HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

VOLUME 3

by

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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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INTRODUCTION

This third volume of our study has a good chance, we think, of holding the attention of the reader -- and, indeed, of the secular reader -- in a special way. It is, of course, like its predecessors, addressed primarily to the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle; and research done by a number of the members of their Congregation assumes an important role in it. We would be failing in our primary obligation should we neglect to use the "family" documentation, unpublished and fascinating, that the Christian Brothers were kind enough to place at our disposition. On the other hand the volume preserves a sort of technical quality: we have made our modest contribution to the history of education. But, in the period we are studying, pedagogical principles and problems present, more so than the distant past, a vital, general and ever "current" interest; indeed, they arise in pretty much the same language as in our own times. The concerns for the future of youth aroused in most of our contemporaries, the struggle that is, unfortunately, conducted over the minds of the young, the heirs to our purposes and our beliefs, have, since 1789, taken on the form as well as the fury and the harshness that they have retained well into the 20th century. Philosophers of "national" education and lawmakers in modern states have drawn upon the concepts that we have already ex mined in Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the "Encyclopedists" and La Chalotais. Confronting them, and without ignoring the need for change, the champions of the religious tradition have defended freedom of conscience and the rights of divine truth at the cost of heroic efforts and suffering that have included the shedding of their blood. Incompletely and provisionally, they won the day after the excesses of 1792 and the moral anarchy that followed. The precarious equilibrium introduced by the Concordat was, in the aftermath, threatened and ruptured. With "anticlericalism", from which current generations continue to suffer, with atheistic communism, with "totalitarianism", which, creating its own ghastly idols and denying the value of the human person, seems no less formidable to a culture emerging from the Gospel, we find that the errors which our 'father-in-the-faith' combatted and which incurred ha tred, persecution and martyrdom for them, have now grown into convulsive dimensions.[1]

De La Salle's disciples were quite clearly marked out for the blows of an antiChristian revolution. Not, of course, that they were the beneficia ries of the abuses of the 'Ancien Regime'; nor were they the defenders of privilege or caste, nor the enemies of French unity or fraternity. They were admirably employed in the peoples' service. To them, for a hundred years, was owed the material and intellectual progress of the masses and the im provement of the social environment, in addition to the well-being, the joy and the hope in the homes of day-laborers and in the shops of the small craftsmen. There they had contributed, not only skills for living, but the means for escaping poverty, knowledge indispensable to the exercise of a suf ficiently remunerative profession, a methodical mind, a taste for initiative, wisdom and stability. Nobody so much as these teachers had contributed to the establishment of harmony among the classes of the nation, by devoting themselves to the poor, by dealing respectfully with children who had been abandoned to ignorance and vagrancy, by raising the standard of living of the people, by narrowing the gap between the workers and the middleclass, through their catechetical instruction,· through a useful education, dispensed in reasonable doses, but without distinction of class, and in both tuition free schools and in residence schools.

When the country decided to seek reform, to take in hand the conduct of its own affairs and to change its institutions, the Brothers were universally appreciated. Like the majority of Frenchmen, the Brothers looked for the dawn of a better day, in peace, order and in the concord of citizens under the protection of the ancient monarchy. But the weakness of public authority, the decadence of morals, the intrigues of obstinate and ambitious men and the

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influence of a "philosophy" hostile to Catholicism diverted a great and generous enthusi asm. Upon optimistic predictions there followed the doleful reality. Results anticipated for 1789, hastily accepted amidst turmoil, misunderstanding and angry outbreaks were compromised, vitiated and all too generally wasted in the years that followed. And the sectarian passion that drove the Constituent Assembly in its relations with the Church ended in disunity, a rupture with the past, the deposition of Louis XVI, massacres in prisons and, then, by an irresistible descent, in the scaffold for the king, nobles, priests and the humblest of the faithful, in civil war, and in internecine butchery among the revolutionaries themselves.

As the religious question moved to the forefront, it goes without saying that the history of the Christian Brothers, the teachers invited by a divine vocation, merged throughout this period with the history of France. Effortlessly and artlessly our account inserts itself into the texture of national events. Alongside the Brothers, with whom we are principally concerned, there appear successively on the scene the people who have become so well known to the public-- the Mirabeaus, the Talleyrands, the Condorcets, the Brissots, the Dantons and the Robespierres. And, too, since we carry the present inquiry to the point at which the Revolution "officially" ended, at which the Empire (the by-product of the French Republic) arose on the ruins and assembled pieces, old or new, suspect or sound, which were at hand for the reconstruction, we shall seek taking form the new figures of those who played roles in the Directory, the actors of the 18th Brumaire, the co-workers in the task begun in 1800 (as early as 1805 it was already a structure of imposing proportions)-- the Portalis', the Fourcroys, the Chaptals, the Berniers, the Regnaults and the Feschs, who had followed upon the Lakanals, the Daunous, the Barbe-Marbois and the Jourdans of a more unsettled period; until, on the horizon, there looms the imposing profile of Napoleon Bonaparte.

In this list we have included the names of two churchmen whose activities, important for other reasons, unfolded in the politico-religious do main: these were the man who negotiated the Concordat of 1801 and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons. We shall have nothing special to say about Étienne-Alexandre Bernier, but Joseph Fesch will detain us at some length, since it was he who had supported the Christian Brothers. In the world of religion, however, there were men of a different priestly bent whom we are pleased to point out for the importance of their role in the direction of the Institute: there was Father Emery, the Superior of the Society of St. Sulpice, Father Picot Clorivière, Father Varin, Father Chaminade and Father Paul; and, at an other, less important level, there was Father Bienaimé and Father Bernadet. And at the heights there stands out in sharp relief the white robes of the Sovereign Pontiffs, Pius VI, the victim of the Revolution, and Pius VII, the Pope of the imperial coronation. Especially does the first of these occupy a very important place in our study: it was to his orders, on the whole, that the Brothers remained faithful throughout the sad events of the period 1791-1799; and it was to his paternal concern and his energetic initiative that they owed the preservation of their agonized Congregation. We have selected his portrait for the frontispiece of the present volume in order to recall that the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle, like their Founder before them, had given evidence of the strongest attachment to the Roman See, as well as to acknowledge the felicitous outcome of Pius VI's interventions in favor of the Institute.

A danger lies in wait for us along our way. The history of the French Revolution is so fascinating that we could easily be misled into abandoning the purpose we are pursuing and, quite needlessly and clumsily repeat the work of our teachers-- Pierre La Gorce and Georges Goyau. We hope that we have not overstepped the limits of moderation and that we have used the writings of these great historians without plagiarizing them and only for the purpose of illuminating and verifying our own. As in our two earlier volumes, we must redefine the climate, the landscape and the spirit of the period, with the view of better understanding its documents, and provide our sketches with their precise coloration. This is why, in several chapters, we speak of the Brothers only after

we have reconstructed "the locality" in which they lived, narrated the general nature of the facts, and analyzed the legislative and administrative texts within which were framed the Brothers decisions and actions.

The Brothers remain the protagonists in the drama that we shall be recounting in three acts: *the juridical destruction of the Institute, the "diaspora" and fresh beginnings.* We shall first of all attempt to throw light on the Leader, Brother Agathon, remarkable to the end, in the harshest tests, just as he was in the days of his pedagogical fame and of his administrative successes. Thereafter, the Congregation, taken as a whole, will become visible in the crisis of 1789-1792, in the very dangerous and cruel moments of decisions regarding the constitutional schism, the collapse of the schools and the suppression of the "secular Congregations". Then will come, in their turn, those who were sacrificed, the exiles, from the martyrs of the September massacre to the victims of the Directorship Terror, without neglecting the captives in the Rochefort "prison-ships" and the Brother who mounted the scaffold in Rennes. We shall study further the Communities grouped together in the Papal States, under the direction of Brother Frumence: the problem will be to define and explain the essential and delicate mission that had devolved upon the "Vicar-general" while Brother Agathon himself was still alive. Finally, we shall unfold the story of that magnificent but difficult undertaking-- the restoration of a Society for popular education on French soil.

But, between the dispersion of 1792 and the new beginnings of 1802, it will be important to follow, as far as possible, the former Brothers in the vicissitudes of their isolation, to discover their presence in the various re gions, to inquire whether or not they remained faithful to their vocation, to ascertain the role they played in public or private education before and after "the 9th Thermidor", and then, under the threat of the "Fructidor" persecution and, finally, at the dawn of the Consulate. It is an inquiry demanding much patience and difficult to exhaust. In spite of the advance work of our predecessors and our own personal documentation, we do not maintain that we have uncovered or explained everything. We readily concede that, on this point particularly, our account preserves the provisional character that an historian is resigned to present to the public and to bequeath to future scholars..

We shall be satisfied if we shall have sketched the period faithfully, with that degree of perseverance and conscientiousness that is beyond serious reproach. It is possible that our conclusions shall not be to everyone's taste. Similarly, we think that we have been fair, but not infallible, in the interpretation of some of the facts and of some of the steps taken, especially regarding the refusal, or the taking of, oaths, whether in 1791 and 1792, or after "the throne" collapsed. Finally, relying upon very clear documentation and upon impressive authority, we have attempted a plausible explanation for the silence, which, for many years, overlay the memory of the famous Brother Agathon, and the misunderstandings which arose around "the Brief of August 7th, 1795", which handed over the direction of the Congregation to Brother Frumence.

The Motherhouse Archives (where, happily, filing is on the way to completion) supplies us with abundant and invaluable riches; some of it, such as the Register of Admissions into the Institute up until1790, the Book of Vows pronounced at St. Yon, and the Melun "Account Book" have already been mentioned in the course of the second volume. They have continued to be of use to us either in identifying a host of people or in being exact about a rather large number of dates. Individual files in which are assembled hand written letters, official documents, along with notes in other handwriting, Community files, often quite rich as well in original documents, would fur nish materials for some excellent monographs; we have borrowed from these whatever would enter into our plan, and whatever would enable us to de scribe the situation of the Institute before the dispersion, in the first part of the volume, and, thereafter to establish a sort of *curriculum vitae* and glean important information.

As one might very well have suspected, while the Superior-general's "Circulars", the Register of the letters of the Brother Procurator-general Philippe of Jesus, and a variety of other documents preserved from destruction might have supplied ample material for a history of the Christian Brothers up to the fateful date of the 18th of August, 1792, the documentation becomes more sporadic with regard to each of the members of the suppressed Con gregation. It then becomes necessary to have recourse to the files of the National Archives, and to the documents that are buried in the collections of Communes and Departments. Soundings in this sea of manuscripts are necessary in order to discover reports concerning statements as to monastic properties, the taking or refusing of oaths and the closing of educational institutions. They also keep us informed concerning arrests, questionings, exiles, sentencings to prison, deportations and capital executions. On this point our task was lightened by the work of the Brothers Archivist, who had made copies of important originals, by manuscript *Histories*, in which sources are carefully indicated, and by several publications due to the labors of our predecessors. We should be wanting in the most elementary gratitude should we fail to mention here the articles included in the *Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes*, especially the skilled writings of Brother Paul Joseph, the biography of Brother Agathon, written by Brother Fredebart of Mary and published as an offprint in 1938 and the studies of Brother Gustave of Mary, collected and completed in his book, *The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Moulins Deported to the Island of the Lower Charente* (Moulins, 1929).[1]

Our own investigations, pursued in a special way in the Departments of Aisne, Calvados, the Lower Loire, Marne, and Meurthe-and-Moselle are concerned not with the religious persecution of 1791-1799, but with public education during that period and, as a consequence, with the presence of former Brothers in the schools in the era between the Convention and the Directory. We have pursued this inquiry into the years after the "18th Brumaire". It is brought to a close, as concerns the present volume, with the answers addressed by the Prefects to Fourcroy's "Circular", dated the 12th of December, 1804. We hope that our final chapter throws some light on this very important file preserved in the National Archives.

Documents found in Lyons (the Archdiocesan Archives, Archives of the Rhone, Municipal Archives) access to which have been very kindly granted to us, prove to be the principal source of the third part of the present volume. Thus, we hope to have reconciled the accounts given by Alexis Chevalier and by the M.H. Brother Gabriel Marie in his "Circular" entitled *The Centenary of the Restoration of the Institute* and in the *Historical Essay on the Motherhouse.*

Following our practice, we consign supplementary information to the notes in each of the chapters and to the Index, throughout which it is possible to call attention to the archival references and the names of authors who have been consulted, along with the dates of publication. It is not difficult to imagine that any study having to do with the French Revolution requires a huge bibliography. To the studies of Aulard, Camille Bloch, Gabory, J. Guillaume, Herissay, Dom Leclercq, Louis Madelin and Victor Pierre have been added recent and highly valuable theses, the chief among which are Andre Latreille's *Cardinal Fesch's Embassy to Rome* and Canon Jean Leflon's *Étienne-Alexandre Bernier.* We can only hope to take our place, *longo intervallo*, behind these scholars. To us the truth is as precious as is the defense of the cause of the Christian Brothers is dear to our heart. They have nothing to fear from the judgment of impartial history.

G.R.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Institute Under Threat

Back to back with the ancient ramparts of Melun, the Holy Child Jesus House, where the Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools lived in 1789, raised its sturdy, austere silhouette behind R u e St. Ambrose, near the church of the same name. It was framed by imposing gardens and surrounded by clean air. Here it was possible to breathe both pastoral and monastic peace. The bells of the parish church, the bells of the Brothers' Community and those, somewhat more distant, of the Visitandine Convent measured out the day for the times of the Office, meditation and study. At some distance to the north the street ended at a bridge which spanned the Seine: the waters murmured like silken cloth as the barges passed by; and formed about the island a zone of charm and silence for Our Lady, a sanctuary heavy with the ages. It was a river at once busy and peaceful; there were harmonious masses of greenery on the uplands and neat rows of trees in the valley; on the right bank there was the greater part of the city and, in conformity with this type of French landscape the well-built houses, with roofs crowded on upon the other and dominated by St. Aspais with its elegant arches and plain stainglass windows.

It had been a little more than eight years since Melun had become the headquarters of De La Salle's Congregation. A brochure, seen through the press by Brother Agathon in 1790 (but which even now provides reliable testimony for those who wish to use it) proposed to present to general idea of the Institute.[1] The Brothers composed "an association of about 1,000 individuals" and were spread "over 116 institutions". In this figure were included two houses in Italy, two in Comtat-Vennaissin and one in Switzerland: "like the others, they depend upon the 'Regime', which is in France". All "local superiors" obey a "French" Superior-general. Through the registration of the Bull which approved the Rule and through several 'Letters patent', the Society possessed juridical existence throughout the kingdom.

