- The importance of seeking counsel and a personal examination of the issues before taking a decision.
- love of solitude and uneasiness concerning honors.
- Intense prayer life.
- Personal poverty and a tender love for the poor.
- Austerity and the practice of penance.
- Absolute submission to the Church.
- Kindness toward his Brothers.
- Zeal for the instruction and salvation of students.

The list could continue...

The list of themes might be of some help in discovering this path throughout the 208 meditations.

There is so much of the man woven into his meditations that I feel there is no exaggeration in saying that the Meditations are really his spiritual autobiography.

This is the first key to understanding the real meaning of the text. The second, which is just as important, is **to understand and be aware of the basic outline of his main spiritual ideas**, in order to identify and appreciate the individual teachings as they occur in the course of the Meditations.

This must be the backdrop against which the multiplicity of comments on Gospel passages and the lives of the Saints must be seen to appreciate their unity, because of themselves they appear episodic and unrelated.

Bro. Mario Presciuttini

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(1) These quotations have recently been the object of intensive study. It reveals that the author had a deep knowledge of the Bible and an extraordinary familiarity with the authors of the Sacred Texts:

M. Sauvage. "les citations néotestamentaires dans les Méditations pour le Temps de la Retraite" (C. L. I, 1959).

M. Campos. "L'itinéraire évangélique de S. J. B. de La Salle et le recors à l'Ecriture dans ses Méditations pour le temps de la retraite" (C. L. 45-46, 1974).

L. Varela. "Biblia y espiritualidad en San Juan Bautista de La Salle". (Salamanca, 1966).

S. Scaglione. "Le citazioni dei Padri e degli Scrittori sacri nelle Meditazioni" (Rivista Lasalliana 1/1967).

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DE LA SALLE AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:

What De La Salle Expected from the School «Principal»

When Lasallian school principals and others who speak about De La Salle and school administration make no reference to the Inspector of Schools, they ignore the person whom De La Salle established as the on-site school administrator.

In contrast to most schools of De La Salle's time in which the teacher confronting school problems was isolated and without resources, De La Salle's schools administered to the teachers' needs, and to that end he had established the position of Inspector of Schools.

To highlight the thesis that this important Lasallian administrative position is equivalent to that of school principal today, this article substitutes "principal" for the title Inspector of Schools.

The job description of the "principal" was spelled out originally in the manuscript copies of the **Conduct of Schools**. However, when the book went to press, that section dealing directly with the duties of the "principal" was left out. The reason for the deletion, as suggested in the Foreword Letter, was that the need did not apply to teachers and, therefore, did not warrant the expense involved.

That unfortunate decision to print a truncated version of the **Conduct of Schools** had three disastrous results for our understanding of the Lasallian "principal."

1) Without the section on the duties of the "principal" the **Conduct of Schools** became a teacher training manual in which the function of the "principal" in Lasallian teacher formation was not clear.

2) Unfortunately the obsolete manuscript copies of the **Conduct of Schools** were destroyed or eventually lost. The loss was compounded by the fact that there is very little significant description of the duties of the school "principal" in the other pedagogical writings of De La Salle. As a consequence of this loss and the lack of other references early historians of Lasallian education labeled the position "mysterious."

3) When a manuscript copy of the **Conduct of Schools** was discovered in the mid-twentieth century, the section on the duties of the "principal" was not read by many American Brothers for two unfortunate reasons. First, the unedited section mistakenly appeared to be redundant, merely repeating what was written in prior sections. Second, the newly found, pedagogical treasure was not translated into English.

Despite the disappointing history of our knowledge of the "principal," it is well established that in the early Institute the position of "principal" was a major appointment as seen from outside the school as well as inside. Outside the school the "principal" had to be astute and diplomatic in dealing with the strained relations with diocesan school authorities and pastors, and with the litigious relations with the teachers' union and the writing masters who crudely spied upon the school. Within the school the "principal" had to be respected by the teachers as a master teacher of sound and sensitive judgment.

The "principal" held a full-time position in middle management. Responsible for the operation of two or more schools, the "principal" alternated spending the full day at one school or the other. He performed all his duties under the immediate authority of the Director of the community, except when only one school was involved, for then the Director was also the "principal." The relationship of the "principal" to the Director can be compared to the relationship of today's principal to the Superintendent.

The "principal" was in charge of the in-service development of his teachers. As such, he was a member of a teacher-formation team composed of the Director of the community, the Director of novices, and the teacher-training "Formateur." The Conduct of Schools focuses upon the role of the "principal" as mentor and model not only in classroom instruction and management but also in program and curriculum development.

Fortunately the historical reality of the role of the "principal" is spelled out in detail in the restored section of the Conduct of Schools which divides the duties of the "principal" into three broad areas:

1) to exercise vigilance over the schools, the teachers, and the students;
2) to assign the students to their classrooms and assign the lessons they are to be taught; and
3) to promote the students from one lesson to another when it is observed that they are capable of doing more advanced work.

However, these duties are given clearer coverage today if they are regrouped under six specific headings: maintenance and supplies; enrollment and registration; examinations and promotions; scheduling and student placement; teacher supervision and support; and public relations. Of course these headings do not add to the duties of the "principal"; rather, they just make explicit duties implied in the three areas, referred to throughout the **Conduct of Schools**, and demanded by historical reality. The following paragraphs amplify these six headings.

MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLIES: The "principal" was responsible for obtaining needed instructional materials and building supplies, and for seeing that the custodial equipment was purchased and kept in the proper place and in good condition. It is not surprising, therefore, that the section on the duties of the "principal" emphasizes directives dealing with school cleanliness; for example, preventing paper, quill shavings and fruit pits from being deposited on the floor, and keeping the toilet facilities clean and decent, to mention two. The chapter on classroom furnishings, which was added to the Conduct of Schools at its first printing, is also an entry indicative of administrative concern.

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REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT: The "principal" conducted a thorough process of registration and enrollment of all new students. In the registration interview he gathered in writing detailed personal and family information, for example, the state of the child's health, sleeping arrangements for the children, and parental expectations and plans for their son's future. He made certain that the parents understood, and accepted, the school regulations regarding, for example, daily attendance, appropriate behavior and dress, school meals, and attendance at Mass and catechism lessons. He granted special considerations and conditions of acceptance due to family need. The "principal" implemented the school policy on the acceptance of transfer students, for example, judging the reason for leaving the school, and verifying that tuition due had been paid in full. He conducted diagnostic testing of the child's level of achievement in reading, writing, and arithmetic to insure proper academic placement. De La Salle regarded the student placement by the "principal" as his most important effort to maximize teacher instruction.

CURRICULUM AND SCHEDULING: It was the duty of the "principal" to balance the sizes of the classes, and to see that the intermediate sections had the largest number of students over those of the advanced and beginning sections. He also determined in consultation with the teacher the amount of material to be covered, and the length of time to be spent on each lesson. He was responsible to see that all the classes began and ended at the same time, even on variable-schedule days. He had expert familiarity and facility with the organization and proficiencies of the reading and writing academic programs. The Conduct of Schools gives several remarkables examples illustrating how he figured out flexible schedules and complex configurations of teaching curriculum. There can be no doubt that De La Salle expected the "principal" to be the instructional leader of the school.

EXAMINATIONS AND PROMOTIONS: The "principal" and the classroom teacher worked together as a team regarding the monthly examination and promotion. Prior to the examination he and the classroom teacher agreed to submit only those students who could pass. The examination conducted by the "principal" demonstrated not only his mastery of the academic program, but also his sense of justice and fairness. As much as possible he examined for mastery and judgment not only memory, and he took into account the quality of the student's daily effort. He always made his final decision regarding promotion in consultation with the teacher.

TEACHER SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT: As was said above, De La Salle set up a strong system of teacher formation, and in that system the "principal" was responsible for the in-service supervision and support of teachers. In that regard the section brings our how the "principal" needed to be sensitive to the feelings of the teacher, especially the beginning teacher, by making his suggestions and corrections in private. On the other hand the methods of teaching reading and writing, described earlier in the **Conduct of Schools** for the teacher, are selectively complemented and reinforced when they are described for the "principal" as teacher supervisor. For example, the "principal" gives more emphasis to items such as adjusting to approved variations in the daily schedule, beginning and ending the lesson on time, sticking to school regulations and policy on absence.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Although public relations is not an explicitly designated duty of the "principal," his responsibility for public relations is obvious in his concerns about the consequences imprudent, improper, and indecorous behavior by the teacher or the students have upon the parents, the pastors, the neighbors, and the public in general. Examples of teacher behavior about which the "principal" was concerned for the effect on public relations include: keeping to the published time table; accepting gifts; handling irate parents; dealing with callers to the school. Examples of student behavior about which the "principal" was concerned include: noisy gathering in front of school; vandalism and mischievous behavior going and coming to school; urinating in public; and fighting. Clearly De La Salle was sensitive to the importance of good public relations for the success of the schools, and he entrusted the on-site responsibility for the public image of the school to the "principal."

Happily the new translation and edition of the **Conduct of Schools** soon to be published by St. Mary's Press reinstates the section on the "principal" in which De La Salle addresses himself directly to the tasks of school administration. That restored section is written from an original, Lasallian, administrative viewpoint, and in a prescriptive style, typical of "administrative talk." Also, the operation of the school program, as reviewed from the administrative perspective, is described with new details, nuances, and emphases important to the "principal." The section on the duties of the "principal" is definitely not redundant, and worthwhile reading.

The expectations De La Salle had of the position of "principal" can furnish guidance to a Lasallian school principal today. A principal can gain comfort in learning that De La Salle recognized the need for on-site school administration; that he understood the difficulties faced by the "principal" in fulfilling that need; and what the duties were which De La Salle legislated for the "principal" as he saw him "at grips with his time." The school principal can identify with the inspector of Schools and enjoy the precious administrative insights offered in the new edition of the **Conduct of Schools**.

Brother Dominic Everett

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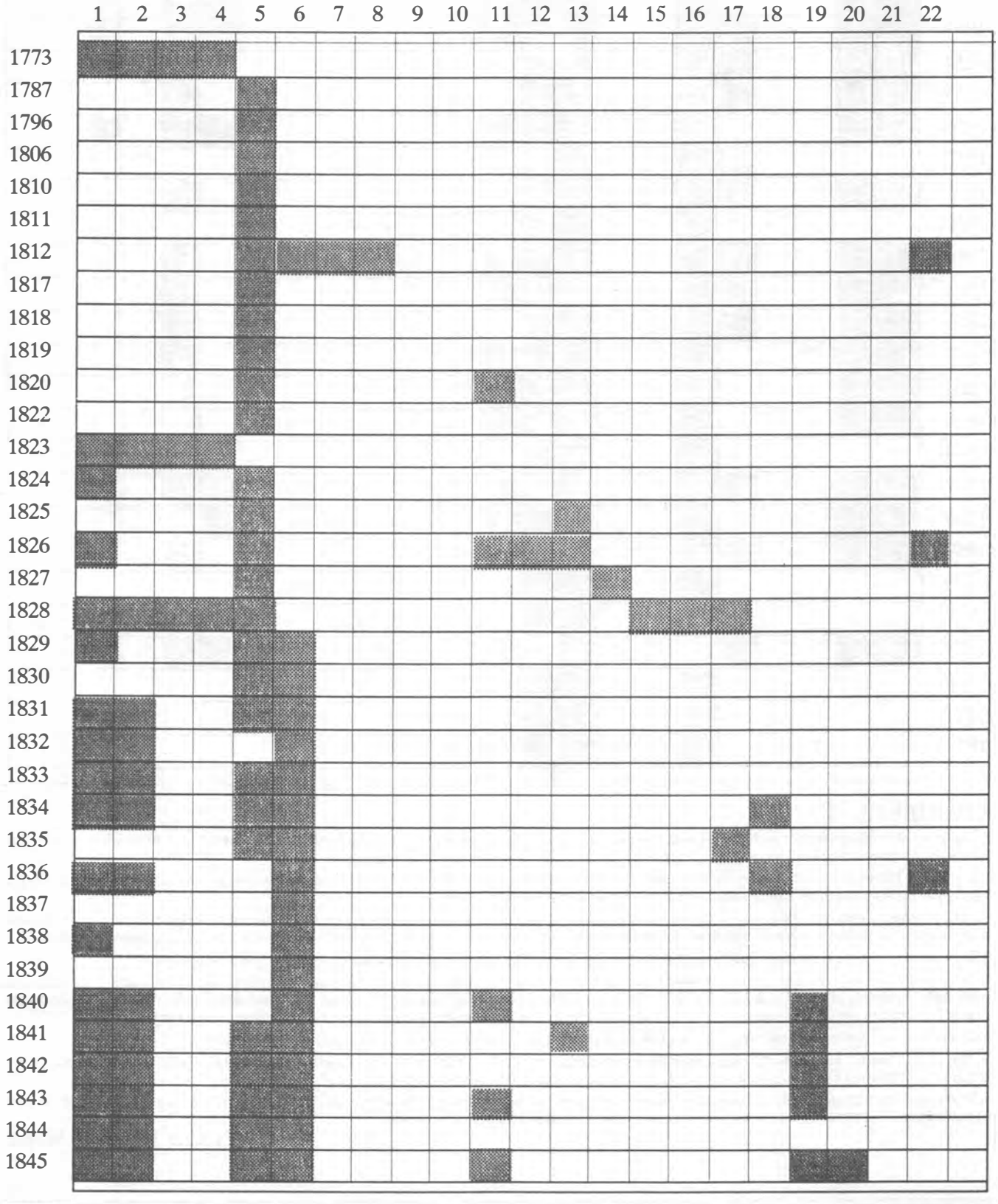
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THE CONTENTS OF «DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN» 1 IN THE VARIOUS EDITIONS

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(numbers correspond to columns)

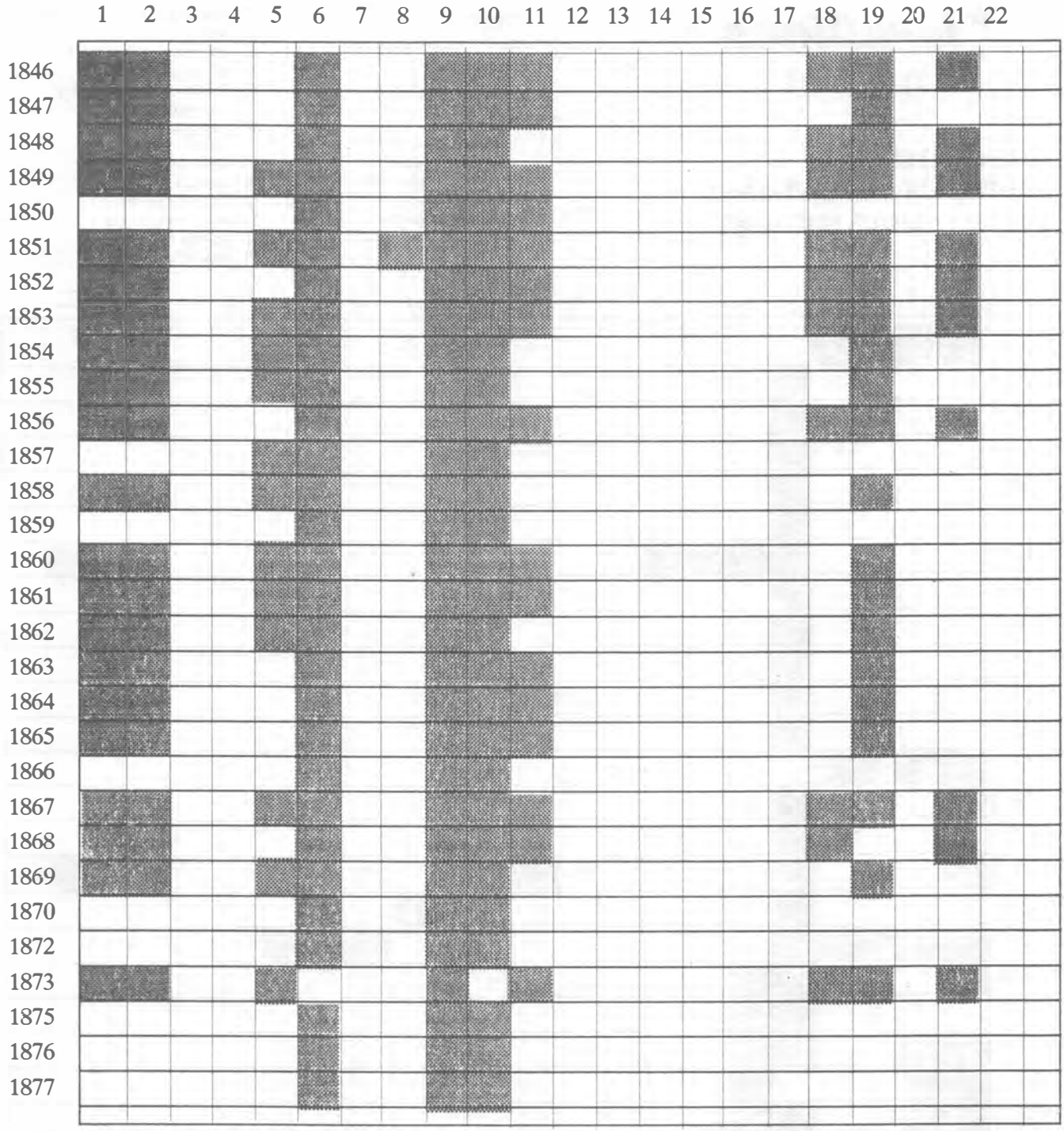
1. Mass
2. vespers
3. confession
4. communion
5. exercises of piety
6. profession of faith
7. principal duties of a Christian
8. universal prayer
9. Christian practices
10. prayers to Our Lady
11. morning and evening prayers
12. hymns
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COMMENTS:

* This is not the place to spend much time considering in detail the kind of person for whom De La Salle wrote **Duties 1**. His readers fall into one of the following categories: the Brothers, pupils' parents, the pupils themselves, and the faithful in general.

* If we judge this work according to internal criteria, we could say that he had the latter category in mind. However, in the course of history, it was the pupils who drew most benefit from it. This is what this present article aims to show.

* The 1703 edition, considered at present to be the first edition, and those that followed it up to the year 1773 contained the original text without additions. Subsequent editions had a variety of additions, which preceded or followed the original text, and which described current daily classroom practice.

* The nature of the additions leads one to suppose that **Duties 1** was a text used every day in class by all or by the majority of pupils.

1. In the first place and generally speaking, **Duties 1** was used as a reading text in the classroom. As its use by pupils became more widespread, additions were made consisting of texts which contributed to the spiritual life of the pupils. One can be certain that these additions were of benefit also to the pupils' families and the faithful in general. It would not therefore be too presumptuous to attribute a Christianising role to **Duties 1.**

2. In a certain way, these additions turned **Duties 1** into a manual on the theory and practice of the duties of a Christian.

3. The tables show us that certain Christian practices were maintained over the years and continued to be included in new editions and reprints. Other practices, on the other hand, came and went easily. This helps us to judge the relative importance of all these practices.

4. It would be interesting to make a study of the additions made to the text of Duties 1, taking into account the editors involved, the place and the year of publication. This would be a valuable contribution to the study of the history of this work.

Brother Manuel F.Magaz

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CONCORDANCE OF THE MEDITATIONS OF St. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE with the readings of cycles A, B and C of the 2nd Vatican Council ROMAN MISSAL

This concordance of the Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle was drawn up on the basis of the scriptural readings for the Sundays indicated, the subjects treated by the Founder and the virtues suggested by the liturgy corresponding to the Sundays and feasts of the liturgical season.

MEDITATIONS OF ST. J.B. DE LA SALLE FOR SUNDAYS

	A	B	C
ADVENT			
1st	189,1 1,1-2 77,1-3	207,1-3 1,1-3	207,2-3 1,2-3 200,1
2nd	2,1-3 189,1 162,2	205,1-3 138,3	195,1-3 138,3 4,1
3rd	2,2 166,2	194,2 164,1 3,1	138,3
4th	110,1-3 112,1 194,1	112,1-3 93,3 83,2	141,2-3 162,1 138,1
24th December	162,1 85,1-3 3,3	162,1 85,1-3 3,3	162,1 85,1-3 3,3
CHRISTMAS	**Evening** 86,1-3 110,1-3	**Night** 85,1-3 86,1-3	**Day** 86,1-3 164,1
Holy Family	91,2 110,2-3 6,3 90,3	104,1-3 5,1 22,2-3 90,3	7,1 110,3 206,3 91,2
January 1st Our Lady, Mother of God	164,1-3 86,2 93,3	5,1 93,1	112,1 164,1
Octave of Christmas	112,3 195,3 198,1	112,3 195,3 198,1	112,3 195,3 198,1
Epiphany	96,1-3 199,3 110,2-3	96,1-3 199,3 110,2-3	96,1-3 199,3 110,2-3

ORDINARY	A	B	C
Baptism of Jesus	112,2	138,2	162,2
2nd ordinary	138,3 78,2	96,1e 203,3d 139,1	8,1-3 201,1 170,3
3rd	78,2 88,2 81,1	4,2 45,3 88,2	96,3e 170,3 178,1-3
4th	5,2 44,2 84,1 196,2-3	3,2 192,1 45,3 78,1 116,2	3,1 5,3 194,3 74,2
5th	197,2-3 64,2 192,2	207,1 194,1 36,3	57,1 46,1 90,3
6th	202,2 1,3 93,1 58,2	66,1 90,3 196,2	196,2 168,3
7th	84,1 5,2 44,2 202,2	58,1 71,2	58,2 87,1 84,1
8th	153,1 67,2-3 174,3	195,2 201,2 199,3	29,1 60,2-3 175,3
9th	75,3 67,1 73,2-3	166,3 66,3 183,3	9,1 90,3 188,2-3
LENT			
1st	17,1-3 103,1 68,2	17,1-3 103,1 78,1	17,1-2 193,1 103,1
2nd	18,1-3 152,1-3 145,1	139,1 152,2-3 88,2	18,1-3 152,2 202,3
3rd	24,1 73,1 207,1	199,3 165,1 203,1	10,3 20,2 5,2
4th	15,1-3 21,2-3	112,3 44,1-3	188,3 56,2-3
5th	147,1-3 45,2 84,1	43,1 119,3 21,3	179,1 37,3 4,3
Palm Sunday	22,1-3 27,2-3 112,1-2 144,3	22,1-3 27,2 24,3 25,3	22,1-3 27,1 23,1 91,2
Holy Week	**Monday** 23,1 24,1 27,2-3	**Tuesday** 88,1 24,2	**Wednesday** 25,1 107,1-3
	Thursday 26,1-3 47,1-3 50,1-3	**Friday** 27,1-3 28,1-3 145,1	**Saturday** 29,1-3 144,3 25,3
Easter	**Sunday** 144,3 88,2 29,1-3	**Monday** 199,2 29,1-3	**Tuesday** 144,3 43,3 4,2-3
Wednesday 30,1-3	**Thursday** 31,1 32,1	**Friday** 106,2 149,2	**Saturday** 78,3 33,1-2

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	A	B	C
EASTER			
2nd	84,1-2	84,1-3	84,2-3
	32,1-3	32,1-3	32,2-3
3rd	30,1-3	31,1	106,2
		4,9	149,2
4th	45,1	33,2-3	208,3
	199,2	183,1	23,2
	196,3	201,3	33,1
5th	200,1	195,3	73,3
	38,2	72,2	140,1-2
6th	73,2	195,3	34,2
	42,1-3	34,3	35,2-3
	189,2	39,3	
Ascension	39,1-2	40,1-3	39,3
	40,1-3	39,1-2	206,1
	202,3	78,2	208,2
Pentecost	**vigil**	**day**	
	62,2	43,1-3	
	45,1	201,1	
	24,2	32,1	
	203,2	170,3	
Trinity	46,1-3	46,1-2	46,2-3
	201,3	178,3	44,1
	44,1-3	199,2	191,2
Corpus Christi	51,1-3	93,2	51,2
	48,1-3	52,1	47,1
	26,2	50,2	20,2
Sacred Heart	113,2	199,3	56,1
	7,2	27,2	196,1
	28,3	88,2	188,3
ORDINARY			
6th	183,1	66,1	168,3
	165,1	90,3	196,2
	58,1-2		
7th	44,2	71,1	58,2
	196,3	191,2	87,1
	202,2		84,1
8th	67,1-2	195,2	175,3
	153,3	201,2	29,1-2
	193,1	199,1-2	60,2-3
9th	33,3	23,1	9,3
	21,3	195,2	75,2
	3,2	166,3	90,3
10th	167,1-2	5,2-3	68,1-3
		183,3	9,1
		2,1	
11th	90,1	12,1	144,2
	67,3	183,3	22,2
	91,1	194,2	2,2
12th	205,2-3	10,1	139,2
	91,3	90,3	25,1
	206,2	201,3	195,1
13th	29,2-3	76,1-3	203,2
	75,2		45,1
14th	65,2	5,2	28,2
	79,2	21,1-2	121,2
	196,2	69,1-3	178,3
15th	14,1-3	21,2	65,1-3
	68,1	200,1	40,3
	11,2	205,2-3	112,3
16th	11,1-2	20,1	147,1-3
	12,1-3	33,1-3	144,2
	205,1	205,2-3	25,3
17th	193,3	23,1	54,1
	152,1	93,1	37,1-2
	31,2-3	20,1	77,3
18th	20,1-3	60,2	30,1
	31,2-3	48,1-3	40,1
	51,1	92,3	29,3
19th	139,2	48,1-2	199,1
	10,1	46,3	90,2-3
		49,2-3	91,3
20th	38,2	49,1-3	25,2
	193,3	48,3	87,2-3
	199,1	26,2	165,1
21st	139,2	196,3	73,3
	106,2	52,1	203,2
	46,1	205,3	200,2
22nd	5,3	139,1	69,1
	102,2-3	3,3	113,1
	167,1-2	95,2	5,2
23rd	106,1	64,1-3	180,2
	70,2-3	19,2	167,1-2
	90,1-3		5,3
24th	74,1-3	139,2	56,1-3
	40,1	147,3	196,1
	198,2	7,3	188,3
25th	13,1-3	193,3	61,1
	201,1-3	194,2	205,1
		207,2	174,3
26th	2,2	199,1	40,3
	4,2	201,2	172,2
	112,2	202,2	143,2
27th	202,3	196,2	38,2
	23,2	197,2	36,1-2
28th	72,1	180,1-2	66,1-3
	50,1	81,1	73,3
		97,1	
29th	75,1	75,2	5,2
	206,3	56,2	50,2
	207,3	198,3	192,1-3
30th	70,1-3	15,1-3	38,3
	90,1	32,2-3	63,2
	198,2		203,1
31st	91,2	70,2	33,1-3
	69,1-3	90,3	37,2
	203,1	199,1	44,2
32nd	2,3	196,2	207,3
	91,3	56,2	29,2-3
	205,3		203,3
33rd	207,1	1,1-2	200,3
	50,3	208,2	1,1
	205,1		150,3
34th	22,1-3	22,1-3	27,3
	80,3	143,3	46,3
	173,1	85,3	112,3

* * *

Bro. Otto Pántano Guevara

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22 - 11 – B - 100

CALLS ADDRESSED TO THE INSTITUTE AND THE RESPONSE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

(From the review «Comunicação» of the District of Porto Alegre, N° 100)

Many are the calls made to us today by the Church. The "urgent calls" vary according to the point of view which they reflect. We are referring to the important calls from the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Church.

1. The call for the evangelization of nations.

The call made by Vatican II:
a/ Necessity for evangelization:
– for the unbelievers: «But they will not ask his help unless they believe in him, and they will not believe in him unless they have heard of him and they will not hear of him unless they get a preacher, and they will never have a preacher unless one is sent» (Rom 10: 14-15).

– believers must continually hear about faith and repentance; they must be prepared for the sacraments; they must be taught how to fulfill all that Christ commands» (SC n. 9)

b/ Evangelization must reach everyone.
«Since the local Church must mirror the universal Church as far as it is able, it must have a keen realization that it, too, has been sent to those who do not believe in Christ and who dwell in the same region, to guide them to Christ through the witness of the lives of each of the faithful as well as that of the entire community» (AG 20).

c/ The apostolate of the laity is the only way to reach many people:
«...The laity are perfectly capable of exercising their apostolate with their peers. They complete the witness of their lives by the witness of their word. In the area of labor, professions, studies, living, leisure or social life the laity have the opportunity to help their brothers... This apostolate must be extended to all the people they contact and it must include any spiritual or material assistance they can offer them... Many cannot hear the Gospel or know Christ except through the laity, their neighbors» (AA. N° 133).

d/ A call repeated in Puebla (N° 777, 778, 800) and in Evangelii Nuntiandi (N° 68, 69, 70).

2. A call for the involvement of the laity.

In these two documents, the Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, Ch IV, and in the decree Apostolicam Actuositatem, Vatican II speaks of the apostolate of the laity. See also the orientations and insistence of John XXIII and Paul VI on what concerns the opening up of the "Ministries".

3. A call for respect and development of the human person.

In its pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II speaks of this call: respect for the human person (N° 27); the equality of all men (N° 29); the value of human activity (N° 34); the defense, promotion and protection of the family (N° 47, 48, 49, 52).

4. The call to social justice and the development of peoples.

Vatican II speaks about this in chapter III of the pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes when it deals with the Church in the modern world.
The encyclicals Mater et magistra and Populorum Progressio recall and bring up to date the social doctrine of the Church. The encyclical Solicitudo rei Socialis of John Paul II is the latest word on the subject.

5. A call to openness and docility to the Holy Spirit.

a/ An intense and continual life of prayer.
b/ prayer centers, prayer encounters, prayer retreats.
c/ Writings on the Holy Spirit and prayer...
d/ The encyclical of John Paul II "Dominum et Vivificantem" on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the worl.

(5/18/1986).

The Response of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the call of the Church Today.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools are a Congregation of Brothers, lay Religious, founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle for the Christian education of youth, especially the poor. This purpose which is still valid today, determines the manner in which the Congregation responds to some aspects of those calls from the Church of today.

1. With regard to the call to Evangelization, there is a concerted effort that in our schools:

– there will be a truly Christian atmosphere.
– catechesis be active, youth groups encouraged, leaders be formed, workshops be organized, Eucharistic celebrations be held in honor, and active participation in the life of the parish be advocated.
– Service for Religious Education (SER) give orientations and supervise Religion teachers as well as stimulate and promote Christian living.
– besides the weekly catechesis, there will be a daily "Reflection to raise consciousness of Gospel values" based on some significant Christian idea taken from the Agenda which has been given to the students.
– Our District has a Central Catechetical Team which evaluates schools, supports teachers, especially the catechists, by providing them with all manner of catechetical materials.
– The Brother of the Christian Schools is aware that he is not only a professional, but a man sent by God, by Christ and

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by the Church to teach the Gospel to youth (GE 2).
– He offers his students a mature love which unites firm guidance with the requirements of affection and respect as would be expected in one who is called to union with God (GE 9).

2. With regard to the promotion of the Laity, it has mounted a serious effort to develop excellence in the teachers who work in our shools:

– Delegation of responsibilities among the teachers of our schools according to the principle "awareness, freedom and participation".
– Formation of catechists.
– Development of Parent-Teachers associations, and encouragin their participation in the school.
– Encouraging the creation of educational communities through co-responsibility among Brothers, teachers, parents and alumni.

3. With regard to human development:

– development of the person, development of the mind.
– an atmosphere of respect and dialog between teachers and students.
– social integration: presence of rich and poor, white and black...
– an effort to know each student individually, the reality with which he lives, awareness of his capabilities.

4. With regard to justice and the development of peoples.

– The school as agent for the development of peoples (R 13a).
– «Through the promotion of justice and peace they cooperate in the building up of the kingdom of God» (R 7).
– «The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide» (R 14).
– The Brothers have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the gospel and either the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education.» (R 40)
– «With regard to its employees and auxiliary personnel, the community observes both the obligations of social justice and the demands of Christian charity» (R 60c).
– «In conformity with the spirit of the Institute, the Brothers cooperate closely with those in the Church or in society who are involved in education, ministry to the young, the cultivation of a sense of justice, the use of mass media, or the integration of young people into social and professional life» (R 17d).
– «The Brother Visitor ensures that the requirements of canon law and civil law are complied with in what concerns the goods of the District and the patrimonial goods of the Brothers. The same applies to social justice as it affects the personnel employed by the communities» (R 132d).
– «Educational Foundation La Salle: This is destined to help maintain works for the poor, poor students in the schools, and to the perpetuation of the Fund itself» (District Chapter V, N° 51).
– «To send as least 10% of the Brothers to the Missions after providing for their adequate preparation» (District Chapter V, N° 55).
– «To participate... by joining in on various projects and in the missionary effort of the Institute, as well as by contributing to the Sharing Fund» (District Chapter v, n° 54-54B).