Under the protection of that legal recognition, it had acquired property and constructed new buildings. Independent at St. Yon, the Rossignolerie in Angers, the Charlemagne Estate near Carcassonne and in Marseille, Montpellier, and partially in St. Omer, the Institute had been in a position to create its chief "residence schools" for "free" pupils. The institutions in Normandy and Anjou also included "reformatories" as the result of obligations which the Brothers had joylessly assumed. As for Maréville, the Brothers' major institution in Lorraine, we are aware that it was pretty nearly exclusively reserved for "black sheep" and a variety of mentally retarded.

These supplementary commitments, designed to furnish funds for the Congregation's central government, for novices, scholastics and for aged and infirm Brothers were not to divert the Brothers from what they rightly considered to be the proper end of their Institute: "To maintain tuition-free schools under the authority of the Bishops and subject to inspection by pastors and civil authorities".

[1] Idee generale de l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes, a twelve-page brochure, from the press of the widow Herissant, on the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs, Paris. It is without a date, but certainly published, as we shall see below, after the Constituent Assembly had raised the question of the fate of Religious Congregations. The text, known through the copy preserved in the National Archives (File S 704647) is extensively quoted in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pp. 317-321.

In the 107 cities and large towns which (according to statistics just prior to the publication of the brochure) entrusted the education of the children of the people to them,[2] their Communities, with a personnel varying from two to nine, to twelve and up to (as at "Roquette" in Marseille) seventeen, were usually housed by the city administration. Their "salary" often remained fixed at the inadequate figure of three-hundred livres apiece and under the best of conditions never exceeded five-hundred livres, which "made it necessary" to seek raises and bonuses. Some city governments and "especially bishops and other secular and regular clergy" made generous gestures in the Brothers' favor. The foundations which financed the schools and supported the teachers did not belong to the Institute. And the very strict rule of gratuity forbad the Brothers from receiving anything from the parents of their pupils.

However, through gifts and legacies or by means of patiently accumulated economies, the Congregation secured the ownership of some residential property, to which classrooms were attached; this was the situation at Dieppe, Nimes, Alais, Montelimar, the Roquette neighborhood of Marseille and on the Rue Neuve in Paris.[3].In eleven other cities (Abbeville, Auxonne, Chateaudun, Dijon, Luneville, Le Puy, Mirepoix, Nancy, Rheims, Rethel and Vire) the Brothers "administered and had an income" from property set aside for charity schools. Finally, we should recall that it was the funds from the residence schools that paid the costs of purchasing and furnishing the headquarters at Melun.[4]

Most of this property did not produce an income. According to Brother Agathon's master plan, the acreage at the Charlemagne Estate was to be divided among the residence school, the novitiate, the scholasticate and the home for aged Brothers. The land connected with St. Yon accounted for "eighty-nine-thousand livres"; the annual income from Maréville could "go as high as twelve-hundred livres before taxes".

It would be quite unjust to charge the Brothers with having contributed to the abusive extension of "mortmain", with having enriched themselves after the fashion of the upper levels of the clergy during the 'Ancien Regime' and in imitation of some of the major monastic orders. The entire Institute, although widely spread, more than a hundred years old, and, judging by the extent of its buildings, possessing very important institutions, had not earned 60,000 livres overall. If, leaving aside the salaries the teachers received for their services in the schools, we add the income from real estate investments, the occasional lease of property, farm lands in Normandy and Lorraine, it must be concluded that the annual income "divided among all" the members of the Congregation, "would not come to three louis for every twenty-four livres of investment". On the other hand, several Communities "had a total of more than fifty-thousand écus of debts" contracted for the maintenance, the improvement, the reconstruction and enlargement of Institute properties, and especially of residence schools.

No, indeed, money was not hoarded. In the three functioning novitiates,[5] approximately eighty novices were the financial responsibility of the Superiors; (while the others, who paid tuition, numbered no more than thirty). And in the months during which the scholastics[6] were exclusively concerned with their formation as religious and with the acquisition, under excellent teachers, of the skills that fitted them for their profession, they lived on common funds. In the budgets of "old France" there were no provisions for subsidies to normal schools. In this sense it could be "observed" that the Brothers made "an important gift to the nation" by "every year" training "more than a hundred teachers for the education of the youthful poor".

Such a report proves overwhelmingly that De La Salle's disciples remained faithful to the ideal of the Founder. They did not succumb to the temptations of the world, to the appetite for riches,

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[2] Some cities (especially several in which tuition-free schools and a residence school coexisted) there were two Communities. Paris had four

[3] Other documents that we shall have occasion to introduce mention, besides, as belonging in fee simple to the Christian Brothers: the institutions in Rouen, Montauban, Avignon, Toulon, Troyes and Saint-Brieuc and list the establishment in Abbeville as belonging in the same category

[4] See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 487.

[5] St. Yon, Avignon and Maréville

[6] Brother Agathon's overall figure is about thirty

to the pride of knowledge, nor, indeed, to clerical ambition. The priesthood was forbidden to them and they performed no church functions. Their zeal tended, unhesitatingly and unremittingly, toward the goal of so instructing the minds of children that education in elementary human knowledge was not isolated from moral and religious knowledge.

They took vows - "simple" vows - in order to support and sustain their efforts and to preserve in perpetuity an Institute which would have soon perished if it had not offered its adherents and members a guarantee for the future.

There was the same justification for their highly centralized organization which projected beyond city, parochial and diocesan boundaries, and for their autonomy, which was not a declaration of independence from pastors or magistrates but a protection for their internal vitality and for their orderly and unimpeded development: The regularity of their action, their union and their relations among themselves and with their Superior-general, and their obedience to the same Rule cannot be interrupted without the total subversion of their Society. Isolated units (understanding thereby Communities that wholly depended upon some ecclesiastical or civil power) could not support the strain of the supernumeraries, the ill, the aged, accept novices who could not pay tuition, could not maintain nor reform individuals, move them from one school to another at need, could not give them a suitable education, form them in the spirit of their vocation, and restore them to it when they seemed to have wandered from it. There was no Institute without a "Regime", i.e., without the supreme and independent government of a Brother who was Head, elected by his Brothers and assisted by his Council.

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In this text we possess a particularly important resume, a sort of refocusing which clarifies the moral and material situation of the Lasallian[7] Congregation at the end of the first century of its existence. At a single stroke the document illuminates and strives to dissipate the prejudices of the period concerning the wealth of the Brothers, their vows and vocation and their discipline. The Superior-general had launched his appeal in an already lowering sky, although the clouds had been gathering for a long time. Oddly enough, and a thing that demonstrates the persistence of ancient prejudice in a world that was impatient to reform everything, the author reserves for the end of his brochure a series of direct arguments against the complaints that the defenders of privilege had been repeating ad nauseam.

On the eve of the French Revolution there were people who still criticized De La Salle's heirs for the instruction they gave to craftsmen and the poor, for performing a part of the duties of pastors and parents, for withdrawing farm-workers from agriculture and from the mechanical arts, and for damaging teachers who worked for a living (i.e., the teachers in the primary schools who lived off the income they received from the lessons they taught), and, finally, "for being a burden" to the public treasury.

The refutation of these charges was easy and (after so many controversies, one might term it) "routine". And, as a consequence, it could be summarized in a few lines:

"It is not for the Christian Brothers (Brother Agathon wrote with just a tinge of irony) to explain whether it is important for the Nation that the children of the common people have religion, morality and some openness of mind...What assistance could society possibly derive from men who are unfit, devoid of understanding, and deprived of education"? As for the "pastors", it is for them to say whether their sermons are followed by the average child, whether they themselves, as substitutes for parents, (overburdened, or inexperienced educators) find the time and the means to train the youngsters in their parishes "to piety and to good behavior..." We are not talking about the countryside: the Institute was not intended for that.[8] In the cities where the Brothers teach "it has not

[7] It may be well to point out that the neologism "Lasallian" is used in the present volume only as a stylistic accommodation.

[8] St. John Baptist De La Salle had planned for the countrysides (where it was impossible to set up Religious Communities) teachers trained in "seminaries" by Christian Brothers. But this part of the work, several times attempted, was dashed under the most distressing circumstances. (See Vol. I, Part II, chaps. ii and v).

yet been demonstrated" that their pupils abandon the way-of-life of their fathers. And, even then, "must it be regarded as a calamity that out of the great mass there emerges, for a wonder, a few (remarkable) individuals (in a position) "to serve the Nation"?

What were "the other teachers" complaining about? In many places children were not admitted to tuition-free schools except by "certificates of poverty" distributed by pastors.

Everywhere the poor retained preferential rights. Without gratuity, for them there was no education. As servants of the people and through a spirit of faith and Christian charity, the disciples of the man who had made the heroic sacrifice of his personal wealth gave an example of complete detachment. Their life was "simple, secluded and frugal". Their salary "couldn't be less", and, nearly everywhere it came from foundations which reduced or completely replaced public expenditure. Who, then, would agree to exchange "so much trouble for such a scanty recompense"?

Some people, perhaps, will be surprised at such a discussion during a period which advocated the equality of citizens. Let them recall La Chalotais and Voltaire. For many of the so-called "philosophers" of the 18th century contempt for the people was the expression of a reawakened paganism.[9] Only the deliberately or unconsciously Christian mind was averse to treating the poor as slaves. In the period which followed, the triumphant middle class lost all generosity and objected to gratuity. It thought that the burden placed upon it for popular education was too heavy. And while it sought out the Brothers for the children of the poor, it did so often with egotistical afterthoughts. The masses, stripped of political rights and socially enslaved, was on the verge of shaking off the yoke, and the "bridle supplied by religion" seemed very useful indeed.

Such a role for teachers, in itself dependent and debased, was scarcely dwelt upon in 1789. The Church was slandered, creeds derided, and the clergy was disparaged. For some it was important "to crush superstition". In the view of others, it seemed that Deism, morality without dogma, was all that the human conscience required. Those who were less bold, if not less sectarian, meant to loosen the ties that bound France to Catholicism, and, in separation from Rome, establish both a cult and a hierarchy. Gallicans, Jansenists, disciples of Voltaire, and adherents of the "Social contract", would momentarily mute their rivalries and unite behind a common hatred. Immediately, they gave the Revolution its anti-Catholic and, by a scarcely avoidable consequence, its anti-religious character. Once passions were turned loose, they became untameable, until they consumed a good number of the incautious people who had unleashed them.

It goes without saying that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were among the innocent victims. Profoundly faithful to their Founder from the beginning of the Institute, they repudiated -- quietly but unequivocally -- the tenets of Jansenism and the adversaries of the Bull *Unigenitus*. Throughout the century priests and magistrates in the "Movement" did not spare these humble "Romans" their suspicions, rebukes, insults and the denial of simple justice. They considered them (actually, a huge compliment!) at first of being disciples of and, then, of being "successors" to, the Jesuits. However, people pretended to despise them; there was put into circulation the term "Ignorantins", probably founded on the nomenclature of another religious congregation which had at one time invented it, or, through an inordinate modesty, welcomed it; but it no longer designated any but the "De La Salle Brothers", and, in its pejorative sense, it had a most unfortunate success. Voltaire prevailed to give it currency in the literature of the period. For the "philosophic caste", what a windfall to be able to strike at Christianity through these simple men! There was no risk to run, no retaliation to fear. The courts were hardly ever favorable to them; the king supported them, but he couldn't stop people from talking. With glee their enemies heckled the Brothers "as apostles of the catechism", as "eunuchs" who had bound themselves by vows "contrary to nature", and as the promoters of the pointless and pernicious policy of tuition-free education for "riff-raff".

Nevertheless, the Brothers had good reason for believing they were, certainly not at permanent peace, but at least secure from total destruction. They were acutely aware of the affection of their pupils, of the confidence of parents and the clergy, and of public esteem for the services they rendered the country. We shall have occasion to speak of the chorus of praise that arose around them

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[9]See Vol. II of the present work, Part Two, chap v.

on the eve, and throughout the course, of the Revolution. Some small portion of human security might legitimately have entered into their abandonment to Divine Providence. Schools in steady growth, flourishing residence schools and the Holy Child Jesus House a center of serious study and intense religious life -- it was thus that the Institute appeared in the eyes of its friends, and in the view of the impartial observer.

At the time, people in the world were, according to Talleyrand, experiencing "life's charm". The Community gathered around Brother Agathon enjoyed it also, but in a purer atmosphere and in a more genuine harmony, far removed from passion. A vibrant happiness, without the shadow of an illusion, is the impression given by a letter preserved in the Motherhouse Archives. The recipient was a Brother of singular excellence whose name will recur in this history. Father Bienaimé, pastor of Gigney in Lorraine, wrote on the 1st of January, 1789 to his brother, Nicolas, who had belonged to the Lasallian family since 1784 and had become Brother Philippe Joseph:

At least, you are in Melun, and you are completing your training in order, soon, to go out yourself and work for the education of others. The picture you sketch of your activities and the quiet you enjoy captivate me. May God be blessed. For too long Nicolas, perhaps out of an excess of scruples, had deprived his relatives of information about himself; his elder brother reproached him in a friendly way for this silence, which he attributed "to a supernatural impulse". He meant to respect "even piety's mistakes". However, he had received assurances from "dear Brother Julian that the most austere Brother may write several times a year...to those among his relatives" who are in the Church. The exhortations of a brother, who was also priest, would not cool this youthful ardor. What "good things" did he wish for the scholastic? *Perseverance in good, growth in grace and merit, the loving peace of Christ...and ultimate death to one's own will.*

Nevertheless, he cannot help paying him several compliments: *If I didn't fear grieving you somewhat, I would tell you that you write beautifully.* Brother Philippe Joseph evidently attributed his fine hand and excellent style to his teachers. To their instruction as well he owed his progress in the sciences, which delighted him, as it did the pastor of Gigney: *If we were together we could chat about 'latitude', 'longitude', 'the antipodes', 'horizons', 'tropics' and 'zones', etc., etc*. (terms that reveal both the intellectual tastes of the period and the level of instruction to which, according to Brother Agathon's mind, the Christian Brother must attain.)