5. With regard to openness and docility to the action of the Holy Spirit and prayer:

– «The Brothers provide opportunities for their students to encounter God more frequently» (R 15a).
– «Pray the Master of the harvest to send workers into his vineyard» invite the Brothers to realize that prayer is fundamental in order to initiate and to develop a pastoral ministry for vocation. (R 84).
– «The Founder gives this recommendation "Ask God that he will be pleased to make your Institute grow and bear fruit day by day". This stimulates the Brothers to organize prayers for vocations in their communities...» (R 84).
– «prayer, filial devotion to St. John Baptist de La Salle, love for the community and dedication to the work of the apostolate help to assure stability and fidelity to the Institute» (R 42b).
– «The oratory where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved provides the ideal setting for community prayer.» (R 70b).
– «Each Brother has the primary responsibility for his personal prayer. Each one and all together are jointly responsible for community prayer» (R 72).
– «Ordinarily the Brothers give to God at least two hours of each day in meditation, the Eucharist, community vocal prayer, spiritual reading and personal prayer» (R 73).
– «The fidelity of the Brothers is achieved by their daily response to different stituations, by getting to know more fully persons and the milieu in which they live and work, and by their determination to find new strength in frequent prayer» (R 145).
– «The Brothers are faithful to their mission in the measure in which they perceive and accept the calls which come to them from their ministry, and in which they go to God as apostles who are responsible for the salvation of those confided to them» (Dist. Ch. V, 14).
– «It is our duty to re-establish this charism in all its purity with the adaptations which are necessary for our times and then to transmit its renewed form to new generations» (Dist. Ch. V, 15).
– «We will be men of God through the renewal of our spirituality:
  – Know, assimilate and live the Rule.
  – Renew the practice of meditation.
  – Design and accept the Personal Program» (Dist. Ch. V, 17).
– Besides their annual retreat, the Brothers follow specific courses for their continued formation: CIL, CREL, Más Vida, Año de Renovación, formation programs organized by the local Church or other entities such as CERNE, CETESP, etc, the CNBB or CRB.

«That through our lives together as Brothers, we show the unity with which we pursue our common goal and celebrate it as a Community in the liturgy, especially on the occasion of important dates designated by the Church and the Institute» (Dist. Ch. V, N° 4).

Brother Estevão Turcatel

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PLACES WHERE THERE IS A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR LASALLIANS

To some of you this title may appear somewhat strange.

God is everywhere. He can reveal his presence as he sees fit.

As for us, we can discover him or find him in favourable times and places. St John Baptist de La Salle put it well when he was reflecting on the experience of Saint Teresa: *«And so, as she found everything in finding God, she had the happiness of finding God everywhere: whatever her situation and wherever she happened to be, God was her guide»* (Med 177, 3).

However, it requires an effort to grasp this truth. To the extent that Brothers and their lay colleagues concern themselves with De La Salle's teaching, the need arises to grasp at a deeper level what we might call the "originality of Lasallian spirituality".

As Christian educators make more frequent references to La Salle in carrying out their "ministry", the necessity is felt for deeper consideration, from an educational viewpoint, of the peculiar weighting of such Lasallian terms as: mission, ministry, spirit of faith and zeal... That shouldn't surprise us. We know that every spiritual experience has its roots in two realities always to be found in the Bible from the epoch of Abraham right up to the coming of Jesus of Nazareth. *The experience of faith is, at the same time a theological and a human experience.*

In the Bible, the spiritual experience is centred on a relationship with the God of the Covenant. And this *relationship* with the God of the Covenant brings with it a new way of understanding reality. And so there arises a movement "of contemplation and of communion". For we can contemplate God through all the events of our life and through these events enter into "comunion" with them without turning away from the real living exprience. This contemplation/communion means that our a whole life is transformed: we enter into a whole new mode of perceiving, evaluating and owning our being.

And so, we find ourselves at the very heart of the life of faith as it is presented to us by De La Salle. The eyes –the eyes of faith– are focused on the experience, for it is precisly there that the God of history reveals himself. The experience, therefore, is that special place where God is revealed, the God of salvation, the God Father who has assumed in his son Jesus, our every day actions and who offers us his love.

Very often, too, we speak of meeting God at the very core of life. Pope Paul VI would say "at those points when now and the yet-to-come interact" (*Octogesima Adveniens*, n° 51).

This concept is present in every "spirituality". Always, at their centre, emerges a dynamic principle of Christian faith, which gives to existence a new Gospel identity. By way of verification, all that is needed, is a rapid survey of the fruitful history of the Gospel, as incarnated in the Founders (Foundresses) the "Mothers or Fathers of our spiritual Families".

Saint John Baptist de La Salle raised up in the Community of the Church a striking new way of living out the spirit of the Gospel. The Gospel journey followed by De La Salle brought forth a "new model" of the Christian life specially appropriate for groups of Christians who identify with him and who feel bonded to him in a special way, those particulary who commit themselves to the field of education and culture.

But it often happens, that in Lasallian schools, some men and women of faith feel they rather "disciples" of St Teresa, of St Augustine, of St Francis of Assisi rather than of John Baptist de La Salle. There are also more who belong to modern spiritual groups (Focolari, Charismatics, New catechumens) or who are active members of Catholic Action groups or of Christ Cursillos. Coming from faith groups having their roots in other "spiritual families", some Lasallians fail to appreciate the originality of our **Lasallian Spiritual Family.**

Something even more fundamental sometime happens. Some Brothers seem to have experienced in their year of formation an initiation into the spirituality of Benedict or Ignatius rather than into that of De La Salle. As a result of this at a later period, it is difficult in practice, for them to live as "Disciples of De La Salle". This situation, also makes difficult dialogue and sharing within a Lasallian educational Community.

I would like to cite, by way of example, the experience of spirituality shared with some educators from Lasallian schools who belong to the "spiritual family" of Charles de Foucauld.

With the limitations imposed by the comparison of two texts (the expression of two spiritual experiences) and aware of the danger of reductionism and distortion I take the risk of offering this twofold reading.

WHERE DOES THE DISCIPLE OF CHARLES DE FOUCAULD FIND GOD?

Here is a text in support of our point of view.

«Every place is good for you; the countryside, the highway, the roads are delightful; Jesus is there with you, in you, around you, you possess him, he possesses you, he penetrates you, he enfolds you, he is in you and you are in him. Oh! how happy you are, on the way, at rest, in solitude, as you journey along, everywhere, always. You feel yourself in Jesus, with Jesus, you have him with you, you contemplate him, you adore him, you lose yourself in him and you are lost in him..». (Considerations on the feasts of the year, page 367, Ed. Nouvelle Cité).

In the life of a man or woman who feels himself called to live a contemplative life at the heart of the story of man, all life's moments are transformed into the Place of an en-

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counter with Jesus, their Lord. This way of understanding and of taking up one's life, is profoundly influenced by the **God who is present.** It is a presence that one contemplates and with which one enters into "communion". Let us underline the most significant effects of this spirituality: the believer is, in a certain sense, impregnated, moved, shaken, amazed by his God, because he is a witness to the rality of his Word: **"And I am with you all days, even to the end of time"** (Mt 28, 20).

WHERE DOES THE DISCIPLE OF ST JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE FIND GOD?

The Lasallian texts that can be cited are numerous and they are consistent. For now, let me linger on one only.

«St. Ignatius was so filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ and His holy love that the sacred name of Jesus was constantly on his lips. By this means he communicated this divine love to those whom he instructed, as well as to those with whom he conversed. As he himself was wholly devoted to Christ and consecrated to Him for preaching the gospel, so he wished his disciples to be specially attached to Jesus and to labour for Him alone.

If you are a true lover of Christ you will take every possible means to instil His holy love in the hearts of your children whom you train to be His disciples, and your aim will be that they think often of Jesus, their good and only Master; that they speak frequently of Jesus, that they aspire only after Jesus, and that they live for Him alone.» (Med. 102, 2)

This text is a good "key" for interpreting the Lasallian experience of God. We find a similar "key" in the Meditations for the Times of Retreat as also in Meditations 90, 91 and 92 concerning the examination (the reading) which the Brother makes at the end of the year of his experience of God at the centre of his life.

Although the meditations for the end of the year are addressed to the Brothers there is no doubt that their purpose is of value for Christian educators in general. This is more obvious in the Meditations for the Times of Retreat and the text cited above.

We can say, therefore, that **it is in the depths of his being and in the fulfilment of his ministry that the Lasallian experiences the God that saves.**

In my opinion, therefore, the Lasallian has an exceptional experience of faith in the following three areas: community, school, the Word of God.

In this article for Lasallian, I would want to emphasize the second of these "Places": The **school,** in its fullest sense, that is to say in so much as it is the "field of God" where the Lasallian carries out "the work of God".

The **school,** in effect represents for La Salle a profound and authentic spiritual reality. By following his teaching we can affirm that the Lasallian school is indeed a "Godly place". God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who wants all of his sons and daughters to be saved, is present at the heart of the school and he offers us the possibility of transforming it into the place of his saving action. The Lasallian schools **«are characterised by the determination to make the means of salvation available to young people through a quality education and by an explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ»** (Rule, 13).

This is to say that a Christian educator, a true disciple of De La Salle will find God at the heart of the school and will live out his faith as an act of communion with the plan of a loving God who wills that education be an instrument of salvation.

– The educational process, that is to say the organization of the school,
– relationship within the school,
– the quality of teaching and of the students' work,
– the planning and putting into operation of the "Education Plan,
– the integration of the Educational Community,
– the nature of the dialogue within the educational process,

– the formation of persons,
– the work of interiorization, personalization, socialization,
– the proclamation of the Word of Jesus,
– the introduction to prayer,
– the opening-up to society and the Church...

In all of these realities the Lasallian is exposed to the possibility of experiencing his (her) identity as a man or woman of faith and of faith community. If one bears this in mind, one can doubtless understand better this text – short but significant – of the Rule: *«The Brothers live their faith as a gift received for the ministry of Christian education»* (N° 20).

Thus by living out faith and zeal at the heart of the school, the Lasallian educator transforms his "work" into a true "ministry" (cf. Rule, n° 13). It is in this way, in my view, **that the Lasallian experience of faith is accomplished.**

Brother Genaro Saenz de Ugarte, Vicar

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«LET US REMEMBER

THAT WE ARE IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD»

«LET US ADORE HIM»

There are certain memories of our family or friends that we always treasure. They speak to our hearts and renew within us the secret sources of mutual esteem and appreciation.

Among the De La Salle Brothers, the memory OF THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD is one of these. The Founder left it to us as a community and school practice.

Many of those who have attended our schools keep this memory alive and recall it with great benefit.

This intense moment of silence and introspection is of great educational value for it is God himself who becomes our teacher.

LET US REMEMBER

We say: **"Let us remember"**. This is not something imposed upon us by duty. It is rather a need we feel, an act of love which we renew.

Do not those who love each other often think of each other?

"For nothing proves so forcibly that we love someone than being unable to prevent ourselves from thinking of him" says De La Salle in Meditation 70, 3.

We are before God, his presence fills us, his mystery surrounds us:

* the God who consecrates us and who inflames our heart with zeal.
* the God through whom all has life, for he is eternal life.
* God is the silent atmosphere in which our whole life resounds like an echo of eternal love.

Why delay recalling this "memory" which brings us so many benefits?

THAT WE ARE IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD

It is easier to define by making comparisons. There are things present in our world which are special, like the **sun** and **air**, among others.

– the **sun** which is at the same time light, heat and energy. The light which surrounds us as a cloak, the heat which invigorates us and the energy which transforms us.

– the **air** which supports the bird and which is a vital element for our organism.

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They are so familiar to us that we do not speak of them, we are in their midst. Although we do not see them their absence would cause our death.

In our lives too, God is a welcoming silence which is felt rather than a word which is heard; he is an interior joy which appears and remains rather than a vision that satisfies the senses.

Because we possess God in our hearts as a Grace, we can recognise and "see him" in all that surrounds us. We can exclaim with the psalmist:

> "*If I climb the heavens, you are there,*
> *there too, if I lie in Sheol.*
> *If I flew to the point of sunrise, or westward across the sea,*
> *your hand would still be guiding me,*" (Ps. 139, 8-10)

With St. Paul, we recognise that in the presence of God we live and move and have our being.

Let us say finally with Isaiah:

> "*And yet, Yahweh, you are our Father;*
> *we the clay, you the potter,*
> *we are all the work of your hand.*" (Is. 64, 7-8)

LET US ADORE HIM

Not with our lips but with our hearts we say to you like Samuel: "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

Your Word will be a lamp for our feet, a light on our way.

Helped by your Spirit who is holy, we will fulfil your desires and your will which we adore in all things.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL OUR ACTIONS
FOR LOVE OF YOU

AMEN

Br. Jose Luis Hermosilla

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22 - 14 – C - 97

THIS MINISTRY OF OURS (1/2)

Presentation to Faculty/Staff of La Salle High School, Pasadena. September, 1990

INTRODUCTION

There is a real difference between a public school, a Catholic School, and a Catholic school in the Lasallian tradition. My gradutate level training in teaching methodology, management, and content was most excellent and thorough and I went out to teach in public schools well-prepared for the job. I was a product of these schools and a proponent of the system. I liked teaching – I loved teaching, and I felt good about the fact that the business courses I taught gave the students useful skills. Ten years later, I taught for the first time in a Catholic school. I knew that God had led me there. I was struck by the caring, nurturing ways of the sisters who ran the school, but after all, they were supposed to be that way because they were religious, and I was just a lay teacher of a secular subject.

Seven years later, I met St. La Salle. In studying his life, and the educational and spiritual dimensions of the Lasallian tradition, I really realized that I was a part of something overwhelmingly awesome. I have been called to represent Jesus to the students; they, in turn, bring Him to me. St. La Salle's words, «Domine Opus Tuum,» Lord this work is yours, ring true for me. We truly are on hallowed ground in this holy work, this ministry of ours.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Aware of our diversity of background, talent, personalities, we come together to consider how we can affect a better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of ourselves as persons and as community and how we can work together to make this a most successful year. Our commonality is a lifestyle patterned after Christ. That doesn't mean that we all have to be Christians but rather we are called to live generously, compassionately, justly, and charitably. We have all been called to minister to the students of La Salle High School and to one another. Our common goal is to educate our students in the context of an atmosphere of faith. All of us are at a point of a new beginning, the '90-91 school year. Our school and our community are dynamic. To know this, one need only step foot on the campus, look at our documents, talk to anyone on our staff. Today, we share with one another our prayers, our food, our good will, and our mission; we are a community of faith.

FAITH COMMUNITY – THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

The term, «faith community,» supposes a unity that requires a commitment. For some of us, it sends up warning signs and caution lights. How can I be one in yet another community without being divided? «I Wanna Be Me» and this self-identity is continually challenged by the presence of others. In whatever our lifestyle – single, married, religious – people call to us through their needs, fears, hopes, and deeds. This takes our time and energy in responding to them and sometimes we can sense a loss of control over our own preferences. And many times our particular assignements create isolation – we are in our classroom, our lab, our office, the gym. The demands of our schedule, which include preparing, presenting, evaluating, moderating, leave little time or desire to acknowledge, let along appreciate, the work of others. But we do hold a shared vision – the vision of La Salle High School. Do we have a common understanding of the Mission? (We will have a chance to explore that this morning.) We derive support from others based on this shared vision even though our backgrounds differ. The idea of faith community involves a sense of belonging to one another and to God. It takes such little effort and the rewards are high. Let's work together to remove from our community any uglies – loneliness,

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apathy, alienation and negativism, and make it our task to build, to plant, to nourish and to care, so that those who work with us will find the support they need to do the work that they are capable of doing so that we, as a school community, become a truly living faith community.

A SPECIAL GIFT FOR ALL

Teaching in a Catholic school is more than a vision; it is a vocation, a special calling from God. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit, entrusted to the entire faith community of the Catholic school. The non-Catholic teacher also shares in this unique gift from God through identification with the Church's ministry of teaching. Every adult in a Catholic school is called to witness to the Christian values present in the life and practice of the Church and the philosophy of the school.

A Catholic school is not simply a place where lessons are taught and information transmitted. It is a center of formation as well as instruction. Students are guided toward that integration of faith with culture which is the hallmark of the Christian life. The Catholic school is governed by an operative philosophy that is attentive to the needs of today's students and illumined by the Gospel message. Not only do the courses of instruction inform students, but the entire environment and climate of the school plays a major role in their formation. This responsibility for Christian Formation belongs not only to the Brothers and religious studies teachers, it belongs to the entire faculty and staff to whom these students are entrusted. A recent Church document, «The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School,» makes a bold statement about the nature of the Catholic School. From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus who is with us in our journey through life as the Master Teacher. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate. Prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with us, gathered here.

The American Bishops' Document, «Teach Them,» concurs. There has been an increased recognition that all share in the educational ministry, not just those specifically assigned to teach religion. Consequently, the faith witness of every adult in the school becomes vital to that school's success. Students should see in their teachers the Christian attitude and behavior that is often so conspicuously absent from the secular atmosphere in which they live. Without this witness, living in such an atmosphere, they may begin to regard Christian behavior as an impossible ideal. The image of the Catholic school has long been embodied in the presence and the person of the Brother, Sister, or Priest. The commitment of these religious men and women to the ideals of the Church and the welfare of their students has served not only to attract young people to seek fulfillment in religious life, but has served as a constant reminder to all their students that there are spiritual values beyond those lived by society in general.

The joyfully committed religious will always have a recognized influence on the atmosphere and life of the Catholic school, much as the religious community will always have the primary influence in shaping the philosophy and education practice of the schools they staff. It is the special task of lay teachers to offer their students a concrete example of the fact that people deeply involved in the world can find their truest identity and strength of character in the values and faith that Jesus taught. Students will share in this life more readily when they have concrete examples, when they see the importance that this life has for believers. Just as it is important that the religion teachers not be the only teachers identified as believers. Students need to find in their coaches and teachers of the so-called secular subjects, examples of adults who believe and practice their faith. Everyone is an important facet of the environment. Staff contributions extend beyond formal tasks and assigned duties. All have become significant adult others for students by providing caring hearts, listening ears, and affirming gestures. I have often observed that the first people our returning grads want to see are those in the office – the ones who had to deal with them when they were late, or had a problem in class, or were frightened or unsure.

Mrs. Mimi MacCaul

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THIS MINISTRY OF OURS
(2/2)
Presentation to Faculty/Staff of La Salle High School, Pasadena. September, 1990

WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

In «To Teach as Jesus Did,» the purpose of the Catholic school is the integration of religious truth and values with the rest of life. This is accomplished not only by its unique curriculum, but more importantly, by the presence of teachers who express an integrated approach to learning and living in their private and professional lives. The Catholic school accepts as its specific duty the comprehensive Christian formation of its students. Its mission is a critical systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith and the integration of culture with faith, and faith with daily living. Prayer and religion must permeate the entire curriculum – co-curricular as well, so that students do not see religion as a neat little package – liturgy, church, religion class – but rather as life itself. One way we can be God's instruments of salvation is to give students quality education and skills necessary for their temporal life. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel to our students. God will give them the message, if we announce it, model it, and train them with the tools to discern it.

The Vatican II Declaration on Christian Education proclaims:

> *Catholic Education is a form of education which promotes the development of the whole person – body, mind, spirit – and fosters the entire development of human life. The example and teachings of Jesus Christ provide the inspiration and the course of Catholic Education. As a life-long process, Catholic Education is a socio-religious activity which enables a person to become a responsible member of the human family and willing to contribute to the well being of the global community.*

WHAT ADDS THE LASALLIAN DIMENSION?

The Lasallian Charism adds a special dimension... From the very beginning, De La Salle wanted his Brothers to be ministers of God and channels of his truths. He wanted them to teach poor children and to teach them in Christian schools. In our day, Lasallian schools are run by both Brothers and lay people. De La Salle's thinking has lost none of its astonishing relevance. Its influence extends beyond the Brothers' communities; it reaches out to all who wish to work, guided by his inspiration. (Brother John Johnston, F.S.C.) The purpose of the Brothers' institute is the Lasallian way of expressing the basic message of the Gospel: proclaim Jesus Christ. Therefore, a Lasallian school should be characterized by the fact that it makes its students actively responsible for their own development. They have to learn how to be involved in their own education and develop social responsibility. To achieve this, they should be given an active role to play in class. The pupil is not an object which receives; rather he is the one who thinks, who searches, who discovers, who creates. All this implies a certain teacher-taught relationship. It is not one between someone who knows everything and badly misunderstands the idea of authority, and other person who knows nothing. Rather it is a relationship of communion and brotherhood and sisterhood. This importance of knowing and living the philosophy takes us to this morning's activity.

With regard to what is taught, a Lasallian school takes care to prepare its students to take their place in present-day society and in that of the future. This implies constant adaptation to society as it evolves but without losing a critical spirit. Moreover, what is taught is not simply a body of knowledge, but also and perhaps principally, values that are the foundation of the education of the whole person. In Lasallian schools, pupils are taught to be active agents not only in their own education, but also in social transformation. De La Salle himself challenged the society of his day by actions which appeared revolutionary at the time. The Lasallian school is a school whose whole life, at every moment of the day, should consist in living out the teachings of the Good News in the presence of Jesus. And this Good News is that we are all certainly saved and risen with him, and that its key word is love.

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St. La Salle instructs his teachers to look upon themselves as ministers of God and the administrators of his mysteries. He reminds them that they have been called by God to this ministry and given the grace of teaching and the gift of exhortation for the sake of those entrusted to their care. He says fulfill your ministry with all the affection of your heart. You are co-workers with God in his work.

It is the mission of the Lasallian teacher to teach the students to love authentically, to proclaim what we believe and practice what we teach; to be patient, taking time to develop with our students a community of knowledge and faith; to be kind – gentle with the slow learner and the problem student. Learning and maturity are encouraged more by patient guidance than by stern demands. The teacher must be truthful. The teaching must be hopeful, seeking to inspire the students with a desire for knowledge and the conviction that God has given them personal talents to be developed. The teacher must inspire the students to develop uniquely the potential which each possesses.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING AND OWNING THE PHILOSOPHY

The unique vehicle for accomplishing these tasks is the thoughtfully prepared and reflectively integrated philosophy of the school. On this written statement of philosophy, goals, and objectives hinges the success or failure of the entire education effort. Therefore, it is essential that each member of the faculty understand, profess, and implement the school's statement of philosophy. It is also essential, if for no other reason than a unity in teaching, that each member of the community, albeit with differing degrees of awareness, adopts a common vision based on adherence to a scale of values in which he/she believes.

Every teacher in a Catholic school conveys both a content and an attitude about religion. In every discipline and course, religious values are lived and communicatted. It is important that all of us understand how a message related to faith is explicitly or implicitly transmited. As stated in the Catholic School Document of the Church, «it is the task of the whole faculty and staff, to ensure that a distinctive Christian educational environment is maintained in practice.» We have been selected to be here because we have demonstrated that we are qualified and committed to the mission of La Salle High School. We want to grow in faith, integrate that faith into our work, and help to create a genuine community of belief and service. In the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, it states: let teachers realize that to the greatest possible extent they determine whether the Catholic school can bring its goals and understandings to fruition. Bound by charity to one another and to their students and penetrated by an apostolic spirit, let them give witness to Christ, the Master Teacher, by their lives as well as by their teachings.

I ASKED FOR WONDER – ABRAHAM HESCHELL:

«Everything depends on the person who stands in front of the classroom. The teacher is not an automatic fountain from which intellectual beverages may be obtained. He is either witness or stranger. To guide a pupil into the promised lands, the teacher must have been there himself. When asking: Do I stand for what I teach? Do I believe what I say? he must be able to answer in the affirmative. What we need more than anything else is not textbooks, but textpeople. It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text they will never forget.»

Mrs. Mimi MacCaul

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TOWARDS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LASALLIAN FAMILY

1. WHAT IS THE LASALLIAN FAMILY?

The Lasallian Family is a spiritual entity born of the communion between persons and groups "who wish to derive their inspiration from De La Salle in order to grow as men and women of faith, at the service of the local Church, and as people particularly committed to the field of education" (Circ. 422, p.13).

"When we speak of the Lasallian Family we refer to that body of persons who make up those movements and groups all of which have been forming according to the spiritual and pedagogical experience of St. John Baptist de La Salle" (Message of the 41st General Chapter to the members of the Lasallian Family, p.29).

2. WHERE DOES THE LASALLIAN FAMILY EXIST?

The Lasallian Family normally exists within the framework of a District. Why in a District ?

1. Because it is a clear and well-defined geographical sector of the Institute which already has all the elements, structures, means and organisation to ensure the unity and communion that are indispensable if we are to speak in terms of a family.

"The District, as the ordinary communion existing among its communities and Brothers, is more than a structure of government" (Rule 124).

2. Because it has a head, the Brother Visitor, "the guarantor of the unity and vitality of the District" (Rule 132).

3. Because normally a District has a District Plan. This Plan states in general terms what the District plans to do for a given period of time with regard to the religious life of the Brothers and its ministry of Christian education, a mission entrusted to the Institute by the Church. This Plan is implemented by means of clearly structured programmes.

4. Because each District has structures of government, organisation and evaluation such as District Chapters, District Councils, specialised permanent commissions, ad hoc commissions, etc. whose work is complementary, interdependent and unified by common criteria, approach to work and planning of activities.

5. Because in a District is to be found the concrete reality in which the apostolate of the Institute is pursued through formal education (schools, colleges, intitutions) or informal (youth groups, Old Boys, social work groups, voluntary work groups, summer activities, married women catechists, Signum Fidei...). This is the context in which the District Plan is implemented.

All these advantages make the District the ideal framework for the birth, growth and consolidation of the Lasallian Family.

3. THE DISTRICT: A GREAT COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

The District, which is a place of communion and participation, is made up of small groups of persons which we call communities.

1. In the first place there are the communities of Brothers whose identity is clearly defined in the Rule.

2. There are groups of lay people, the majority of which have sprung up recently or are still being trained, whose aim and ideal are to become faith communities. These alone can guarantee the authentic fulfilment of the baptismal covenant and the missionary commitment which is the consequence of this covenant.

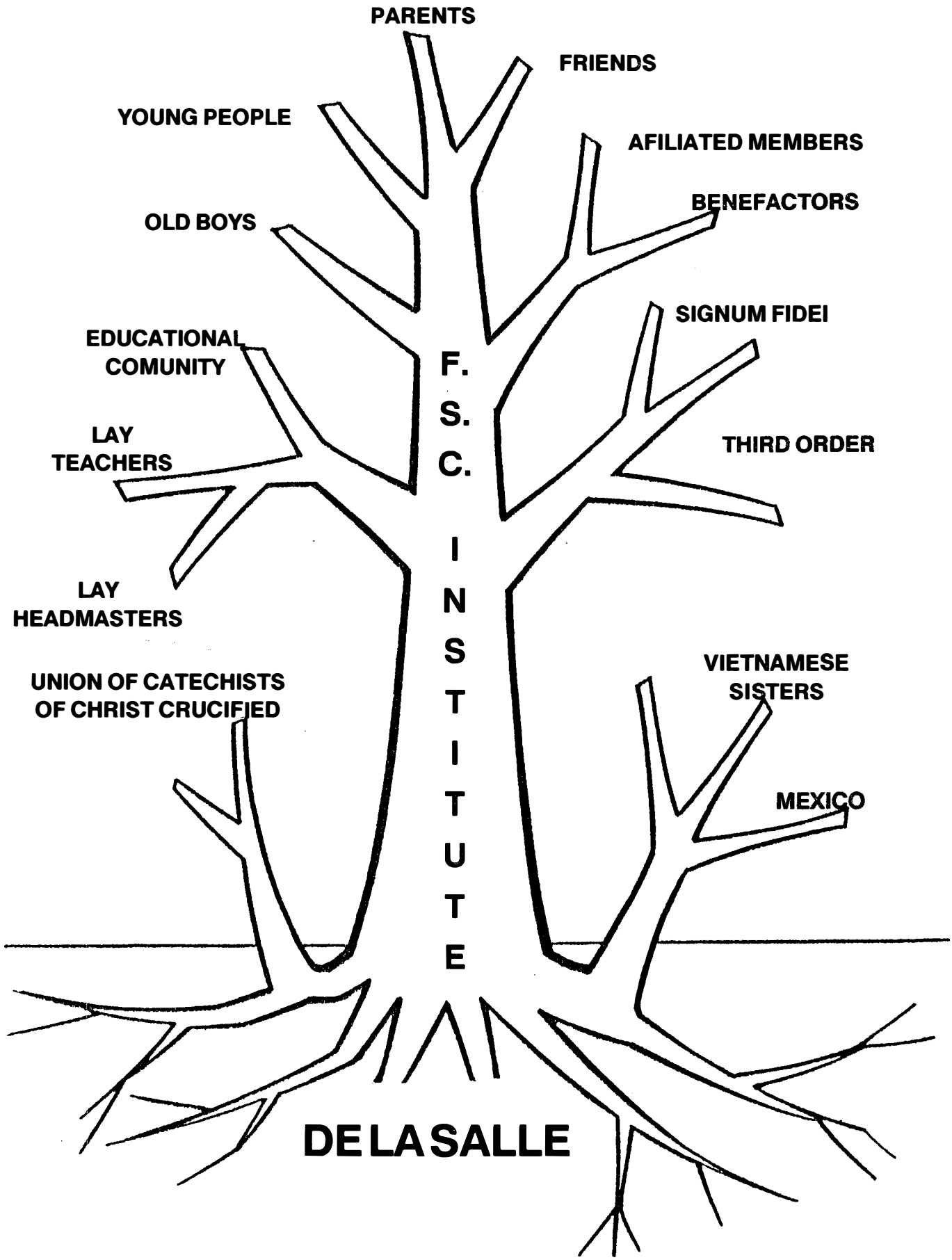
It is within a District that Brothers' communities and the various lay groups, whether they are part of educational communities or not, work in a complementary manner to achieve the same aim: to fulfil the District Plan. Seen as a plan for all the communities of Brothers and lay people, it can equally be called **The District Lasallian Family Plan.**

Br. Hernando Seba López

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THE IDENTITY OF THE RELIGIOUS AND OF THE LAY PERSON IN THE SHARED MISSION

The basic question

For some time now, there has been much thinking, and much has been said and written about our "shared mission" with the lay people who work with us in the ministry of Christian education.

On various occasions I have heard a difficulty brought up and a question put that deserves a very serious and judicious response if we are not to run the risk of changing the nature of the identity of the persons (religious and lay) who exercise this ministry, especially where the identity of the religious is concerned.

This question can be phrased in various ways, but it can be summarised as follows: "If it is true that the lay person working with us in our school accomplishes the same mission as the Brothers and fulfils the same ministry with the same professional and apostolic efficiency (and even better) why is there still a need for the Brothers ? So what is now the meaning of his vocation and his consecration ?

The conclusions we draw will depend on the answer we give to this question: either the vocation of the Brother of the Christian Schools is no longer necessary for the Church since lay people can do as much; or his vocation and life still have now as before a special significance.

* * *

1. "Our shared mission"

– What mission are we talking about ?

We are talking about the mission that God confided to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools through the foundation made by St. John Baptist de La Salle which was later recognised and confirmed by the Church which gave it its approbation. It is the mission which consists in evangelising children and young people by means of Christian education given in schools.

– Who is the depositary of this mission ?

The Institute as a body, as a religious family established and recognised by the Church.

Consequently, all the Brothers collectively, and each one of them as a member of the Institute, are the depositary of this ecclesial mission.

– How is this mission of evangelisation by means of Christian education accomplished ?

By means of work which is transformed into an apostolic ministry because it is directed to the accomplishment of the apostolic mission.

It cannot be said that all work accomplished by a Christian is a "ministry", given that such a characteristic derives from a "mandate" or an ecclesial "sending" for an apostolic end.

On the other hand, the Brother is an "envoy", an "apostle", a "missionary". His whole life, his whole existence consist in being an envoy, apostle and missionary. Consequently, his whole being, his whole person is permeated by "his ministry", by "his work", including the time when he is not actually actively pursuing them.

– With whom is this mission shared ?

The Institute, the depositary of the mission, and the Brothers who form it offer the lay people who work with them in the work of Christian education the possibility of "taking part", of participating in their ecclesial mission.

The lay people who "work" with the Institute can "share" this mission. Where this is so their "work" likewise is transformed into an "apostolic ministry" because it is directed to the mission.

Logically speaking, if the Institute did not exist it could not be the depositary of a mission; and a non-existent mission could not be shared with anyone. This of course does not exclude the possibility of the Church recognising other groups of the faithful exercising a similar mission. But in that case, it would not be "the mission of our Institute".

– What conditions are required for sharing the mission ?

It is necessary first of all to be related to the Institute.

Next, it is necessary to accept and be willing to collaborate in pursuing the apostolic aims of the Institute.

In addition, it is necessary to accomplish the work in question with the aim of achieving these aims: Christian education.

It seems logical to state that simply the fact of materially working in a Christian educational establishment does not necessarily mean that a person shares in the mission or exercises an apostolic mission. It is obvious that some people look upon their work as a means of earning their living and nothing more, leaving aside all transcendental or religious motivation. In a case such as this, it would be difficult to say that such a person shared in an apostolic mission or exercised an apostolic "ministry".

– What means make it possible to share an apostolic ministry?

Before all, to know this mission and be conscious of it. Hence the necessity to think carefully about this mission in the light of the Word of God, and to assess systematically one's response to it.

Secondly, one has to commit one's life for, since a mission of evangelisation is involved here, one has to carry the message of the Gospel within oneself and try to live according to it.

Thirdly, one has to exercise the ministry in communion with the Institute, as a response to the mandate received from it.

Finally, one must become a part of the "educational community" responsible for the implementation in a specific

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place of the educational plan corresponding to the mission. Educators at a Christian school form a "community". No one can work on his own, for his own ends, nor can he dissociate himself from the others or the common plan.

* * *

2. The same ministry but a distinct identity

1. From what has been said, one can conclude that in practice lay people can exercise the same apostolic ministry as the Brother. A ministry which derives from a mission.

2. It should be noted that the Brother is the depositary of this mission. As for the lay person, he shares in the mission of the Brother.

3. Both **commit** themselves to Christian education through schools, as a mission from the Church, but **the nature of their commitment** is different.

● The lay person commits his work, his strength, his enthusiasm and his zeal to ensure that the school achieves its aims.

However, his life, because he is a lay person, imposes on him other obligations and other forms of devotedness, for example, with regards to his family and whatever concerns the future of his children.

● The Brother, for his part, commits his whole existence, with all that this implies:

TO MAINTAIN THE SCHOOLS
TOGETHER AND BY ASSOCIATION
WITH THE OTHER BROTHERS.

* This commitment presupposes
CONSECRATION TO GOD

* with the acceptance of
A SPECIFIC WAY
OF LIVING THE GOSPEL, that is to say,

– adopting consecrated celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom
by giving up the possibility of having a family
by consecrating all his strength and love
(fraternity: love for children, for Brothers and the adults with whom he comes into contact)
for the sake of spreading the Gospel.

– practising consecrated poverty, which presupposes
working gratuitously without reward;
putting all his personal wealth
(talents, time, etc.)
at the disposal of others;
not having personal material goods
and sharing with others what he has;
living modestly.

– sacrificing his own will
by accepting all destinations and jobs
which the Institute considers opportune
in the pursuit of the aims of the mission.

4. The Brother is, consequently, a person who has chosen **"to consecrate himself"** to God
by vows of consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience
in order to commit himself to the maintenance of the Christian schools
together and by association with the other Brothers.

These elements, expressed clearly in the Brothers' formula of vows, confer on us an identity which is different from that of lay people who exercise the same ministry. Our commitment to maintain the Christian Schools is of a different order. It is also more radical, more profound. It embraces very important aspects of our life, which is not so in the case of the lay person: celibacy, acquisition and use of goods, willingness to go anywhere and take on any employment, community life, stability in an associated commitment, responsibility in the apostolic mission of the Institute.

* * *

I think that what makes religious different from lay people is not that they make public profession of living the Gospel fully, radically and consistently. All Christians in fact should do so and should of course live the Gospel publicly as it is and without restrictions. There is only one Gospel, and it is the same Gospel for all of us. It is by living the Gospel according to our own situation that we respond to our vocation to holiness. This is common to all the faithful, whether religious or lay.

What makes us different basically is that in order to achieve some precise aims relating to the extension of the Kingdom of God, in our particular case, the maintenance of the Christian schools, we have chosen an appropriate way of living the Gospel: living together and by association, in consecrated celibacy, poverty and obedience.

Our road to sanctity consists in being consistent with the way of living the Gospel which we have chosen: consecrated by vows to God to fulfil a mission which he has entrusted to us. In the same way, for the lay person, the road to sanctity consists in being consistent with the way of living the Gospel required by his lifestyle.

In summary: whether we are Brothers or lay people, we can exercise the same apostolic ministry by responding to the ministry of Christian education. Both Brothers and lay people can sanctify themselves by exercising this ministry but by different ways of living the Gospel, because of their different commitments with regard to the mission of maintaining the Christian schools. These differences of commitment confer on them a distinct identity: the Brother has added to his state as a believer the choice of consecration for the Kingdom for the service of a mission.

If there were no Brothers, there would be no Institute. If there were no Institute, its mission would not exist either. If a lay person has the possibility of sharing the mission, it is therefore because the Brother exists as a person who possesses a specific identity: that of a consecrated man.

Br. Jose Maria Valladolid

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SHARED MISSION

AND LASALLIAN PHILOSOPHY

(1/2)

INTRODUCTION

IN SEARCH OF A NEW VOCABULARY ?

During our meetings and gatherings, we often use a vocabulary which we could describe as sociological or functional. We use words such as stream of consciousness, project, co-administration, co-participation, or expressions as interdependence, together and by association, shared mission, etc.

However, what connection is there between this vocabulary and the efficiency of our life? This sociological or functional vocabulary is perhaps only an echo. We spend our time repeating words which are not our own or which we do not manage to make part of our lives. It is a very up-to-date vocabulary but perhaps it does not make us efficient.

To achieve that we would have to try to make the words we take from this vocabulary more human, more community-linked, more committed. For example, we need all the participatory structures that exist, but if none of them touches what is really the heart of the school, vocabulary of this sort is of little use.

Let us not fool ourselves: if our heart is not up-to-date our vocabulary will be so in vain. It will remain old, in the negative sense of the word.

The new expression **"shared mission"**, coined by the Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in constitution N 17, has about it a good deal of creativity implying the existence of a risk, but a fruitful one. A risk because it involves facing a situation with an unknown outcome. In fact the risk involved is not one of repetition, but of undertaking something new.

Fruitfulness means the creation of another being who is not a simple repetition of ourselves. Our professions of faith, our plans could possibly be simply the repetition or copies of previous ones. If our ideal tomorrow is a repetition of yesterday, there is no fruitfulness. True fruitfulness contains an element of surprise.

By the expression **"shared mission"** we do not understand first and foremost the participatory structures, professions of faith, nor even plans or theoretical foundations. What we are referring to is our joy at living out our personal or institutional charism today as the 20th century comes to an end and strains towards the 21st.

Consequently the **shared mission** cannot consist in an oscillation between "the aspiration to be oneself" and "the resignation to be what one is". No! The needle on the scales shows that we **Brothers and Lasallian lay** people are uniting and organising ourselves in a union of responsibilities, commitments, spirit and style of action.

"To resign oneself to what one is" is a sign of old age, There are some people who are old at 20. The person that resigns himself creates nothing and is not happy. On the other hand, the person who has both attitudes is happy because he creates. He lives according to the spirituality of De La Salle and guarantees the Christian character of the Lasallian school.

* * *

PART ONE:

THREE FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF ALL EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

1.° "The ultimate aim of education is the complete development of the one we educate" (J. Dewey).

* By harnessing his potential through an individual process.

* By introducing him to culture by a social process. These two aims are achieved progressively by means of the assimilation of cultural values.

2.° **"Every philosophy of education must be based on the educational fact which in its turn is based on experience and not only on reflection".**

3.° **"The philosophy of education is the result of the work of constructive criticism":**

* In its critical phase: reflection about experience must lead to the formulation of certain fundamental guiding principles **(Educational profession of faith)**.

* In its constructive phase: this involves promoting aims and values which must be related to active implementation **(Educational plan)**.

SECOND PART:

THE LASALLIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Lasallian philosophy of education is to be found implicitly in the fundamental attitudes which guide our approach to education. This has been so now for three centuries the world over and a hundred years in Colombia.

These fundamental attitudes have always been: **daily commitment** and **personal reflection**. Both of these constantly respond to the serious questions posed by the reality one is involved in and committed to and are accompanied by an aspiration to unity in the midst of great diversity. This is the synthesis that is sought.

1.° DAILY COMMITMENT

* *"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."*

John Baptist de La Salle gave a new meaning to the school

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by making it accessible to the poor and offering it to all as a sign of the Kingdom and as a means of salvation.

The Christian school, which has always to be given new vitality, is the preferred field for the activity of the Brothers. The Institute also explores other possibilities for teaching and education more adapted to the needs of time and place" (Rule 3).

● The daily commitment has to be seen always in a context all of whose aspects are clearly pragmatic: process, intentions, improvement, managing to be...These terms, and others, are fully reflected in the advances of contemporary philosophy relating to the theory of human action, and these have a great influence in the field of education.

● The Lasallian daily commitment is always a human action, in this case, an educational action, which is localised in space and time. In fact, our educational action is not generic, but is based on individualisation ("principia individuationis"). It achieves a creative value to the extent of producing a "body" (in this case a "community", which is why we speak of a "shared mission").

2.° PERSONAL REFLECTION

● Ryle writes as follows: "The logical geography of concepts in the field of education has not yet been mapped out, because the field itself in which education takes place depends on transactional mechanisms between individuals (plans, programmes) and in general the active and influential environment, both sociological and theological. These mechanisms always express the dynamic mode of being in the world, which enables us to speak of "cosmic education".

● The influence of these factors, phenomena and elements of the world (cosmos) - understood in their widest sense in order to include all that surrounds the individual - affects the person we educate and fashions him. This reality has to be approached by the human mind, intelligence (intus-legere), and reflection (re-flexo), otherwise the educational act will be inconsistent, asystematic, amethodical.

● That is why reflection on the Lasallian philosophy of education has been linked "ab initio" with two positions: the ethical-philosophical question and the pedagogical- philosophical question, which are always involved in reflection on methodology and ideology. This is borne out by terms such as: simultaneous, group, functional, linguistic, utopian, personalising, dialectic, liberalising, technological, interdisciplinary, globalised, vital (to learn to live), etc.

● With regard to the Lasallian philosophy of education (active for three centuries in the world in general and a century in Colombia), personal reflection has centred on **equifinality** (that is, on the relationship existing between the master and the disciple) and leading to isomorphism which is the harmony or equilibrium between the profile of the master and that of the disciple. In this regard, the Lasallian philosophy of education expresses itself clearly and with great vigour. (Cf. The Conduct of Schools, the Meditations for the Time of Retreat, the General Chapters ("The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today"), regional seminars (on education), national pedagogical congresses, gatherings, meetings, etc. A very extensive bibliography relating to this could easily be drawn up).

3.° THREE MAJOR QUESTIONS

In the Lasallian philosophy of education, this daily commitment and personal reflection have always had as points of departure the following three major questions:

* The question of man. The vital environment of the person being educated is the **school community**. It should be the family environment, but in our days it is so often called into question and reproached that many responses are both sought and found in the school environment.

At the present time, this question has to be resolved in the framework of the **shared mission**.

* The question of the world. The rational environment of the person being educated is **the cosmos** in which there are no "Maginot lines". Pupils come to the knowledge of this cosmos through the knowledge communicated to them not only by formal teaching in school, but also by the mass media (of which the most accessible is television).

At the present time, this question has to be resolved in the framework of the **shared mission**.

* The question of God. The spiritual environment of the person being educated is that of **transcendental values**.

"Every culture needs to be evangelised. The Brothers make every effort to get to know, to respect and to assimilate the positive values of the cultural heritage of the people where they are located and whom they are called to serve. With joy and hope the Brothers discover there the signs of the presence of the Spirit. They ensure that the ferment of the Gospel renews and enriches this cultural heritage. This effort at inculturation is equally necessary and applies as well to youth culture as to the rapidly evolving culture of contemporary society" (Rule 18).

At the present time, this question has to be resolved in the framework of the **shared mission**.

4.°. UNITY IN DIVERSITY,
motivation of the educational task

When unity in diversity is spoken about, the stress is put on the content. This is the reason for the urgent need for committed attitudes: a Lasallian philosophy of education committed to the service of Latin America, of Colombia, of our school or educational establishment, of our immediate neighbours, of others, either near, far or still to come.

For K. Lewin, "the totality of the contemporary situation is the absolute cause of conduct". This is equivalent to saying that the conduct of an individual at a given moment is entirely a function of his personality, his vital space or field of action.

Autoeducation (represented here by unity) within heteroeducation (represented here by diversity) cannot be anything else except the simple process of maturation or of development, or the resultant of the transactions which the pupil himself establishes in a more or less spontaneous fashion with the environment. It is at this point that there appears the **factor** which in the Lasallian philosophy of education is known today as the **"shared mission"**.

Br. Alvaro Llano Ruiz

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SHARED MISSION

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THIRD PART:

THIS LASALLIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IS MORE AND BETTER APPLICABLE TODAY THANKS TO THE SHARED MISSION.

The philosophy of education which permeates an educational establishment is what defines the pedagogical act.

The pedagogical act, in so far as it is an action springing from an act of knowledge and love, needs philosophical language.

Philosophical language is what describes the existence and the situation of man in the world.

The existence of man in the world cannot be understood except as a relational existence. In his work entitled "Theory and Metatheory of Education", Antoni J. Colom Canellas states that "education could very well be reduced to a relational phenomenon" (p. 56).

Lasallian vocabulary furnishes us a new expression: the **"shared mission"**, with the meaning of "relationships between teachers".

The dual position which has been linked "ab initio" with reflection on the Lasallian philosophy of education (cf. 2nd part, 2.0) : the ethical-philosophical and the pedagogical- philosophical questions have now become within, and as a consequence of, the shared mission, a causality and a process.

1.° A CAUSALITY

The study of educational causality forms a part of educational etiology (from the Greek "aitia": cause, foundation) and educational anthropology. Etiology as a term is reserved for research into the why and how of the educational process.

Educational causality describes therefore the deliberate intention of a person or a group of persons to bring about the education of another person or group of persons.

"Education" presupposes the conversion of a person by a process intended to bring about the internal transformation of the person.

In order that this phenomenon can come about, there has to exist a causal relationship between the educator(s) and the educated (one or more), without there necessarily being any conditioning of behaviour, alienation or absorption of one or other of the persons involved in the relationship.

Such conditioning must likewise be avoided by those who guide the educational process. "Hodogetics" (from the Greek "odos": way, "egein": guide, lead) demands not only that a "hodogogue" should be free from conditioning, but that likewise his "accompaniment" (from the Latin "cum": with, and "panis": bread) should be beyond reproach, so that the pedagogical act (from the Greek "paidos": child and "egein: to lead) can respond to the following questions: Is it possible for one man to lead another man ? Is such a guide necessary ? And in the case of an affirmative answer: What are his limits ? since it is a question here of something as delicate as the human person.

Let us reply that this not only possible but also necessary. The importance and value of such actions are all the greater when it is a group of persons (**"shared mission"**) involved in directing the process.

(IN PARENTHESIS)

Nevertheless St. Thomas Aquinas (Summa, question 117, a.1) denies that anyone can cause the education of another: the educator cannot influence a pupil directly because he is only an external factor. The only thing an educator can do is to propose values, experiences, possibilities; explain science, culture...and the pupil will assimilate them or not, according to his own capacity to cause his own education. St. Thomas uses the example of a doctor who does not cure the patient: it is the patient that cures himself by taking the medecine provided by the doctor.

St. Augustine, for his part, uses as his thesis that of illumination to explain that it is only by this means, through a special intervention of God, that the educator can teach a pupil because God is the only true teacher.

After a certain time the following balanced conclusion was reached: the educator can transmit only the "humanising" elements he possesses but not the "humanised" elements of his person, even though the "humanised" aspect of the educator is clearly perceived by the pupil and can influence the pupil as a "humanising" factor.

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The more the educator is highly "hominised" (and not only "humanised"), the greater his influence in the humanisation process of the personality.

"Hominisation" is more substantial to the extent that its source and origin are more "hominised". This educational "hominisation" has its roots firmly embedded in the founding act of **John Baptist de La Salle** and continues to draw strength today thanks to the **shared mission** though the union of "hominised" forces.

2.° AS AN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

The educational process is the product of the dialectical integration between perfectibility and intentionality.

- Perfectibility can be:

– natural: evolution of nature, without any reference or finality outside of natural evolution.

– artificial : the regulating principle is an artifice (education is a work of art).

The educational process is not the work of the artist alone, nor of nature alone. A balance has to be sought, since no system should do violence to the nature of the subject. Were this to happen it would bring about the loss of the idea of improvement which it must necessarily include.

- Intentionality, which must be based on two principles:

– intrinsic: the nature of the pupil.

– extrinsic: (with an active element and a passive element): it is I the educator/educated who educate the pupil who, however, should not be in any way subjected to conditioning.

Causality and process are two elements of the pedagogical act which must be inspired by the philosophy of education. This involves not only a horizontal and synchronic movement, but has always, and will always, include a vertical and diachronic constant (specifically historical and evolutive) in harmony with the direction and rhythmn adopted by society.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

With regard to Lasallian lay people, the Lasallian Community does not dissociate mission from spirituality. It presupposes the union of these two aspects and proposes to its associates the following two conditions:

1. The desire to tend to evangelical perfection in their lay state.

2. The desire to observe the spirit proper to the Community, the spirit of faith.

They need therefore:

– to know what this spirit consists in.
– to strive to acquire it.

Today, the Lasallian Province of Medellin, faithful to the charism of the holy Founder and to the signs of the times discerned at the 41st General Chapter (1986) and condensed in the Rule of 1987, exhorts Lasallian lay people, in the framework of the shared mission, to dedicate their lives together with us as "school ministers" in preparation for the year 2,000, in the following two areas:

1. The commitment to teaching values,
with the awareness that personal witness and the relational atmosphere of the educational community are important factors in causality and the process of "autodidaxis" and "heterodidaxis".

2. Opening up teaching to the spiritual dimension.
This is the evangelical option of the person who considers his life to be a vocation to serve humanity. In fact, only the person who accepts to be part of the interdependent world of gratuity and dedication can truly say that he is accomplishing "the ministry God has confided to him".

Br. Alvaro Llano Ruiz

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SOME INDIVIDUAL LASALLIAN APOSTOLATES

One apparent development in the Institute, at least here in the United States, probably elsewhere as well, seems to be an increase in the number of Brothers who, as Rule 16b says, «are called upon to work outside the establishments conducted by the Institute.» How much of this is actually an increase, or something new in the history of the Institute, probably needs further study. Perhaps also it is only a transitory phenomenon, but again it may be a significant facet of the evolution that our Institute is going through at this time. As Rule 3 says, «The Institute also explores other possibilities (than schools) for teaching and educating more adapted to the needs of time and place.» In any case, it seems worth while to publicize some examples of great work that some individual Brothers are doing «outside the establishments conducted by the Institute.» Two such examples are given in this presentation.

The first is Brother Jeffrey Gros of the St. Louis District who lives in the Good Shepherd parish elementary school community of our Brothers in New York City and is a full-time Assistant General Secretary of the **National Council of Churches of Christ/USA.** He is Director of the Commission on Faith and Order, a counterpart of that Commission of the World Council of Churches, and has held that office since 1981.

As stated in the current Standing Rules of the Council, the purpose of the Commission on Faith and Order is «To enable communions to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goals of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in the common life in Christ, that the world may believe.» (Currently the Council is undergoing some reorganization, which may change the titles and the assignments of its commissions.)

Brother Jeffrey became interested in ecumenism in 1963 while studying the Decreee on Ecumenism of Vatican II and teaching the subject to his high school religion class in Memphis, Tennessee. In this city the Brothers' schools always welcomed Protestant and Jewish students, a policy that grew into an ecumenical commitment following the Council. On the advice of the Brother Visitor Brother Jeffrey took courses in Protestant theology and later earned a doctorate in systematic theology from the School of Theology at Fordham, the Jesuit University in New York City. He has been twice reelected for three-year terms to his position in the Council. As Director of the Faith and Order Commission he has organized and supervised the work of the Commission which is composed of fifty representatives of the different churches that hold the belief that Jesus is Savior and Lord. Members are nominated by their churches, ratified by the Council's Nominating Committee, and elected by the Governing Board. The Commission meets twice a year. An Executive Committee, composed of twelve members of the Commission, selected in the same manner as Commission members, meets in between meetings of the Commission, or more often as needed.

Besides exercising leadership of the work of the Commission, Brother Jeffrey among other duties organizes a program of studies in ecumenism, is a frequent speaker at the councils of the different churches, edits studies on ecumenical issues, plans various seminars, and writes articles for theological journals and periodicals.

Clearly his work is Christian education, but not limited to a classroom in a single school, college, or university. He is reaching out to a much more diversified and extensive population, one that is at the cutting edge of the growth of Christianity in the world today. Reflecting on his experience in ecumenism over the past 25 years, Brother Jeffrey says, «We are only just beginning to realize the impact on the commitments of the Council in our own Roman Catholic ecclesial life and spiritual development. Our ecumenical partners have the same burden of educational, relational, and renewal tasks before them. ...Many personal enrichments and spiritual graces have come from prayer, from caring people, and from study in the ecumenical movement. But the greatest sign of the Holy Spirit's presence these years is the renewal that has been wrought in the Church, and that is promised among the churches – a dirct result of the call to unity in Christ.»

* * *

Another example of special apostolic work by an individual Brother «outside the establishments conducted by the Institute» is the work of Brother Gerard Frendreis. In one sense he is part of an Institute work established in 1981 by the eight Districts of the United States, the **Christian Brothers Investment Services, Inc. (CBIS).** This agency manages the financial resources of religious communities, dioceses, and educational institutions. The President of **CBIS** is also a

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Brother, Michael W. O'Hern, of the Chicago District. Currently **CBIS** is managing over $600 million. The primary purpose of the management is to safeguard and promote the funds of various religious institutions. Closely related to this purpose is making sure that the investment of these funds conforms to the ideals of Christian social justice.

Brother Gerard is a member of the Baltimore District and lives in the Hudson Catholic High School Brothers' Community in Jersey City, New Jersey. His office is located in New York City where he works with the other nine staff members of **CBIS**, including Brother Michael. He is the one who is responsible to see to it that the $600 million are invested in accord with Christian principles of social justice and concern for the poor. To assist him in this work Brother Gerard represents **CBIS** as a member of the Interfaith Center as Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), and among other things, as a subscriber to the Investment Responsibility research Center (IRRC). Incidentally, the ICCR is a part of the National Council of Churches of Christ where Brother Jeffrey carries out his ecumenical work. Brother Gerard's job is to keep informed of how the investment of the **CBIS** funds is actually being used. To do this he must continually study the reports of ICCR and IRRC, attend their meetings, represent **CBIS** at meetings of the corporate stockholders of corporations in which CBIS funds are invested, know what these corporations are actually doing, and speak up and vote at these meetings, in order to represent the Christian values of **CBIS**; he also goes directly to the executive board meetings of these corporations to explain and request appropriate action on particular issues.

Some of these issues are: raising money for housing, for small businesses, credit unions; promoting fair employment, product safety, quality, and equitable marketing; monitoring and championing environmental concerns; taking action on behalf of South Africa and third world countries (e.g., debt reduction and human dignity); speaking up on life ethics (e.g., control of genetic engineering, birth, life maintenance, death, and other medical issues), etc., etc.

Brother Gerard holds an MS degree in Mathematics Education from Duquesne University, an MA degree in Applied Economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and has completed all the courses and comprehensive examinations for the doctorate in Finance at the Wharton School. He was an instructor at the Wharton School and at La Salle University before becoming the Financial Advisor and "Social Activist" for **CBIS**. In this position he is a member of a three-person team that is responsible for all the decisions related to the investment of the funds that are managed by **CBIS**. He is also Editor of Principles, a "Letter of Socially Responsible Investing" that is published for the clients of **CBIS** about eight times a year, explaining all the action taken by **CBIS** on behalf of social justice in the management of their funds.

The Pope's encyclical Solicitudo Rei Socialis speaks of the "structures of sin" (§'s 36, 37), and in particular «the all-consuming desire for profit» and «the thirst for power»... «at any price» which adversely affects the development of the poor of the world. Often well-intentioned Christians feel powerless to do anything about these structures, e.g., action of nations, economic cartels, multi-national corporations, etc. **CBIS** has adquired a level of power, especially in cooperation with the Interfaith Center on Corporate responsibility that gives it the opportunity to work ecumenically, to direct some of the action in these structures. Brother Gerard has the training and the enthusiasm, as well as the pedagogical skills to guide the exercise of this power as a work of Christian education.

There are at least a score of other individual Brothers in the United States who are exercising similar educational apostolates. They are exploring and creating «other possibilites for teaching and educating» that are «adapted to the needs of time and place.» They seem to be a sign of the vitality of the Institute in our world today. If there is an interest, maybe their work and similar work from all the countries of the world should be presented in the future.

Brother Augustine Loes

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INTRODUCTION

● With the the present issue, the 23rd, LASALLIANA begins its **fourth year of existence** (stage 2). The number of readers is growing with the increase in orders for our publication. The number of our contributors is increasing also: numerous and excellent articles are reaching us from all over the world. They will all be published, and we are grateful for the interest shown by all those who wish to share their ideas, their thinking, their research and their concerns with the other members of the Lasallian Family.

● The **Bibliographia lasalliana** booklet which is included in each issue of Lasalliana is also very much appreciated. Booklet N° 8 was included with issue N° 22. It gave a list of educational books published by the Brothers in Colombia.

Several Districts have decided to follow their example and are preparing a list of their own publications. These will be published in time.

● Starting with this year, we will be offering something extra to readers of Lasalliana. Each year, subscribers will receive **a special issue free.** This means that there will continue to be three normal issues a year to which will be added a fourth, unnumbered, which will normally be devoted to a single topic. We are able to do this at no extra cost to readers because the number of subscriptions from Districts has been steadily rising.

The 1992 special issue is enclosed with the present issue of Lasalliana, the 23rd. It contains the pictures of our Brothers who have been canonised, beatified, or whose causes are at present under consideration. On the back of each picture is a short biography of the Brother concerned. We have arranged things so that pictures can be framed.

● **Subscriptions** to Lasalliana **are usually arranged through the District.** We receive many orders from communities, schools and even individuals who wish to receive Lasalliana directly. Except in special cases, would-be subscribers are asked to contact their Visitor who will be happy to adjust the number of copies needed by his District each time the need arises.

Br. Jose Maria Valladolid
Education Mission Secretary

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MEDITATIONS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE – II – (1/2)

Brother Mario Presciuttini

5. The central themes of Lasallian teaching

This article sets out to summarise the basic themes of the spiritual teaching of De La Salle, as contained in his works as a whole and in particular in his Meditations. It is based broadly on a summary of the Saint's teaching drawn up by Saturnino Gallego (op.cit. pp.17-57).

1. The underlying principle: THE SPIRIT OF FAITH

This is the central core and the underlying principle governing the thinking and lifestyle presented to us by De La Salle in his Meditations.

The "spirit of faith" means, first and foremost, trust and self-abandonment into the hands of God, as expressed by De La Salle on his deathbed: "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard." This is the permanent attitude of the person who lives and walks in the presence of God, and who looks upon reality in terms of its relationship to God. It is the internal and supernatural principle behind every thought, judgment and action.

For De La Salle, the spirit of faith does not mean so much an intellectual act of acceptance of truths, as a faith that is lived intensely and in which the whole person is involved. "But let us remember that it will profit us little to have received the light of faith if we do not live according to the spirit of Christianity, and if we do not observe the maxims of the Gospel. The chief aim to be realised by our faith is the practice of what we believe" (Med. 175, 2; cf. also 84, 3; 139, 3; 197, 2; etc.).

The following consequences follow quite naturally from this basic principle:

1.1 Discerning the will of God

For De La Salle this is the first effect of the spirit of faith: a person undertakes to listen for the calls and the plans of the Father who loves, saves and sends.

There are three basic ways in which we can listen and which involve discernment:

(a) Holy Scripture

While statements about the central position occupied by this source of discernment are frequently repeated in the Meditations, it is the practical example of how one should set about this listening to the Scriptures that is even more frequently illustrated: references to the Word of God are part of the very texture of all the Meditations; explicit quotations and allusions reflect the permanent dialogue of the author with the God who speaks and calls, and is a practical spiritual example for the reader.

"May this reading fill you with God's divine spirit that you may do all these things with ease" (Med. 192, 1). One could say that this summarises what is meant by this means which is recommended so frequently.

(b) The guidance of the Holy Spirit

A characteristic recommendation of De La Salle is that one should think and act "under the impulse of the Spirit" (cf. Med. 43, 2; 44; 79, 1; etc.). He is the interior guide who enlivens the spirit of faith and with his gifts (De La Salle stresses in particular wisdom, piety and fortitude) guides discernment and stimulates and accompanies action.

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(c) In community

This is an easy form of discernment in particular for religious, but not only for them. To seek the will of God together in faith is a way open to all Christians, especially if they are involved in apostolic work undertaken as part of a community.

"When choosing Mathias to replace Judas, the Apostles not only prayed but they also conferred among themselves in order not to settle anything without taking counsel...It is thus that God wishes you to act in all that pertains to your conduct and your ministry" (Med. 107, 2).

1.2 To follow the will of God

This is the second effect of the spirit of faith: the faith that served to guide the listening and discernment also guides and sustains the implementation of God's known will.

That is why De La Salle insists in his Meditations on the practical expression of faith by acts. The words of St. James' epistle are constantly quoted: "Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead" (Jm 2, 17; cf. Med. 84, 3; 175, 2; 197, 2; 200, 3...).

All the Meditations, therefore, offer a practical way of implementing this faith each day both in the personal spiritual life as well as in the apostolic or professional work of the Christian educator.

1.3 The principal devotions

The spirit of faith is increased and deepened by means of a number of well-tried and recognised devotions.

De La Salle does not involve himself in special and passing "devotions". Taking as his point of departure the Word of God and the light of the Holy Spirit, he suggests the following basic devotions:

(a) The person of Jesus as a model seen especially in the three principal "mysteries" of his life:

* childhood (cf. Med. 85; 86; 93; 96;...)

* the passion: (cf. Med. 23-28; 104; 121; 129; 145; 152; 165; 195, 1).

* the Eucharist: (cf. Med. 26; 47-55; many passing references)

(b) The person of Mary as a model. The use of "The most Blessed Virgin" by De La Salle. Many Meditations treat of this devotion which was so very much a part of his life and which he taught so vigorously to his spiritual sons (cf. Med. 82; 83; 88, 3; 112; 146; 151...). Very specially recommended is the use of the rosary (cf. Med. 150, 3; 151, 3).

(c) In connection with Mary, St. Joseph is given special prominence as an example of the spirit of faith, of openness to the will of God and, in particular, as a model for the Christian educator (Med. 110).

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MEDITATIONS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE – II – (2/2)

Brother Mario Presciuttini

2. The means of nourishing the spirit of faith: MEDITATION IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

For De La Salle, this particular form of prayer called mental prayer or meditation is the indispensable source of nourishment and support for the spirit of faith.

Closely related to it is the idea of the presence of God, that is, living, thinking and making choices always with reference to God in the midst of everyday life.