Father Bienaimé paid his respects to the Superior-general: "*Tell him that one of the best friends of the Institute takes the liberty of greeting him".* Harmony of feeling and thought was maintained between these two key elements of ancient France: there was the profoundly believing family, whose four sons included a priest, a Brother and a seminarian (Mansuy, the youngest had just entered the Seminary, according to the pastor), and the Religious Order which had not relaxed in its primitive purpose. *

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That was the patch of blue sky on that first day of a year pregnant with so many sensational events. But already the clouds were gathering. Suddenly, they spread across the letter we hold in our hands and curdle the blood. Father Bienaimé seems surprised to find nothing in his brother's letter concerning "the news about the country". Nicolas, of course, wanted to be "dead" to all earthly things. However, he could not be completely unaware of the "distress of the poor". Lorraine, buried in snow, suffered greatly. The streams were frozen. The mills ceased to turn and there was a shortage of flour. Firewood was also in short supply. Commerce ground to a halt. Want and famine went hand-in-hand. In the homes of the poor in Gigney there was neither money, clothing nor bread. "I eat nothing", writes the good pastor, "but what is bitter to me, when I think of so many of my children who are hungry. [10]

That awful winter had begun on the 15th of October, 1788 and intensified in severity on the 21st of November - even more dreadful than the winter of 1709, the memory of which continued to be evoked after eighty years. Widespread adversity struck at the very moment when feelings ran high over political quarrels, the acknowledgement of a severe financial deficit and the convocation of the

[10] Motherhouse Archives, HA p. Brother Lucard gives a short quotation from this document, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 562-563. He is mistaken about the date on which Brother Philip Joseph received it.

Estates General. The people grumbled. At the beginning of January in Nantes the City Hall was filled with cries of insurrection and the bakeries were looted.[11] While Melun escaped such scenes, Brother Agathon contributed to its pacification: the Motherhouse Accounts book reveals that during the early months of 1788 alms in greater quantities eased the hardships of the poor. At that point, the Superior-general made over to the bakers of the city the provisions of wheat laid aside during the previous years: "1101 bushels", evaluated by the city at 2.5 livres the bushel, or 2,752 livres and 10 sols which were paid to the Procurator of the Institute on the 17th of July.[12] The Brothers' gesture did not go unnoticed: those who fomented disorder found it a pretext for suspicion; but it earned the Brothers the respect of the city fathers.

In this ferment the "Estates General drew up its reports". The Nation's three "orders" wrote position-papers declaring their "grievances". There were the reports of the clergy and of the nobility, and, for the "Third Estate", there was an extraordinary pile of resolutions, recommendations, claims and complaints issuing from the delegates from rural parishes, urban guilds and from "free holders", a mass that was to be clarified, condensed and transformed in the reports of the bailiffs and the bailiwicks' courts. Preoccupation with education emerged in some hundreds of documents, a rather unimpressive figure in comparison to the total number of initial drafts. The best organization and development of studies for all classes was the objective. Here and there was a demand for the opening of elementary schools, without being precise as to who would be in charge of them.[13]

The report of the Orleans clergy cannot be so criticized. Its 22nd article deserves to be quoted, as much for its farsighted concern as for the equitable commendations and exalted position it confers upon the Christian Brothers:

"Let the attention owed by the government (to the) colleges be extended to the education of the people who are ordinarily so neglected, to the end that charity schools in the parishes...be supported and approved...In the cities, there is nothing better to do than to place them under the charge, so far as possible, of the Christian Brothers, whose exemplary lives and success wherever they have been called attests to their zeal and competence; but it is appropriate to endow them, if need be by bestowing upon them some ecclesiastical properties, so that they will not be a burden to the parishes and that they might live suitably in the modesty and simplicity of their vocation..."

The French Church was wealthy enough to sacrifice some of its superfluity for the benefit of such valuable teachers. They inspired the University of Orleans and the City's Bar with the same confidence: the education of the people cannot be placed in better hands, the professors declared. Going a step further, the lawyers wrote:

"Let the Brothers of the Christian Schools run all of the city's elementary schools! They perform this task to everybody's satisfaction.'[14]

The same compliments were extended and the same demands expressed in Melun, Sens, Montreuil-sur-Mer and Toulouse, although Sens and Montreuil knew the Brothers by reputation only. Melun, on the other hand, had the honor of being their headquarters and owed them the totally tuition-free service of one of the three teachers in its charity school. Toulouse had only just welcomed them, and the bailiffs' assembly already insisted on having them in "the principal cities" of Upper-Languedoc.[15]

The Brothers who witnessed these manifestations of sympathy and gratitude did not, as a result, experience any foolish pride. Nowhere were they seen to get involved in politics, and nowhere were they heard to contribute their voices to the uproar that echoed throughout France. They avoided

[11]E. Gabory, La Revolution et la Vendee d'apres des documents inedits, Paris, Perrin, 1905, pg. 35.

[12] Motherhouse Archives, HAm. Cf. Chassagnon, Le Bieheureux Salomon, pp. 292 and 295.

[13]Alfred Cilleuls, Histoire de l'Enseignement dans l'ordre primaire en France, Paris, Poussielgue, 1898, pp. 63 and 65.

[14] Father Augustine Sicard, L'Education morale et civique avant et pendant la Revolution (1789-1850), Toulouse, 1909, pg. 60.

[15]See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 434, 435-436.

anything that would interrupt the usual order of their religious life and their classes, in order to listen to what was being said in public places or in order openly to take sides. De La Salle had made it a rule that the Brothers were not to speak in recreation "of what went on in the world", and they were not "to seek news from their pupils", nor allow their pupils to supply any. These texts from the Common Rule[16] could have been neglected, even at the moment in which the entire kingdom was astir and questioning. It was the task of the Superior-general and his Council to follow events attentively, to weigh opinions, to anticipate conflicts, and, as far as possible, to ward them off: Brother Agathon continued to do just that, discretely, prudently and prayerfully.

One of his secretary's letters informs us concerning the spirit and the line of conduct that the fervent, farsighted Superior promoted in the Institute. On the 29th of May, 1789, when the Estates-General had already assembled in Versailles and when, in the presence of an inactive and indecisive king, antagonism between the Third Estate and the privileged classes broke out concerning the verification of credentials and the question of voting "as individuals" or as "Orders", Brother Solomon wrote to his sister, Mlle. Rosalie Le Clercq:

"You might have known that with so much being written and so much talk, some of it has reached us here. I have read some of it, but, as you say, it doesn't worry me much, except that I wish, as I should, that everything works out for the good of the country, for the happiness of the people, and especially to the advantage of morality and religion: that is what we should be asking God for.[17]

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It was clearly essential to grow in fervor and to pray for God's help. The relative calm which in May still prevailed in the Superior's immediate entourage swiftly metamorphosed, as spring passed into summer, first into uneasiness and then into intense anxiety. The bringing together of the three "Orders" into a "National Assembly" on the 27th of June gladdened every Frenchman. Once their delegates had become reconciled, it seemed clear that, with the acquiescence of the king, they would go on to make everybody "happy". And the Revolution, peaceably procured, would have turned out to have been nothing more than marvelous "theater". Unfortunately, however, the long, drawn-out drama was only just beginning. Louis XVI showed nothing but weakness; his army refused to obey him, and hatred ran riot. Suddenly the kingdom was "out of joint" and anarchic. It was seized by an "intense fear", spontaneous in many places, ill-defined and out of proportion to its causes. Here and there, terror was accounted for by the appearance of sinister gangs and by scenes of violence and looting. There was scarcity and unemployment and the insidious propaganda that they arouse; while ringleaders were emboldened with impunity. The scum rose to the surface, while honest people were in fear of their lives and their property, and, like lost children, felt isolated and abandoned.[18] Then came word of the 14th of July in Paris: lightening having struck, for a moment it might be thought that the skies might clear. The night of the 4th of August seemed like the night for a miracle. But, in the countryside the attacks continued against the manor-houses. Scoundrels plied their trades in the furor created by peasant and townsman.

In this disorder, faith, like conscience, could only become obscured. And given the sins of the age, one could only await the moment of darkness. The Church and the faithful heard the warning of the approaching persecution: of course, in no way did anybody imagine scaffolds, murders and heroic, bloody martyrdom. So far, one could only rely upon the Gospel and its counsels of foresight, vigilance and of active and silent preparation. "Pray that your flight be not in the winter."[19] Retire into yourself; be on your guard; do not run around aimlessly; do not rashly compromise the future; rather fulfill the daily task with greater precision than ever, while trusting in Providence --[20]. The

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[16] ibid

[17] Motherhouse Archives. Cited by Bishop Cassagnon, pp. 294-295.

[18] Traces of this "great fear" that Taine has described are evident in the minutes of the municipal meetings.

[19] Matth. XXIV, 15-22.

[20] these were Brother Agathon's injunctions, in his "Circular letter", dated from Melun, the 23rd of August, 1789.[20]Motherhouse Archives,

document in question was published in the *Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes* for October 1937, pp. 308-310, reproducing the only extant copy, which bears the address of the Director of the school in St. Menehould.

"The grace and peace of our Lord be with you always." This introductory formula, traditional in Superior-generals' letters, on this occasion took on a special solemnity. Indeed, at the human level the prospects for turmoil and profound suffering were immense.

"Since the Nation's current circumstances, of which you cannot be unaware, make travel as difficult as it is dangerous, I have thought it wise, during the coming vacation, to make only the absolutely indispensable changes and to delay the vows which were requested last December. The liberties that the people are taking throughout the kingdom, the great number of vagrants, the armed robbers who appear everywhere, the large number of unemployed workers and ill-disposed persons, so many deserters that they are no longer counted, insults (directed) particularly at Religious and clerics, demand that we avoid appearing in public, especially in places where we are known. Many of our Brothers, although correct and beyond criticism, have been harassed, imprisoned and robbed, while others have been exposed to the greatest danger of losing their lives."

Such, in a few telling lines, was the picture of France four months after the opening of the Estates General. The Brothers, passing on the high roads to reach new residences or to gather at the principal Communities for retreats had to listen to "unpleasant remarks" and were witnesses to, or, even, the victims of, scandalous incidents; it would be better for them to remain in the shelter of their current Communities. If, in the course of a journey, they should have to pay for their lodging and food, the exorbitant costs could grossly overburden a Brother Director's budget, since the excessive cost of living had been the cause of widespread suffering.

Nowhere in the Institute were the Brothers pronouncing vows, even in places where the ceremony could be held on site. The reason that Brother Agathon gave for this general postponement was that it was not fitting to create different situations for Brothers who were equally deserving. Nevertheless, houses which had been designated for retreats changed nothing of the schedule of their annual activities. On the contrary, the times demanded a renewal of conscience, an increasingly lively zeal, the faultless fulfillment of ones professional tasks, and an altogether exemplary regularity. God had to be served. And, at the same time, we must try not to alienate thoughtlessly earthly powers.

On this score, indeed (and the Superior was pleased to acknowledge it), "consolations" were not entirely lacking. "Of the Institute we hear nothing said but what is good; ...it is widely respected, supported and favored." These were the happy consequences of an enduring dedication, educational success and wise policies. It was impossible to find fault with the Brothers whether for the reason that they had forgotten their modest role or that they had adopted an unseemly attitude toward the law-makers. This direct and simple path was the one that Brother Agathon was to follow, and he encouraged those under him to follow it:

"While we have nothing to fear from indiscretion on your part regarding the events of these times, you will think it well that we recommend to you a very great reserve in your speech and that you not allow any outsider in our houses to make remarks censuring anybody. Avoid criticism and critics. Obey lawful injunctions, no matter how annoying, so long as they respect conscience and the soul's freedom. If, in spite of all the disadvantages indicated, a Brother must leave the city in which he is living, he shall not fail to obtain a passport."

Through such precautions and cooperation, it was hoped that a difficult hurdle might be cleared, beyond which one might once again make one's way normally. With the sight of public misery the heart grew heavy; and the news from Versailles and Paris inspired more concern than confidence. Who could master the stormy gale? What barrier was there to oppose it should it turn against the Church? Yet, even those Catholics whose suspicions had been awakened withheld their accusations and their censures. In his letter of September 1789 Brother Solomon reports the occurrences of the past month to his family: "Melun has not been free of (disturbances). Toward the end of July there was a false alarm; the tocsin had sounded, and the entire city was at the ready for

nearly the whole night of the 28th and the 29th; and since they have it in for Religious and for large houses, we have more to fear than a lot of others. Several dissolute individuals bounded on the door, seeking to break it in. But they failed..."

Monastic life, however, continued. "A saintly priest" came "from a distance of fifty leagues" to preach a retreat to the members of the Community. Brother Solomon was marvelously prepared to listen to him: the supernatural filled his mind. He wrote to his sister about union with God. And the days' events inspired the following commentary, the sadness of which remained without bitterness and was illumined by a radiant faith: "Who knows whether more distressful hardships...lie in store for us? It seems that the hand of God weighs heavily upon France...Happy those who make the most of these divine punishments...! Happy the French, if in the disfavor they experience today, they know...how to adopt religious views...and concern themselves with their salvation..."[21]

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"More distressful hardships" would indeed come, slowly but inexorably. Faithful souls would be genuinely sifted. The Constituent Assembly assumed power over both the temporal and the spiritual. It aspired to reform, to recreate everything -- law, morality and religion. It was an application of the theory of the "tabula rasa": the new man and the new nation was to be dated from 1789. And they were to emerge, fully armed, from the brain of "philosophy".

Philosophy, in the sense meant by the disciples of the "Encyclopedia", was rationalism and individualism. It did not admit of a religious society, superior (at the level of conscience) to civil society and independent as to doctrine and discipline. It allowed of no intermediary between the individual and the State, under whatever name or form, be it guild, company, congregation or confraternity. Apart from the collectivity called "Citizens", not a single moral person, recognized by the law and capable of owning and administering property could exist. All wealth, landed or personal, must rest with a man, living or dying, and therefore be transmitted and circulate without interruption; or else it must revert to the State.

These views were given greater currency during the second half of the 18th century. And so, neither the Church, nor monastic Orders, nor regular or secular Institutes could afford to ignore what was threatening them. Lawyers, who made up the majority of the Constituent Assembly, were obviously prepared, under the influence of "philosophy" to push the ancient daring of royal and judicial Gallicanism to its ultimate consequences.

The 5th and 6th of October ended by discrediting Louis XVI and by discouraging resistance. Many of the delegates of the higher clergy and the nobility ceased to take their seats in the Assembly, which henceforth held its meetings in the palace of the Archbishop of Paris, while awaiting relocation in the *Tuileries*. On the 28th of October there occurred the first significant action: "The pronouncement of vows will be suspended in all monasteries of both sexes". On the 2nd of November, by a vote of 568 to 346, "the die was cast": a decree, in purposely ambiguous language, placed the property of the clergy "at the disposal of the Nation". Actually, the Assembly considered the immense fortune of the French Church as an estate in abeyance. The Nation's First Estate lost its legal standing. Shamelessly, the Assembly syphoned off the Church's inheritance, even if it did plan, somewhat later, to grant a salary to priests, now become "public functionaries".

A rapid accounting of all of this wealth was an urgent necessity. The decree of the 13th of November promulgated: "All holders of benefices of whatever kind and all Superiors of ecclesiastical houses and institutions without exception, shall be obliged to make, on unstamped paper and without charge, in no more than two months beginning with the publication of this decree, before royal judges or city officials of the locality, a detailed declaration of all the personal and landed property dependent upon these benefices, houses and institutions, as well as their revenues and to furnish at the same time a detailed account of the obligations with which these properties

[21] Motherhouse Archives, GF-a, Letter #88, 2nd of September 1789 to Miss Rosalie le Clercq (copy) and Letter #89, 3rd of September to Francis Le Clercq. Cf. Chassagnon, op.cit., pp. 296-299.

might be encumbered.[22]

To what extent did this legislation affect the Christian Brothers? As a "lay" Congregation, the Brothers were not committed to solemn vows -- the only ones recognized and ratified by traditional law -- and they did not form part of the clergy. The decree of the 28th of October did not concern them directly; however, it must have appeared to them as a threat to all forms of Religious life. As for the decree of the 13th of November, the corollary of the famous decision concerning Church property, there was a question as to whether the nature and the disposition of their collective inheritance dispensed them from complying with it. In any case, it was a question that was not immediately raised; and, in spite of the time-frame provided in the official text, the civil authorities did not receive statements from the parties affected until well into 1790.

The masses did not wait that long to confuse the Brothers at the Holy Child Jesus House with clerics and monks. The accusations propagated by the Church's enemies ("hoarders", "monopolists", "starvers") were spouted as insults against Brother Agathon and his Community. The city thought it wise to appear to defer to the ringleaders, and it ordered an investigation, which revealed nothing out of the ordinary. However, the invidious campaign continued. It was up to the Superior-general to defend the honor of the Institute. The formal protest that he wrote in the latter half of November and addressed to the city officials of Melun remained well within what we know of his principles and his character: without raising his voice, and in a transparently clear statement, he submitted a careful demand that allowed of no evasion.

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools, to whom you have granted legal existence in your city and who must be well thought of and enjoy a good reputation in order usefully to attend to the education of your youth, respectfully beg to set before you the fact that they are experiencing abusive treatment, which you can judge for yourself whether they deserve...Depositions against them have been accepted and recorded at the City Hall of this city. Posterity, which will read in your records the reports of these depositions and the repeated investigations made against the petitioners will be convinced that the charges are well-founded. It will become prejudiced, quite unjustifiably, against them, and when fresh disturbances arise, they and their institutions will become the target of hostile people and of the insults of the populace, as has recently happened."

But let the people take note of the day-to-day life of the Community: they would certainly find nothing suspicious. And Brother Agathon reminded the gentlemen in Melun of the men whom they knew so well, busy with their tasks, "far from the clubs and the societies", abstaining from the most innocent diversions and limiting "their relaxation" to "a few hours of walking". He recalled the Brothers' frugality, their alms, and the detachment they showed by teaching the city's poor children at the least possible cost. "And in spite of this, they are being dealt with...as though they were the enemies of society".

They were being accused of enriching themselves through lucrative commercial contracts and of secretly hoarding foodstuffs. These were fictions that informers would have considerable difficulty in proving. The Brothers "were not the cause either of the high cost, nor of the scarcity, of wheat in the marketplaces; their supply" was the result of the years of plenty. "Rather than damaging the city", it enabled the Brothers to come to the assistance of their fellow-citizens.

Let the Commune repeat its inspection of the Brothers' house as often as it wishes. Not only did they have no fear of the minutest supervision, they expected thereby to be completely vindicated. "Their institution in Melun ought no longer to seem a mystery."

In conclusion, the Brothers of the Christian Schools asked: 1. That the negative findings of the investigations of the Holy Child Jesus House be included in the most explicit way in the City's "records"; 2. That their own statement "be read at the city's first general assembly, so as to have the widest possible publicity"; 3. "That the fact be recorded in registers or in newspapers to prevent posterity from becoming prejudiced against the Brothers" on the strength of the accusations "mentioned in the reports". 4. "That there be sent to them a copy...of the document that declares the

[22] National Archives, S 7046-47, text of the decree, accompanying the "statement of revenues belonging to the Brothers of the Christian Schools".

falsity of the accusations and the injustice of the suspicions directed against them."[2324] On the 30th of November an official affidavit, signed by thirty-four "city officials and representatives of the Commune of Melun" bore the assurances that Brother Agathon had been seeking:

1. Desiring to give the Brothers of the Christian Schools the genuine proof of our respect, devotedness and gratitude for the successful attention they pay to our young people, for the good example they give our city, where they practice the virtues imposed by religion as well as those prescribed by a sound philosophy, and also for the generous sacrifices they make in favor of our Commune:

1.We certify that when inspections of the Brothers' house were made, ...they were made under public clamor, which was the rule of the moment for the leaders of the Commune; and that they were undertaken in the same way as in the Duke of Praslin's manor, and elsewhere; that no written accusation was brought against them; and no verbal accusation has been made against them; and that the outcome of our inspections has been to ascertain that the Brothers of the Christian Schools act as heads of household, stocking their homes with food as they would do if they were simple consumers.

We declare that the active interest the Brothers have taken in our Commune during its time of crisis, inspired them to share with us what little grain they had, which they relinquished gladly; we declare furthermore that daily they gave us proof of their unselfishness by letting us have a third teacher in the schools when contractually they owed only two, and that, on all occasions, they have been good citizens, to the extent that their retired, frugal and contemplative life permits.[25] Here, these good, simple people were speaking from the heart. They had not changed their views since the quiet times when Bishop de Luynes discussed with the Superiors of the Institute in the prospects for moving the Brothers into the former Ursuline Convent in Melun.[26].

They loved their school teachers and they meant to keep them. Their "religion" as well as their "sound philosophy" saw nothing but what was remarkable in De La Salle's work and in the activities of his followers. While they gladly accepted the new order of things, along with all the personal advantages that it guaranteed them, their wishes were fulfilled with the reforms already realized. They loathed violence, and sectarian hatreds grieved them. But they did not dare sail into the teeth of the gale. When, then, detractors arose and the populace grew restless, they agreed to the inspection of residences, no matter how irritating and unjustified it appeared: "Public clamor had become the rule of the moment". And the Duke of Preslin had to submit to it, as did Brother Agathon. Nevertheless, the city officials contrived to cushion its disagreeable effects: they asserted that their records bore no traces of accusation. They sent the Brothers a most flattering letter in which they recorded the reasons for their "dedication" and their "gratitude". But they made no mention of the fact that the Brothers were obliged to pay guards to protect the Holy Child Jesus House from marauders.[27]

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It was a period of transition. His Most Christian Majesty, the king, still reigned, but he no longer ruled; and France had not repudiated its Catholicism. On that November, Durand Maillaine, the renowned canonist, wrote (in the name of the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Constituent Assembly) a report which was to be submitted to the Assembly, in which he dealt with catechetical instruction which he intended "to put in the hands of young priests almost exclusively". "Good

[23] Motherhouse Archives, document included in Historique de l'etablissement de Melun. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pp. 310-3113.

[24] ibid

[25] Motherhouse Archives, document included in Historique de etablissement de Melun. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pg. 214; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 548-550; Chassagnon, pp. 300-301.

[26] Cf. Vol. II of the present work, pp. 486 et sq.

[27] Motherhouse Archives, Account Book; amounts paid to the guards on the 20th of November 1789. A second payment refers to a period from the 8th to the 14th of the following December.

Christians", he stated "are formed in the Church by catechism lessons."[28] How was it that in the view of this segment of the clergy the Brothers, the educators of the 'people' failed to preserve their essential function?

But while people proclaimed the necessity of religious education, they had also to be concerned with guaranteeing a livelihood to the teachers. Had the nation's new masters foreseen the effect of their laws? The great upheaval had already shaken the elementary schools to their foundations. Tithes, obtained through the pastors, had provided the Brothers with an indirect income; but on the evening of the 4th of August, tithes were abolished. The property of the clergy was thought to be a particularly sound and stable basis for many scholastic foundations. The State, which had seized capital funds, deferred the payment of quarterly interest to investors. In February, 1790 the cancellation of grants to cities reduced drastically the income of all cities that that assumed the responsibility for the salaries of Lasallian Communities. At the same time, political disorders, the high cost of living and the uncertainty of the future touched private fortunes to the quick: what would happen to the prosperity of many of the residence schools?

On the 13th of December, 1789, Brother Eunuce, the Director of Nancy, wrote to his colleague, Brother Florus at St. Menhould: "In your present distress, you are fortunate that the city has had the goodness to provide for your urgent needs. Otherwise, you would experience the lot of many people who bewail their misery, because nobody is any longer paying their bills." He added that the school in Maréville, his neighbor, is already "approaching its end". Resident pupils were leaving. The so-called "free residence school" had only eight or ten pupils, for whom there are three teachers who, from morning 'til night are dying of boredom.[29].

The investment of the 'city of God' continued apace, relatively slowly, intermittently and with gaps which sometimes raised hopes. Nevertheless, it was known that those who laid siege meant to take the place; and they would not spare the monasteries. The spiritual and temporal utility of some of these great institutions scarcely seemed any longer demonstrable; their occupants who had grown sluggish in the midst of worldly comforts, fulfilled their functions quite imperfectly; and there were those of them who treated with the enemy. People were inclined, therefore, however reluctantly, to make the necessary sacrifices in order that hospitals, schools and social services might be saved. Momentary optimism assuaged fear: people deluded themselves by enumerating amnesties. These were all quite human feelings, and particularly strong on the eve of disasters. At least fugitively, they came to the surface in Brother Solomon's letters. He wrote to his sister on the 25th of December, 1789: "You would be surprised, and I would be grieved, although resigned, if I had to return to my family. But no! if it please God, I hope to die a Christian Brother, since everything encourages our hope for survival. Isn't my lot better than if I were some fat monk"? [30]

The lot of "monks", indeed, no longer raised any doubt. Against them Treilhard had prepared his report to the Assembly.[31].He filed it on the 11th of February, 1790, and the debate opened on the following day. Speakers 'on the Left', such as Petion, did not disguise their hatred. A moderate, the Duke La Rochefoucauld, recognized past services but declared that monasticism had lost its meaning and had retained nothing but its disadvantages. The vote came on the 13th of February. It prohibited solemn vows on French soil. Religious of both sexes might if they wished grow old and die in the handful of houses that would be allocated for their use. To those who agreed to doff the 'habit' pensions would guarantee an independent life.

With the destruction of the Society of Jesus in 1762 the courts had begun the work of undermining Religious life. The "Commission on Regular Orders", beginning in 1766, endeavored to remove several of the ancient Congregations, close certain convents, and, in a more or less arbitrary way, regroup Communities it wanted to preserve. This structure, weakened by the "Ancien Regime",

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[28] Cited by Pierre La Gorce, Histoire religieuse de la Revolution francaise, Vol. I, pp. 198-199, following the National Archives, AD XVII, Case 31.

[29] Motherhouse Archives, original letter, file Ha p 4

[30] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, Letter #90.

[31] La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 155-156

crumbled under the attack launched by the Revolution.[32]

Only the "secular" Congregations, whose social activity could not be abruptly broken off without danger to the State, were still left standing. "We declare, furthermore, that, as of now, nothing is changed regarding those institutions responsible for public education and charitable establishments, and this, until a decision is made on these matters".[33]

It was merely a stay of execution, as we shall see: the Christian Brothers were temporarily spared, but by no means did they escape proscription in principle. Their friends felt the full burden of the threat. Two months later, four thousand inhabitants of Castres (whom the generosity of their former bishop, Barral, had once endowed with primary schools) assembled in the Dominican church and cloister and, after singing the *Veni Creator*, unanimously demanded that the Brothers be retained.[34]

The attitude of the leading citizens in Melun has already shown us the permanent popularity of the Brothers. The climate in the provinces was favorable to them, at the time the decree of the 14th of December, 1789, brought about the election of new town councils. Mayors, attorneys-general, members of City and Commune Councils, the entire personnel effectively entrusted with the daily conduct and direction of the Communes, still belonged to the middle class, indeed, to a nobility of moderate opinions and prudent behavior, and to an elite that was no doubt satisfied, with the "liberal" reforms but (like the voters, they were "active citizens" and people with "a roof over their heads") hardly inclined to proceed any further along revolutionary lines. After the law subsequent to December 22nd, provinces and districts would be in the hands of Directories and Councils similarly selected from among the propertied classes. It is obvious that the beginning of 1790 marked an interruption in the evolution of thought. When, on the 27th of January, the Brothers in Moulins prepared their classes on Lices Place and on Rue Cynge to meet the electors of the Upper Allier precinct, they didn't think that they would have to endure a hostile crowd. [35]The supervision of "national education" could be handed over to departmental functionaries by the Constituent Assembly.[36].At first glance, such a measure could not give rise to very violent reactions.

However, it harbored the fixed purpose of substituting the civil power for the Church in the governance of education. It was as much associated with Rousseau's doctrine of the omnipotence of the State, as with the ideas circulated by La Chalotais in the famous Plan,[37]and with the tendencies manifested in 1763-1764, at the time of the creation of the "Offices" for colleges.[38]

Once the principles were in place, they were expanded ruthlessly: discretion, moderation, convenient concessions to people in service, the preferences of families, the merits of teachers, the gratitude of pupils - none of this mattered. The combined and coordinated powers of Statism and irreligion overcame obstacles and propelled minds: it was too late to close the door.

From 1789 to beyond 1794 the Revolution had become an avalanche, with a velocity that accelerated in compliance with the law of gravity. Earlier, the threats of expropriation had become more explicit. After a postponement, the decree of the 13th of November was given a wider application. As we have seen, the Brothers thought that an exception would be made of their property, obviously distinct from Church property: the authorities, urged by orders from above,

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[32]The members of the Constituent Assembly were well aware that they were finishing off the work of the Courts; they also prided themselves in a sort of concern for justice with respect to individuals. Adjusting the pension level, they declared that Jesuits who shall not posses, whether as benefice or State pension, a sum equal to the one paid other Religious in their classification, would be given whatever would make up that sum". (Session of the 19th of February, Moniteur universel for the 20th of February 1790).

[33]Cited by Chassagnon, pg. 303, following the Duverger collection, Vol. I, pg. 118.

[34]Father H. Salabert, Histoire des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de Castres, Albi, 1888.