The presence of God is a characteristic of Lasallian spirituality. The Meditations for Sundays and Feasts constantly recall its importance and benefits: habitual attention to the holy presence of God "gives a foretaste of eternal bliss" (Med. 179, 3) because it enables one "to enjoy God by anticipation" (Med. 177, 3) and "because it is so useful to you in your employment. As your work relates to God and the salvation of souls, it is most important not to lose sight of God while performing it" (Med. 179, 3; Sauvage/Campos op.cit. p.151).

It is in mental prayer or meditation that this contact and union take place, and during it that one can learn the will of God (cf. Med. 37, 2; 62, 2/3; 42, 3; 181, 3...) and dispose oneself to fulfil it through love (cf. Med. 36, 2; 177, 3...).

Lasallian meditation is characterised not only by the presence of God but also by some basic elements revealed by its structure: it is

(a) Christocentric: De La Salle considers Jesus especially in the mystery of his incarnation and in his redeeming mission: the work of the Christian teacher who shares in the same salvific mission is constantly linked with the work of Jesus himself (cf. Med. 33; 39, 2; 61, 3; 70, 2; 86, 3; 106, 3; 193, 3; 195; 196, 2...).

(b) Biblical: All the models for meditation offered by De La Salle are centred on the Bible; there is a constant recurrence of Biblical passages containing "maxims" or "mysteries" on which to build one's spiritual life; Suggestions of this nature are frequent and forceful: "It is from this sacred book that you must draw the knowledge which you should daily offer to your pupils. Thus they will imbibe the true Christian spirit. But it is necessary that you, in the first place, should nourish your soul with the holy truths contained in this precious book, and that you should let them sink into your mind by frequently meditating thereon" (Med. 159, 1; cf. Med. 170, 1; 192).

(c) Ministerial: It is so first of all in the sense that meditation nourishes and prepares for the fulfilment of one's educational ministry: "It is your duty to go up to God every day by mental prayer to learn from him all that you must teach your children, and then come down to them by accommodating yourself to their level in order to teach them what God has communicated to you for them - as much in your mental prayer as in the holy scriptures which furnish you with the truths of religion and the practical maxims of the holy gospel" (Med. 198, 1). The Meditations for the Time of Retreat go so far as to make the educational apostolate the exclusive object of mental prayer!

It is so also in the sense that it is a prayer for those being educated; a prayer of intercession, a prayer for sufficient light to guide them (cf. in this connection, Secondino Scaglione, "Preghiera ministeriale nelle Meditazioni di S.G.B. de La Salle", Rivista Lasalliana, 4/1971).

3. A view of life through the eyes of faith: ONENESS OF SPIRITUAL LIFE AND APOSTOLATE

This is the foundation of apostolic work and the practical way in which the spirit of faith finally expresses itself.

The spirit of faith makes it possible to do away with the dichotomy that is often found between the religious (Mass, devotions, prayer, sacraments, catechism...) and the secular (studies, teaching, work, entertainment, material needs...).

For De La Salle, this dichotomy is overcome by the view of faith which looks upon every action in life as

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part of God's plan and one that is carried out with a view to its accomplishment.

In accordance with a principle which he states in his personal rule of life, and which he constantly repeats in various writings, "one must not make a distinction between the duties of one's state and the question of one's personal sanctification and salvation."

Life must be united around a single central point which draws it to itself and from which it radiates. Sauvage/Campos (op. cit. p.138) make this point: "To act in view of God means to make the unconditional consecration of one's whole life to God part of everyday life." There are many Meditations in which De La Salle stresses the power of a commitment which ends only with the sacrifice of oneself for God. "To commit it only to him means really to sacrifice one's life for him." For a Brother, this fundamental commitment is translated into zeal to work for the good of the pupils. In order to fulfil his duty properly, he must "consecrate himself entirely and give his life". An interior fire such as this is all-devouring: it enables the Brother to direct all his actions to God, to give him all his time, all his thoughts, his whole heart. (cf. Med. 58, 1; 70, 2; 104, 2; 114, 3; 135, 2...). And this happens whatever the activity involved even when it is apparently "secular". The zeal of which De La Salle often speaks is none other than faith translated into action.

3.1 The theology of education

This strongly unitary view of life is the basis of De La Salle's whole theology of education developed in his Meditations, especially in those for the Time of Retreat.

According to it, "The Christian educator, imbued with the spirit of faith and guided by the Holy Spirit, contemplates in his meditation the mystery of Christ, God's only plan, God who reveals himself in life and who wishes to save all mankind in Christ. In it he becomes aware of the needs of young people, communicates with the salvific will of God, offers himself to the Father in the Spirit and in Christ, in order to contribute to the "salvation" of these young people: to help them to live according to the Christian spirit in every single moment of their lives" (S.Gallego, op.cit. p.33).

The main points of this theology of education can be briefly summarised as follows:

(a) God takes the initiative

Either in the foundation of the Christian Schools (cf. Med. 193), or in the call of the Christian educator to the mission (cf. Med. 131; 140, 2; 146, 2; 177, 1; 197, 3...).

(b) The purpose of the Christian school is complete salvation

This consists either in human growth through instruction, or personal spiritual growth through the teaching of the truth and apprenticeship in Christian life, or social growth through initiation into ecclesial and secular life.

(c) The Christian educator is a collaborator of God

* he is called and prepared by God; * he is entrusted with an ecclesial ministry; * he becomes an instrument of grace by his witness and work; * he is at the service of all the pupils, in particular of those who are poor and weak; * he takes care over his initial and continuing formation; * he always acts as an active member of an educational community. (These topics are treated in the following section devoted to the Meditations for the Time of Retreat).

(d) The education offered by the Christian school:

* is directed to the development of the whole person (cf. Med. 160, 3); * is characterised by tender attention to each pupil (cf. Med. 33); * takes place in an atmosphere of solidarity, responsibility, commitment which includes vigorous evangelising action.

* * *

This process, which is based on the spirit of faith and affects the whole life of a person, including the smallest pedagogical indications, can be followed throughout the length of the Meditations.

Some topics are certainly developed more fully and in greater detail in other works of De La Salle, but they can all be found in the Meditations, if only by allusion, and all are linked to a Gospel text, to the example of a saint, or to a systematic consideration of the educational apostolate of the school.

As has already been said several times, the Meditations for the Time of Retreat are concerned exclusively with this last point, and now I should like to treat them in some detail.

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ST.JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE AND CATECHISM IN THE LIGHT OF «THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS»

Brother Jean Paul Chastel

We all know what great importance St.La Salle attaches to catechism. He uses the word "catechism" 191 times in his writings, and of these, 93 are to be found in The Conduct of the Christian Schools.

At the very beginning of the Common Rule where he sets out the aims of the Institute and speaks of the need for it, the Founder says that "the aim of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children...by teaching them the mysteries of our religion" (Common Rule I,3). Further on, in Chapter VII, he says: "They will take care above all to teach their pupils their prayers and catechism" (Common Rule VII, 5).

In the Conduct of the Christian Schools, he mentions five important areas with regard to which pupils ought to be reproved - the word he uses is "corrected". One of the areas is catechism. These five areas are highlighted by apposite sayings "posted up in various parts of the classroom". For catechism the saying goes as follows: "Pay attention during the catechism lesson" (CL.24, pp.130-131).

How does St.La Salle envisage catechism in his Conduct of the Christian Schools?

1. Link with the diocese

There are several instances where he speaks of a "diocesan catechism".

Among the books provided for the poor free of charge there is the diocesan catechism manual:

«The poor can be given hymn books, school prayers, the diocesan catechism and other books used in the Christian Schools, which will not be provided free of charge to those who can afford them» (CL. p.139, No 9).

For the others, "In each class there should be one or several copies of the diocesan catechism".

With regard to testing, "a note will be kept of all the times he did not know his diocesan catechism" (p.137).

With regard to the pupils themselves, "they will question one another, by twos, on the diocesan catechism" (p.108).

Elsewhere, when speaking about the teacher, St.La Salle says that "he will not say anything in his catechism lessons which he has not read in some well-approved book" (CL. p.103, No.10).

There is no freedom to improvise.

2. The material taught

There is no freedom to improvise. Each week, the Brother Director announces the topic to be taught during catechism lessons. "On Sunday, the Brother Director will announce the topic to be spoken about in catechism lessons during the following week, beginning with Monday" (p.99, No.16).

Catechism is linked to the liturgical year. St.La Salle writes: "On the vigil of feastdays...catechism will last an hour...The topic will be that of the feast celebrated by the Church the following day" (p.98, No.10).

In general, catechism will centre on "the principal mysteries of our religion". This is an expression which is to be found in the Common Rule which we quoted in our introduction. It is a subject also on which "the teacher will question pupils both singly and in groups at different times; and at different times he will ask one or several questions on the Mysteries" (p.100, No.9).

Sacraments are another subject to be treated in catechism every week. The sacraments of penance and eucharist receive special mention. The teacher "will ask one or several questions on the sacrament of penance, and then about the eucharist" (p.101).

What should be noted also is the importance St.La Salle attaches to Holy Mass in the Conduct of Schools. He mentions especially pupils "who cannot read" and who are to be given a rosary. On the other hand "pupils who can read should be given a book containing the prayers of the Holy Mass for the use of the Christian Schools, which they should use during this time" (p.89-90).

When catechism lasts a long time, St.La Salle advises the teacher to find a story "to embellish his lesson". On Sundays and feastdays, when catechism lessons are three times longer than on other days, "he should find a story which his pupils can appreciate and tell it in such a way that they will enjoy it and their attention will be renewed. He should do this with sufficient details to prevent them from becoming bored" (p.103, No.9).

3. The pedagogical aspect

There should be variety during catechism lessons, as is amply clear from what has already been said.

The way a teacher speaks should be different from that of a preacher. The pupils are not there to hear authoritive statements which demand no response. On the contrary, "the teacher will not speak to his pupils during catechism as if he were preaching".

Vocabulary too should be simple and easily understood by all. "When asking questions he should use only simple expressions and easily understandable words which need no

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explanation, if that is possible. He should make his questions and answers as short as he possibly can" (p.101, No.10).

Catechism should be linked to everyday life. "Every lesson, the teacher makes a point of suggesting a few practices to his pupils, and giving them as thorough a grounding as he can in matters related to morals and behaviour that are needed if one is to live as a true Christian" (p.102, No.5).

In addition to not speaking as if he were preaching, the teacher should likewise be very brief in his remarks. St.La Salle gives priority to pupils when it comes to speaking: "He will make sure he speaks very little and asks a lot of questions" (p.102, No.2).

4. The attitude of the teacher

Like any other teacher, he has to take means to ensure that all the pupils follow his lesson and pay attention. If the need arises, he should question pupils who seem distracted and bring their attention back to the subject being treated. "Each day he should question all the pupils, even several times if he can. From time to time he should change the order in which he questions pupils during the catechism lesson so as to question pupils he has noticed not paying attention" (p.100, No.6).

«One of the chief areas of concern of a teacher during a catechism lesson must be to ensure that all the pupils pay great attention» (p.102, No.1).

Above all, teachers must be "so concerned about teaching their pupils well that they will not allow a single one to remain ignorant of at least the things that a Christian is obliged to know with regard to doctrine and practice" (p.104, No.15).

The teacher must be convinced of what he is teaching. This must be obvious from the way he speaks. "He must be careful not to speak in a vague way which could lead to a loss of interest" (p.102, No.5). If sometimes pupils are just "impossible", the teacher must not punish them. If necessary, he should stop and think so as not to act through anger. "He should be careful not to disturb the catechism lesson with inopportune rebukes and punishments; and if it happens that a pupil deserves a punishment, it should be postponed till the following day" (p.103, No.7).

Pupils should not be rebuffed or confused "by what one says or does when they are unable to answer a question put to them" (p.105).

St.La Salle recommends great respect for pupils. With regard to those experiencing difficulties, the teacher will make sure he asks questions "which can be understood not only by the brightest and sharpest pupils, but by the weaker ones also, so that most of the pupils in the class can answer the questions put to them" (p.104).

With regard to giving rewards from time to time, the teacher should sometimes give them "to the weakest pupils who have tried the hardest to learn" (p.105).

Respect for the pupils makes a teacher refrain from acting as a judge or criticising their actions. "He will never say that such and such thing is a venial or mortal sin. All he should say is 'It's a big offence against God, it's a sin to be avoided at all costs'" (p.103).

St.Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, wrote the following: "Brothers, I myself was unable to speak to you as people of the Spirit: I treated you as sensual men, still infants in Christ. What I fed you with was milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it" (1 Cor. 3,1-2).

He offered his new Christians the "milk" of catechism rather than the "solid food" of the purely dogmatic teaching of a master to his disciple. Can we achieve in our schools the kind of care St.Paul had for his catechumens or that shown by St.La Salle?

* * *

Two one-day meetings

This fresh look at the Conduct of Schools from the catechist's point of view was the topic for consideration at two one-day meetings held at Fonseranes on October 7th and 14th. The first meeting was attended by 26 persons from Avignon La Salle, Castres, Cavaillon, Beziers, Marseille, Nimes and Perpignan. Six hours sped quickly by in talks and discussion. As someone who attended said: "I came with questions to ask and I am going home with answers. Not all problems have been solved, but we have been enabled to realise that we are not the only ones with problems"

In spite of the small number taking part - about ten - the second meeting was very enriching for those who came. Everyone found the sharing of views very valuable but too short. It was also felt by all that these meetings should have one central topic like Confirmation, or "How to celebrate with young people", or "Encountering young people" (psychological aspects). Such a meeting should be held again, once a year, so as not to overload already existing diocesan programmes of meetings.

These meetings have enabled us to realise that no one has all the answers, and that more or less everywhere there are sources of enrichment. There is one question, though: "How do we get people moving, especially our colleagues, the lay teachers?" One Brother in a post of responsibility said: "Just by putting up my posters and providing my colleagues with information I become a catechist..." And so, let's get on with it! Let's bear fruit wherever we've been planted! Looking forward to seeing you soon. We'll have to do this again!

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LASALLIAN WAY OF THE CROSS

(GOOD FRIDAY 1991)

The texts are taken from the Meditations of St. John Baptist de La Salle for Holy Week, by Br. Umberto Marcato. (M. 22-28).

1. Jesus is condemned by Pontius Pilate to death on the cross.

We adore you, O Christ...

Jesus Christ came on earth, says St. Augustine, not to govern nations, to exact tribute, to raise armies, or to combat his enemies in a visible manner, since he assures us himself "My kingdom does not belong to this world", but he came to establish his reign in souls, according to the expression he uses in the gospel "the kingdom of God is here, within you". (M.22, 1)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

2. Jesus sets off for Calvary carrying his cross.

We adore you, O Christ...

Adore these different dispositions in Our Lord, conformable to the designs which God had over him. As Jesus said himself: "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me", that is to say, it was the rule and the very soul of his conduct. In imitation of your divine Saviour, study to desire only what God wishes, when he wishes, and how he wishes. (M.24, 1)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

3. Jesus falls for the first time under the weight of the cross.

We adore you, O Christ...

It is thus that the Son of God abandoned himself to the will of his Father to suffer and to die when and as it pleased him. When he prepared for his Passion, praying in the Garden of Olives, he declared to his Father, that notwithstanding the repugnance he felt for the sufferings and death which he saw near at hand, he did not wish to do his own will, but that of the Father, to which he abandoned himself completely, as he had always done during his life. (M.24, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

4. Jesus meets his mother on the way to Calvary.

We adore you, O Christ...

O amiable abandonment of the human will of Jesus, submissive in all to the divine, and directed in both life and in death , and as regards the time and the nature of the tortures in which he was to expire, by the decisions of the Eternal Father. Endeavour to become a disciple of Jesus in this respect by having no other will than that of God's good pleasure. (M.24, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

5. Jesus is helped to carry the cross by Simon of Cyrene.

We adore you, O Christ...

Our Lord Jesus Christ having descended from heaven only that he might secure the salvation of men, and knowing that this design was to be accomplished only by suffering much and by dying upon a cross, offered himself to his Eternal Father...to suffer all that he would be required to satisfy for our sins. Adore the holy dispositions of our divine Saviour in entering the world: dispositions which he continued ever afterwards to have, of suffering and dying for your sins and for those of all mankind. Thank him for such goodness, and endeavour to render yourself worthy of participating in the fruits by sharing in his sufferings. (M.25, 1)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

We adore you, O Christ...

* The tender love which Jesus felt for sinners not only disposed him to suffer and die for us, but even gave him an ardent desire to do so. Hence, in speaking of his wish that sin should be extirpated he says: "It is fire that I have come to spread over the earth, and what better wish can I have than that it should be kindled?" (M.25, 2)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

7. Jesus falls for the second time on the way to Calvary

We adore you, O Christ...

Not content with having a life-long desire to die for us, Our Lord testifies his joy at the approach of the hour of sacrifice. This caused him to say to his Apostles, when he celebrated the Pasch with them: "I have longed and longed to share this paschal meal with you", because he knew that this was to be the last action of his mortal life, and the final repast he would take with his Apostles before suffering and dying for us, which was his greatest desire. All that remains now, as St. Paul says, is "to pay off the debt which the afflictions of Christ still leave to be paid", which is the application that must be made of his merits to ourselves through our participation in his sufferings. Render yourself worthy of such a grace. (M.25, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

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8. Jesus meets the women disciples on the way to Calvary

We adore you, O Christ...

Wishing to give us a mark of his affection and goodness, he left to his Apostles, and in their person to the whole Church, his body and blood before dying, to be for all time a precious token of his tender love. Receive this present today with all due respect and thanksgiving. Render Jesus love for love in acknowledgement of so great a gift, and let your love for him and your desire to be united with him, lead you to have an ardent longing to receive holy communion frequently. (M.26, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

9. Jesus falls for the third time on the way to Calvary

We adore you, O Christ...

None can conceive how great were the sufferings of Our Lord during his Passion. He suffered in every part of his body and his soul was so overwhelmed with sadness that he could only express it by saying "it is ready to die with sorrow". Such was the effect upon him that it caused a sweat of blood and he fell into such extreme weakness that his Eternal Father had to send an angel to sustain and strengthen him, that he might be in a condition to endure the tortures of his Passion to the end. (M.27, 1)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

10. Jesus is stripped of his clothing on Calvary

We adore you, O Christ...

What crime had Jesus committed to be thus treated? Even after all these tortures inflicted upon him, the Jews were not satisfied, says St. Bernard. How is it possible that he who had studied only to do good to men could be so dealt with? (M.27, 2)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

11. Jesus is nailed to the cross

We adore you, O Christ...

Jesus suffered from all classes of persons. One of his Apostles betrayed him, another denied him, and the rest took flight abandoning him to his enemies. The Chief Priests sent a body of soldiers to sieze him, and these outraged him. He was mocked by the people and a King insulted him and sent him away as though he were a fool. The Governor of Judea condemned him to death; all the Jews looked upon him as a malefactor, and the passers-by blasphemed him. (M.27, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

12. Jesus dies on the cross

We adore you, O Christ...

Can we possibly contemplate the Man-God in so pitiable a state without conceiving a lively horror for sin, and heartfelt sorrow for those we have committed? For it is our iniquities which have caused his death and his untold sufferings. Not to wish to cease sinning is not to desire that Christ's sufferings should end. The more we sin the more he has to suffer, for, as St. Paul says: "Would they crucify the Son of God a second time, hold him up to mockery a second time for their own ends?" This is for Jesus a kind of death more painful and more difficult to endure than the first. (M.27, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

13. The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross

We adore you, O Christ...

These adorable wounds not only honour the sacred body of Our Lord, but teach us, as St. Peter says, that "Christ suffered for our sakes, and left you his own example: you were to follow in his footsteps. On the cross his own body took the weight of our sins; we were to become dead to our sins, and to live for holiness; it was his wounds that healed you". (M.28, 2)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

14. The body of Jesus is placed in the sepulchre

We adore you, O Christ...

These sacred wounds may likewise procure us the advantage of animating us with a love of suffering, through the remembrance of what Jesus suffered for us. Our divine Lord has preserved the marks of the wounds in his glorious body as ornaments and signs of honour, hence as members of Christ we should likewise esteem it an honour to suffer something for him. After the example of St. Paul we should exclaim: "God forbid that I should make a display of anything, except the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (M.28, 3)

A pause for silent prayer Glory be...

Final adoration

We adore you, O Christ...

Prostrate yourself frequently before the divine wounds of Our Saviour, looking upon them as the source of your salvation. Place your hand with St. Thomas in the wound of the side, not so much to strengthen your faith as to penetrate, if possible, right to the Heart of Jesus, in order to draw from thence into your own sentiments of Christian patience, entire resignation, and perfect conformity to the will of God, as also to take courage sufficient to lead you to seek occasions of suffering. (M.28, 3)

Let us pray for the intentions of our holy father the Pope, our Institute and for all the members of the Lasallian Family:

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be.

Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!

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GUIDE FOR FORMATION
– 1 –

DEVELOPMENTS IN INSTITUTE FORMATION

Brother Joseph Hendron

The publication of the Institute Guide for Formation this year (1991) is an appropriate occasion to reflect on the evolution in Institute Formation programmes over, say, the last 50 years. This is an arbitrary time span. There are still many Brothers in the Institute who were formed before this period; but the style and content of their Formation would not have differed significantly from the Formation programmes in use up until the mid 1960s.

The first session of the second Vatican Council began on 11, October 1962 and the final session ended on 8, December 1964. The Motu Proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae", which gave the norms for the up-to-date renewal of Religious Life according to the mind of the Council, was published on 6, August 1966. The 39th General Chapter, which took place in 1966, was extended to a second Session in 1967, in order to comply with the demands of the Council for a "Special Chapter". This Special Chapter had for purpose "to put renewal and adaptation into effect" (Ecclesiae Sanctae 3). The Council and Chapter had profound implications for all of us: in our Community Life, in our Mission, in Formation. "Perfectae Caritatis" (28, October 1965) said of the up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life that "it comprises both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the Christian Life and to the primitive inspiration of the institute, and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our times." (PC 2). The 39th General Chapter expressed the challenge of renewal, as it affected us, in the draft Rule, and "A Declaration: The Brother of the Christian Schools in the world today."

Formation before 1966:

The upheaval of the 1960s shattered the Formation structures that had been in existence for a number of decades before. These decades in Formation were marked by confidence and clarity in objectives and means. Personnel and candidates alike knew exactly what was expected of them at every stage of Formation. The programmes were uniform throughout the Institute. A candidate entering would find the same time-table, prayers, conferences, spiritual reading material as in any other formation house in the Institute. With small variations the stages from juniorate to scholasticate were uniform in duration and age of candidates. Planning was in view of the smooth functioning of the group and the formation of Brothers in a certain uniform style, rather than to answer to the developmental needs of the individual. There was a high degree of centralisation; directives on formation from the Centre of the Institute and from the Church were precise, detailed and mandatory.

This is not said by way of a blanket criticism of this type of Formation. Later I will show that some aspects of this formation method have been retained or recovered in today's formation programmes. It should be said also that changes in formation, or at least in the thinking about formation, pre-dated Vatican II and the 1966 General Chapter. The General Chapter of 1956, for example, launched the programme of Lasallian research, and also initiated a revision of the Rule. These had for aim a critical study of the life of our Founder and his charism, and a up-dating of the Rule. These decisions were prophetic. They were part of that "constant return to the primitive inspiration of the institute", described by "Perfectae Caritatis" nearly ten years later. The studies on our origins and the life the Founder are now an important element in formation and they began before 1966.

Formation after 1966 (1):

The years after 1966 until the present time may be divided into two periods; but two periods which overlap. The first begins at the end of the 60s. This period was marked by a collapse of the structures noted above. Responsibility for planning formation moved from the Centre to the Districts. A restructuring of formation in all its aspects began. The former certainties were replaced by uncertainty and by a search for new plans for formation. There was divided opinion about the way to proceed; plans became more diverse and experimental throughout the Institute. Age of entry and duration of formation varied from District

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to District. The number of candidates fell dramatically. In part because of this the traditional locations for

houses of formation were abandoned, and many variations on location, size of groups, apostolic engagement during formation were tried. It became increasingly difficult for each District to maintain its own houses of Formation and staff them adequately.

It must be said that the quality varied as greatly as the programmes. Some programmes retained the best elements of the former structures and blended these successfully with the new ideas coming from the Council and the General Chapters. Others tried, unsuccessfully, to retain the old structures more or less unchanged. A third group offered a superficial and inadequate programme lacking appreciation of the old or new approaches to formation.

Formation after 1966 (2):

This situation continued for some years; but little by little the independent approach by sectors to planning formation was replaced by a process of dialogue; dialogue between Districts and dialogue between the Districts and the Centre of the Institute. Co-operation and sharing increased. Dialogue took many forms: a number of Circulars were published. The General Council consulted with an international group of Formators in the writing of Circular 418. A number of CIL Sessions were held to prepare Formators and study the problems of Formation today. The Inter-Capitular and Regional meetings of Visitors with the General Council always included a consideration of Formation. Then in 1985 the Formation Secretariat was established. This was to be an instrument of dialogue between the Centre and the Regions and Districts. Initially there was one Brother in the secretariat. A second was appointed in 1986.

Our Rule, which was revised in consultation with all the Brothers of the Institute, received its final draft from the General Chapter of 1986 and was approved by the Church in 1987. The approved Rule gave clear guidelines for formation. The 1986 Chapter also asked that a fuller document on formation be provided which would expand on the Rules and Constitutions. This document, which was given the title "Guide for Formation" and went through five drafts before publication, was the outcome of a consultation between the Centre of the Institute and the Districts and Regions. Now we have a number of instruments of dialogue which were not available immediately after the Chapter of 1966-67: the Rule, the secretariat for Formation, the Guide for Formation, the Declaration, various Circulars on formation, periodic sessions of Cil or other meetings to help Brothers working in formation.

So the dialogue continues, and with it an increased Interdependence in formation. Now most houses of Formation are the shared responsibility of a number of Districts or a Region. The staffs are often international and made up of experts in different disciplines: scripture, Lasallian studies, theology, etc. In November 1991 all the Directors of novices of the Institute will assemble at the Generalate for a four week Session - to continue and deepen the dialogue between Centre and sectors. The old uniformity may have disappeared; but unity is very evident. Now there is greater clarity and certainty about what constitutes Lasallian formation today, and greater confidence in putting it into practice. We think that the Institute is in a postion to implement the statement of "Perfectae Caritatis": "The up-to-date renewal of institutes depends very much on the training of members" (PC. 18, 28 October 1965). We need more personnel, well trained and willing to carry out this vital Institute apostolate, and in some sectors we must find the candidates who can benefit from the new richness of formation programmes, and become in their turn Christian formators of young people.

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GUIDE FOR FORMATION
– 2 –

"SOME INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS TO ASSIST IN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE INSTITUTE'S GUIDE FOR FORMATION"

Brother William Mann

The **Guide for Formation** is intended as an instrument to assist in an ongoing dialogue between the various Districts and the Center of the Institute. It is not my intention here to provide an analysis of the content of the **Guide.** Probably, a careful reading and study of the document by the Brothers themselves is its best introduction. Rather, I would like to share with you some ideas or principles which form the document's **fundamental orientation.** Hopefully, this will make for a more informed reading and a more clear understanding on the part of all concerned.

1. Ours is fundamentally a **gospel-based and apostolically oriented spirituality.** The gospel is at the center of our formation programs. The integration of ministry and prayer is essential in every stage of formation. Of course, however, formation needs to have a Lasallian flavor.

2. Initial formation is to **our vocation and our identity** in the Church and not just to some generic model or to some privately determined model of religious life, as though all religious families in the Church were homogenized or the same (as has sometimes mistakenly been the case in recent history).

3. Ours is clearly a formation in the tradition and spirit of **Vatican II.** Fundamental to understanding formation today is the principle that:

– **a. Vocation** is understood as something that happens to a person within his own personal history; therefore, no two young Brothers are exactly the same. God calls a person as a **unique** individual.

– **b.** Secondly, "vocations" do not happen in a vacuum. It is in the concrete events and needs of the people of today that God's Spirit **evokes, calls forth,** and **raises up** Brothers of the Christian Schools to do God's work.

– **c.** Therefore, formation must always remain sensitive to the unique individuality of each Brother and must never be divorced from the concrete events and needs of the people of today.

4. This perspective has required a basic shift in the manner in which formation is attempted. For example,

– **a.** The environment in which formation takes place is the **marketplace instead of the monastery.**

– **b.** The approach to the individual in formation is **more concerned with the person than with the program.**

– **c.** The nature of formation programs involves a **process of progressive incorporation** into religious life and not a **procedure to be completed and certainly not a trial to be endured** once and for all. It involves a formation of the "heart" that affects the attitudes and preferences by which the Brother sets priorities and makes decisions.

– **d.** Formation involves **discernment** of the workings of God within the life of an individual and is not just the matter of simple decision making. The pace of individuals is variable; vocation is an **evolving reality** within the human development of a person. Formation takes a lifetime (hence, the fifth chapter of the **Guide** on "Continuing Formation"). All of this is the context for why the question of the **accompaniment** of the young Brothers is such a major concern today.

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I would also like to highlight the **key aspect of vocation promotion programs** as presented in the second chapter of the **Guide** on "The Pastoral Ministry of Vocations."

5. The **Guide** addresses the issue of where the ministry of vocation promotion fits into the larger question of each District's pastoral ministry to youth. The essential question here concerns the work we do in the Church and how we see **vocation promotion as an integral and inseparable dimension of every aspect of true Christian education.** The **Guide** suggests that nothing less than a rather courageous and bold reexamination of the very nature of the Christian ministry we perform is capable of addressing the question of **our declining numbers** and work for the promotion of vocations.

6. The question of "mission" is the key to vocation promotion. "What is our mission in the 1990s"? Who and what is determining our mission at the present time? Is it being determined by local governments, by our predecessors and their success, by our "old boys," by our paralysis, fear, and insecurity, by the real abilities and desires of the young Brothers who are going to be carrying these commitments into the future, or by the gospel and the needs of the young, the poor, and their families today? This question of mission is the key to the work of vocation promotion and initial formation. **To what do we invite? For what do we form**?

7. The question is not one of "getting" new Brothers; the primary question is the nurturing of faith among the young within the cultures where we minister. The **Guide** proposes that this is the context in which **authentic vocation promotion** makes sense and gathers life and momentum. **The re-vitalization** of our vocation promotion programs requires nothing less than a complete re-animation of our ministry.

Suggested Supplemental Readings:

Azevedo, Rev. Marcello. *Vocation for Mission: The Challenge of Religious Life Today.* (Available in Brazil 1977, Italy 1984, Spain 1985, France 1985, and USA 1988).

Giallanza, Brother Joel. "Evolving Religious Formation," *Human Development,* Vol. 11, No. 3 (Fall 1990), 14-14. (Excellent development of point 4).

Johnston, Brother John. *Pastoral Letter: "Irrevocably Committed" to Follow Christ Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.* Rome, 1991.

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GUIDE FOR FORMATION – 3 –

THE FORMATION GUIDE

A STUDY AID

Br. Bernardo Villar

A NEW APPROACH

The 1986 General Chapter established a new policy in the Institute with regard to initial formation. This is defined in the 1987 Rule. It is left to Districts and Regions, in consultation with the Centre of the Institute, to draw up formation programmes.

As part of this new approach, there came into existence the **Secretariat for Formation**, as a consultative body, and the **Guide for Formation**, which provides a framework containing basic principles and general outlines to serve as guidelines.

HOW THE GUIDE FOR FORMATION CAME INTO EXISTENCE

The 1966 General Chapter asked for a number of Directories to be drawn up to complement the new Rule, and the Guide for Formation was included among these. In October 1988, Brother Superior and his Council asked the Secretariat for Formation to begin this work. The work of producing this text involved the following process:

– The Secretariat prepared a first draft which was sent to the whole Institute. With a view to stimulating reactions from the Institute, the text was in the form of an enquiry covering a great variety of areas related to initial formation.

Reactions were numerous and valuable, coming from both individual Brothers and Formation Commissions and District Councils. Some even expressed the feelings of certain Regions as a whole.