[35]Brother Gustave of Mary, Les Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de Moulins, etc., Moulins, 1929, pg. 40, and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April, 1912, pg. 153.

[36] Law of the 22nd of December 1789

[37] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 417-418.

[38] Ibid., pg. 411.

obliged the Brothers to produce the same statements of accounts as other Religious Orders and as the clergy. The Department of Meurthe did not wait for the expiration of the original time-limit to require Brother Eunuce, on the 7th of January, 1790, to make a declaration of real property, the income and the obligations of the Community in Nancy.[39] On the 6th of February, Brother Bernardine, along with Brother Mark, his Sub-Director, signed and sent to the city corporation of Carcassonne an inventory of what their house owned and contained.[40] And on the 8th of the same month, "Charles Andrew Joseph Lepine, (called) Brother Berthier, resident of Paris, Rue Neuve, in the parish of St.Sulpice", agent "of the General Regime of the Institute" for the collection of about a third of the annual income of the entire Congregation, appeared before Jean Louis Le Couteulx La Noraye, "deputy Mayor for the department of public lands of the City" of Paris. The document he placed in the hands of this municipal official and which is preserved on file in the National Archives[41]supplies a great deal of financial information not only for "the Institute's general savings", but also for the benefit of thirty-three Communities situated in the two eastern and western" Provinces.[42] Brother Berthier received 26,223 livres, 19 sols, 5 deniers of income "from the king at the City Hall, from the States of Brittany, Languedoc, Bourgogne, Artois, from the India Company and from the public lands of the City of Paris". He added that "in this declaration I do not include what I draw for our house in Paris, because that house itself declares its income in the statement of its properties, just as do the houses in Orleans and Brest for what concerns them.[43]

Brother Étienne, the "Superior of the Brothers" in St. Sulpice parish, complied with the decree of the 27th of February.[44] From those who rented a part of the property on the Rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs the Community received 1,440 livres annually; and its own income was figured at 1,084 livres, 13 sols and 4 deniers. But its obligations (maintenance, "credence table for the chapel", "hospitality for visiting Brothers", interest on loans) absorbed practically all of its working capital. A rebate on city taxes was no longer paid. As for the Brothers' salaries, the capital had been given over by Cardinal Bissy to the pastor and to "Catholic Charities".

From the end of February until August statements followed one after the other monotonously, docilely and scrupulously. The king's agents under the "Ancien Regime" had habituated the French to obedience; and the new order conferred the maximum of prestige and power upon "the Law". As Brother Berthier attests, those who were liable carried it out with "respectful submission". But it only involved temporal matters: and the soul's peace remained intact. Indeed, what good was there in troubling oneself excessively about the future? And, as for today, nothing had changed. Religious institutes that taught school would keep their property until further notice, repeated the Constituent Assembly on the 20th of April. Meanwhile, it would be exactly informed, and effortlessly, as to how the Brothers at St. Yon lived,[45] as well as those at the Rossignolerie and those in Avignon, and those in other less influential institutions.[46] It would know, if it wanted to, about the shabby furniture (the old beds without curtains and the wicker chairs) in the Carcassonne Community,[47]about the

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[39] Departmental Archives of Meurthe-et-Moselle, SQ., article 17. Cited in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937.

[40] Brother Lemandus, op.cit., pg. 128.

[41],[41]Case S 7046-47.

[42] See the explanation of the geographical divisions in Vol. II of the present work, pp. 348-349.

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[44] National Archives, S 7046-47.

[45] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1159, statement of the 26th of February 1790.

[46] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pg. 315, following the Motherhouse Archives.

[47] Brother Lemandus, op.cit., pg. 128

Brothers' unpretentious library in Laon, where the Brothers would not hide the fact that "the Premonstratention Fathers at St. Martins Abbey had since 1683 supplied them with their noontime meal", although, in the meanwhile they had refused to draw "a small income of 17 livres from the French clergy".[48]

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However, at the very moment this report was being prepared in all good faith, a new and dangerous development was taking shape. On the 26th of March the Assembly decided that, besides the inventory of capital funds and revenues, public officials were also to evaluate the status of Religious personnel and ask each one whether or not he meant "to return to the world". The Brothers of the Christian Schools, like the members of Orders and Congregations already visited, were obliged to proceed with this census of their membership, and each one was to undergo the interrogation individually. Who, under these circumstances, failed to see the prelude to the "diaspora"? For faithful souls it was an alarming experience, but an insidious temptation to those whose will wavered.

Once again, this time on April 30th, commissioner from the town council appeared at the Brothers' house in Nancy. He took the names of five professed Brothers,[49]three with temporary vows, and four without any formal commitments. But his inquiries did not seem to go any farther. Doubtless, Brother Eunuce and his associates, believed to be indispensable for the school's continuance, were not called upon to choose.[50]On the other hand, Claude Étienne Le Gendre, called Brother Gordian of Mary, Director of the Community in Vire in Normandy, replied to Mayor Castel on the preceding day that he was "determined to remain uninterruptedly" in "his Order" and that "the other two Brothers, absent at the time", had the same intention.[51]To the officials in Albi, on the 25th of August, Brothers Liberator, Gabriel Joseph, Ismael and Louvein declared "separately" that they were resolved to "live and die" in their vocation, as perseveringly as "the law would permit them".[52]Also invited to "state their intentions", the members of the Community in Le Puy refused to do so for the quite legitimate reason that the National Assembly had so far come to no conclusion about their Institute; they did not believe therefore that they "were included under the "Letters patent issued with the decree" of the legislators. Moreover, they disclaimed any attitude of rebellion: when the time came, they "would observe whatever was prescribed".[53]

Surely it would be lunacy to face the future with serenity. While a fervent Christian never despairs, still his abandonment to God does not dispense him from human foresight. He knows that the assistance of Grace will not fail him, no matter what his situation: but, mistrusting himself, he does not go looking for trouble out of sheer wantonness. For the love of his own soul, the soul of his brothers, for the good of the Church or for the salvation of his country, the Religious must dread persecution that might destroy, if only momentarily, the work of the Saints. And what did the revolutionary spirit have in store for De La Salle's sons? Assuming that their schools survived and that each of their Communities continued to exist, would the bond of unity be broken? The majority in the Constituent Assembly would not admit of the preservation of an autonomous "corporation", obedient to a freely elected superior, empowered to dispose of a collective patrimony, spread throughout the kingdom, and spilling over beyond its frontiers. It would inflict upon them a freedom

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48 Municipal Archives of Laon, no. 105, statement of the 25th of February 1790.

49 Prior to the Canon Law that is currently in force, the term "professed" referred to a Religious with perpetual vows.

50 Departmental Archives of Meurthe-et-Moselle, Q, 657.

51 National Archives, D XIX, 13.

52 Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 275-276.

53 Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1934, pg. 35.

that would separate them from their Superior, would isolate them from one another, and would succeed in discouraging the professed Brothers, alienating the novices and, as a consequence, unnerving all vocations.

These reflections are summed up in the following lines of one of Brother Solomon's letters to his father, dated the 13th of April, 1790: "A short while back I commented to my sister that she would be quite surprised if she were to see me return to my family; but, at the moment, I would not be so surprised myself...For, from all that is being said and done against Religious, we rather fear our suppression, or, at least, that the changes they want to make in our Institute will be the cause of its destruction. In that case, I would have to have recourse to my dearest father"[54]

Here again, we are picking up the echo of conversations between Brother Agathon and his secretary. And no doubt it is a faithful echo, although we cannot hear the Superior-general's voice directly. But other evidence is not lacking.

In February 1790 the Brother Director of the Community in Agde in Languedoc asked, with the concurrence of the city officials, permission to open a residence school. On the 6th of March Brother Agathon informed him that his request could not have come at a worse time. There was indeed the "appearance" that the Brothers were being spared. However, they were living in the midst of uncertainties. The novitiates had "dwindled to nearly nothing" and very few candidates were applying "because of a fear" (which the Superior still believed was "ill-founded") of a coming suppression. Two months later, another letter, dated the 28th of April, concurred with the thoughts expressed by the Brother Secretary to his father, except for a few formal reservations, which were quite justified in view of the rank of the people to whom the Superior was writing. He had received from the city councillors a copy of their deliberations concerning the residence school; and he wrote that he was "humbled" because he was unable to reply as he wanted to their respect and their trust. "Although the unanimous wish of the city administration is for our preservation; however, we do not know whether we shall continue to exist, and, under these conditions, you are aware that we must suspend any plan for a new foundation.[55]

It was probably at about this time that the brochure entitled *The General Idea of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* came from the presses of the printer Herissant.[56] The cares of the moment are reflected from one end to the other of this remarkable appeal; at every page and on each of the points discussed (the essentially French character of the Institute, the insignificance and charitable destination of its property, the services rendered to national education, the defense of the vows and the wisdom of the Rule of Government) is disclosed the man who was struggling with excellent weapons and calm courage against powerful adversaries.

Attacks had increased in number and it seemed the moment to re-enforce the defenses. A "supplement" was added to the initial "report".[57] Published without a date and without mentioning the printer, we should have been uncertain as to its exact date, except that it begins with these significant expressions that we find in the writings both of Brother Agathon and Brother Solomon:The fear, perhaps ill-founded, that the Brothers of the Christian Schools have of submitting to certain changes in their vows, Constitutions and government seem to require that they issue the following comments. We believe therefore that the "supplement" must have appeared about May of 1790.

After a number of distinctions concerning simple vows (they did not strip the professed Brother "either of his personal effects nor of his ownership of inherited property") and after a new

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[54] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, Letter #98.

[55] Ibid., BE a, Brother Agathon File, copies of two documents already cited.

[56] See above, pp. 4-9.

[57] National Archives, S 7046-47. Supplement au Memoire intitule "Idee generale de l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes (twelve pages, msall format). Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pp. 321-322.

defense of the "Regime" (so perfectly adapted to the ends of the Congregation), the author stresses what might be termed the "loyalty" of the Brothers: "Obedient to the Church, they have never held special views on matters of doctrine; and neither have they fashioned any ambitions for themselves in civil society. They have never formed part of any faction, nor meddled in disputes between cities, much less in the affairs of State. The spirit which inspires them : to teach children, to bring them up in the fear of God and good morals...is quite obviously a patriotic spirit. It is...the very spirit of the French nation, to the love of which (the Brothers) incline their pupils. Thirty-four thousand children of the people are the beneficiaries of the lessons of four-hundred-and-fifty Brothers. (The total number of members of the Lasallian family is gotten by adding to this figure "the Superiors in each of the institutions, the elderly, the sick, novices and student-Brothers and, finally, the Brothers employed in the residence schools and the Serving Brothers".) Who would replace such a group of teachers for these children and youths? There is reason to believe, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools dare hope, that if French law-makers in considered the Brothers' services as useful to the Nation, they would at the same time acknowledge the need to support the Brothers, in all respects, in their present condition.

It was in this way that the Superior attempted to conjure with external peril. With no less resoluteness he accomplished his duties as leader by setting the situation before his men and by cautioning them against either an uncritical optimism or a craven discouragement. In this connection the "Circular" published on the 12th of May, 1790[58] [59]appears to be a very important document. It throws light on this very confused period; it disguises none of the hesitation that showed up here and there in the Institute and presages the failures that were to come; but it was also a tribute to the perseverance of the majority of Brothers, to the zeal which, in the midst of anxieties, never flagged. It completely confirms our view of the noble, valiant spirit, remarkable at once for faith, simplicity and modesty, of the man whose work, realized on the eve of the turmoil, we have already studied.[60].His mind and his style had lost none of their vigor. In spite of what he said of himself, he was at the height of his powers. Indeed, he succeeded in the worst possible difficulties to yield the full measure of his virtue.

He "supposed" that the Brothers were "waiting to know whether (their) Congregation would remain intact..." His silence up to then was readily understandable: he thought he was going to have "something positive" to tell them. But everything "drags on". The "occasion of the upcoming renewal of vows", however, demanded that the Superior publish his guidelines.

"Up to the present time there is nothing in the decrees of the National Assembly that particularly concerns us: but we cannot assure you that they will allow us to continue as we are without any alteration of our condition. We wish it; we hope and ask for it; but events are not under our control. Several young Brothers wanted to renew their triennial vows on the Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity. Another, and more numerous group was undecided. It was impossible to blame them: When we undertake an obligation, we must know ...what we are doing". But, as things stood, intentions confronted the unknown. What would be the legal status of the Congregation tomorrow? Prepared to "be a model of total submission to the decrees", the Brothers did not think that they had the right to anticipate. There was nothing standing in the way of the renewal of perpetual vows, since that did not alter the already definitive situation of professed Broth−ers; but they "certainly would not wish to forego the merit" of such a ceremony. On the other hand, the renewal of triennial vows prolonged the previous commitment by a year.[61]According to the old Rule, followed in the 18th century and up to our own time, until the "new" Canon Law (see Vol. II of the present work, pp. 120 and 121). The renewal of trienial vows took place each year and, as a consequence, without awaiting the end of the current three year period. In view of the uncertain future, it would be better to postpone the renewal.

Such a delay "must in no way weaken the resolve" of true sons of the Institute, who must pursue their spiritual advancement and not enfeeble their fervor! At the first favorable opportunity the Society

[58] Dated in Melun. The text preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, BE a, Brother Agathon file, has been integrally reprinted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1937, pp. 322-326.

[59] Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 551-554 and Chassagnon, pp. 304-306.

[60] See Vol. II of the present work, Part Four

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will be pleased to admit them to perpetual profession.

Brothers who might seek in this decision of the Superior a pretext for an immediate return "to the world" would be unworthy of their calling. If such a pretext existed, it did so only in sterile souls – people "who merely wore the habit of the Institute and who remained in it only to have the necessities of life;...who are always ready to enjoy the gratification of the senses, are powerless to overcome them−selves, to repress their outbursts, their flashes of temperament and passion, and to overcome their laziness in the performance of their duty...; who seem to have entered Religious life only to be a burden to others...a cross to be borne by everybody in the Society".

"When such people...leave, they are no loss...The living are ill at ease with the dead." And such people are really dead, because they have fled from Grace".

Numbers are far less important than unity of minds and the collective thrust toward perfection. The safeguards of a Religious family are: "Assiduity in mental prayer...fervent and frequent reception of the Sacraments...regularity at all Community exercises...charity for one's brothers... and zeal for the education of youth, especially in the truths of the faith and the morality of the Gospel."

Was this the way things were in all Christian Brothers' Communities? Brother Agathon "notes" a "relaxation" in some of them. "Temporal events disrupt, disquiet and sway weak minds." There are "false brethren": "God grant that their purposes do not match the gloom of their opinions"! We would do well to recall "what Scripture says: Man's enemies are those in his own household."

It is important to pray: "For the preservation of the Congregation, for the Church, for the National Assembly, and for the peace and tranquility of the French Empire. Even if we were certain of the impending dissolution of our Institute, which we are not, let us constantly live in such a way that nobody has reason to wish for it, nor to reproach us with having provided the occasion for it."

While he sharply denounced the infection, the Superior did not exaggerate its extent. The Brothers' houses were free "of serious disorders" and deserved the praise which every day came to Brother Agathon's attention. "Hot heads" and "misguided imaginations" were rare. And even these had to be handled indulgently: some temperaments "were extraordinarily moved by the nationwide revolution". "Challenge does not change a man, but it reveals him for what he is".

There was one reason for satisfaction that was far from trivial: the new city governments entertained kindly thoughts regarding the Brothers. Some cities were busy enlarging the schools and opening them where they would be needed. "If we could rely upon plain speaking and judge on the strength of our experience, we should have high hopes for a glowing success." But such thoughts were out of season.

Right up to the final words of this letter, and in the very words that suggest the possibility of disaster, there is a virile energy and a sober eloquence that dominate the profound emotion, which, in the end, had to emerge: the paternal heart overflowed in a sort of intimacy. Appalling, unforeseen events force the most intrepid men to assess their insignificance and their powerlessness, the disproportion between their individual efforts and the pressure of the forces prepared to crush them. It is then that the proud man acknowledges his peril. The humble man, relying upon God, abides in peace: but he is not reluctant to appear before the world in all his wretchedness and humiliation. As Blaise Pascal put it, his "nobility is great in that he knows that he is wretched".[62]And he is "nobler than what kills him, because he knows he is dying".[63]And we might dare to add: because he consents to die. Far from discouraging those who surround him, his acceptance, his prostration, is an example disposing them to bow before the truth.

What the Institute needs, wrote Brother Agathon, "is a more competent Superior". (But where would a more farsighted, a more resolute one be found?) In any case, let the Brothers take confidence is a dedication that on no occasion was sparing of itself: "We do, it seems, what depends upon us, and, while we are convinced that the things that are good (for the Congregation) cannot be effected by a grievously inadequate cause, we are not disconcerted. Too limited in our ideas, we seek out and gladly

[62]Pensees, Brunschvig Ed., section VI, 397.

[63]Ibid., 347.

accept others' in order to make the best possible use of the counsel that is given us. If we cannot suitably answer to your expectations, at least rely on the full extent of our concern. Your interests are our own, and even if we were responsible only for yours, we could neither forget nor neglect them. We would always remember that we owe everything to you; and the obligation dearest to our heart will be, until death, that of living up to the confidence you have placed in us. Yes, death will be the limit of our solicitous attention, of our service, of our work and of our inviolable affection for the confreres to whom we have unreservedly dedicated them...

We shall witness this solemn oath (pronounced on the 12th of May, 1790) observed in the midst of the worst misfortunes, heart-rending separations, in the pain of bondage, under the threat of the scaffold; and then (the glory of martyrdom suddenly dissolved) in the darkness of precarious refuges, in semi-solitude, in sickness, until the Lord came to reward His faithful servant, overwhelmed with bitterness, crushed by fatigue and stripped of all honors and of every earthly hope.

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Fortunately, the future doesn't share its secrets. Page after page, we write the book of our lives, and each day God gives us enough strength to fill a page. Looked at in the perspective of time, revolutions and wars are perhaps more frightening than when they are experienced at first hand and when we feel them in their day-to-day reality. In 1790, how many days at the Motherhouse in Melun were completely similar to the old days! Religious services, recreation, office work, and (in the vast gardens) manual labor recurred according to Rule, in their accustomed rounds. The Brother Procurator methodically kept his accounts of receipts and expenditures in the huge ledgers that were begun on the 28th of August, 1777 and which, after the 15th of October, 1792, were to remain so many blank pages.[64]

Shortly after the publication of the "Circular" of the 12th of May, 1790, the Brother Secretary was commissioned to visit the Western region. Meeting with the Brothers, he was to comment on the Superior's instruction and to ascertain their state of mind. A letter of the 20th of June, dated from Avranche but sent from Rennes, informs us of his itinerary: he passed through Rouen and arrived at Bayeux "the day after Corpus Christi". Thereafter, he was received at Cherbourg. He left Avranche for Rennes and pushed on to St. Malo and St. Brieuc, and planned to come round to St. Yon toward mid-July, before returning to Melun. He mentions no incident throughout the course of this journey, which was made on horseback.[65]In most provinces, the disturbances of the previous year had come to an end. Except sporadically, commotions no longer occurred. But at the moment there was serious agitation in the South: and the Brothers in Nimes, we may assume, viewed with terror the armed struggle between Catholics and Protestants who were supported by the Guyenne Regiment. The city was invaded by Huguenots from the Gardonnenque and the Vaunage. During the awful days of the 13th, 14th and 15th of June the Capuchins were massacred, and overall there were about three-hundred victims.[66]The first demonstrations in favor of the reunion of the Papal Territory with the kingdom of France were mounted in Comtat- Venaissin. There had been considerable turmoil, but as yet no bloodshed. In Avignon on the 28th of August people took an oath on the "Roche des Dom" "to be faithful to the Nation, the law and the king"; and they sent to gather the children's signatures in the Brothers' schools![67] Hotheads attempted to win over the youth, willy-nilly, to the Revolution. And in the Antilles people fantasized as they did under the sun of Languedoc and on the banks of the Rhone. The pupils in St. Victor's College, in Fort Royal, were made to stay in the city, in spite of their parents, and surely as well, against the wishes of the Brothers, their teachers. The venerable founder of the Institution, Father Charles Francis, was mauled.[68]

We must not generalize, however. The fever that swept through a colony like Martinique seemed to be abating throughout France. Calm, inspired at once by a wish to survive, by weariness and by hope, returned. The laws of the Constituent Assembly, the civil laws and the administrative system were put into operation: they answered to the wishes of the country and they offered the charm of novelty. The sanguine did not intend to be shut in by passive expectations. Anybody who possessed a particle of power asked for nothing more than to manifest seasonable initiative.

Brother Agathon wrote about the fine feelings and the lofty plans in city governments. Bishops and pastors raised no objections. Brother Solomon's stay in Bayeux coincided with the opening of a fourth class and the dedication of chapel in the school directed by Brother Damian:

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[64]Motherhouse Archives, HA m.

[65]Ibid., R-2, letter #100.

[66]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 240-248.

[67]Municipal Archives of Avignon, Series A, no. 456, M. Armavon's diary.

[68] Sidney Daney, Histoire de la Martinique (Fort Royal, 1846), Vol. V, pg 128. On St. Victor's College and Father Charles Francis, O.F.M. Cap. see Vol. II of the present work, pp. 551-554.

these improvements were the result of the fresh generosity of Bishop Cheylus.[69]

At the beginning of the same month of June, Father Bernadet, pastor of the principal church in Toulouse, wrote to the mayor of this large city, M. Rigaud: "Viewing with genuine satisfaction that the Christian Brothers' school in the Faubourg St. Étienne is generally appreciated and applauded, that every day it produces marvelous effects among youth, formerly inconstant and practically undisciplined and untrained; that it is composed of more than six-hundred children taught, tuition-free, reading, calculation and especially religion, instruction in which is the foundation of the Brothers' Congregation; that the Brothers...by their skill and virtue have won the respect and love of the inhabitants of this city, of which you are the fathers and the leaders, I believe and am profoundly convinced it is impossible to place that pious and patriotic institution into more considerate and watchful hands than your own."

Was it possible to hope for more complete harmony? Father Bernadet announced the gift to the city of Toulouse of a house purchased by him as a teachers' residence. The mayor and the city officials accepted the offer along with all the conditions stipulated by the donor: the payment of a salary of 450 livres to each of the eight Brothers; the maintenance of the property; the assumption of the responsibility for the rent for another building, situated in the "Poid de l'Huile" neighborhood, where two additional classes were to be conducted. "During his lifetime, the pastor, in conjunction with His Honor the Mayor, reserved to himself the admission of pupils to the schools..." Finally, the gift became null and void if the Brothers ceased to benefit from it.[70]

If we leave the Upper Garonne and move on to the Department of the Somme, the mentality was the same. The city council of Amiens in August drew up a "Regulation for Charity Schools". In it everything was considered in relation to the obligations and the rules of the Religious who had been invited by Bishop La Mothe into his diocese and confirmed in the possession of the legacies of the Director of Schools, Jean Baptist Pingre and of Canon Vilman.[71]

Several municipalities were concerned to improve the material conditions of the teaching personnel. Nearly always uncertain from the beginnings of the Institute, living standards couldn't fail to grow worse in 1790, with the increased cost of living and with the revolution cancelling some of the sources of income. In Puy a bonus of five-hundred livres, that might be considered a compensation for the high cost of living, was granted to the Community in Gouteyron.[72]The Brothers in St. Brieuc, having sought assistance, Mayor Bagot transmitted their "statement" to the District Director and, "so as not to rest content with an unavailing expression of sympathy", he asked for authorization to have an increase of salary voted by his council; further, he would have liked to "purchase the house adjoining the one the Brothers lived in for their benefit". In its deliberations of the 2nd of November, the District testified to the importance of the services rendered by the Brothers and deplored "their scanty means of livelihood". It seemed right to the Council to propose the reestablishment of an ancient subsidy of 100 livres; but, in its judgment, it was impossible to go any farther without awaiting the decisions of the National Assembly.[73] The Directory of the Department of the Aisne, too, took into account that the organization of the public schools entered into the plans of the Constituent Assembly: "The restoration of morality" and the "hopes" of the country depended upon it. Was this a reason for not legislating, at least provisionally, for the support of the tuition-free schools? The Brothers had received help "from the ancient privileged classes, especially from former Religious Communities. This assistance was no longer supplied; and it was necessary immediately to provide something to take its place; "so that education would not suffer a setback". Complying with these injunctions, the municipal corporation in Laon commissioned two of its members, Bollee and Dumage, to pursue an investigation, the results of which did not appear until January, 1791: "The

[69] Motherhouse Archives, HB s 246, Historique des maisons de Normandie.[69]

[70] Brother Lemandus, op.cit., pp. 68-69.

[71] National Archives, F17 1366..

[72] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1934, pg. 35.

[73] Motherhouse Archives, no. 445, Saint Brieuc notebook.

Brothers of the Christian Schools deserve the full consideration of the gentlemen of the administration"; their number should be increased from five to six. "It would be ...essential to move" the school site, which is "dark, unhealthy and too small". The Community is going "to be in need of the basic necessities": a salary of six-hundred livres was indispensable. The funds would be levied both on the untitled property of the Major Seminary and on the retirement home for invalided priests, as well as on what belonged to the Jesuits.[74]

It was obviously a convenient way of economizing the public funds. The financial crisis, increasingly critical and paralyzing the loftiest intentions, was revealed in letters, involving the Brothers in Orleans, exchanged between the municipal officials of this city, the Directory of its District and the Directory of the Department of Loiret. The Brothers, wrote the Mayor, M. Tristan,[75]to the administrators of the District, "have been paid nothing since the 1st of April, 1790, of the 790 livres they received from the director of schools on the income from tithes." Coming to their assistance, the College had indeed promised to pay the sum of 1000 livres for five years, "but this bonus ended on the 30th of June, 1791 and would not be renewed, as the result of losses that (this institution) experienced under the 'new order'. It was to be the same for the 75 livres granted (annually) by the Bishop. The city government was counting on the influence of the District with the Departmental administration to induce the latter to "fill" the void. Otherwise the tuition-free schools could not continue -- a real misfortune for a city with so many "poor families".

The teachers had to eat, and they also needed a more comfortable residence. The lodgings on Rue St. Euvert, dank and without a garden, would not do: but the Department controlled the "Religious houses that were being abandoned", as for example, the Dominican house. It would have been a generous gesture to move the Christian Brothers into it.

The Directory of the Loiret refused to listen to new responsibilities. Certainly, it "shared the interest that" the Brothers "inspired in the District and in the City". "But conditions (were) not favorable" to an increase in salary and a move to new quarters. On the other hand, the city officials in Orleans would do well if, of themselves, they assured the necessary resources to the Community on Rue St.Euvert: let the Directory of the District persuade them, then, for the year 1790, to lend the total amount of the subsidy "once levied on the clergy" for the benefit of the teachers[76]

The year came to an end and the Brothers, while not dismissed, were sent from one bureaucracy to another: "They are in a fix", wrote the Attorney-general of the Department, Lemarcis. on the 6th of January, 1791. Finally, M. Tristan and his Council were determined to make an effort that bore witness to their sympathy and concern for the poor Brothers. On the 13th of January, they wrote to the Gentlemen of the District: "Like yourselves, we appreciate the perplexity that they must experience in the delay of the payment of money which the Nation owes them...The city treasury is overwhelmed by the weight of debts...Nevertheless, wishing to share the views of the administrative Assembly of the Department...,we have agreed to make an advance of 600 livres to the Christian Brothers, under the condition (accepted by them) of their reimbursing us with the first monies paid to them by the Nation, replacing the clergy as debtor.[77]

In Rouen we find the same concern arising from the same causes. The intervention in this case of the city corporation is all the more significant in that the people in Rouen, under the "Ancien Regime", had instigated numerous quarrels with De La Salle's disciples. On the 10th of January, 1791 the District administrators presented the problem to the Directory of the Lower Seine: "The Brothers of the tuition-free Christian Schools had received a promise from Cardinal La Rochefoucauld of an annual payment of 1200 livres. Only once have they been paid this sum. It has since been refused them, because the clergy's property has been declared to belong to the Nation.

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[74] Municipal Archives of Laon, no. 105.

[75] Letter dated the 1st of December 1790. Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 468.

[76] .[76]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 468, letter dated the 24th of December 1791.

[77] Ibid.

The Brothers live in the greatest indigence. At Easter time, 1791, two years of back pay are due to them. The city corporation, in its letter of the 18th of December, 1790, thought that it was essential to come to their rescue with funds from the College's income.[78] Bureaucracies, unfortunately, are never in a hurry; and before the city of Rouen moved from decision to action the Brothers on Rue St.Romain would no longer find themselves facing sympathetic, if restrictively generous, friends, but irreducible enemies.