– A second draft was based on these reactions which had to reach Rome by the end of February 1989. It was submitted to an international commission appointed by Brother Superior, comprising Brothers Raymundo Suplido (Philippines), Dominique Samne (Burkina Faso), Paul Etienne (France), Jose Antonio Urrutia (Spain), Guilebaldo Orozco (Mexico) and Timothy Wentworth (United States). Between them, the Secretariat for Formation and this commission drew up a third draft which was then submitted to Brother Superior and his Council.

– A new draft was drawn up which now included the input of the Council. The 49 members of the CIL session on formation (held in Rome from September to December 1989) were asked to study it. The work they did on the document and the recommendations they made were very valuable because most of these Brothers were directly involved in the formation programmes of their respective Districts.

– With the help of the input from CIL, the Secretariat for Formation produced a new draft which was submitted to Brother Superior and his Council. The text was finally approved in September 1990.

We went into the history of how the text was produced, because it is an important factor if the text is to be understood. A great effort was made to ensure that the dialogue stressed by the last General Chapter took place. This, indeed, was the Founder's approach when he and the first Brothers produced such key documents as the first Rule and the Conduct of Schools.

The Guide was not produced in a laboratory nor in an office. It reflects the living experience of the Institute. Since we wanted it to be a framework for the dialogue we have to pursue, it was important it should be itself the fruit of dialogue. We should read the Guide with the attitude that it reflects what is richest in the present-day life of the Institute, listening constantly for the Spirit (R.37) who speaks and reveals himself through the Brothers.

WHAT IS THE GUIDE FOR FORMATION ?

Let us first of all say what the Guide is not. The Guide **is not a formation programme.** If the Guide were interpreted as an attempt to draw up in Rome a formation programme intended for the whole Institute, it would represent a return to pre- Council days, and nothing could be further from the mind of the General Chapter.

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Formation programmes continue to be drawn up by individual Districts. It is only by looking closely at the very rich and varied life of the Institute that it is possible to adjust to the needs that come to light in various places and circumstances. The Guide is intended to be a source of help for Districts and Regions as they draw up their own formation programmes, but it is each District that has to discover how to adapt the guidelines and recommendations of the Guide to the concrete reality of its own situation.

For this reason it is important that the Guide be fully assimilated by Districts and that the programmes and structures of the various stages of initial formation should be revised and re-organised in the light of this new document. What the publication of the Guide asks us to do as a first step is to study and reflect on it at all levels: individual, community, formation commission and District Council.

The second step will involve revising structures and programmes, consultation with the Centre of the Institute, making decisions leading to the establishment of a District or Regional initial formation programme. **The Guide is a means** made available to Districts and Regions **to help them draw up their formation programme.**

FOR WHOM IS THE GUIDE FOR FORMATION INTENDED ?

As Brother Superior says in the introduction, the Guide is **addressed to all the Brothers.** Why should this be? For various reasons:

– Its content: It is not simply a Guide for Formation, as it might seem at first sight: it is concerned also with continuing formation.

– It is true that the subject of initial formation is of more direct concern to the formation teams and formation commissions of each District. And yet, the subject of initial formation concerns all of us. In the final analysis, we are the members of the communities which look after the young men who come to us in the course of their formation process. Our communities are a point of reference for our young men in formation. While there are formation teams that serve in the ministry of formation for our benefit, this does not do away at all with our own responsibility in this matter.

– Initial formation makes sense in the context of continuing formatiom which should follow on logically. The process which our young men in formation begin and which they pursue through the successive stages of initial formation leads logically to a process of gradual maturation in the communities of our Districts. What communities hosting young Brothers are asked to do, therefore, is to ensure that, because of their lifestyle and their way of living out the spiritual, community and apostolic guidelines of the Rule, these Brothers find, on joining them, an atmosphere which will enable to continue to grow and complete the process they have begun.

– Finally, the topics treated in chapter 1 (our religious identity) and chapter 2 (the pastoral ministry of vocations) are areas that affect all of us.

STUDYING THE GUIDE

We offer here **one possible way of studying** the Guide in community. This could be done by dividing the material into three parts:

(1) Chapters 1 and 5 help us to see our identity and our fidelity to our vocation in the context of our present stage in life.

(2) Chapter 2: The pastoral ministry of vocations is a priority which affects us all as individuals and as communities.

(3) Chapters 3 and 4: The nature of the formation process and the stages of formation. They are more directly the concern of formation staff, but they help us all to understand the process our young men are undergoing. Communities hosting young Brothers with temporary vows will find these chapters particularly useful.

Method

The Guide must always be studied side-by-side with the Rule. The Rule and the Guide are inseparable. The margin references to the Rule in the Guide show that the Rule is a constant factor.

Whatever sections we choose for reading, discussion, study or community prayer, they must always be considered from the double point of view of the Guide and the Rule.

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BROTHER EXUPERIEN AND CHRISTIAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF «RERUM NOVARUM» (1/2)

Br. Yves Poutet

The excellent Positio super virtutibus (Rome, 1984) which the Congregation for the Causes of Saints devoted to Adrien Mas, known in religion as Brother Exuperien (1829-1905), was quite right in attributing to this Brother of the Christian Schools an important role in the rise of the Christian trade union movement and in the process leading to Rerum Novarum. Adrien Mas was educated at the Pensionnat de l'Immaculee Conception run by the Brothers at Beziers. Filled with enthusiasm by their example, he joined their novitiate in Toulouse. After the novitiate, he returned to Beziers and remained ten years there, training the pupils "in piety and knowledge", putting "his whole heart" into this work. He then became novice master, and his fellow-Brothers appointed him Assistant to the Superior General who was living at the time in Paris at 27 rue Oudinot, a building now occupied by the Ministry for Overseas Departments and Territories. He remained in this job for 32 years. During this period, his zeal for spiritual retreats and pious associations was equalled only by his concern for social justice as a source of peace. This he pursued by means of various schemes and associations for workers and people in employment. "L'Oeuvre des Apprentis", created in 1843 by Vicount Armand of Melun and Brother Philippe, was transformed by the energy of Brother Exuperien who made it part of a larger group called "Oeuvres de Jeunesse". Its spirit was kept alive by a newsletter. In 1882, the spiritual elite of parish youth clubs joined Brother Assistant, Fr. Chaumont and the chaplain of the Incurables in forming the Saint Labre Society which was dedicated to evangelical poverty and devotion to the Eucharist. Not long afterwards, the Employees' Trade Union was born there.

In the meantime, in 1873, Albert de Mun started up Catholic Workers' Clubs which were open to employers. This was the very opposite of the class struggle. Eleven years later, a minister, Waldeck Rousseau, authorised the creation of "professional trade unions" with the following proviso: employers and workers were to have separate unions. It would be a long time before bridges were rebuilt to any degree. There was another legal restriction: these trade unions were to be totally free of religion, politics or ideology. In 1885, La Tour du Pin, a pilgrim to the Holy See in a group led by Leon Harmel, was received in audience by the Pope. This is how he described the occasion:

"On the fifth day after my arrival...I was admitted into the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff and knelt at his feet, alone with him in a small room...His Holiness began to speak about the apostolate of the clubs...He added: "It's very good, but keep your simple name of Apostolate of Catholic Workers' Clubs as it is." He smiled when he heard of the accusations of socialism that were being levelled at our way of doing things. "But it isn't socialism, it's Christianity." When I informed him that the very value of the expression 'Christian social order' was being questioned, he said with feeling: "They don't know what Christian social order is. But don't worry. Wait for my next encyclical. The Pope will speak. He will say that there is a Christian social order." Then softening his tone and resuming his expression of ineffable goodness, he added: "You asked me for a cardinal to oversee and, where necessary, direct your work. Well, I'll give you two. I'll set up a commission for social studies, and like that you'll find in Rome all that your faith has led you to seek there." (A. Murat, "Le catholicisme social en France" Bordeaux, 1980, p.84)

The following year there appeared Immortale Dei on the Christian constitution of states.

Around 1887, Brother Hieron started up a union in Paris for shop and industrial employees. Brother Exuperien gave him his full support. By Lasallian tradition, the Brothers ran vocational schools, apprenticeship centres, extra Sunday courses because they wished to serve all "the artisans and the poor" without exception. The students who followed these courses found themselves mixed in with a variety of social classes. In their schools, pupils joined not because they were poor or rich but because of vocational reasons. To a great extent, the social and religious attitude of the Brothers of the time was due to the work of Brother Exuperien. This is borne out by the words of Michel Launay, a university historian:

"Let us remember straightaway that their intention is to train not only minds but also characters...The pupils of the Brothers are not only taught. After school they are followed up...This is the spirituality of the Congregation. The Brother lives completely in community, totally, without any chance of taking refuge in a touchy reserve, with no possibility of evading common responsibilities, with no refuge in a secret garden. Meals taken in common are an opportunity for ex-

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pressing joy, for making cutting remarks about others, for public exhortations to work hard and to have a burning faith. The Congregation is permeated with an atmosphere of genuine brotherhood, of astonishing spiritual health." (M. Launay. "La C.F.T.C., origines et developpement", Paris, Sorbonne, 1986.)

On September 13th 1887, 18 young men, inspired by the leadership of Br. Hieron and the President of the Union of Parish Commercial Youth Clubs, started up the Trade Union of Shop and Industrial Employees (S.E.C.I.), taking as their patrons Saint Labre and the Archangel Michael, as a sign of the religious character they wished to give their undertaking. On November 15th 1890, the first issue of their newsletter L'Employe came out. The second issue appeared on March 15th 1891, two months before the publication of Rerum Novarum. When the leaders and main inspirers of the S.E.C.I., and these included Brothers Hieron and Exuperien, realised that almost all its members would always remain wage earners, they gave up their initial ideal which was to promote workers and employees to positions of administrative responsibility by means of in-service training. Their aims became more modest and more suited to an often hostile social environment: to help workers defend their rights once they had firmly established them; to remedy inequalities created by the social situation of their parents, the power of money, and the difficulties which militated against secure jobs...Ever aware of the benefits of friendly relations with Christian employers and lawyers, L'Employe began a series in 1896 entitled "Views of a proletarian". In the meantime, two encyclicals had appeared: Rerum Novarum, on social questions, and Au milieu des sollicitudes de l'Eglise universelle (February 16th 1892) which preached support for the Republic. More than ever before, Brother Joseph, Superior General, and his Assistants of whom Brother Exuperien was the chief, called upon the Brothers and all their pupils or disciples to show perfect submission to the Sovereign Pontiff in imitation of their Founder John Baptist de La Salle who had been beatified in 1888. Relations with Leo XIII had been close since the March 1885 private audience. Informed about the recruitment of the Brothers, their religious and professional training, and the variety of their work, he traced out a way forward for them: they should organise themselves, fight, train regiments of well-disciplined apprentices, workers and students; snatch souls away from the dangers of isolation, "give back to the Christian masses the feeling of brotherly solidarity" (G. Rigault, "Histoire generale de l'Institut des Freres des ecoles chretiennes", vol.VII, p.415). In his Circular dated December 18th 1892, Brother Joseph, helped by his Council, writes:

"In the midst of the sadness and tribulations of the present time...we acclaim (on the 50th anniversary of his consecration as bishop) Leo XIII, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Infallible Guardian of the Faith, Father and King of our souls; we glorify in him the Incomparable Doctor who continues to enlighten the world by his Immortal Encyclicals...the defender of the poor and working classes, the one who has been justly named the Pope of the workers. May Heaven grant him to see crowned with success so much work for the prosperity of the Church, for the good of society and for that of the working class in particular."

The Circular dated January 1st 1893 rejoices at the work that has been accomplished: "Youth organisations have been set up in great numbers (and not only in Paris, far from that): an effort has been made to turn these into true centres of Christian life, where the frequentation of the sacraments, monthly recollections, and annual retreats and practices of piety have kept our former pupils faithful to their duties and in many cases have made them, in their parishes, the collaborators of their parish priest, the supporters or even the organisers of works of zeal and charity."

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BROTHER EXUPERIEN AND CHRISTIAN TRADE UNIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF «RERUM NOVARUM» (2/2)

Br. Yves Poutet

When Brother Gabriel Marie succeeded Brother Joseph as Superior General in 1897, Brother Exuperien remained the chief Assistant. He was responsible for the former students' associations in France which numbered 31,200 young people. At the time of the World Fair of 1900, there were 35,572 of them spread over 350 parish youth clubs (G. Rigault, op. cit. VII, p.417). Brother Exuperien always remained involved in this work as one of the leading organisers of all these Lasallian undertakings. This was not only in Paris and the departement of the Seine, but also in Lille, Rouen, Boulogne, Calais, Saint Omer, Orleans, Nantes, Beauvais, Laon, Lyon, Bordeaux and finally in nearly all the departments of France, putting into practice the words of Leo XIII to Brother Joseph: "Each school establishment should be matched, except when absolutely impossible, by a youth club."

This widespread influence among young adults, complemented by that of Old Boys associations which also were permeated with the same spirit of understanding between employers and employees and commitment to the preferential service of the less privileged, owes much to the religious life developed by Brother Exuperien among the Brothers and their friends. The main meetings, recollections, and annual spiritual retreats of the St. Labre Association were held in the retirement home of the Brothers at Athis Mons, near the present-day Orly Airport, in an area which was particularly tranquil and lightly wooded at the time. It was from the St. Labre group that the Employees' trade union took most of its most dynamic organisers. Daily family prayers and inter-social class discussions on the basis of pontifical pronouncements found constant nourishment there. The collaboration of fervent and devoted priests like Fr. Paguelle of Follenay and Canon Peuportier reflect the common desire to work as a Church, with priests and non-consecrated lay people working together with the Brothers who were canonically defined as lay religious. There is no better description of the situation than the one found in Michel Launay's doctoral thesis based on extensive and scientific research:

"All those who at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century became leaders of or held positions of responsibility in Christian trade unions in France were all, in their youth, energetic members of St. Labre and conscious of belonging to an elite...One must constantly bear in mind that the Christian trade union movement in France came directly from the congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and that in this way a whole range of ideas, concerns, reflexes, thoughts were transmitted, at least at management level, through this trade union movement." (op. cit. p.12).

It is important to add at this point that the talks, private conversations, the exchange of correspondence of Brother Exuperien were, up to the year of his death, 1905, the golden thread that bound strongly together the spiritual and the temporal, secular, social and economic training on the one hand and religious studies on the other. In this connection we must mention the important part played by the chief Assistant of the Superior in the preparation and publication of a series of doctrinal works intended for the paratheological formation of the young Brothers. There were three volumes of about 500 pages each, entitled Dogma, Moral, Worship, the work of "a seminary lecturer". The volume on Moral does not omit to speak of the workers. The table of contents refers to pages 329-332: "Situation of workers in our days brought about by the abandonment of faith and corruption of morals; duties imposed by justice which they should practise; institutions through which the Church works to remedy their situation; duties of the State with regard to what concerns the situation of the workers." The really essential message would have been missing if the following were not also included relating to employers: "Teachings of the Church intended for the rich; duties imposed by justice which employers should practise; justice must be complemented by charity." The chapter in question is entitled: "Duties of workers and employers" with two sub-headings: "Causes of conflict between workers and employers" and "Remedy for social antagonism". A long quotation from the encyclical Rerum Novarum is studied by questions and answers. This approach makes it easier to explain and memorise each separate section of the quotation. The first edition appeared in 1894. This work served as the basis for the formation of the Brothers, their pupils and disciples up to the middle of the 20th century.

Because of the links established by the Brothers in France with the world of technology and industry, the

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members of the 1901 General Chapter were sufficiently conditioned to greet enthusiastically the creation of the Istituto De Merode in Rome, founded by the Pope accepted from him by the Superior General and his Assistants. Here is what the Superior said on this occasion:

"On the initiative of our Holy Father the Pope, we have been offered the direction of the Pontifical Technical Institute, known as the Istituto De Merode. This is a kind of small university which aims to prepare young people for the liberal technical professions such as those of engineer, architect, science teachers. It prepares also for entry into military and naval academies. This establishment could be called the crowning glory of our vocational and technical schools" (Athis, Circular, October 25th 1901, p.75).

The Christian trade union movement has a debt of gratitude to several eminent laymen trained in the spirit of Brothers Hieron and Exuperien. One such person is Jules Zirnheld, born in 1876 in Alsace, taught by the Brothers in Paris, an accountant at 15, a member of the St. Labre Association and of the S.E.C.I. of which he became the president in 1892. Another is Charles Viennet, a Parisian born in 1878, a pupil of the Brothers, a business legal secretary, attending regularly the talks given by the Comte de Segur at the youth club attached to the school on rue St. Dominique. He, like Zirnheld, was totally overwhelmed by Rerum Novarum which they both read in their study group. He joined the S.E.C.I. and became its general secretary. Like the Brothers, and as the Pope had urged, he rallied to the defence of the Republic. He fulfilled his patriotic duty by joining up in 1914 and died the following year on the field of battle. Gaston Tessier, born in Paris in 1887, began to earn his living as soon as he left the Brothers' school. He continued his studies thanks to courses for adults and joined the St. Labre Association and the S.E.C.I. For the latter he wrote an article which was taken up by many other publications. In the article, entitled "The future of the employee", the future of the white-collar worker is shown to be brighter than that of the manual worker. He had established his reputation: henceforth the power and wisdom of his thinking were recognised. Soon after, he was called upon to take over as president of the union. This led to the foundation of the C.F.T.C. (French Confederation of Christian Workers). However, this happened after the death of Brother Exuperien in 1905. This story is sufficient to illustrate even now how a small seed sown at the time of Rerum Novarum was able to influence a whole area of personal relationships in the working world.

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THE EVERYDAY REPETITION OF ACTIONS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE LASALLIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (1/2)

Br. Alfredo A. Morales

"Pray to him (God) fervently too, that he will be pleased to make your Institute grow and bear fruit *day by day*" (MTR 207,3; cf. R 141).

Introduction

The expression "every day" is often used by the Founder in his writings: it can be found in the Conduct of Schools, in his Letters, in the 1718 Common Rules, in his catechisms...

The Lasallian Vocabulary (Volume 4) indicates that the expression "every day" is used 232 times and "each day" 16 times.

Let us try to discover the significance of this repeated use.

Many of the instances quoted refer simply to chronological listing or indicate the frequency of activities.

There are others, however, that have a deeper meaning and which reflect a specific plan. They imply a fundamental message the meaning of which is completed by sentences that follow. For example:

"The end of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children; it is for this purpose that schools exist, so that the children being under the care of the masters from morning until evening..." (RC 1,3)

This is what provides an answer to and counterbalances the day spent in working which, as the Founder and the first Brothers noted, made it impossible for "the working class and the poor...occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their children...(to) give their children the needed instruction and a good and Christian education" (RC 1,4).

The every-day nature of the apostolate - which we will call the quotidian ministry - is what determined the lifestyle, the spirituality and apostolate of the Brothers of De La Salle who constantly invited them to see in their daily lives the transcendence, the unexplainable, the mystery of salvation in action.

1. THEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THE QUOTIDIAN MINISTRY OF THE BROTHERS

The theological reflections of St. John Baptist de La Salle in his Meditations for the Time of Retreat (193 to 208) can be considered as an analysis of the nature and of the ways of fulfilling the Lasallian ministry of education day after day, hour after hour.

The Founder saw clearly the importance of this every-day nature of the ministry and wished to pass it on to his Brothers as a precious spiritual bequest meant not only for them but also "for the use of all persons who are engaged in the education of youth" (subtitle of the MTR).

But it is in one of his Meditations (MTR 200) that De La Salle stresses particularly and repeatedly this quotidian ministry.

He takes as his point of departure some quotations from the Acts of the Apostles:

"They preached every day...and the proclamation of the Good News of Christ Jesus was never interrupted" (Ac 5,42).

"Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved" (Ac 2, 47)

The logic of De La Salle's explanations is impressive:

What the Apostles did was to simply imitate Jesus Christ who..."taught in the Temple every day" (Lk 19, 47) and who "would spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives" (Lk 21, 37).

The conclusion follows logically:

"You are successors to the Apostles in their task of catechising and teaching the poor...you must teach catechism every day...In this way you will be following the example of the Apostles and of Jesus Christ himself, who devoted himself daily to this ministry" (MTR 200, 1).

What are the results of the Brother's quotidian ministry?

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The fulfilment of the plan of salvation which God has entrusted to the Brother and to the community to which he belongs.

The result of this is that the quotidian ministry becomes "sacramental" because of the outlook of faith which enables the Brother to see the will of God in all that he does, however simple it may be, and which in its turn transfigures him, conferring on him spiritual greatness and a power to reveal: a "transparency" perceived by all who benefit from the Brothers' ministry of education.

This faith dimension in the daily work of education makes the charism of the Brother visible and tangible, and enables him to make it operative: it makes it effective from a pastoral point of view.

According to De La Salle, to discover this spiritual greatness and this sacramental transparency in the work of every day constitutes a grace from the Spirit. The Brother must ask for it with great insistence, otherwise the "terrible quotidien" will crush and devour him.

2.. THE EVERYDAY REPETITION OF ACTIONS IN PRACTICE

This is what Saint John Baptist de La Salle writes in his Letters:

"One of your main preoccupations, my very dear Brother, should be to apply yourself to prayer and to your classwork, for these are your two principal occupations" (Letter to Br. Hubert, May 5th 1702).

He says the same thing eight years later:

"Your spiritual exercises and your school require all your care" (October 2nd 1710).

He writes to the unstable Br. Mathias:

"You must carry out not only your class duties, but also the other exercises, for classwork without the spiritual exercises will not do" (April 13th 1708).

These quotations reflect what we read in Meditation 198 and show the total coherence of De La Salle's spiritual experience, as well as the pendulum-like movement of the Brothers' life: "to go up to God every day...then come down to them (the children)" (MTR 198, 1).

In practice, the repetitive aspect of the Brother's life is lived on two levels:

1. On the level of his spiritual and community life:

"All the exercises will be made in common from morning till evening" (RC III, 1).

"We ought frequently, and even daily, to thank God" (M 126, 1).

"Thank God for it every day" (M 182, 1; cf. M 89, 1).

"You should renew this donation every day" (M 104, 2).

"Read it (the Word of God) carefully every day" (M)

"The Brothers should love the holy exercise of mental prayer very much and they must look upon it as the first and principal of their daily exercises...They will be careful to make it every day" (RC IV, 1).

2. On the level of his educational, human and Christian activities

"You are obliged by your duty of state to teach the truths of the Gospel every day" (M 138, 3).

"the words of salvation you address them each day" (M 39, 2).

"a letter...which you write every day in their hearts" (MTR 195, 2).

"You must teach catechism every day...Jesus Christ...devoted himself daily to this practice" (MTR 200, 1).

"You must, of course, teach catechism to your students every day" (Letter to Gabriel Drolin, May 12th 1710).

"The teacher must visit all the writers every day" (Conduct 60).

Who benefits from this repetitive activity?

1. The Brothers themselves:

"the ordinary everyday actions which you perform in common with your Brothers" (M 69, 2)

"...because one is not satisfied with the conversation one has every day with one's Brothers" (R 58, 9).

2. The pupils:

"You are daily with the poor" (M 189, 1).

"It is your daily duty to instruct the poor" (M 166, 2).

3. The community surrounding the Brother:

"When you are outside the house, let your conduct be such as to be an example to all and a source of edification. This is all the more necessary as you are called to save others, and should therefore begin by giving good example in order to attract souls to God" (M 92, 2).

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23 - 11 – C - 100

THE EVERYDAY REPETITION OF ACTIONS AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE LASALLIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (2/2)

Br. Alfredo A. Morales

3. THE PITFALLS OF DAILY REPEATED ACTIONS

Routine and monotony are a risk when actions are repeated in an apparently identical manner over a long period of time. It is certain that De La Salle foresaw this pitfall and warned his Brothers about it by a variety of means, encouraging them always to provide high quality service. This is what he does when he urges them constantly to have an "ardent zeal" in the exercise of their ministry as teachers.

In his correspondence with his Brothers, he speaks to them of fervour, of fidelity:

"Be careful not to fall into negligence, for God gives few graces to those who are negligent. They have little success in what they do" (Letter 79 to a Brother Director, August 23rd).

"Nothing will draw down on you the blessings of God so much as fidelity in carrying out small matters" (Letter 4 to Br. Denis, July 8th 1708)

And here are some fine words straight from the heart:

"It is a great consolation to me, my very dear Brother, to know that you are wholeheartedly in love with your vocation. I bless God for this" (Letter 85 to a Brother).

He warned his Brothers of the low esteem in which teachers were held by the society of the time:

"We are poor Brothers, forgotten by the world and esteemed of no consequence. Only the poor come to us" (M 86, 2).

"Your work enjoys little consideration in the eyes of men, but in the eyes of God it does, for it contributes to extend his Kingdom" (M 143, 3).

"How often it happens that occupations that men consider lowly produce more fruit than those which are more exalted. Look upon your work as one of the most important and excellent in the Church" (M 155, 1).

The spirit of faith was the great spiritual means that De La Salle bequeathed to his Brothers and to his spiritual family as a spiritual incentive in order to overcome the danger of the shortsightedness of actions repeated daily, mechanically and without soul:

"Not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God" (RC II, 2).

This is the "Lasallian magic wand" that can transform the Brothers' most ordinary actions. It has led many Brothers to high levels of anonymous heroism and sanctity recognised by the Church: "Do ordinary things with extraordinary fervour".

On numerous occasions in his writings, De La Salle shows his concern for the "daily fervour" of his Brothers. As an example of this we can quote the Collection:

- Collection of things about which the Brothers will converse during recreations:

– About daily actions and the fervour with which they should be done; about the ease with which one can save oneself in the Society by doing them with a spirit of faith and religion and without doing anything else (XX).

– About the failings against which they must most guard themselves, like...negligence in the house and school exercises (XXVI).

– About the obligation the Brothers of the Society have to acquit themselves well of their duty in school...and about the way to fulfil it well (XXVIII).

- With regard to the use of time:

– Do you do ordinary actions in a spiritual manner, only in view of God and his pleasure? (III).

– Do you do all your actions as perfectly as you know they ought to be done? (VIII).

– Be satisfied with what you can do, as God is satisfied with this. But do not spare yourself with regard to what you can do with grace. You must believe that, provided you are willing, you can do more with the grace of God than you think (X).

Not to be able to fathom out the mystery of his constantly repeated actions can be a source of great frustration and discouragement for a Lasallian educator. It can even lead him to mediocrity in his ministry

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since he does not put all his heart and soul into what he does.

The Founder's advice is impressive:

"Never be sad with the bad kind of sadness to be found in the world which comes from a lack of mortification and from displeasure at having what one does not want, or not having what one would like to have" (Collection: With regard to the exercises and actions of the day, XIV).

4. THE EVERYDAY REPETITION OF ACTIONS AND ESCHATOLOGY

"By the words of salvation which (he must) address them each day" (M 39, 2), he has made the plan of salvation of Jesus Christ a reality for each of the children and has presented them thus redeemed to the Father:

"That perfect man who is Christ come to full stature...as part of the structure of the Church, built by your care into a temple to become the dwelling place for God in the Spirit" (MTR 205, 3)

He will have known "how to strengthen (his) disciples in the Christian spirit" (MTR 207, 3).

He will be able to say to the Lord that he has truly fulfilled his ministry (MTR 205, 3).

The conclusion of the Founder's theological considerations on the educational mission of the Brother is really moving. Abandoning his austere style, he becomes lyrical:

"Oh, how fortunate you ought to consider yourselves, to be working in the field of the Lord!...Devote yourselves, then, with zeal and affection to your work" (MTR 207, 1).

"With joy, then, say as he (St. Paul) does, that the greatest cause of your consolation in this life is to announce the Gospel free of charge" (MTR 207, 2).

"Ah, what a thrill of joy you will get when you hear the voices of those whom you have led almost by the hand into heaven!" (MTR 208, 3).

CONCLUSION

"The Brother is invited to be open each day to the presence of the living God in such a way that he discovers it, and lives it in his mission, his consecration and his community life" (R 100).

"That by their very lives the Brothers give testimony to the presence of God among people, to the liberating force of his Spirit, and to the tenderness of his love" (R 85).

"The entire life of the Brothers is transformed by the presence of the Lord who calls, consecrates, sends and saves" (R 21).

"Our lives should speak 'God' to all we contact" (Br. John Johnston, Superior General, Pastoral Letter January 1st 1987, p. 31)

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23 - 12 – C - 101

VOCATION MINISTRY:

A HIGH SCHOOL MODEL

Brother Robert Shea

Mike is given a choice of what high school to attend by his parents, as his brothers were. It is not a difficult decision for him to make. Most of his friends are going to La Salle High and he wants to join them.

During his Freshman Orientation Program, Mike is given the usual information about his class schedule, the school regulations, bookstore hours, available student activities and sports. He is also given an introduction to the men who are charged with the administration of the school and who are on the teaching staff – The Christian Brothers. He finds the Brothers a curious group especially since he had been so used to having primarily women as teachers in elementary school. He listens attentively as the Brother Principal speaks about St. La Salle and how the Brothers managed to land in the USA and how they came to his city and high school.

His first year at La Salle is full of new experiences. Having the usual freshman jitters, Mike gets lost a couple of times, loses a few books, finds he is swamped with homework and lives for the weekend football games! Mike finds high school is very different from grade school and he loves it! His religion class is different, too. Once every eight weeks or so, the topic covered in class has to do with choosing a vocation. This year Mike learns that as Christians we are all «Called to Faith». This same topic is used for a Day of Reflection conducted by the Campus Ministry Staff which is held in the Brothers' Residence. This is Mike's first look inside the community where the Brothers live and he is surprised to find how much it seems like a regular house. When the first issue of the school newspaper is published Mike can hardly wait to get home to show it to his parents. His name is mentioned in the sports section for an outstanding touchdown he made for the Frosh Football Team. Mike also notices an article about the recent graduates who have joined a program sponsored by the Brothers called Aspirancy. In May Mike feels very much at home in his new surroundings so when a school Liturgy is scheduled he knows exactly where his class sits in the Gym and what the procedure is for the reception of communion. This Mass is a bit different from the others that he has attended because it is in honor of the founder of the Brothers. He is told that the graduates sitting with the Brothers are considering the option of Brotherhood and are known as Aspirants. The Aspirants sing a song in French with the Brothers at the end of Mass. Mike has no idea what the tune is about, but he is impressed with the gusto with which it is sung!

Sophomore year is full of idealism and a great deal more comfortability for Mike. He now knows his way around the school and he enjoys being able to help the new freshmen find their classes. Mike has Brother John for English and likes the way he teaches. In fact, he admires all of the Brothers that he has met. He finds them friendly and willing to help. He even sees them at games and dances. One day, Brother John invites Mike and a few of his friends over to the house for a Coke and Oreo cookies after intramurals. Because of the Days of Reflection, Mike already feels at home in the house. Mike kids Brother John about having it «so nice» and Brother John fires back with a smile, «You'll enjoy it one day!» Mike laughs at the suggestion, but knows in his heart that the idea of considering the Brotherhood is not so far fetched. This year in his religion class the vocation theme is that we are all «Called to be Church». Once again Mike finds the theme being carried over into the annual Day of Reflection for his homeroom. The school newspaper once again has an article about recent graduates who have joined the Aspirancy and several who have actually joined the community and moved to a place called Jersey House, which is described as a House of Studies for the young Brothers. Mike is struck by the fact that he actually knows some of the recent graduates who have joined the Aspirancy Program. He had no idea that they were interested in exploring the possibility of Brotherhood. From the list of graduates in the paper, Mike concludes that there is not a special «type» of person who considers religious life. He wonders who will be listed in the paper next year when he is a Junior. This May Mike is aware of how proud the Brothers are of their Founder and he looks forward to hearing them sing «their song» again. Once again, he notices that a number of graduates have joined the Brothers for the Liturgy and they all seem to know that song sung in French!