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The assistance contributed to the Christian Brothers by magistrates in Departments, Districts or Communes, no matter how well-intentioned and fair it might have been, decided nothing over against the plans of an omnipotent Assembly. Surely, Frenchmen sought only to maintain the advantages of religious instruction and tuition-free education. But were their wishes compatible with the intentions of the Assembly? Even if no law were passed to strike down the primary schools and disperse the teaching personnel, the abolition of the Christian Brothers as "a moral person", sooner or later, involved the destruction of the major work realized by De La Salle and his successors. Would the Brothers, faithful to their vocation, agree to take their place in a new system of "national education", where their Rule went unrecognized, that "habit" proscribed and their internal organization declared illegal? There was probably no immigration in their ranks; since the departure of the two Brothers, Esdras and Yon, who, in 1790, accompanied five Neapolitan resident pupils from Marseille to Italy could not be regarded as a genuine exodus.[79] But on the assumption that the Superior-general, authorized by the Pope, urged the Brothers, each in his own Community, to hold themselves at the disposal of the Bishops and the cities, recruitment, limited within the boundaries of an administrative region, would r\m into a number of difficulties and would give rise to a lot of disappointments. And what would become of the aged and the sick when the Congregations's property would have been confiscated by the State?

These prospects appeared on the horizon with increasing clarity and created anxieties. Why not make a representation to the members of the Constituent Assembly and obtain from them, if still possible, a guarantee that the Lasallian society would continue to exist in the conditions in which it was founded? And if positions proved irrevocably fixed, wouldn't it be necessary, indeed urgent, to start thinking, as a debt in strict justice, of pensions which would secure a living to Brothers forcibly cast out into the world?

Such was the meaning of the petition which, in July, 1790, Brother Philippe of Jesus, Procurator General, and his associate, Brother Berthier and eighteen teachers in the Brothers' schools in the capitol sent to the National Assembly, with the approval of Brother Agathon.[80] "At the feet of the Fathers of the Country", they "placed" their "misgivings", their "unanimous wishes" and their "hopes". They declared their "devotion" to the religious family they had chosen, their "ardent desire" to "fulfill" their educational functions "until death".

The arguments they developed in favor of the preservation of the Institute were borrowed from the Supepior-general's earlier appeal. However, there was added a timely reminder of the decree of the 13th of February, which had pronounced in favor of the *status quo* regarding "houses devoted to public education".

And then the worst case was raised: If, in spite of our respectful demands, you still think you must include the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the general suppression of Religious Orders, we have reason to hope from your justice and humanity, for all the professed Brothers of the Congregation and, indeed, for those who, although not professed, are elderly and infirm, an individual salary proportioned to the age and the service of each of them.

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78 Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1159.

79 Motherhouse Archives, *Historique de la pro'llince meridionale,* Vol. II, pg. 330.

80 National Library L 39 3135. From the presses of Calixtus Wolland, Paris. The account book at Melun shows that the publication of this petition antedates the 29th of July 1790. The text can be found in the *Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes* for October 1937, pp. 327-329. Cf. Chassagnon, *op.cit.,* pp. 310-311, and Lucard, Vol. III, pp. 555-556.

The petitioners, freer in this respect than Brother Agathon was able to be, called to the attention of the members of the Assembly that "the major Superiors, all more than sixty years of age or nearing it, and all the more worn out with work in that the superiorship among the Brothers of the Christian Schools was distinguished only by its worries and its labors. They sought for all their veterans (who had devoted" their days "to the tuition-free instruction of the poor") "both adequate pensions and healthy, comfortable homes", such as many of the Institute's residences afforded.

The sentiments of the period dictated this final declaration: Whatever the lot that is reserved for us by your laws, we bow to them without complaint, satisfied to give in this way to our Fatherland the proof of the devotion which we have always professed and that it has the right to expect of all good citizens.

It was the indisputable witness to obedience: the Revolution never met with noncompliance on the part of the majority of Catholics until it invaded the innermost realm of conscience. We come now to that fatal moment: the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" was voted in on the 12th of July, 1790. But before its consequences clearly emerged, several months were to elapse.

People had been living in growing uneasiness, in a climate of insecurity, but still not in the eye of the storm where the brave are blindfolded and the fainthearted collapse. October brought only fresh alternatives of fear and hope: on the 13th and the 19th of that month the Assembly entrusted its Constitutional Committee with the task of supplying as soon as possible an overall plan for public education. On the 28th it postponed all decisions concerning the sale of proper ties belonging to Catholic charities, hospitals, scholastic establishments and other charitable institutions. Two days later Brother Solomon wrote to his sister: "We await events".[81]

The Superior-general harbored very few illusions concerning the future. Thus, he determined to take up himself the matter of the pensions. He wanted to consolidate this last line of retreat which he had ordered planned out in July by Brother Philippe of Jesus; and henceforth, until the cataclysm, ceaselessly, in collaboration with his Procurator and his secretary, he prepared a haven for his men, which would spare them (at least as he had hoped) the agony of neglect, hunger and disastrous abandonment.

On the 19th of the previous February the Assembly had decreed: Each Religious who shall make a declaration of desiring to leave his monastery shall be paid...as follows: to mendicants, 700 livres until he is fifty years of age, 800 until he is seventy, and 1,000 for beyond that age; to non-mendicant Religious, 900 livres until fifty years of age, 1,000 until the seventieth year, and 1,200 for beyond that age.[82]

The problem was to obtain the most favorable income for the Brothers in case the Communities were disbanded.

This seems to have been the principal purpose of a second appeal to the Constituent Assembly,[83] signed by Brother Agathon, his Assistants, Brothers Paschal, Sylvester and Lothaire and by Brother Philippe of Jesus. First of all, it alluded to the first petition, which it summarized in a few lines. Judging from the language of this reminder, it can be concluded with certainty that the Brothers in Paris had not received a response. Nevertheless, the signatories thought it advisable not to show any surprise, and prudent not to emphasize their special circumstances, which their confreres and inferiors had set forth: "If we were concerned only with our own

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81 *Archives, Letter 104 30th October 1790.*

82 *Moniteur* for the 20th of February, 1790.

83 National Library, LB-39 3160. The account book at Melun for October 31, 1790 includes the comment: "48livres for 1,200 copies of the Regime's petition to the National Assembly, to wit: to Mr. Tarbe, for printing, 33livres and for the paper, 15 livres". Indeed, the Petition was "printed at Tarbe's in Melun". The press-run indicates that each member of the Assembly received a copy. See the complete text in *Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes* for October 1937, pp. 331-333. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 556-558; and Chassaganon, pp. 311-314.

personal interests, the present step would be enough to free us from all uneasiness, and the generous justice you have volunteered in favor of former Jesuits has only too well taught us how citizens who have been dedicated to the national well-being are deserving in your eyes. The "lawgivers of a vast empire" will do no less for the humble teachers of "the poor class" when it comes to evaluating "in terms of money" the services of each of them.

That opening indicated quite clearly the. purpose that Brother Agathon had set for himself. But it was no part of his intention to relinquish better hopes: "If, in your wisdom, you decide upon the continuation of our Institute, all our wishes would be fulfilled; in our poverty, we should be wealthy, because we would be strengthened by the goodwill of the Nation and by our union for the common good."

Unfortunately, there was nothing more to be said along these lines to people whose minds were already made up. It now become important to look at things from their point of view and face the realities: "If, in your plans, our suppression must be carried out...then you should not add to the pain of our political destruction that of reducing us to penury".At this point the plea tightens up into closely woven arguments and urgent appeals-- like a father, speaking for his children, who means to secure them against the blows of fate. Unhesitatingly he points out their good qualities, and, by way of parallels with other Religious Orders, emphasizes their sacrifices.

"The mendicant Orders came before you with nothing to reccommend them except their good works." Between them and the Brothers, how do the scales balance? The Superior does not have to decide. But, in this case, to the value of the service must be added the bulk of the material benefits which, as products of "personal privations" and "of hard and disagreeable work", will, one day perhaps, fall into the Nation's treasury.

"We have no fear, then, that your wisdom accuse us of an unfair ambition by appealing to you, in case we are suppressed, to deal with our teaching Brothers as you have dealt with the professed Religious of Orders with independent means, and with our Serving Brothers as you have with their Lay-Brothers. Our services make claims in our favor just as those of the mendicant Orders made claims for them: our inheritance invokes equity and preference upon us just as the inheritance of Orders of in dependent means did upon them; and we possess over each of them; and we possess over each of these two groups the advantage of combining the two considerations which, taken separately, determined their respective pensions. The legal claim, then, that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were making was "parity…of pensions" with "the suppressed Orders". Furthermore, they must retain, along with other Religious, the option of returning to the world or of persevering in the common life, which, for the Institute, implied the use of their houses as "places of retirement".

In this way the entire appeal remained within the framework and "the spirit" of the decrees. Thus, the Brothers' "patriotism" was resolutely asserted.

It is possible to preserve the mentality of a good citizen without succumbing to a blind trust. One may call upon the representatives of a nation for fairness, even when there are reasons for believing that the nation is suspect. Prudence requires both that one do nothing to vindicate the suspicion nor to stumble into a trap. Brother Agathon, then, would have considered himself blameworthy in the eyes of his Institute if, while waiting for the problematic payment of pensions, he failed to take measures that would protect his Brothers from the direst destitution. While visiting the Rossignolerie during the previous July, he ordered the Council of the residence school, in anticipation of events, to set aside a sum of money which, we may be certain, was to be distributed among the Brothers.[84]

On the 6th of November the Constituent Assembly voted to affix seals to all the personal property of Religious after an inventory had been made. This law raised the prospect of total confiscation. The Holy Child Jesus House, which was under the protection of the local authorities, had, up to that time, been dispensed from making any such declaration. The Superior obtained a fresh deferment from the Directory of the District, which he hoped would be extended as long as the Congregation would endure.[85] Under the protection of this respite, a number of practical precautions were taken, as we shall see in a letter to his confrere at St.Menehould, he did not conceal.[86] Moreover, was it strictly true that the Institute's patrimony

[84] Archives Mother House

[85] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4, letter dated the 4th of November 1790, addressed to Brother Florus.

[86] Historique d'Angers Voir Bulletin Octobre 1937, p.325

entered into the category of "Church property"? Assuming that it did not, and until the legislature made a special decision, there was no way of preventing the Brothers' completely free disposition of it. Such was the opinion of the Superior himself. "In no way do I believe" (he wrote on the 9th of November to Brother Eugene, a member of the Marseille Community) "that your property belongs to the State, nor that the State is in a position to take it away from you."[87] The same directions must have been sent to other institutions, since, on the 28th of February, 1791, Brother Jean de Marie, Director of Maréville, pointed out to the municipal commissioners that the income "acquired by the work, the sacrifices and, the economy" and the good "management of the Brothers", cannot, according to him, "be considered national property."[88] On the same day, at Nancy, Brother Eunuce objected energetically, in a letter addressed to the city administrators, to the application of the November decree abusively extended to the capital and personal property of his Community.[89]

But, henceforth, the most important resistance was to be exercised in another area: the struggle for the Catholic faith had already been joined.

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2 Archives of the school in Albano, *Attestati vari,* no. 29.

3 *Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes* for May 1908, pg. 135.

4 *Ibid.,* for April1912, pg. 128.

[87] Archives Maison Mère
[88] Bulletin Mai 1908
[89] Ibid avril 1912

CHAPTER TWO

"Civil Constitution of the Clergy" and Brother Agathon's Guide lines

Then came the moment of the great test. It was necessary to take sides, and the choice irrevocably determined the future. The Revolution did not merely pretend to organize the earthly city. But, by abolishing Religious Orders, it had already penetrated to the City of God. Henceforth, it meant to set itself up at the very heart of the Church. On the 12th and 13th of July, 1790, the National Assembly transformed itself into an ecclesiastical council. As the heir of Jansenism, imbued with the most exaggerated forms of Gallicanism and docile to the influences of an anti-Christian philosophy, it drew up a law which bound consciences in matters of religion.

There was no lack of abuses in the ecclesiastical organization of the "Ancien Regime". Parasitical growths, illogical complications, inexplicable survivals, and shocking inequalities gave rise to hopes of energetic reforms. But it did not belong to the civil power to "rip and mend" without the consent and the cooperation of the Pope, the teacher of the faith, the guarantor and reformer of discipline, the supreme leader of both pastors and the faithful. To exclude him from the task, to ignore his rights, was to pave the way for schism. And the danger became more formidable in that the legislators were urged on by false ideas, and their power and their pride was running up against the opposition of convinced Catholics.

A large number of bishoprics and parishes were suppressed, and the boundaries of new constituencies were arbitrarily drawn. The territory of a diocese became identical with the boundaries of a Department. What was being sought after was some sort of mathematical equality. But what was forgotten was the fact that a bishop's jurisdiction, or a pastor's, is not altered at the plea−sure of a head-of-state or of an Assembly of lawyers. A pastor, out of the simple obedience of a citizen, may not abandon a single one of his flock.

He cannot look upon himself as legitimate unless his selection conforms to Canon Law. The members of the Assembly fancied, more or less seriously, that they were returning "to the purity of the primitive Church", because they were subjecting religious "functionaries" to election. But who were the electors? For the bishops, they were the same people who elected Departmental Administrators; and for the pastors, the same as those who elected District Administrators. Would non-Catholics, then, become the guardians of orthodoxy? It was a curious possibility. And all that it would take for it to happen was a purely casual and temporary allegiance to the Church and an attendance at the parish Mass that was to precede the voting.

Afterwards, of course, the pastors would receive their spiritual powers from their bishop. But a new bishop would apply to his "metropolitan", i.e., to one of his colleagues invested (as formerly an archbishop among his suffragans) with a sort of primacy of distinction and a commission of high-level supervision. He would exercise his authority fully without the approval of the Holy See. There remained a single prescribed gesture "as a witness to the unity of the faith": the forwarding of a letter to the Pope "as the visible head of the universal Church". With this rather meaningless exception, the new organization of the Gallican Church showed most of the features of a church in schism: the Concordat of 1516 was severed without prior notification; ecclesiastical structures were overthrown; and the election of "ministers of cult" offered no guarantee in the area of dogma and morals. As it received its salary, the clergy received its function from a sovereign Nation.

Such, it seemed, were the main lines of the "Civil Constitution", from which were to

emerge so many misfortunes. Never, in the most difficult moments of his relations with Rome had Louis XIV acted with this kind of effrontery. Neither did Austrian "Josephism" appear so radical. The members of the Assembly went as far as they could along the road opened up by ancient European jurists. But precisely because their daring only pushed Caesarist principles to the extreme, many Frenchmen did not clearly grasp the ultimate and ineluctable consequence of their undertaking. They were expecting the Revolution to rejuvenate their country. Carried along by an avid logic, they thought that the method applied to the transformation of the State could be transported into the domain of religion. The Catholicism upon which they had been raised was, in their eyes, the body and soul of the Nation. Too easily, they professed satisfaction with the teaching of catechism and the celebration of the Sacraments ...if only the priestly hierarchy were relieved, as they thought, of its dead weight.