Junior year begins with the realization that high school is already half over! Mike realizes that he is beginning the process of thinking about colleges and what he is going to do with his life. He is concerned about the PSAT's and the SAT's in the spring. He hopes to do well. He would like to go to college but has no firm idea of what he would like to study. Perhaps it will be pre-law; maybe business. His friend,

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Brother John, sees him one day when they both have a break and asks him how he is doing. Mike shares with him his confusion about the direction of his life beyond high school. «Ever consider the Brotherhood as a possibility?» The question really doesn't surprise Mike, but he acts starled and says «Well, sure, I guess – but I don't think that I could make that sort of commitment!» Brother John says that he understands and explains the nature of the Aspirancy Program. «Just stay open to the idea and we'll talk again» he concludes. Mike is very pleased that Brother John thought enough of him to suggest that he had the potential to consider the Brothers as an option. He puts the idea in the back of his head. Every time that he goes to the house for a Day of Reflection or just for a visit he now thinks, «Maybe I will be here one day myself.» The annual St. La Salle Liturgy is especially meaningful this year. The young Aspirants with the Brothers are becoming more and more familiar as he gets closer to them in age. Mike wonders if he will be there one day singing with the Brothers. The periodic theme in religion class this year is that we are all «Called to Discipleship». The discussions help Mike focus on the possibilities of service to others and what that might mean for his life, no matter what vocation he chooses.

Mike can hardly believe that his senior year has begun. Where did the time go? He experiences all of the normal anxieties of «senioritis» regarding SAT scores and colleges applications, intended majors, financial considerations, etc. Brother John sees him in the early fall and talks to him again about the Aspirancy Program. Brother suggests that Mike sign up for an interview when the Vocation Director visits the school in November. Mike is open to learning more about the option of religious life so he agrees to the suggestion. After his chat with the Vocation Director Mike is invited to attend a January DISCOVERY retreat at the Brothers' Spiritual Center a few hours away from La Salle. Between the interview and the retreat Mike has several religion classes devoted to the theme «We are Called to Ministry». During a visit to his school, Mike is introduced to several Aspirants from a different city and he begins a correspondence with them. They are just a year older than he is and he finds that he enjoys their company. The DISCOVERY retreat was a special experience for him and Mike feels as though he would like to give the Aspirancy a try. In the very early spring Mike participates in the Candidate Assessment Program with several others from his class. His parents have been contacted by the Vocation office and by the Brothers of his high school so that they are included in the process of helping Mike determine what his future may be. After Mike hears from the Vocation Director that his personality profile fits that of a person who would find religious life growthful, he accepts the offered application for the Aspirancy and promises to return the papers to Brother John as soon as he has a chance.

In May, Mike receives word through Brother John that he has been accepted into the Aspirancy Program. A few days later he receives a letter from the Provincial «officially» welcoming him into the Initial Formation program. Mike is very pleased that all has worked out so well for him, as are his parents. The entire family is invited along with the families of the other Aspirants from La Salle High to a Liturgy and dinner with the Brothers in their community in the late spring. Everyone is made to feel very much at home and Mike is even convinced that he made the right choice in applying to the program. At graduation time, Mike receives a card signed by all of the Brothers from his high school which he displays prominently on the mantel above the fireplace at home.

In August, after having met with his Aspirancy Coordinator twice, Mike is driven to the Christian Brothers' Spiritual Center with other young men he knows from his school and from neighboring schools. Some of the new Aspirants he had met already on the Discovery Retreat the previous January or at the cookout sponsored by the Brothers of the city a few weeks ago. During the first few days of the retreat for new Aspirants, Mike and the others are taught the French song that he has heard so often at school Liturgies. He is pleased that he finally knows, «Honneur a Toi». As he sings it at the closing liturgy of his retreat he hopes that he will be able to remember the words for the Mass at La Salle next spring when he will be invited back to sit with the Brothers and sing the song during the Founder's Celebration. Something tells him that he will remember and that he will be proud to be counted among those known as Aspirants.

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23 - 13 – C - 102

MANAGEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (1/2)

Bro. Robert McCann

It is good to be here with you at this First Lasallian Workshop of the Baltimore Dictrict. I congratulate Brother Joseph Mahon and all of you here present since what you are doing these days is something very important for each of your schools. We are in the process of developing in each of our schools that "spirit" which we can identify as Lasallian. At the last General Chapter of the Brothers, it was suggested that we begin to develop this Lasallian spirit in our schools. You might ask the question, "Why now?". This certainly is a legitimate question. The answer stems from Vatican II which asked each religious community to reexamine their traditions and to return to the spirit of their founders and foundresses. Over the years there had been a straying away from traditions and now we were being called back. For the Christian Brothers, we have spent the last several years in this search, in a sense refounding the Institute by reexamining who de La Salle was and looking at ways to make him alive today in our lives and in our schools. As far as our schools are concerned, we refer to this new development as the Lasallianization of our schools. This does not mean to return to the school of the 17th century, but rather to look at de La Salle's directions and to make them applicable today. As far as we in the United States are concerned, we began this process with the Huether Workshop of 1984 when we developed the "Characteristics of a Lasallian School". This booklet has been the cornerstone for your work these days as it has been for schools and faculties in other districts of the United States and Canada.

My part in your management program is the topic of Management. You have already covered the topics of Teacher as Minister and Association. When we look at the word Management, we ask two questions: 1. what does it mean, and 2. why are we using this particular word today?

First, Webster defines Management as:
– the act or art of managing
– the conducting or supervising of something such as a business
– the judicious use of means to accomplish an end
– the collective body of those who manage or direct an enterprise.

We have here two concepts: one is an action... the conducting, supervising, controlling, directing... and the other, the person or persons who do the conducting, supervising, direction, and controlling. I am going to use both of these concepts in my talk. I will talk about activities of managing a school and the people who do it.

The second thing we needed to examine was how we, as Lasallians, were using the word management. This is the historical part of the talk and brings us back to the time of De La Salle. Briefly, when de La Salle started his Christian schools, he put all his efforts into the teachers. He believed strongly in the concept that **good teachers make good schools**. You must remember that there was no such educational program as a teacher training school. Teachers of the 17th century can best be classified as hand-me-downs. If one couldn't do anything else, you taught. Many were seminarians who did not complete studies for the priesthood. Others were just do-gooders who wanted to help children. Some were money seekers. These were people who had a little education, especially in the area of writing who called themselves Writing Masters. They would do tutoring for money. I don't want this aspect to sound bad, but it was how they did it that was bad. It was an exploitation rather than a profession. Along comes de La Salle who sees the need for the Christian School. He saw a problem and responded to it. What was the problem? Boys running around wild in the streets getting into trouble. Boys with no goals or values. Boys who did not know Christ or the tenets of their religion. Boys whose futures were bleak. De La Salle wanted to do something for these boys to change their lives. Christian Education was the answer de La Salle came up with and Christian Education was what de La Salle began to deliver to them. Since he could not do it himself, he literally goes out to the streets and gets some men who in some way believe in his dream and are willing to join him. Here de La Salle begins the process of training teachers. This was the start of the Teacher Training School and the professional beginning of the Christian Schools. As a side, since this was not mentioned by previous speakers, de La Salle had not the intention of starting a religious community. His plan was to train teachers to teach in the Christian Schools. It was only later that the idea of a religious community arose. It is also good to remember that de La Salle's schools were called Christian Schools. The two words were always used together. When he did form his religious community, he gave his teachers the title of Brother, not from a religious context that we know today, but rather from the fact that he wanted them to be like older brothers to their students. This led to the name of the community, the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In his training of the teachers/Brothers, he used his own experience as well as what he learned in the Christian Schools. He himself was in a learning mode. Slowly he began to see what worked and what did not work. Over a period of time, he established an order and system for use in the Christian school and the classroom. This strict order was needed since his teacher/Brothers were not well educated and certainly had no teaching experience. He had to make things very simple but orderly. In the later years of his life, he called his chief Brothers together and together they wrote the **Management / Conduct of Schools**. The word Conduct comes from the French word **conduite** which is the noun form of the word **conduire** to conduct or guide. Given the context of this book, it is clear that conduite denotes the manner in which something is done, executed, carried out, or conducted. As such and in context, it might well be translated as "management". Now we have the latest research, and it seems that the word **conduct** is a better translation. The word conduct follows the example of the orchestra leader conducting the orchestra. We will let the experts decide whether the word should be conduct or management. Going back to the book on Management written by de La Salle and his Brothers, the title of the book (in French) is **La Conduite des ecoles chretiennes.** I bring to your attention again the use of the words Christian Schools... always used together. This book became the Bible for the de La Salle Christian Schools. It is very detailed as to the duties of the teacher and

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the duties of the students. It is so full of goodies that I hesitate to even mention some since in your excitement about this book that you will be running out to get a copy of it. However, just to whet your appetite, let me quote a few ideas.

a. Getting to know your students...

1. At the time of enrollment the Brother shall ask the person who presents him for the student's name and surname, the names of his father and mother, or the person in charge of him, the latter's occupation, dwelling with the street address and the name of the parish to which he belongs. Also the child's age, whether he has made his first communion and been confirmed. Whether he was in school before, and if so, where and under whom; why he left this school –wehether it was for misbehavior or because he was punished... He should ask about the child's good and bad habits, whether he suffers from any physical defect or illness, especially whether he has scrofula, the itch, epilepsy or some other infirmity which might be communicable... the Brother shall also inquire how long it has been since the child went to confession, and whether he goes frequently; whether he consorts with dubious characters; he shall also ask the child whether he sleeps alone, or with someone else, and if so, with whom...

2. One thing that can contribute much to the maintenance of order in the schools is that there be well kept registers. Each teacher will have a register in the form of a book containing twenty-four leaves, two for each month, upon which will be inscribed the names of the pupils of his class, according to the section of each grade in which they are...

(This knowledge of each student is to allow the teacher to better understand the student and hence to better prepare his lessons. **De La Salle in his Meditations for Time of Retreat** refers to Good Shepherd as a model for the Brother/teacher since a good shepherd knows his sheep and his sheep know him.)

b. Jobs for the students

1. The reciter of prayers
2. The keeper of Rosaries
3. The bell ringer
4. The distributor and collector of papers
5. The doorkeeper
6. The keeper of the key

The keeper of the key will be at the door of the school punctually every day before half past seven in the morning and before one o'clock in the afternoon. He will not give the key to any other pupil without the permission of the Brother who is in charge of this school... He should be chosen from among those who are the most assiduous at school and who never miss.

c. Asking questions

In order to make them understand what he is teaching them, he will ask several pupils, one after another, the same question. Sometimes he will ask it of seven or eight... He will question the pupils according to the order of the benches. If, however, he remarks that several, one after another, cannot answer the question or do not do so well, he may call upon one or several out of the regular order and in different parts of the class... He will question all his pupils each day, several times, even, if he is able to do so. However, from time to time, he will interrupt the regular order and the sequence to question those whom he observed to be inattentive, or even the more ignorant.

These are a few examples of how explicit the book is and how little details are important. It certainly speaks loud and clear to the concept of the needs of each child. Getting to know them, rewarding with jobs and teaching responsibility and trying to get all the students involved in the lessons. Remember this book was written nearly 300 years ago.

Let us now turn our attention to the present day Lasallian school and look at the two concepts of management... the action and the actor... the program and the programer...

In the booklet the "Characteristics of a Lasallian School" the second on Management has four areas of concern:

a. The teaching mission of the Church and the giving of Christian instruction
b. Quality education... academic excellence
c. School environment
d. Teaching the poor... concern for the poor.

We who are Christian Catholic Educators in a Christian Catholic School share in the teaching mission of the Church. We do not teach in isolation. We are not islands unto ourselves. We are part of the Church. We are part of the local Church. As such, we teach with the permission and the support of the Bishop and for those who teach in a parish school, you teach with the permission and support of the local pastor. As sharers in the teaching mission of the Church, we profess to be Catholic/Christian, both in our classroom intruction and in our management of the school. This is important to look at and digest since there is much being written today about the value of our Catholic school system. People are asking the question as to why we are in existence. Right now I want to say something, that if you don't remember anything else I say tonight, you will remember this... **there is no reason for your school to be in existence today, if it is not catholic...** I repeat there is no reason for your school to be in existence today if it is not Catholic. Our schools must be an alternative educational system from the public school system. I feel strongly that we do not have a choice in this. **This is a given**. The document entitled, "The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School" issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education of April 7, 1988, the feast of St. de La Salle states:

> ... the distinguishing characteristic of a Catholic school is *«The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love. It tries to guide the adolescents in such a way that personality development goes hand in hand with the development of the "new creature" that each one has become through Baptism. It tries to relate all of human culture to the good news of salvation so that the light of faith will illumine everything that the students will gradually come to learn about the world, about life and about the human person.»*

It is the Christian spirit that permeates the school that makes it the special place it should be.

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23 - 14 – C - 103

MANAGEMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (2/2)

Brother Robert McCann

It is the Christian spirit that permeates the school that makes it the special place it should be.

If you ever get the opportunity to visit other schools on a middle states review, etc., do it. It is a great learning experience. From the moment you put your foot into the school, you get a feel for the school. It does not take long to know if there is a Christian atmosphere in the school. Let me give you two examples that I experienced in visiting a school, not in the Baltimore province. I arrived at the school just as school was beginning, and I went to the office. I was greeted by a joyful secretary, who first of all, knew I was coming, and secondly, welcomed me graciously. She indicated that the principal was with some parents, and would I like to take a seat as he would be with me as soon as he finished. In the meantime, would I like a cup of coffee, and here is our yearbook from last year. It will give you a good picture of the school. She could not do enough for me. I felt very welcomed and that feeling came through during the day in many other ways. The second example is I arrived at a school around one o'clock in the afternoon. I walked into the lobby of the administration area, and to my left was an opening with a secretary, sitting with her back to the opening, typing away. Straight ahead was another secretary also typing. Sitting around were a few students. I stood there awhile and finally the secretary in front looked up and saw me. I was dressed in my Brothers black suit and white collar. I introduced myself and asked for the Principal. The answer I received was, I don't know where he is. He was here a few minutes ago. End of conversation. Thank God, the Principal came along, because I don't know what I would have done. I hope the two examples speak for themselves. The Christian atmosphere must exist in the entire school, and it must be exhibited by all, from the Principal to the people who work in the cafeteria. (I'm not putting these people at the bottom of the ladder, but only using them as an example.)

There are two types of religious intruction that takes place in the school. The first is the classroom lesson. Another of my strong convictions, is that Religion should be taught an equal amount of time as the other major subjects. The classroom instruction should be professional and theological. Where there is area for discussion and interpretation that is fine, but where there is dogma, it is set. The classroom instruction should clear up confusion and not make for more.

The second area of instruction is the Campus Ministry program, or the action arm of the classroom instruction. A strong viable campus ministry program with appropriate liturgical services, spiritual direction, sacramental availability, and outreach service programs is vital to the Christian atmosphere of the school. In these types of programs, the students are learning by doing and observing. A very valued form of education.

De La Salle always wanted to be part of the Church. He had a great loyalty to the Church. So much so that he sent one of his closest advisors and most trusted Brothers, Brother Gabriel Drolin, to open a school in Rome as a measure of his attachment for the Holy Father.

A Lasallian School is Catholic quality education and academic excellence going hand in hand together. Anything short of this is unprofessional, and in a sense, unjust. I am not talking about having a school only for the academically talented. I am talking about having an excellent school that is meeting the needs of its students. The academic program in a school should be developed for all students. Each student should be educated to the best of his/her ability, and if college is in the future for the student, then he/she should be prepared for it. If the world of work is in the future for the student, then the student should be prepared for it. Our students should experience success... this means they should be pushed as far as they can go... but they should be successful at whatever level they are performing. This is not easy when you have a two or three track system, and a teacher that is teaching on all tracks. It is not easy to shift gears from one period to the next. But let us put it in the area of justice. Are not all students, the gifted and the normal, the 140 IQ and the 95 IQ, paying the same tuition? Therefore, each should be taught in the best possible way. Listen to what de La Salle said in the 17th century. "The directors of each house or the Inspector of Schools must keep a very exact vigilance over all their teachers... and make sure that they carefully apply themselves to teach their students, that they neglect none of them, and that their concern be equal toward all, even greater toward the slowest and most neglected". What makes this especially Lasallian... isn't this what every school should be doing. Sure every school should be doing it, but the question is, do they? If you want to be a Lasallian School you have no choice but to do it. De La Salle's concern for the individual student is part and parcel for the existence of the school. The role of management, the administration, the guidance department, is to know the school population and program wisely. The role of the teacher is to prepare well and be concerned for each and every student. To reach out to the one in need. To touch the hearts of your students. This is Lasallian. Closely associated with the concept of academic excellence is the school environment. Without a positive school environment academic excellence cannot be achieved. What is this positive environment? I believe it is one whereby the students can grow academically, socially, and spiritually. It is one where there is order, discipline, concern, and love. A place where responsible behavior is not only encouraged but expected. It is a happy place, a place where the students want to be. De La Salle reminded his teachers that they had a grave responsibility of making the school attractive. He pointed out that if the children were learning and liked their classes, they themselves would put pressure on their parents to keep them in school. This would often be successful, he said, because, "parents desire only what their children desire, so it will be enough that the children desire to come to school for their parents to be satisfied to send them there". Did you ever stop and think how much of a teenager's life is spent in school or at school activities each day, each week, each year? It can range from 7 hours a day to over 12 hours for those involved in sports or plays, etc. Add to this the time spent doing homework and then add the 8 hours they should be sleeping and you can see that there is very little "other" time left in their daily or weekly lives. If a student is not happy, then life is a bore, it is dull, it is a drag. What is left except drugs, alcohol, and even suicide. On the other hand if a student is happy and excited then life is worth living and the future can be bright. A Lasallian school is **alive.**

The final area I wish to address in this section is the concern for the poor, both the academically poor and the financially poor. Again there are two parts to this section, one is the education of

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the poor and the other is the education to understand the poor. The reason that de La Salle started his mission in the Church was for the poor. the financially poor. the neglected. the academically poor or the uneducated. He was conscious of the large number of boys roaming the streets and getting into trouble. He knew that one way to change this social disorder was through education... Christian education. He was in the true sense a social innovator. If he were alive today he would be in the category of Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King. Jr. He did things that no others wanted to do and he did it well. Can we carry on the same tradition in our schools? True. populations change. cultures change. but we still have the poor with us. Lasallian schools should reach out to the poor wherever possible. Lasallian schools should become creative in developing new ways to reach the poor. Equally important to the teaching of the poor is the teaching of social justice and developing programs whereby the students can reach out and touch the poor. Our students who come from families that are financially well off must be brought to the undestanding of those who have less and to learn what they can do to assist them. Most of our schools have programs that allow the students to touch the poor. I don't have to explain them to you. But I do want to emphasize the importance of these programs for a truly Lasallian school. Needless to say it is the role of the management to assure that these programs are in place. for a truly Lasallian school is concerned for the poor.

As we conclude the section on management as action I now want to address the concept of management as people... in a sense the actor. the doer. the administrator. the teacher. Remember in the definition of management it included the people who do the managing. I think this is a common use of the term since we refer to the people at the top as management. I sense that in a school setting there are several levels of management. In the eyes of the faculty. it is the principal. In the eyes of the students. it is the teacher and the dean of students. In the eyes of the parents it could be the guidance counsellors. Here. however. I want to look at the chief administrator and his/her team as management. I want to again refer to the book of de La Salle. **The Conduct of Schools**. In the preface written by Brother Timothy it states. "this method has been prepared and put in order only after a great number of conferences between him (de La Salle) and the oldest and most capable teachers among the Brothers of the Institute. and after several years of experience. Nothing has been added that has not been thoroughly deliberated and well tested and of which the advantages and disadvantages have not been weighed and is so far as possible the good and bad consequences have not been foreseen". This example of de La Salle of calling together those who had lived the experience of teaching. to assist in the writing of the book gives us the model to work from. School administrators should call forth the expertise that is present within the faculty to assist in the developing of new policies and procedures. This is what we refer to today as collegiality. a working together. When the chief administrator reaches out to the faculty and staff and invites them to participate in decision making. the faculty usually responds by accepting the decision and implementing it.

Collegiality also can take place in other levels of the school such as the department chairpersons and the departments. the athletic director and the coaches. the academic and student affairs counsels and the students. even the parents' organizations and the chief administrators. Collegiality helps to make a "happy" school.

Collegiality. however. does not take away from the role of the chief administrator. De La Salle was very strong about the role of the principal and his authority. He was the one to supervise the teachers and to control what was taking place in the school. So as we look at the concept of collegiality in a school we must also look at the role of the principal in supervising the teachers. Of all de La Salle did and said. nothing was more important than making sure that the teachers are professional and well trained and do their special ministry to the best of their ability. In each school the principal. or if he could not do it. then there was the Inspector of Schools or the Master Teacher who worked with the teachers. The schools were very structured. The students knew what they had to do. The teachers knew what they had to do. The principals knew what they had to do. It was like a well-oiled machine when all parts worked well.

There were good reasons for this structure. The students came from an unstructured existence. The teachers/Brothers were untrained and new. The structure was needed to carry the program and in the process the students learned. The role of the principal was to see that this structure was carried out. This is the prime example of the maxim that de La Salle believed in. **good teachers make good schools.** If there is any weakness that I have found lately in our schools. it is in the area of teacher supervision. and teacher development. Yearly we have new teachers coming into our schools and these and inexperienced teachers need the support and assistance from masters. Too often we expect the new teacher to walk into the classroom and take over and do all things right. Generally we even give them Freshmen homerooms and classes and together they can go down the tubes. Many of our new teachers today are coming from college programs that are not teaching oriented. They know their academic material but they have had no experience as teachers. They do not know the simple classroom management techniques. Why am I saying all of this? If our schools are to be truly Lasallian then we are looking at well trained teachers. Management in a school. the chief administrators must give time and energy to the development of the teachers. I would like to see today in our schools a Master Teacher. someone like the old Inspector of Schools. whose only responsibility is assisting teachers in their own development. This is what a Lasallian school should be. This is a responsibility of management.

So as we look at the management of schools. in particular Lasallian schools. we look at the two sides of the word management... the action... the actor. We saw the conducting of Christian, professional schools. where academic excellence is striven for, where the environment is conducive to the development of happy and healthy adolescents. where the concerns of the poor are addressed. as the ideal. If de La Salle were alive today would he feel at home in your school? We saw the chief administrators, the assistant administrators. the teachers. the staff. and the students forming a Christian community whereby each is concerned for and respectful of each other. The core of Christian Schools (Lasallian) is the teacher. The role of the teacher is to touch the hearts of the students. by this we mean we have to make a difference in their lives. In a recently completed study of the schools of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Sister Mary Ann Eckhoff states. «One key finding is that "parents value and believe their children benefit from strong academic programs. a caring and disciplined learning atmosphere. religious faith development. positive role models for educators and a school/community family orientation". The integration of religion into the entire school day is highly valued by parents even if it is not often explicitly stated».

The above could be a definition of a Lasallian school. All Catholic schools have similar philosophies. but it is in the carrying out of the philosophy where we should be Number 1. We should give the example as to how it is done. Why... simply because we are the daughters and sons of de La Salle. We are Lasallian. He is our Founder. He is the Founder of the Christian Schools. He is the Patron of Teachers. He achieved his sanctity in the school setting as did Brother Miguel and Brother Benilde... we can too.

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23 - 15 – C - 104

THE THREE PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LASALLIAN EDUCATOR

KNOWLEDGE, TEACHING SKILLS PASTORAL CONCERN

Br. Jose Maria Valladolid

In order to be able to exercise his ministry as a Christian educator fulfilling faithfully the will of God, the Lasallian educator must possess a certain kind of spirit: in simple terms, the spirit of Christianity, that is to say, faith. Faith, however, is revealed in charity, or in other words, through love. The love of the Christian educator is zeal for the salvation of the souls of children. To fulfil their ministry, Brothers make a commitment to live and to run schools "together and by association", and this community dimension complements the faith and zeal of the Brother.

From a professional point of view, the ministry in its turn requires the Christian educator to combine three characteristics: knowledge, teaching skills and pastoral concern.

1. At the beginning of the Institute

John Baptist de La Salle and his first teachers (who soon became Brothers), through a process of personal and shared reflection, discovered progressively what the characteristics should be of an educator in a Christian school.

They came to understand that their work was a "mission" entrusted to them by the Church and to which God called them. They realised also that their work in school was a "ministry" because it served to extend the Kingdom of God. And they discovered that the Christian school demanded of them a total commitment and that to devote themselves to it they had to consecrate their whole life to God.

They understood likewise that as teachers they had to combine in their persons three inseparable characteristics. They had to:

1.– possess knowledge in order to pass it on to children;
2.– be competent teachers in order to teach well and ensure each child made progress;
3.– be filled with a burning zeal in order to guide them in the spirit of Christianity.

They had, therefore, to have knowledge, know how to teach and be apostles. All three things together.

These three elements characterised the Brother as an educator. It would have been unthinkable for a Brother not to have a thorough grasp of the material he was teaching. Nor would it have been conceivable for a Brother not to use the methods devised and and adopted by everyone, which were contained in the Conduct of Schools, and which thus had become the "rule" where teaching was concerned. In the same way, it would have been impossible to imagine a Brother incapable of educating his pupils in the Gospel values.

In the beginning, the knowledge required of a teacher by the Christian school was quite elementary: reading, writing, arithmetic, singing (Gregorian chant), politeness, Christian doctrine...none of which called for extensive studies.

Very soon, however, standards rose, and the teacher needed to know more and be more skilful. At the first Seminary for teachers which De La Salle set up at Rheims, the young men spent several months there or even "several years till they were completely trained as much in piety as in the requirements of their work...They were taught to sing, read and write perfectly" (Memoir on the Habit).

These young men were not due to become Brothers, but lay teachers in village schools. It is logical to suppose that Brothers also were trained in piety, teaching methods and in the subjects they would have to teach.

Very soon, and already in the lifetime of the Founder, certain Brothers had to undergo more thorough training in order to teach at more advanced levels or other subjects. For example, there were those who ran the Seminary for teachers, those who looked after the Irish nobles, or who had to teach crafts at the Rue Princesse and St. Yon. These too had to possess these three characteristics: knowledge, teaching skills and apostolic zeal.

2. Historical evolution

As time went on, the Institute had constantly to adapt its ministry to the needs of the times. It extended its teaching over the whole educational range from schools for very young pupils to post-secondary and university establishments. The subjects or disciplines children and young people had to study increased greatly in number as did the level of knowledge.

In our times, whatever the school, teachers need a great deal of training in order to master the special subject they will be teaching. They have to restrict themselves to a single subject or at the very best to one or two closely related subjects. Competence in a specialised field calls for constant updating on the part of the teacher if he does not want to find himself out of his depth.

And so in our days, one can no longer imagine a teacher teaching all subjects except at a very elementary level. Very often, being a teacher implies specialisation in one subject.

In his work, a teacher cannot separate his knowledge from his teaching skills. While it is important to know one's subject thoroughly, it is equally important to be an expert in the art of teaching. This is really the second specialised subject of every teacher. To know many things but not be able to communicate them might be a reasonable position for a scientist or a researcher, but not for a teacher.

The two characteristics already described are necessary for all teachers. But for a Christian teacher, and above all for

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a teacher in a Lasallian educational centre, a third characteristic is absolutely necessary: that of being an apostle.

Quite a widespread attitude in some places is to concentrate on the areas of knowledge and teaching skills and to leave apostolic considerations to one side. Some members of educational communities think there should be a diversity of functions. They say: "I concentrate on my specialised subject. As for the apostolate and religious training, that's the job of the person responsible for pastoral care or for teaching religion. The same person cannot at one and the same time specialise in everything."

The reasoning seems to be quite convincing, but it is based on a false principle. It ignores the fact that the "Christian teacher", at whatever level he teaches, is a single person who combines at the same time knowledge, teaching skills and commitment to the apostolate. If this last characteristic is missing, he is merely a teacher (a most commendable profession, certainly), but he is not a "Christian educator".

3. Education in the faith and the pastoral ministry of education

In the Christian school, every teacher is called to be a "Christian educator", even if he does not teach religion. To educate children and young people in a Christian way means to help them assimilate Gospel values.

In the Christian school, there is no single person specifically responsible for communicating these values: it is the whole teaching body collectively and as individuals that is responsible for this mission. Consequently, every teacher, whether he specialises in science, the arts or technology, is also at the same time a teacher of the faith for his pupils.

Teaching the faith to a young person does not consist above all in teaching him the contents of religion, but rather helping him live in relation to God, his fellow men, nature, in accordance with human and Christian values. This is valid for all Christians even if their knowledge of their faith is very restricted.

It is logical for a pupil in a Christian school, who fills his head with knowledge, to get to know his own faith to the same degree and to grow in it. The intellectual content of religion may be the area of competence of the teacher of religion, but he is not the only one who educates in the faith: this is the responsibility of the whole teaching staff.

Quite often nowadays, for a person to become a religion teacher he has to specialise in theology and catechetics. But to be an educator in the faith requires also expertise in the pastoral ministry of education. We are speaking here of the two quite distinct but related dimensions of the Christian training of the child and young person: that of religious knowledge, and that of practising the faith.

The religion teacher is responsible for the first dimension, but no teacher should neglect the second, the pastoral ministry of education, which embraces much more than " religious" training or religion lessons. The pastoral ministry of education is a part of everything the Christian teacher does in a Christian school. It is present in the classroom, through the atmosphere he creates, the values he communicates, the criteria which govern what he teaches; through his attitude towards science, the world and children; through his relations with pupils and other teachers; through his approachability and closeness to pupils; through his "tender love" for the children and young people entrusted to him; by the advice and help he gives; by his willingness to come to the help of those most in need; by his spiritual life centred on his ministry and the souls of children.

All this, and many other things, is what constitutes the pastoral ministry of a Christian school. To this can be added school and extracurricular activities whose aim is to help children and young people live their faith more intensely and communicate it to others by apostolic activities suited to their age: religious events, prayer groups, meetings and retreats, catechist groups, help for the needy, activities offering help on a human and Christian level...

4. Suitable training for the teacher

The training of a Lasallian teacher must, therefore, include these three elements. Normally, most attention is given to acquisition of knowledge, less to teaching skills, and much less to pastoral concern.

With regard to pedagogical skills, the first Brothers were able to "compose together" the Conduct of Schools. It contained norms based on experience and adapted according to what experience showed to be necessary. There came a time when, because situations had become so diverse, the Conduct was relegated to the archives and the Lasallian style of education came to consist in what each individual thought was the best way to achieve certain specific results. What a pity! How many schools are there where teachers have come together and agreed upon a common approach to methodology and pedagogy?

It is true that much has been done to draw up "school educational programmes". But this is only the first step. What still needs to be done is to study, formulate and assimilate the Lasallian style of education by making it an active and living factor in each educational community.

As far as the pastoral ministry of education is concerned, to what extent is each Brother and each lay teacher in a Christian school involved in it? Quite probably, when we examine ourselves on this point, we feel an urgent need to start or update our training in the spiritual, pastoral and apostolic field. The kind of training needed by each Brother and each Lasallian teacher is one that enables him to be a real expert in the pastoral ministry of education just as he is in the subject he teaches and in the methods he uses to teach it.

The basis of this pastoral training must be an intense spiritual life centred on the charism of Christian education; a spirituality permeated with the "spirit" of faith and zeal, lived and communicated within the context of the educational community. The primary source of nourishment for this spiritual formation is without doubt the meditations St. John Baptist de La Salle wrote for us, and especially those written for the Time of Retreat. These contain a synthesis of a profound theology of education which he intended not only for teaching religious but for all Christian teachers.

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WHAT IS DEMANDED OF US BY OUR ASSOCIATION (1/2)

«Juntos», n° 89
District of Central America

1. "Together and by association" (R 47)

- Inspired and sustained by the experience of the Founder (R 47).

47. John Baptist de La Salle was led to found a community of men who, enlightened by God and sharing in his plan of salvation, associated together to respond to the needs of young people who were poor and far from salvation. Even today, each of the Brothers' communities finds in this event a fundamental source of inspiration.

- We make a VOW of
  - Association FOR...
  - Association WITH...

42. By this vow they commit themselves to remain in the Institute in order to accomplish its specific mission and to live in fraternal and apostolic communion with their Brothers, faithful to the Institute and to its spirit, to their Brothers and to those they serve in their ministry.

39. By the vow of association for the service of the poor hrough education, the Brothers commit themselves, as their Founder did, to conduct as a community schools or other centres of Christian education accessible to the poor. They develop educational methods that promote above all the social betterment of ordinary classes of people.

39a. The solidarity among the Brothers that results from their vow of association for the service of the poor through education gives support to the apostolic activity of the Institute.

- "Having EVERYTHING IN COMMON" (R 32)

32. By their poverty lived according to the Gospel, the Brothers become poor in order to follow Christ who was poor and in order to serve better all persons as their brothers, especially those most in need.

They are convinced that if they were to fill their hearts with the goods of this earth, they would close themselves off from God and become as strangers to the poor.

The spiritual journey of John Baptist de La Salle, their Father, as well as their solidarity with with people today and the needs of the Church, motivate the Brothers to cultivate within themselves the disposition of a poor person. By such a conversion, they witness to the fact that God is their only wealth.

The Brothers live simply as persons of ordinary means, having everything in common. They provide for the livelihood of the community through their work. They decide together the guidelines for the best use of their resources.

For this

- "Together and by association...in the Apostolate (R 16)

16. From the beginning of the Institute, the Brothers have fulfilled their mission "together and by association". Each Brother exercises his apostolate as a member of a community by whom he knows he is accepted, supported and entrusted with his mission.

The Brothers are in solidarity with their community, with their District and with the Institute as a whole. In fulfilling their ministry, whatever their individual assignment may be, they are contributing as a community to the unique mission of the Institute within the Church.

- "Together and by association...in the Congregation (R 25)

25. For this purpose, I...promise to unite myself and to remain in society with the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are associated to conduct, together and by association, schools for the service of the poor...wherever I may be sent and to do whatever I may be assigned by the body of the Society or its superiors.

- "Together and by association...in Community (R 48)

48. The distinctive character of the Brothers' community is to be a community where the experience of God is shared.

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2. "In and for a project"

- **What the Rule requires:**

– *From the central government* (R 117a)

117a. At the beginning of their mandate, the Brother Superior and his Councillors draw up a comprehensive programme which enables them to respond to what they discern to be the call of the Spirit or the needs of youth, and also to the decisions taken by the General Chapter.

This programme will distinguish between those responsibilities that are to be shared by the entire General Council and the specific duties to be assigned to each Councillor.

– *For the Regional Government* (R 127e)

127e. The Regional Coordinator fosters communication among the Brother Visitors of the Region, and supports them in their mission. He ensures that the Region remains in contact with the Brother Superior General. He follows up the application of decisions and programmes adopted for the Region as a whole. He also encourages cooperation and interdependence between it and the other Regions of the Institute.

The details of the Brother Regional Coordinator's functions are specified in each Region by the Conference of Brother Visitors or possibly by a Regional Assembly with the approval of the Brother Superior.

– *For the government of the District* (R 136 & 128)

136. The mission of the District Council is to promote the unity of the District and to assist the Brother Visitor in the exercise of his duties. Together they make plans for the progress of the District and they study how to face the problems that arise. Each year, the Brother Visitor undertakes with his Council, a fraternal evaluation of his own work and of the state of the District.

128. As an assembly of a pastoral and administrative nature, the District Chapter manifests the profound unity existing among the Brothers and permits their active participation, either directly or through their delegates, in the structures of reflection and decision in the District.

The District Chapter is convoked by the Brother Visitor. It evaluates the life of the District in all its aspects. It takes into account the local situation and it establishes a schedule of precise programmes for renewal, adaptation or growth to be implemented in the near future. The process of evaluation and of establishing new programmes is carried out according to the guidelines set by the Church and by the Institute.

Everything set down concerning the District Chapter applies equally to sub-Districts and Delegations according to the arrangements determined in their statutes.

- **To be more realistic and effective (R 58, 11 & 40a)**

58. The community provides the time and the means necessary to study how to apply the Rule to the actual circumstances in which it lives. It determines the decisions to be taken in response to questions concerning either the life of the community or its mission.

Exchanging views on these matters gives everyone the opportunity to express his thoughts and so to arrive at a unity of viewpoint and action.

11. John Baptist de La Salle was deeply moved by the way in which "the children of the artisans and the poor" were abandoned and left to themselves. As a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this fact in relation to God's plan of salvation, he came to discern in faith what God wanted the mission of the Institute to be.

In order to respond to this plan and to similar situations of distress the Institute desires to be present in the world of today as part of the Church's work in spreading the Gospel.

In its primary concern for the educational needs of the poor as they strive to become aware of their dignity and to be recognised as human beings and children of God, the Institute establishes, renews and diversifies its works according to what the kingdom of God requires.

40. The Brothers have always in view the promotion of justice in the light of the Gospel and the direct or indirect service of the poor as the preferred aspect of their ministry of education.

They work directly for the poor by providing an education for the economically deprived, victims of social injustice, delinquents and those neglected by the rest of society.

When the Brothers work with students from families that are more or less well off, they teach them their duties and responsibilities with regard to social justice and charity towards everyone.

The Brothers give special attention to their pupils who have difficulties at school, at home, or problems adjusting to society.

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WHAT IS DEMANDED OF US BY OUR ASSOCIATION (2/2)

«Juntos», n° 89
District of Central America

- **To see to the Formation:**

– *of the Brothers* (R 96a, 32, & 101a)

96a2. The first years in an active community, when there should be a plan designed either by the District or by the community to guide and accompany the Brother as he tries to become responsible for his own formation.

101a. Each Brother is invited to develop a personal formation programme. He has the primary responsibility for his own formation; thus he will live out more fully his vocation with his Brothers to the benefit of the educational mission he shares with them.

The need for continuing formation extends throughout the entire lifetime and to every aspect of the life of the Brother.

– *of the Community* (R 101b)

101b. The community is responsible for establishing an effective and ongoing programme for its own formation as a group. The evaluation of this plan forms part of the community's annual programme.

– *in the District* (R 101d & 88b)

101d. The Brother Visitor and his Council establish a comprehensive plan of continuing formation which caters for the particular needs of specific groups of Brothers within the District. They provide the Brothers who are reaching retiring age with the means to investigate new possibilities and acquire new skills. In this way, these Brothers are helped to continue doing apostolic work in a way that is consistent with their vocation.

The superiors take the necessary means to ensure that competent Brothers are put in charge of continuing formation in the District.

The Brothers in charge periodically evaluate the programmes and other projects established in the communities of the District. They ascertain as well the extent of active participation of each Brother in the work of renewal.

88b. Both initial and continuing formation are related to the overall programme of the District, thereby favouring the unity of the Brothers.

– *In the Institute* (R 101g)

101g. The Brother Superior and his Council are careful to promote programmes of continuing formation in the Institute, especially those designed to prepare Brothers to work in formation.

They ensure that the Brothers from the poorest Districts are enabled to participate regularly in the programmes of renewal established in the Institute.

- **And accompaniment...**(R 96a)

96a. The period of temporary vows must be closely supervised by the Brother Visitor and the Commission for Formation. Three stages merit special attention:

1. the time immediately after the novitiate when the Brother is preparing to exercise his mission as a teacher and an educator;

2. the first years in an active community when there should be a plan designed either by the District or by the community to guide and accompany the Brother as he tries to become responsible for his own formation;

3. the time immediately leading up to perpetual profession.

- **As an educational community of Brothers** (R 58a & 16a)

58a. At the beginning of each year and in a spirit of discernment, the Brothers establish or revise their annual community programme.

Everything that forms part of the life of the community is taken into account in making up this programme: its life of prayer and its apostolic commitments, its brotherhood, its relationships with outsiders and its internal organisation, its provision for continuing formation and its recreational activities.

This community programme takes into account the guidelines and directives already laid down by the District Chapter.

Once the programme is agreed upon and submitted to the Brother Visitor for approval, the Brothers are then committed to it. It serves during the year as the basis for both personal and community evaluation, especially on the occasion of the Brother Visitor's official visit to the community.

16a. The Brothers submit their plans for new forms of apostolate to the discernment of the community in communion with the superiors and the Brothers of the

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District, in order to be sure that these initiatives are in conformity with the purpose of the Institute.

- **As an educational community** (R 13d, 17b & 17c)

13d In order to fulfil their mission, the Brothers, together with those who work with them, undertake a periodic evaluation and revision of their educational programmes. Both groups provide as well for their personal and continuing formation.

17b To achieve the purposes of a school, the Brothers foster a spirit of collaboration and mutual enrichment among all the members of the educational community. They help each one to fulfil his or her specific role: students, parents, teachers, priests, former students and friends.

17c The Brothers' community makes known to the rest of the educational community the essential elements of the Lasallian tradition. The Brothers offer to those that desire it, a more intensified sharing of Lasallian spirituality, encouraging such persons to make a more specific apostolic commitment. The Brothers join in the formation of faith communities which are witnessing to the truth of what the Brothers profess.

How can we understand and live, here and now, the following **inspiring words** uttered by our first Brothers in their own **here and now**?

* * *

The obligations of the vows for the Brothers of the Christian Schools

The vows oblige the Brothers to do four things:

1. To conduct schools by association, with those who have become associated with the Society and with those who will associate themselves subsequently, wherever they are sent and to do whatever the superiors assign them to do.

2. To remain in the said Society for all the time they have committed themselves to, with being able to leave it of their own will, for whatever reason.

3. If it happens that the Society becomes destitute, never to leave it for this reason, but to resolve rather to beg alms and live on bread only rather than abandon the said Society and the schools.

4. To obey in the first place the superior of the Society who has been chosen and the one or those that will subsequently be chosen; secondly, the particular directors who are or will be appointed by the superior of the Society; thirdly, the body of this Society, whether the said body is represented by either superiors or others assembled in its name. Brothers are obliged to obey all the above on pain of mortal sin, every time they command in virtue of the vows.

To understand and appreciate the "founding language" of the 1691 and 1694 formulas of vows.

1691 formula	*1694 formula*
We consecrate ourselves to entirely to you	I consecrate myself wholly to you
to procure	to procure
with all our ability and all our efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools	your glory
in the manner that is most pleasing to you and of the greatest benefit to the said Society.	as far as I am able and as you will require of me

* * *

Some ways to help me to assess my life

- **Together and by association, the basis for an apostolic project**

* The Rule tells us..."**together and by association**"...
– **in** the exercise of the Ministry (16)
– **doing** God's Work (20)
– **as** a community of consecrated persons (25)

* To what extent am I conscious of being a Brother **with** the Brothers of the District?

* To what degree do I take part in: the District Plan? the Community Programme? the Educational and Pastoral plan?

* Do I speak of my Personal programme with: the Brother Visitor? the Brothers of my community? the Brothers I am closer to or who are my friends?

* What do I do to understand and practise my association with my Brothers? in the District, as the "body of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" in Central America?

* We live by **association** and with **stability... in order to..** respond more effectively, as a stable community, to needs of evangelisation and education that are always present and ever renewed among the poor, families and teachers.

Do I support District Plans? Do I not tend to restrict myself rather to my own plans more or less tied in with those of the District? Do I realise the harm done to it by serving one's own interests?

Association and **stability** require a process of continuing formation in the following areas:

- professional competence
- quality of relationships
- witness of one's life
- the vigour of one's faith....(cf. Rule 21)

Do you take this into account in your personal life and with regard to your community?

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BROTHER WRITERS OF COLOMBIA

Br. Juan Vargas Muñoz

On March 19th 1991, the centenary year commemorating the arrival of the Brothers in Colombia came to an end.

The occasion was marked by an exhibition of textbooks written by Brothers in Colombia, organised by the National Library of Bogota.

During the opening ceremony, Br. Juan Vargas Munoz, Rector of De La Salle University, Bogota, spoke of the principal authors of these books. This article reproduces some of what he said.

During this same ceremony, Professor Hector Lopez' new book, entitled "Historia de la Universidad De La Salle", was on show.

* * *

The influence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the field of publication extends to a great many areas: education, culture, science, pedagogy, religion, politics, social questions and sport. In this the Brothers have walked in the footsteps of their Father and Founder, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, who wrote 26 works: 6 works on asceticism or spirituality which urge us to live the experience of God more intensely ; 14 educational works inspired by the Gospel, which aim to make schools efficient from a secular point of view, while offering at the same time the means of salvation to children and young people, especially to the poorest among them; a collection of 5 short treatises, and thousands of letters. Fr. Mouchard was right when he said: "It is he who showed you the way along which your rivals follow some distance behind."

For a certain time, the Brothers based their own works exclusively on those of the Founder, and then they began to produce their own works. In 1785, Brother Agathon, Superior General, wrote "The 12 virtues of a good teacher". A few years later, he began a work on accounting. During this period, works appeared on arithmetic, French grammar, navigation, practical geometry applied to linear design, summaries of geography, the history of France and Christian politeness, etc.

In 1880, the the Brothers' Institute Writers' Committee came into existence. Its president was none other than Br. Gabriel Marie Brunhes who later would become Superior General. The Spanish form of his surmame gave rise to the name BRUNO which subsequently appeared on innumerable textbooks for schools and colleges, as well as on works of a more general nature. The name "BRUNO" was usually preceded by his initials G and M, and that is why a whole group of textebooks was called the G.M. Bruno Series. Much of the G.M. Bruno Series was adopted in Latin America. The Brothers in Colombia added the La Salle Series to it.

The first Colombian Brother to publish educational works was Br. Luis Gonzaga (d.1916) who under the pen name-name of Pacifico Coral wrote two excellent works: "Extracts from Literature" and "Colombian Ephemerides". He was followed by Br. Idinael Enrique (d.1963), known as "an eminent author of didactic works", whose books became very widely known. These included, for example: "Introduction to the Botanical and Zoological Sciences" and the whole Castellano Progressivo Series which revolutionised the teaching of Spanish in Colombia. Together with Br. Fulgencio, he wote also reading, writing and mathematical textbooks, as well as model lessons for the teaching of literacy to adults through Radio Sutatenza.

For more than half a century, Br. Justo Ramon was the best known Lasallian on account of his geography and history textbooks. Because of his expertise in methodology and teaching, he had few rivals in his specialised field. The value of his works lay in their contents and the way they were adapted to all ages, in his own unequalled knowledge of science, in his clear language and his literary genius. He published a "Geography of Colombia by natural regions", a "Universal Geography", a "Geography of America" and an "Advanced Geography of Colombia". In addition to this work he gave highly-rated courses on pre-history and the history of Colombia. He was also Bolivar Professor.

Br. Alfredo Tomas accompanied Br. Justo Ramon on his scientific expeditions and shared in his research. Other Brothers, too, made a considerable contribution to this field. We can be proud of such Brothers as Estanilao Luis, Florencio Rafael, Gonzalo Manuel and Ulberto Miguel, who are already dead; Brothers Jaime Gutierrez and Tomas Alberto (geography); Brothers Antonio Manuel, Claudio Marcos, Eugenio Leon, Estanilao Leon, Sebastian Felix and Florencio Rafael (R.I.P.), as well as Brothers Martin Carlos and Ramiro Pinzon (history and civic education).

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Exceptional for their skill in handling the Spanish language are Brother Benildo Matias, author of an authoritative work on Spanish literature, which Br. Ramiro Pinzon (Rodulfo Eloy) later very skilfully adapted for use in the first three classes of secondary school. He followed this up by producing his own books for the three following years. Exceptional also were Brothers Estanislao Luis, Claudio Marcos, Gonzalo Manuel, Sebastian Felix (R.I.P.), Andres Romero and Andres Bernardo.

If we turn to mathematics, we find many works which are particularly valuable on account of their contents, methodology and teaching approach. There are textbooks on arithmetic, algebra, calculus, geometry, trigonometry, modern mathematics, accounting, physics problems.

The names of authors that come to mind especially in this connection are Brothers Agustin Alfonso, Ramiro Pinzon, Nestor Suarez, Horacio Tobon, Mauricio Torres, Gustavo Cruz, Nestor Barrera, Miguel Amaya Cadena, Julio Chavez and Juvenal Rios.

We must give a special mention to the works on mineral and organic chemistry (including sets of related problems) by Br. Claudio Felix.

In the field of philosophy, the leading exponents are Brothers Alfonso Norberto, Gilberto Fabian, Alvaro Llano, Jose Penagos and Martin Carlos. The latter has turned his attention also to sociology in a recently published book on poverty in Colombia.

Other branches of knowledge have been explored with a view to making them accessible to pupils: English language, civics and politeness, religion, singing, linear design, pedagogy and psychology as applied to education. These publications are the work especially of Brothers Ramiro Pinzon, Andres Rosero, Octavio Sanchez, Ruben Angel, Pedro Garcia, Jose Arturo Penagos, Luis Alejandro Ruiz, Oliverio Rodriguez, Isidoro Honore and Aranio Gallego.

The contribution of the Brothers to the field of the natural sciences and ecology deserves special mention. We recall with admiration and veneration Brothers Apolinar Maria, Niceforo Maria and Daniel Gonzalez Patino (R.I.P.) who, like new Mutis, successfully completed a second botanical expedition and were acclaimed as the great wise Lasallians. There followed in their footsteps Brothers Ariste Jose, Idinael Enrique, Claudio Marcos, Antonio Camilo, Octavio Martinez (the present Rector of the Lasallian University Corporation of Medellin), Antonio Serna, Ramon Guevara, Luis Zamudio, Alfonso Enrique and Roque Casallas.

There is no doubt that Lasallian publications have been extremely influential in Colombian culture. Many of our fellow countrymen cannot do otherwise than express their heartfelt gratitude to the Brothers whose textbooks have enabled them to begin exploring the world of science and have given them the means to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

For a De La Salle Brother, to publish a textbook or a book on some area of culture in general was a special form of apostolate, of evangelisation of culture, an extension of his classroom teaching, enabling him to communicate his message to a multitude of children and young people he did not know and whom he would probably never know. These textbooks were in use throughout the country. They were inspired by criteria which were scientific, professional, and pedagogical. They were intended to instil an ethical and moral sense into the intelligence and hearts of the pupils. These textbooks were low in price so as to make them accessible to the majority of children and young people.

We have to admit, however, that competition from national and multinational companies have driven us out of the leading position we occupied for so long.

Developments in the sciences, technology and modern pedagogy are so numerous and exciting that we feel they hold new secrets in store for us and new channels through which to transmit our scientific, patriotic and Christian message to the young people in our schools, colleges and universities. We have to struggle as our predecessors struggled, but God will light up the way of the Lasallian Community and will strengthen its determination to seek ways of serving mankind through the spoken and the written word. The future expects new and creative initiatives of us.

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A PERSONAL ACCOUNT BY THE LAY HEADMASTER OF A LASALLIAN SCHOOL

P.M. Deleersnyder

When Brother Visitor and I were discussing what we should do on this half day during your District Chapter, I suggested this personal account, showing how, in concrete terms, we laymen try to further the work of St.John Baptist de La Salle, and keep alive and perpetuate Lasallian values. How can an academic secondary school (lycee classique), located in a well-off district, catering for pupils whose parents are keen on good exam results - they include among their number university lecturers, engineers, research workers, managing directors - how can such a school live according to the Lasallian spirit? To give you some idea of how this comes about, I shall concentrate on four aspects of the life of my school:

- social awareness at home and abroad
- individual attention to pupils
- staff team-work
- religious education

First of all I should like to say a few words about myself as this will help you to understand my first point. My name is Pierre Marie DELEERSNYDER, I am 40 years old, I am married with 4 children, two boys and two girls, their ages ranging from 4 to 15. My first job was teaching French and Latin in a private College and Lycee in Marcq en Baroeul. Among other responsibilities, I was in charge of organising the teaching of religion, compulsory in those days, in the 7 classes of the 5th year secondary. These were divided up into about 30 groups, and they had two hours religious instruction per fortnight. During these lessons I came into contact with youngsters from well-off families. I took great pleasure in teaching them because they were intelligent and cultured and responded well. I made a point of stretching them, trying to help them give the best of themselves, because most of them were intelligent and many of them would end up in positions of considerable responsibility. During my 9th year in Marcq, the Diocese asked me to prepare myself for the job of headmaster which they wanted me to take up as soon as possible. I was appointed headmaster of a small school called St.Joseph's in the St.Andre suburb of Lille, which was administered jointly with two primary schools, numbering about 650 pupils in all. Here I discovered a different kind of Catholic school, less pleasant, but doing good work in a different way. The pupils there came from families of modest means, and some from poor families with nothing at all. These were the victims of unemployment brought about by the closure or reorganisation of the major local firms like Massey Ferguson, Caby, the Grands Moulins de Paris, and so on. I realised that there were different kinds of Catholic education. It could one kind or another, it could be Marcq or it could be St.Andre. After being headmaster for 3 years at St.Andre, I was asked by Brother Visitor Eugene Bodel to take over as headmaster from Brother Robert Ferrain, who was seriously ill. I was somewhat surprised to be chosen for this post and sorry to have to cause disappointment by leaving the team at St.Andre so soon. I accepted the appointment as headmaster of the St.Adrien Lycee, and as coordinator of the school complex which included the School, the Lycee and the College. At the time I hardly knew the Brothers of the Christian Schools, so I set about discovering who they were. The process was speeded up because as early as my first year there I was invited to join the Tutelle Council and to come to your District Chapter held 4 years ago. According to the decisions made by the Regional Chapter of the time, one consequence of the partnership between Brothers and lay people was that headmasters had to take part in the work of this Tutelle Council. I wondered whether, seeing that I knew so little about the Brothers, I could be of any use let alone be efficient. I was persuaded to accept. And now after 4 years at St.Adrien's, I am glad I accepted the job, and that I have come to discover the Lasallian approach. If I have spoken to you about Marcq and St.Andre, it is because, after the experience of my years there, St.Adrien's represents for me a sort of synthesis of both of those places: our intake covers a broad social spectrum.

And so I come to my first point: at St.Adrien's, **social awareness** is important. It is shown, for example, by the very extensive sliding scale we have for fees, the most extensive actually of all the Catholic schools in the north; also by not charging the poorest pupils or the children of itinerants anything. And this is the case also for remedial classes in the primary school. This kind of approach is to be found in other Catholic schools too. In our classes, however, there is a also a more discreet approach which consists of mixing children from different backgrounds. Of course, as you are well aware, many of the families are well-off, this is what happens if your school is near a "nice" area; but our intake includes also, and increasingly so. children and young people from other areas. In our classes, children from poor families sit side by side with children from those that are better off. This creates problems, of course, as when the children start comparing notes about clothes, leisure activities and where they go for their holidays. But this contact is good and necessary; and it is an good opportunity for learning, so long as the teachers have their wits about them and are prepared to take advantage of it. We make no distinctions in our dealings with these young people, rather like De La Salle, you recall, Brothers, who sought to help not only the poorest children out in the country and in towns, but also the socially better off youngsters, as in the school for the young Irish noblemen, or those in the boarding school at St.Yon, near Rouen. One could say that school is an apprenticeship for life in society, a chance to see others and the world. While this **social awareness** is practised in our classes, we try to extend it further afield, **to the world outside, both near and far away**. The near outside world, for example, is the Marc Sautelet Centre for the paralysed which is right next to our school. Once again this year, our Lycee pupils have volunteered to help the children in wheel-chairs to take part in group catechism lessons, to draw, to think, pray and join in celebrations. In this way they continue the work of the Brother scholastics and of Brother Deparis. The far away outside world is, for example, Madagascar. A teacher who once lived in a community of Malagasy Brothers leads a vigorous campaign through the school Third World Club to make pupils aware of the problems of the country. This goes on all year long, but also, as recently, on special Third World Days and Weeks. Also we regularly send material help to the Malagasy Brothers. This can take the form of a tractor, a container load of agricultural material, spare parts, medicines, school textbooks, and so on. A Lasallian school helping an overseas Lasallian school - what a marvellous way for youngsters to learn the meaning of real solidarity!

But how can we ever hope to achieve this international solidarity if we are not first of all close to each one of our pupils, close in particular to those with most problems? This

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is my second point: **individual attention to pupils.** In spite of the number of pupils, we want each one to have as much chance as possible. It is better to lose 2 or 3 points in the all-important Baccalaureat statistical tables than to sacrifice the future of one or more youngsters. It is better to get rid of a clearly brilliant teacher whose personal plans do not fit in with the Lasallian spirit, even if this is painful and causes a stir.

Individual attention to pupils cannot work in an atmosphere of savage elitism. This concern for the pupil, shared by most of the teachers, shows itself, for example, in meetings of the the board that decides which pupils are promoted at the end of the year. Pupil and parent delegates do not attend: they take part. When it comes to the final year of secondary school, the pupils are personally involved in the assessment of their term's work by filling in a form with the heading "Assess yourself, be your own promotion board". These forms are then studied by pupil delegates and the form master. A meeting of the board in October/November to tackle problems of the new school year makes it possible to pinpoint pupils' early difficulties and to provide specific advice. In this way, difficulties can be resolved and catastrophic end of term results avoided. For pupils who find the work difficult, what with the shortage of teaching periods that is now our lot, we provide extra tuition in 5th year maths and 6th year French. For 6th form scientists, 3 classes share the same timetable for maths, and this makes it possible to stream students and thus give separate tuition to the good, the mediocre and the weak pupils. When it becomes necessary for a pupil to change his course or repeat a year, we interview the pupil and try to reach our conclusion with him, pointing out to him the advantages of this arrangement. With so many options available in the 5th and 6th year, we try to involve students as far as possible in their own education. Year masters keep track of every pupil and are there to listen and help: they coordinate the work of the teachers in their year and, with respect for their pupils, deal with day to day problems.

These year masters have an important role to play vis-a-vis their teaching colleagues. Their role is crucial in an area which we consider **to be special - staff team work. Teaching,** it is true, is evolving in this direction. There was a time when teachers worked alone in their ivory towers. Now more and more they work with other teachers: things are changing fast with regard to the needs of pupils, curricula, textbooks and teaching aids. And then, team teaching has a reassuring effect on pupils: they see a group of teachers all working together for a common purpose, and they see the same kind of progress in all their lessons. As far as working together is concerned, the way new teachers and replacements are given a warm welcome is a good example. Some have expressed their surprise to me at having been given the address of the teacher they are replacing. This is something we do at St.Adrien's: you phone and arrange to meet either at home or school, and you compare notes. It often produces results. Another example: school staff meetings. In my first year, I noticed that my teaching colleagues needed time to discuss, to speak of their problems and be listened to. For two years now, we have had a staff meeting once a month, and this has helped to knit our team of teachers together. The meeting is in particular for year masters and form tutors, but it is open to all teachers. A form is posted up in the staffroom with the heading "Staff Meeting Memo", and teachers write down the subjects they would like discussed - organisation, teaching methods, general topics. During such meetings, people say what is going wrong, make suggestions or requests, state their needs...At the beginning of the school year, the staff decides on its aims for the year, and these are regularly assessed. Last year, the aim was: "Look upon everybody, pupils and staff alike, with a positive attitude without preconditions": an ambitious and challenging programme! This year, it is "Create an atmosphere of trust, so that pupils and staff alike can give of their best and accept their responsibilities". Quite apart from meeting a need for a friendly atmosphere, team work is necessary if we are to be efficient. It is often true that, if the school is to function properly, as St.La Salle said, the two have to go together.

Another area which we consider particularly important is that of **religious education**. I shall try to treat this point more rapidly as I fear I am taking too much of your time. I hope your questions and the discussion that is to follow will make up for this. As in all your schools, we want the children and young people entrusted to us to come to know Jesus Christ and to grow in that knowledge. We know that the Good News has the power to give life and energy to their young lives, and later, to their adult years. And so we offer them a wide range of options, which are so many different ways the Lord can use, if he so wishes, to seek a welcome from them. In the 5th year, a course in religious culture is offered. It is taught by six teachers. Four other teachers and some parents run Christian study groups. Other parents run the chaplaincy. The religious education of the youngest pupils is partly in the hands of volunteers from the 6th year. Confirmation, in line with local practice, is suggested to pupils who are committed to some form of Church activity, like the scout troop, the Youth Eucharistic Movement (M.E.J.), study groups, etc. Periodically, special activities are organised. At present there is a group of our pupils at Taize, learning about community life and prayer. In January, another group of 6th formers will go for a weekend recollection at the Hautmont house in Mouvaux, etc. On a school level, the members of the Pastoral Council are brave enough to tackle such questions as the following: How to spread the Gospel in our Catholic school? How to create and run a true Christian community? Of course, things are not perfect, and I fear I may have painted too idyllic a picture: for we would like to see more parents and teachers involved in pastoral work; we would like to see our day to day life in the school more shot through with Gospel values; and it is not easy to get children, and in particular adolescents, to come together to pray.

There are other areas I could have mentioned where our work is inspired by the Lasallian spirit. There are our two mobile classrooms for the children of itinerants. These we run in liaison with the Brothers and lay people who are involved in similar work in Nantes, Paris and Grenoble. There are our remedial classes in the primary school, or the scheme to spread the work of years 1 and 2 of the secondary school over 3 years. I could have spoken to you about the document which sets out the philosophy and aims of the school. This document we consider somewhat special, because it is the result of more than a year's work, and teachers, parents of pupils and senior pupils took part in it. You would have recognised its typically Lasallian aims. Instead, however, I chose to restrict myself to the Lycee and give you some specific examples. To conclude, one could say that the road we are following has many Lasallian signposts like "together", "by association" "in the Church", "so that the school may function properly", "attentive to the needs of the young", "considering each pupil as an individual", "in a friendly atmosphere".

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RELIGIOUS - FOR WHICH EUROPE? EDUCATION

Br. Alain Cusin

1967: LIke all good stories, everything began very simply. For years the school had been organising youth camps. Since German was being studied as a second language, it was thought a good idea to organise this camp in Germany and include morning sessions for studying German. Annecy was twinned with Bayreuth, Wagner's city, and so it was to this town that we turned and in 1968 our first camp was held in Bavaria.

In 1969, the group that was staying in Germany was keen on sport. Football matches were organised and in this way contact was made with a secondary school in a small town called Pegnitz, some 30 kilometres from Bayreuth. Friendly links were established and annual meetings were established: the Germans coming over at Whitsun, and the French in the summer.

In 1972, a new stage was reached: holiday visits became school exchanges.

Since 1969 without a break, we have been exchanging our classes studying either German or French.

As the number of students studying German was increasing, which is no longer the case, a second agreement was signed with another secondary school 30 kilometres from the first in the town of Grafenberg. Both these schools are State schools.

In 1976 we began an exchange with the Catholic Spin di Romano school in Veneto for our students studying Italian.

In 1989, a first step was taken in the direction of Spain at Figueras.

1989: 20 years during which there was a continuous coming and going of exchange students between Pegnitz and Pringy and Pringy and Pegnitz. Overall, if our statistics are correct, 800 young Germans and 1,000 young French people took part at least once if not more in this sometimes difficult but always enriching and exciting experience of a different style of home and school life.

Teams from different schools understood that Europe could not be restricted to a big market and could not be built only on an economic basis. Our common history as Europeans was so full of hatred, love, vengeance, political and economic domination that first we had to create Europe in the heart before considering one of merchants and politicians. This is what we understood together 20 years ago. Leaving the union of interests to the politicians and businessmen, we tried to work towards creating a union of hearts without an iron curtain or wall, without frontiers, so that no longer would one hear the words "foreigner, ausland", so un-Christian, but rather "friend" and even better "Brother", since we are all sons of the same Father who is in Heaven.

Aim of these exchanges

It is multiple:

– to make all our young people aware that our future community as Europeans cannot live without the ability to talk to one another, hence encourage learning other languages;

– create opportunities for first-hand experience of real life in other European countries;

– create closer links between the world of education and that of work;

– help our young students to see how cultures are nourished and enriched by contributions from different national cultures. This is I think what led us to widen the scope of our twinning and exchanges: **the triangle of friendship Pegnitz-Pringy-Spin di Romano** (Bassano) first of all, and then to Spain. A diversity of exchanges which demonstrate the cultural unity of Europe without wishing to deny the diversity of cultural traditions proper to each of our countries: **riches to be respected and safeguarded.**

I. In what do these exchanges consist?

For all our exchanges (Germany, Italy, France, Spain) the principle is the same:

1. From 8.0 am to 1.0 pm (because in Germany and Italy, school ends at 1.0 pm or 1.30 pm).

Lessons by the teachers from the host school: normally 4 or 5 sessions on the language studied (vocabulary, grammar, reading, conversation). The 2 or 3 other sessions, always run by the German or Italian teachers, are lessons in history, geography, science, music, sports, all given, of course, in the language studied.

2. From 1.0 pm or 2.0 pm: The young people go back to their host family (all stay with families). For them this is a way of discovering a new way of living, a new family. Afternoons are spent also exploring the area, visiting certain factories, and in sports activities.

Weekends (Saturday and Sunday) are spent with the family. Teachers are lodged with their colleagues. Sunday Mass.

3. The various town authorities in which the schools are located organise an official reception each year for these youngsters, thus showing them the interest and appreciation they have for these exchanges.

4. We point out that the school exchange with Grafenberg led to the twinning of Pringy with Grafenberg at a solemn signing ceremony 3 years ago.

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II. Advantages and disadvantages

For the young people: learning languages

Progress is made during the two weeks spent abroad.

In France they have 3 hours of language study per week (5 to 6 in Germany). During the exchanges, they have 6 hours per day, that is, a minimum of 60 hours per week, the equivalent of 5 months in school. I am not including the hours spent with their exchange partner at home, during which they are obliged to speak German or Italian.

They understand the necessity of learning languages.

All are required to keep a written record of their stay. They get to know a different school, with its different way of working, its special timetable, its spacious and well equipped premises, especially in Germany.

Educational ideas: for the 2nd year now, we are experiencing having lessons lasting 45 minutes.

In Italy, they discover the difficulties experienced by Catholic schools to live and keep going, because they receive no help from either the State or the Church and depend entirely on the financial sacrifices of families and religious congregations.

Getting to know a family

When students arrive in Italy or Germany, there is a certain amount of apprehension.

What is my host family like? Will it be friendly? Will I manage to make myself understood? make friends? adapt?

This demands an effort from the students, because they have to adapt to a new style of life, to the food, to family customs.

Getting to know the area with its riches, its customs.

During this month of December 1989, the young people experienced history in the making. They met East Germans, saw the opening of the frontiers...

Discovering Christian life in Veneto and Bavaria. A prayer is said at the beginning of the school day, before meals. Students took part in prayer meetings, ecumenical services.

In Italy, family life is rediscovered, celebrations in which all take part...joy shared by the neighbourhood, joy that is noisy even, because in Italy children (bambini) are kings.

FOR THE SCHOOL

Extra work to organise these exchanges:
- their preparation
- contacting families
- replacing teachers accompanying the groups
- giving lessons to the students who come:

* in January 1991: an extra class for the Italians,
* in February: an extra class for the Germans from Pegnitz,
* in May: an extra class for the Germans from Grafenberg.

Teachers have to be found who will give lessons free of charge or for a fee. This is not always easy.

Organisation of outings: skiing in winter, visits, etc...

FOR THE FAMILIES

Make families accept exchanges. It is now accepted that there is a language exchange in the 4th year of secondary school.

On the part of these families, an effort is called for:

- to take in the exchange partner without knowing his language,
- to make him fit in,
- to show him around the area.

This demands a certain openness on the part of the families!

It is not rare for families to keep up contact subsequently, inviting one another during the holidays.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

It is the key factor in these exchanges.

German and Italian teachers:

- are lodged in the school
- eat with the community
- sometimes share their prayers and celebrations
- in any case, exchange views about teaching, catechesis.

Germany has on several occasions sent teachers of religion. These were occasions for very interesting and deep discussions.

With regard to Italy, members of the same Congregation accompany the students, and so community life is shared with all the different nuances and originality.

In Germany, it is an occasion for us to discover Protestant and ecumenical celebrations.

My German colleague, a Protestant, asked:

* to read the life of St. John Baptist de La Salle
* to learn about the Lasallian approach to education.

Last September, German and Italian teachers went home with copies of the booklet "Lasallian Educational Project".

At our own level we try to bring about what our ancestors were not able or did not want to: understanding among our countries.

Together, we have understood that Europe could not limit itself to being a big market, nor be built simply on an economic basis.

We have understood that our history as Europeans was too full of hatred, love, vengeance and political domination, and that we had to create Europe in the heart before considering one of merchants and politicians.

We try to work with young people and for them, in order to bring about a union of hearts,

* so that they can come to know one another,
* value one another,
* love one another,

through mutual respect, not denying the diversity of cultural traditions proper to each, so as to avoid the destructive divisions of the past. **Europe is not behind us: it is ahead of us.**

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N° 24

(English)

2 / 1992

INTRODUCTION

● Number 24 of LASALLIANA, which you now have in your hands, is the second issue of 1992. We are pleased to be able to point out that the number of subscriptions to our publication has increased, and we are particularly glad that the number of those sending in articles has grown. Of course this is a great satisfaction to us for it shows that our publication is proving helpful in communities and other centres.

● What we produce in LASALLIANA is, as usual, available to all members of the Lasallian Family, so that we can have the kind of collaboration needed to achieve the aims of our publication, which are to spread awareness of Lasallian issues of whatever nature, and to help our readers to gain a greater understanding of them. Any material on the life, spirituality and work of St. de La Salle is welcome to these pages, as well as reflexions on real life situations, our mission, ministry, lasallian educational themes, actual teaching, the apostolate, pastoral work in schools, vocations and formation,community life, news of the institute, experiences and witness of individuals.

● It is precisely because the reading matter of LASALLIANA is so varied that it should not be limited in readership to the Brothers' communities. It should be available to the whole Lasallian Family, and especially to the teachers who share the Brothers' apostolate in Lasallian institutions. We should also like to invite the Brothers to share the actual spiritual and educational experiences which we are trying to express in these pages.

● Our next issue, number 25, will be a milestone in the short history of LASALLIANA. We intend printing an index, by subject matter and author, of all the articles so far published. We hope that this index will prove a useful reference to our first 500 articles.

● Quite a number of Institute publications reproduce individual articles taken from LASALLIANA. We are quite honoured to see our work thus appreciated, however,we would be very grateful, when you do this, if you mentioned the name of the author and the name of the publication the article is taken from; please also indicate the reference number of the article you reproduce.

Brother José María Valladolid
Education Mission Secretary

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BLESSED EDOARDO GIUSEPPE ROSAZ: A LASALLIAN BISHOP

Br. Secondino Scaglione

To call him a Lasallian bishop is no exaggeration. Blessed Edoardo Giuseppe Rosaz was not simply a great benefactor of the Brothers. He also admired and valued their work and had a profound devotion to St. John Baptist de La Salle, as this short article will try to show.

A holy priest

July 14th 1991 was a memorable day in Susa, a little Alpine diocese near the French border: Pope John Paul II beatified Mgr Edoardo Giuseppe Rosaz, a former bishop of the diocese.

He was born in Susa in 1830, and it was in the familiar setting of his native town that his vocation to the priesthood matured, and his pastoral ministry as a priest, founder and bishop was exercised. And finally he was beatified in his much loved Susa. In brief, that was his life. As his biographers point out, he was a person who would have preferred to lead a hidden life, as the Gospel recommends. Providence, however, wished to honour him in a special way. His beatification adds another name to the already long list of "social saints" and charities that characterised Turin and Piedmont in the second half of the 1800's: John Bosco, Benedetto Cottolengo, Giuseppe Cafasso and Leonardo Murialdo.

On August 15th 1856, the young priest Edoardo Rosaz founded the "Ritiro" with 4 orphan girls and a pious lady. This charitable foundation was run first by the girls themselves and then, when the Franciscan Third Order of Sisters founded by him replaced them, it gradually developed. The reason for Rosaz' commitment was the dramatic realisation of an urgent need: to look after those that no one cared for; to look after the boys and girls who could not be left to roam the streets.

The Brothers in Susa

In 1842, the Brothers opened a little school in Susa for the children of the mountain dwellers. It was called the Charity School and was completely free. The Brothers lived totally on charity: they gave and they received. It was Mgr Rosaz who drew up a statute to ensure the survival of the Brothers. The Brothers' school continued to be constantly in the thoughts of the bishop, and all the biographers stress the help he gave the Brothers and his joy on seeing the number of Brothers increase in Susa. This is reflected in a letter sent by him to the Visitor of Turin:

"Dear Sir, I accept with gratitude the gift you have been good enough to make to our town, by sending another Brother at your expense to work in the 4th form and to help the Brother Director. I undertake to pay 300 lire in addition to the 600 lire paid as a fee to the Brother in the 1st form. God only knows the good the Brothers are doing with their teaching of religion. To a great extent, it is to them that we owe the maintenance of the faith in our region. I bless you and express my profound esteem for you. Yours most affectionately in Christ, Edoardo G. Rosaz."

The holy bishop was convinced that the mission of the Christian school to educate and evangelise was very valuable. This is shown clearly by the fact that 4 of the pastoral letters he sent to the diocese of Susa were devoted to the question of the Christian education of youth. The first pastoral letter is entitled "The Christian education of youth", and was followed some time later by a second one on the same theme. One would think, on reading them carefully, that he had paraphrased the educational teachings of De La Salle. The other two letters are entitled "The study of catechism". These feel as if they were inspired by the Lasallian approach to catechesis.

Among the printed works of the holy bishop we find a treatise on good manners with the title "Rules of politeness for young ladies" (Turin, 1901) inspired by De La Salle's "Regles de la bienseance".

Admiration for St. La Salle and devotion to him

In his own pastoral ministry of education to young people, and in the formulation of the constitutions of the religious institute founded by him, Rosaz drew abundantly on his daily contact with the Brothers in Susa, on his familiarity with the works of De La Salle acquired by his frequentation of the Brothers, and on his reading of the works of the Saint which he had in his library.

Blessed Rosaz was a fervent and enthusiastic devotee of St. La Salle. He took part in the celebrations surrounding his beatification (1888) and canonisation

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(1900) in Susa, Turin and even Rome, and had ample opportunity to express his devotion to the Saint and his admiration for the Brothers.

However, what most clearly expressed his devotion for De La Salle and his gratitude to the Brothers was his visit on September 1st and 2nd 1901 to Thermignon in Savoy, the place of origin of his family. The occasion was the unveiling of a statue of De La Salle in the main aisle of the parish church. Blessed Rosaz presided over all the ceremonies, delivered a panegyric in honour of the Saint, and expressed to the Brothers of the small community at Thermignon his affection and admiration for the work done for poor children.

A permanent guest of the Brothers

Whenever the "vagrant" bishop, as he was nicknamed, came on a pastoral visit to a town where there were Brothers, he always found time to visit them and share a frugal meal, never failing to encourage them and express his admiration. And so he met the Brothers in Susa, Turin, Piacenza, Genoa and even Rome. Many of the Brothers were long standing friends of his. They returned his affection and stood by him in difficult and painful circumstances, especially at the time when the "Ritiro" foundation was being consolidated. His familiarity with the Brothers of Susa and Turin enabled the Brothers to reciprocate in the best of ways. The biographers of the Saint note that he would come to Turin almost every week on pastoral or administrative business and would stay at the Collegio S. Giuseppe. Here he was particularly friendly with the bursar who lent him money in order to meet urgent needs. He was helped very willingly, and more than once, the Director of S.Giuseppe refused to accept repayment of the debt. At the College also he came to know Br. Solenne, a clever and gifted architect, whom he recruited to plan and build the church and bell tower of the "Ritiro", which can still be admired today as a typical example of the neo-Gothic style. Br. Solenne, all the while respecting Lasallian gratuity, continued to make his services available to the bishop, and over a number of years was involved in drawing up plans and renovating many of the buildings in his charge.

In Rome also, Mgr Rosaz was very much at home with the "very dear" Brothers as he loved to call them. On his ad limina visits, he would stay with the Brothers at Piazza Poli or Piazza di Spagna. It was a great pleasure for him to greet the Visitor Br. Casimiro whom he had known and appreciated in Turin. He would have recourse to the Visitor on occasions to expedite the processing of documents, some of them of a delicate nature, by the Roman Congregations. He asked his help also to obtain the relics of St. Callista for the "Ritiro" church, and to ask the Congregation of Rites for a liturgy for the feast of Our Lady of Intercession.

The Visitor of Turin, Br. Genuino, who greatly admired Mgr Rosaz, found in him a prudent and wise counsellor. It was he who, at a time when vocations were scarce, advised him to open a juniorate at Grulisco. Vocations came immediately and the Superior was able to satisfy the numerous requests for Brothers. In 1888, Mgr Rosaz was affiliated to the Institute.

On May 5th 1903, at the funeral of Blessed Rosaz, the pupils of the Charity School of Susa and the Brothers had the honour of heading the funeral procession and accompanying him for the last time. And it was right they did so, for the were the favourite sons of the holy bishop. Moreover, the Brothers remembered how often Rosaz had written to say: "I would rather sell my ring and pectoral cross than allow the Brothers' schools to close. We need them too much in Susa and they serve also the surrounding area".

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24 - 2 – A - 103

CATECHESIS TODAY AND CATECHISM ACCORDING TO CHAPTER IX OF THE CONDUCT

Brother Manuel F. Magaz

● De La Salle became thoroughly conversant with the method of St. Sulpice and used it when he was a student there. In later years, he borrowed this method and adapted it for use in his own schools: teaching methods suitable for parish catechism are different from those needed in a classroom.

● It would be somewhat anachronistic and ill-judged to try to apply to the teaching of religion today the methods explained by De La Salle in Chapter IX of the **Conduct**. If we read between the lines, however, we see that there are certain underlying concepts which are still valid today for the teaching of religion.

PRINCIPLES

Aricle I, pp. 96-98: TIME & SUBJECTS

TIME devoted to explanation
- Monday to Saturday inclusive: **Half an hour**
- Sunday & feastdays: **Hour and a half**

PROGRAMME: for the week
as a team (Director)

SPECIAL CATECHISMS: Principal mysteries
Revision
Liturgical

→ **IMPORTANCE OF TIME**

→ **PROGRAMME PLANNING**

→ **LAW OF FORGETFULNESS REVISION**

→ **REVISION OVERALL VIEW**

→ **LITURGY FEASTS**

Article II, pp. 99-100: QUESTIONING

- Not like someone preaching
- Ask questions constantly so they UNDERSTAND
- Put the same question to SEVERAL pupils
- Don't always follow the same order, so as to help those **not paying attention** and those **who know least**
- In catechism lesson on the principal mysteries do NOT follow the order of the benches.
- Questioning should be short and simple so that they UNDERSTAND
- Answers must be COMPLETE
- When one pupil doesn't know, another repeats the answer.

→ **ACTIVE METHOD**

→ **So that they UNDERSTAND**

→ **So that they REMEMBER**

→ **No answering parrot-fashion**

→ **Those who are BACKWARD**

Article III, pp. 101–103: THE TEACHER DURING THE LESSON

- EVERYONE must PAY GREAT ATTENTION
- They must REMEMBER what has been explained

MEANS: keep an eye on all the pupils
ask lots of questions, speak little
follow the programme
say what you want to say, don't be vague
DO NOT REPRIMAND or PUNISH during catechism
tell an interesting story when the lesson is longer
teach solid doctrine
Supplementary QUESTIONS... within the grasp of the average pupil
STIMULATE... REWARD... the BACKWARD
always suggest some PRACTICE the pupils can do

→ **LIVELY**

→ **ATTRACTIVE**

→ **SUITED**

→ **RELATED to life of pupils**

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PRINCIPLES

Article IV, pp. 101-105: THE PUPILS DURING THE LESSON

- **Posture:** sitting up straight, arms folded, feet together
- **Pupil being questioned**: standing up, head uncovered, sign of the cross
- Includes the QUESTION in the ANSWER
- **Pupil being questioned**: stands up and remains standing till he is questioned
- he answers with eyes lowered, speaks clearly, pronounces final consonants distinctly
- he does not cross his legs
- he does not put his hands in his pockets
- he does not LAUGH when someone makes a mistake
- he does not PROMPT his neighbours
- he does not leave the room during explanations

→ **A FEELING FOR WHAT IS SACRED**

→ **RESPECT**

→ **LOYALTY**

Article V, pp. 105-107: CATECHISMS FOR SUNDAYS AND FEASTS

- **TIME:** HOUR AND A HALF
  (except Easter, Whitsun, Trinity Sunday, Christmas)
- while waiting for the lesson to begin pupils question one another on the diocesan catechism
- Time for explanation is divided up into:
  a/ **first half hour**: on the ABRIDGED catechism, not following bench order
  b/ **REVISION** of what has been explained during the week
  c/ **EXPLANATION** of the feast
  d/ **Suggestions** for practical application

→ **REVISION**

→ **ASSIMILATION**

→ **LIFE**

→ **LITURGY**

→ **PARTICIPATION**

Article VI, pp. 107-109: CATECHISM PUPILS

- brought to school by parents if under 15 years of age
- entrance exam and rules to be observed
- assiduity and good conduct; attention...
- they will not be forced to attend vespers and prayers but they will be encouraged to do so
- they will not be questioned unless they ask to be
- they will be encouraged to answer... and will be rewarded if they apply themselves.

→ **ATTRACTION**

→ **RESPECT FOR THE INDIVIDUAL**

→ **RESPECT FOR FREEDOM**

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24 - 3 – A - 104

WHY READ THE RULES OF CHRISTIAN DECORUM AND POLITENESS (1/2)

Brother Gregory Wright

As part of its ongoing program of making available the Complete Works of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, in late 1990 the Regional Conference of the Christian Brothers of the United States and Toronto published the first English edition of the Founder's Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité chrétienne – The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility, a translation of the original edition (1703). Also, since the appearance of Cahier lasallien n. 19 in 1964, a very readable version of this edition of the work has been available in French. So now a large number of Brothers around the world have ready access to this work.

However, the appearance of the first English edition of this work might lead some to ask why anyone would publish a book of politeness that is nearly three hundred years old, or why they should read this particular work of St. John Baptist de La Salle. One answer to these questions might be that this volume is as relevant to us today as it was to the Christian educators of the Splendid Century. For in it the Founder showed certain characteristics of himself as a person which exemplify a spirit we should try to imitate and convey a message we should take to heart. Among other things, what he had to say and his manner of saying it show De La Salle to have been keenly aware of the milieu in which he lived and in which he sought to apply Christian principles to the situations he encountered so as to be a gentleman in the practical and the best sense of this term. Now, what are some examples of this?

French society in the days of Louis XIV comprised very definite and distinct classes in which each individual had his place, inferior to some, superior to others, and equal to still others. Fully aware of this situation, the Founder accepted it along with its implications regarding decorum and civility. (48, 49, 105) Also, he perceived how members of the same class could be quite different, some acting "properly", others "improperly," as far as he was concerned. For intance, he noted that some decorated their hair with feathers or flowers and their ears with earrings. Others wore wigs, as was the custom at the time, but wigs more suitable for women than for men. He showed his disapproval of such things. (11, 14) At the same time, he perceived that customs, acceptable or otherwise, could change, but the fashions based on them were still important aspects of human living at any given time. (49) Likewise he saw that many people needed to get together so that gatherings for various purposes could not be avoided. (98) Once again, in the Age of Louis XIV, French was still very much of a living and a developing language. In this situation he saw real advantages to associating and conversing only with those who spoke clearly and correctly so that one could learn to comunicate effectively as well as in a polite manner. Choosing one's friends and acquaintances was a matter of great importance as far as he was concerned. (27, 28) However, he also recognized that a group gathering, particularly when it included or centered on a meal, could present practical problems. For serving those present would require respecting the different ranks and tastes of the guests. In his own way, De La Salle tried to suggest some simple solutions to these problems. (66 - 67)

The Founder also accepted both the necessity and the advantages of relaxation and recreation of the proper kind. (84) Still he recognized that activities of this sort were not without their dangers. What were termed relaxing and friendly conversations could hurt our neighbors because of the thoughtlessness of the speakers as regards their choice of subjects. Or they could offend God when what some called efforts to entertain others led to the use of vulgar language or even to attacks on Christian virtues and values. (113 - 116) Great care, he said, was required in these matters. Likewise, he noted, a friendly game of cards could lead to displays of anger and avarice rather than help the players to relax. (89 – 90) In another area, games intended to provide bodily exercice could offend against decorum, he said, if the players became too intense or did not remained properly attired while participating in them. (91) Likewise, popular or "mass" entertainment such as that provided in the theatre or more so on the streets could be very much opposed to decorum. A polite person would find little relaxation in such improper activities. (95 – 96) All these things had to be kept in mind, said he, and suitable precautions taken even when trying to satisfy a real human need.

At the same time, he noted, that when people come together some individuals can show their bad side, knowingly, intentionally, or otherwise. One can become almost childish by neglecting the more important things and becoming lost in details. (134) Another can become a busybody, prying into everyone else's affairs in a way that does no good for himself or others

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and which is certain to give offense. (99) A third person still can show himself to be excessively self-centered by trying to make himself the only subject of conversation. (119) Or the person who can sing or play an instrument might not know when to stop. Then, whatever his intentions, he no longer provides entertainment for others. (93) So, as De La Salle clearly indicated, people are people. And whenever they come together for whatever purpose, great care must be taken by all concerned to make their gatherings a success.

Lastly, while much of what has just been said seems to refer only to those who were "better off" or even doing quite well in life, the Founder was not unaware of what in seventeenth century France was called "The Base of the Pyramid." He knew there were families which lacked adequate bedding so that children of both sexes and all ages, at times in large numbers, had to share the same bed – something of which he strongly disapproved. (45) And he recognized that there were poor people who to keep warm had to cover themselves with their clothing when they went to bed at night. (47) Whatever his backgroung and family situation, John Baptist de La Salle knew much about his contemporaries in seventeenth century France. The Caracteres of Jean La Bruyère is not the only work that gives us good insights into the people of the Splendid Century. Our own Founder adds to our knowledge of this subject in his writings, perhaps more so in Christian Civility than anywhere else.

Having described people as they are or can be, warts and all, De La Salle also accepts the fact that life as it is requires encounters with them as well as more or less extensive contacts of various types. Since these cannot be avoided, he calls upon his readers to make the best of them. Doing this, he suggests, requires first and foremost a Christian perspective. This he sees as the basis for "that wise and well-regulated conduct which governs what we do and say" and which should be "practiced toward our neighbor..." (4) Neither of these should be looked upon "as merely human and worldly qualities" but rather "as virtues that have reference to God, to their neighbor, and to themselves." Likewise, parents and teachers should teach children to observe these rule of decorum "only through purely Christian motives, which concern the glory of God and one's own salvation." (3) And this last suggestion he repeats frequently in connection with many different situations.

Respect for one's body, he asserts, should be the basis for decorum and the civility that follows from it. And a Christian respects his body, he adds, because it is the living temple of God and the chosen tabernacle of Jesus Christ. (36) An awareness of the honors conferred on him helps the individual to decide what to do and not to do, so as to maintain the dignity he enjoys. (39) At the same time, though, the Christian knows he is inclined to sin, which he does commit from time to time. This leads him to accept certain limits on his conduct and to impose others when necessary. (46) And as a Child of God, he strives to put his soul and spiritual things before the body and material things. (50) This attitude will have some practical effects on his life and will influence his actions, even some of which are most common and ordinary.

Eating and drinking are basic human necessities which De La Salle accepts as part of life. At the same time he says they can provide many occasions of acting in an unchristian as well as an impolite manner. (57) In his efforts to avoid offenses of one type or the other, the Christian will set the tone for the meal by the blessing which precedes it. As circumstances require, he will join in the blessing or even lead it on occasion. (60) Then in both how he eats and drinks and how he relates to the others at table with him, he will try to act and react as a Christian should. (58) Among other things, a meal shared with others can provide an opportunity for conversations. Truth, sincerity. prudence and discretion should characterize the speech of the Christian. Also, it will be distinguished by the charity it shows for the neighbor along with respect for God and the things of God. (109) A Christian, then, will see the need to initiate those gatherings which bring people together as well as to respond to some invitations he might receive. (97) In each instance he is neither anti-social nor unsocial. Rather he can be the perfect host or guest because of the principles which inspire his relations with others.

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WHY READ THE RULES OF CHRISTIAN DECORUM AND POLITENESS (2/2)

Brother Gregory Wright

What also might make his company attractive and desirable is what he does and does not do. Respect for his dignity as a Child of God and a desire to honor his Baptismal commitment will influence his choice of topics of conversation. Desiring not to dishonor his soul, the words he uses will show both great control and much discretion on his part. (85, 116) Thus he will find it easy to avoid contradicting others and disputing over trifling matters, actions which offend against politeness while discrediting a man and more so a Christian. (125 – 26) Though conscious of his position and the respect which is his due, and while trying not to offend others in any way, he himself will suffer injuries and avoid taking offense, all in keeping with the Spirit of the Gospel. (55) Sociable as he is, though, the Christian will know when not to go along with what is being done. Just as he avoids using certain language or discussing certain topics, he also avoids improprieties such as songs which "might lead to impiety,... glorify loose living, or ... contain expressions and words suggesting it is an honor and a great pleasure to drink to excess." (92 He has the courage to practice Christian decorum and civility no matter what the occasion or what some might think or say about him.

Aware of current customs and fashions as well as of the requirements of living with others, the Christian will try to conform to the former and to fulfill the latter without in any way offending against religion and its teachings. By doing this he will also become and show himself a "gentleman" in the fullest and best sense of this term. For consciously or otherwise he will be living up to the standard set by De La Salle, that we should "never take pleasure in anything that might cause pain to anybody." (85) Long before Cardinal Newman said it, the Founder seemed to have the idea that "It is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain." *(The Idea of a University)* At the same time, he seemed to agree with the seventeenth century ideal that a gentleman is one who "pleases others in order to please one self." Against this background it is easy to understand why the Founder placed so much emphasis on things the gentleman would not do as well as things he would do.

In this relations with individuals and groups the gentleman would correctly perceive and accept his place. He would not put himself forward by trying to claim, much less demand, a place higher than that due him. If anything, he would gracefully accept what some might think is a place lower than what he deserves. (60 – 61, 130) In his conversations he would avoid saying anything which might mislead his listeners or give the idea he is speaking for the benefit of one or a few of his audience while concealing something from the others. While speaking clearly and frankly, he will not be disturbed or show anger if anyone refuses to accept the accuracy of his statements. (111) Much less would he try to amuse himself at the expense of others, by causing them pain through what he says, or by taking pleasure in the misfortunes of those present or absent. (85 – 86) And as a guest at a meal in the house of another, he would never think of finding fault with what was served or how it was served. (69) In brief, on such an occasion he would act so as to make things as pleasant as possible for all who might be with him.

On the positive side, De La Salle seems to suggest that it is certain unusual situations that arise which can be the real test of the gentleman. No matter how carefully people plan, embarrasing situations can arise which cause particular difficulties for the host or the one responsible for the gathering. He says that the gentleman who perceives the situation will take suitable means to deal with it while trying to attract as little attention as possible to what has happened. (30) Likewise, when someone is ill it can be necessary to discuss his condition in some detail so that the proper remedies can be found. However, this should be done only to the extent it is necessary, with as few people as possible, and in as accurate and refined language as possible. (39) In everything, then, what the gentleman says and does will be calculated to avoid offending anyone while making things as agreeable as they can be under the circumstances.

Whenever a group of people come together someone has to take the lead and see that things get done. In such instances, in what are essentially indifferent matters the gentleman should graciously conform to the wishes of others. (105) If circumstances force him to assume the leadership, he should try to make suggestions rather than give orders to others. (53) His purpose should be to find ways of indirectly leading people to do what is appropriate for the occasion. For instances, if large amounts of food have been prepared for a repast, he might encourage other guests to help themselves to generous portions and to enjoy the good meal their host has provided for them. (63) Contributing in such ways to the success of a social event can please others while making it pleasant and enjoyable for the gentleman himself.

To please others while not offending them in any way seems to require a basic respect for those who are present in a particular situation. De La Salle emphasized the necessity and the importance of this respect as well as how it can be shown in practice. (144) For instance, he suggests the host himself should take care of his guests, doing various things for them and not calling on his servants or allowing them to perform certain services for them. (134) Likewise, when speaking to or communicating with people with whom he has regular or frequent contact, such as his parents, the gentleman will not forget the respect he owes them. This respect will always be shown in how he speaks to them

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whatever the occasion or how he addresses them in any written communication. (124, 139) When anything is done regularly or repeatedly, or if we encounter the same individuals almost on a day-to-day basis, it is easy to forget our manners. Familiarity might not breed contempt, but it can lead to real carelessness on the part of an individual. De La Salle sees the gentleman as one who does not offend against civility in these situations.

Encounters with others can create situations in which it is both normal and necessary to praise others and to receive compliments from them. De La Salle sees doing both as providing occasions for showing our respect for those with whom we have such exchanges. When he is praised by someone of a higher social rank than he, the gentleman might show his respect for this individual by silently accepting the compliment. A few appropriate words of response rather than silence might be more suitable when one receives praise from a person who is his equal. (121) Complimenting another whatever the occasion might be is as difficult as receiving the compliments of others and responding to them in the proper way. In any case, what the gentleman says and how he says it will both show that he speaks sincerely and from the heart. (122, 129) Also, when someone else is praised in his presence, the gentleman will find some way to show he shares the sentiments that have been expressed. And certainly he would never act in such a way as to suggest he doubts that the compliment is deserved. (122) In all this as in so many other things the gentleman will show himself to be a sociable person. He will be seen as one who knows how to please others, one who goes out of his way to be agreeable and pleasant to those with whom he associates.

A careful reading of *Christian Civility* would quickly show that these are not the only characteristics of its author or the most important ones manifested in this work. Rather they are some that are easily perceived and which can be discussed at some length. But more important than showing some characteristics of its author, this work expresses a "spirit" or conveys a "message" which permeates it. Both of these are worthy of some consideration.

In his meditation for the Feast of St. Louis (25 August), the Founder asserts: «Your mission requires you to labor for the good of... your country. Your pupils are already members of the State, and will soon be endowed with full citizenship...» (M 160: 3) Perhaps these words addressed to Lasallian educators are more true today than they were when the Saint first wrote them. However, working for the good of a society requires among other things as complete a knowledge as possible of that milieu, its customs and fashions, its good and bad aspects, as well as its ways of doing things. De La Salle had and showed such a knowledge of the Splendid Century. His effectiveness as an educationist and an educator as well as the popularity long enjoyed by this "best-seller" of his might owe much to this fact. Now, some three centuries later, the Saint might be telling us that we need to become knowledgeable about our milieu. No more than he are we to approve of it entirely or adopt all its fads, but we should see this as a means of becoming more effective apostles in the time and place in which we are working

«... since all our actions should be holy, there are none which should not be done through purely Christian motives,» wrote De La Salle in the "Preface" to *Christian Civility*. (3) A modern reader, particularly one who has studied the Scriptures as they are presented today, might find some of this volume's Biblical references a bit strained, or some of the Scriptural arguments he uses to support certain things either inappropriate or unconvincing. But to do so might be to miss the more important point. As Christian we are called to follow the teachings of Jesus and to conform our lives to his maxims. De La Salle shows this is as possible and practical for us today as it was for him during the Age of Louis XIV. Wherever we are and whatever we are doing, we can take a Christian perspective and be guided by Christian motives. As much as the *Meditations*, the *Collection* or what are usually termed the "spiritual writings" of the Saint, *Christian Civility* calls us to do this while suggesting how it can be done.

«Since you are ambassadors and ministers of Jesus Christ in the work that you do, you must act as representing Jesus Christ himself,» insists the Founder in his *Retreat Meditations*. (MTR 3:2) Again, perhaps more than ever this is required of today's Lasallian educator. However, even one who is most successful as a teacher might ask if the Saint has not set too high a standard, one almost beyond human reach. For his part, De La Salle reaffirmed this notion countless times in various ways and without underestimating the difficulty of achieving this ideal. Still a Lasallian educator aware of the people with whom he is working and the setting in which he and they live, enlightened and guided by Christian motives based on the Scriptures, and striving to be a gentleman –one who causes no pain and pleases himself by pleasing others– will be taking a big step toward representing Jesus Christ as his ambassador and minister. Listening to the message and acquiring the spirit of *Christian Civility* can help us do these things. And then we will become more effective apostles in our classrooms. At the same time we will witness to Jesus and attract others to him. And lastly we will inspire young men to join us so as to share our ministry and help continue the work of Lasallian education. Yes, reading this work, pondering it, and taking it to heart can be of great value to us as well as to the work of God which we are doing.

N.B.: All references to **Civilité chrétienne** are taken from: John Baptist de La Salle. **The Rules of Christian Decorum and Politeness.** Trans. by Richard Arnandez, FSC. ed. by Gregory Wright, FSC Romeoville, Illinois: Lasallian Publications, 1990.

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