The conscience of the king and of the two Bishops seated in the Royal Council, Bishops Champion Cice and Lefranc Pompignan,were doubtlessly not so easily reassured. Where would the Assembly's encroachments stop? And now it was dealing the Pope as it had dealt with Louis XVI. Must we assume that Pius VI was going to make the same concessions as the king? That would be unrealistic, since the Pontiff's authority was a deposit that he was not free to surrender. Nevertheless (the power of presumption and illusion!) the king's counselors, learned, serious and faith−ful prelates, plunged him into an impasse. They convinced him to give his approval to the Decree of the 13th of July before Rome had a chance to speak. The "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" became the law of the land on the 24th of August.

A confidential letter from the Pope to Louis XVI arrived a short time later. It was dated on the preceding week, but it was a long way from Rome to Paris. Pius VI announced an early meeting of the Cardinals and reaffirmed the Church's inalienable spiritual sovereignty.[1]

So far, there was no public condemnation. The moment had not yet come to strike such a serious blow. The law had not been immediately applied, and public opinion needed to be prepared. To this task the bishops who were members of the Assembly applied themselves: on the 30th of October they published an Explanation of Principles, drawn up by one of them, Archbishop Boisgelin of Aix. It was a commendable effort at conciliation. It outlined the limits of possible concessions and, it pointed out anything that looked odd, anomalous or unacceptably false in the legislative text.

Patience and forbearance were encountered by an invincible obstinacy. Rather than retreat a step, the members of the Assembly chose immediately to place the French Church up against a wall. Under the second title of the July Decree they inserted the following articles: "Before the ceremony of consecration begins, the elected (bishop), in the presence of the municipal officers, the people and the clergy, will swear a solemn oath to watch carefully over the faithful of the diocese which is entrusted to him, to be faithful to the Nation, to the law and to the king and to support with all his power the Constitution enacted by the National Assembly and approved by the king. (Art. 21) Elected and installed pastors will swear the same oath as the bishops, in their churches, on a Sunday, before the parish Mass, in the presence of the municipal officers of the locality, the people and the clergy. Up to that time they will be unable to perform any pastoral function. (Art.38) Thus, for ministers of religion who took office after the new law, the civil oath demanded of all electors would include a a commit−ment with regard to their civic duties. By this procedure the Revolution would be gradually implanted in episcopal palaces and presbyteries. But it required a speedier

[1] La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 295-296.

conquest. It needed to precipitate events and immediately consolidate its victory by compelling the clergy of the "Ancien Regime" to submit or resign. Such was the goal of the famous Decree of November 27th: it demanded the oath of all churchmen as "public functionaries". Adherence to the "Civil Constitution" was to be evidenced without delay and in explicit terms. Every bishop and every pastor, every vicar, every priest in active service, occupying a post salaried by the State was to make known his option. If he refused the promise of fidelity, or took refuge in silence or ambiguity, he would have to yield his position to someone elected by the people. It was a general and coercive law which, according to Montlosier's quite exact description, "burnt the bridges" between the Revolution and the Catholic Church.[2] On the 26th of December the tragedy was consummated: Louis XVI, with trembling hand, no longer subject to his will, granted his approval. The king had been "compelled", Boisgelin wrote.[3] The gesture must have revealed to the Holy See, and indeed to the whole of Europe, the awful situation with which His Most Christian Majesty, the heir of St. Louis, was grappling.

The members of the Assembly had stretched a chain across the moat to inderdict passage, and they added links to it that their victims had fashioned. We shall follow this effort, conducted with pitiless logic, to the bitter end, and later on view the results. We shall then describe the attitudes and the resolve of Frenchmen who were being walled up within the revolutionary city or, if they rejected this confinement, left to huddle at its gates. Until further notice, they were threatened neither with banishment nor with death. Other kinds of tyranny would be required before bloody persecution arose.

The Decrees of the 13th and the 27th of December did not aim directly at any but the clergy that had been entrusted with "public functions". Other clerics were exempt from the oath; and those who would soon be called "Non-juring" were thrown into that class of cleric who were free of any ties with the State. It appeared, then, *a fortiori*, that lay professors, teachers in primary schools without clerical title, would continue to perform their functions in all security. Or, if indeed they should suffer from the new arrangements, it would only be by way of reaction -- after the fashion of good Catholics saddened by the growing schism and obliged to break with priests who had opted for the Constitution, the so-called "Jurors".

In law and in fact, the Brothers of the Christian Schools belonged to the community of the faithful and not to any ecclesiastical "Order". Nevertheless, the most ardent partisans of the "Civil Constitution" posed the question: Since the Brothers had the religious and public mission of instructing poor children, ought they not be required to take the oath?

In a letter dated the 9th of February, 1791, the Deputies from Brest, Le Gendre and Moyot, gave the best legal answer to their constituents: "...The Decree of the 27th of December (Art.2)...includes only college professors and all other public Church functionaries. The Brothers of the Christian Schools cannot be grouped with the this class, since the functions they perform are irreconcilable with an ecclesiastical function. The two members of the Assembly went on to hope, as a matter of fact, that the Brothers, responsible for the education of boys in their early years, would be fit to train children in the "civic virtues"; also, one must "indubitably administer the oath to them" anywhere they freely volunteer "to take it". Again, it was only a question of the civil oath "in use by all citizens". To have the Brothers swear "to the fulfillment of the "Constitution of the Clergy" would be "odd". It might be objected that the Brothers "live in Community subject to a rule": but that "observation" cannot "effect the decision". "Simple Brothers in Communities of rule and priests in Religious houses not devoted" to preaching "are not bound to the oath".

"We can assure you (they concluded) that the Assembly is very far indeed from wanting

[2] Ibid., pg. 329.

[3] Ibid., pg. 343.

to extend this obligation and we very much approve that you have not served the Decree on the Brothers whose patriotism is clearly beyond suspicion.[4].

Le Gendre and Moyot misread the purposes of their colleagues or else they were unable to anticipate a sudden reversal. To put an end to interpretations, the Assembly, at its own too complacent pleasure, declared on the 22nd of March, 1791, concerning its earlier measures: "No tutor, and, in general, no individual, will be called upon to practice, and no teacher will be able to continue any function or fulfill any position in institutions having to do with public education throughout the kingdom unless previously he has taken the civil oath, and, if he is an ecclesiastic, the oath of public ecclesiastical functionaries."[5]

The voluntary taking of the oath, which the Deputies from Brest had contemplated for the Brothers as good "patriots" had thus become an obligation for all teachers in Christian schools. On the 6th of April, the Journal of the Department of Maine-and-Loire, the organ of the Friends of the Constitution in Angers called upon the personnel at the Rossignolerie to take the oath.[6] But the civil oath, even in its most general form, implied an adherence to the laws governing the clergy, since, in taking it, one swore to "support the Constitution of the kingdom", of which "the Civil Constitution of the Clergy" was an integral part.

A resistance movement began immediately to appear among interested parties. There were no demonstrations, but a great deal of evasive action, a significant and stolid silence. As a result, it was not long before the Assembly made its threats explicit and gave them a sanction that was to take immediate effect:"All persons responsible for a public function in the department of public education, who has not taken the oath prescribed by the Decrees of the 27th November and the 22nd of last March, have forfeited their posts and temporary provision must be made, if necessary, for their replacement by the (Departmental) Directory."[7]. This was the Decree of the 15th of April, the immediate promulgation of which (as he had done in the case of the previous one) the king certified on the 17th. In the final version of the Constitution of 1791, presented to Louis XVI on the 3rd of September, the formula of the civil oath appeared as follows: "I swear to be faithful to the Nation, to the law and to the king and with all my power to maintain the Constitution of the kingdom decreed by the National Constituent Assembly in the years 1789, 1790 and 1791."[8] All citizens, clerical and lay, were invited to subscribe to this declaration. Two months later, when a new Assembly took its seat in the Carousel Room, the Deputy Gensonne, in an effort to allay consciences, attempted to narrow the scope of the commitment that was being sought: "We no longer live (he said) in the times when the Constituent Assembly decrees Constitutional laws as enactments for the Clergy. Now that these laws have been separated from the Constitution, it is nonsense to think that there can be religious restrictions in a purely civil oath."[9]The opinion of the very influential Girondist was able to induce good Catholics (among those who had abstained or who had been exempt, up to that point, from any gesture) to reply favorably to the cities' appeals. However, there were others who still feared to give an unconditional adherence to revolutionary legislation. Hostility to the Church, to religion itself, was evidenced in the clubs and on the streets. District and Commune Councils were not exempt from it, since the stubbornness of the Assembly sowed division among Frenchmen. The Legislature encouraged bitter speeches directed against priests. The question of the oath

[4]Municipal Archives of Brest, LL 46. Copy of the document in the Motherhouse Archives, Historique du Brest

[5] . Duvergier, Lois, Vol. II, pg. 324.

[6]Motherhouse Archives, Angers file, taken from Revue Historique de l'Anjou.

[7]Duvergier, Vol. II, pg. 370

[8]Moniteur for the 16th of September 1791.

[9]Session the Legislative Assembly on the 16th of November 1791. Moniteur for the 17th of November

supplied it with a pretext for severe measures. On the 17th of November it refused pensions to all non-juring churchmen; and with the Decree of the 29th, which authorized the Departmental Directories to pass sentences of banishment (which Louis XVI, in a moment of reawakened energy, refused to approve), it proposed to make them outlaws. It is understandable that several bishops had warned the members of their diocese against what appeared to be a covenant with the enemies of the faith.[10] When the time comes we shall point out a similar distaste for the oath of August 1792, the so-called "liberty-equality oath". At that date conditions, if not persons, had changed. It's another chapter in the history with which we shall have to deal.

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This survey of legislation dealing with the oath seemed necessary in order to steer us through the events of 1791 and the first seven months of 1792, until the overthrow of the king and the complete suppression of the Christian Brothers. But to prolong it any further would cause it to loose perspective. Before studying in detail the role played by Brother Agathon and his entourage and the decisions taken in the Communities subject to him, it remains for us to say a word about the directives issued by the Holy See and the example of the French clergy, whether encouraging or bewildering, that the Brothers in the popular schools witnessed around them throughout this period.

We are aware of the patience and forbearance of the Papacy. From 1789 onwards, the events which followed one upon the other in a headlong rhythm beyond the Alps did not leave the Sovereign Pontiff unmoved. The seizure of the clergy's property and the early measures enacted against the Religious Orders provoked a severe response on the 29th of March, 1790; but the allocution pronounced on that occasion in a secret consistory was not published.[11]. Pius VI attempted to spare France and its king. He feared doing anything that would increase Louis XVI's difficulties and dangers. All about the Pope there were people who recalled the grievous rupture that had occurred two-and-a-half centuries earlier when Henry VIII's schism had led England into Protestantism. This was why, after the vote on the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy", Roman reactions, certainly unmistakable, were slow to be revealed. It seemed wise to grant the episcopacy time to take a position. Finally, on the 10th of March, 1791, the Brief, *Quod aliquantum* was the official reply to those who had signed the Explanation of Principles; and on the 13th of April, the Brief*, Caritas* quae informed the king, the bishops, priests and the French people that it was necessary to choose between obedience to the Church and obedience to the laws. The Pope suspended every "juror" who failed to retract within forty days; he declared the elections of new heads of diocese and parishes null and void, and the consecration of bishops sacrilegious; he complimented the faithful who had "remained resolute in evangelical and apostolic teaching".[12]Nevertheless, the door was not closed to the repentant: and, six months later, Pius VI gave evidence of his clemency toward the "jurors": "Several Bishops (wrote Cardinal Zelanda on the 2nd of November) have sought a Bull of excommunication...; the majority does not believe that matters have come to such an extreme pass; the Pope is thoroughly in agreement with this latter opinion, since it would be impossible to spare the person of the king who approved the fatal Constitution.[13]

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[10]Dom Leclercq, Les Martyrs, Vol. XI, la Revolution (Oudin, 1911), pg. 21.

[11]La Gorce, op.cit., pg. 275

[12]Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 422-433. Dom Leclercq, op.cit., Vol. XI, pg. 20.

[13]3

Throughout these terrifying years mercy found room to operate. Those in whose direction it inclined were, of course, unable to allege invincible ignorance. But many of them had the excuse of a sort of good faith, or of a noble illusion, or of "peer-group" pressure.

On the 27th of December, 1790, Father Gregoire took the oath. On January 4th his confreres in the Church and in the Constituent Assembly were summoned to follow his example. In all, 109 took the oath; and of that number only one-fifth of them retracted.[14] Over widespread areas the "Constitutional Church" won over a huge majority of priests, with non-functioning priests and former Religious voluntarily joining with pastors, vicars and professors. The inquiry carried on by Peter La Gorce has led this exacting and impartial historian to conclude that Picardy, the Ile-de-France, Bourgogne, Orleans, Touraine and Berry, on the whole, accepted the legal religion along with the satisfaction of protecting their way of life without bothering about the possibilities of schism. The Dauphine and Province, fiery regions where novelty provoked enthusiasm,[15] did something more than accommodate themselves to the situation. Goyau notes that "in Toulon the 'jurors' were nearly unanimous".[16] We shall presently be in position to use this information. Meanwhile, we should keep in mind that "in Paris, for 278 'non-jurors' there were 230" who took the oath;[17] and that in the former group there were 27 active pastors and 23 in the latter.[18] The clergy of St. Étienne du Mont, almost to a man, went over to the side of the "Constitutionals",[19] and Julian Minee, the pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas, became bishop of the Lower Loire.[20]

We know that, of the older episcopacy that was resolved to cede none of its rights and to forsake none of its duties, six broke away, of whom four were heads of dioceses. These were Talleyrand, Savine, Lomenie Brienne and Jarente. The defection of Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun (from some points of view the most serious, since this odd individual, before permanently leaving the Church, agreed to consecrate the first, elected "Constitutional" bishops) did not surprise faithful Catholics. The man's character was known: his ecclesiastical career, his nomination to the See of Autun, his role in the National Assembly and in the plundering of the clergy -- everything about him generated suspicion, incited indignation and ended in scandal. Besides, he had hardly taken the time to show up in his episcopal city. Had a longer residency been required of him, a part of the ancient diocese of Autun (the part which possessed a Lasallian Community) would have escaped his influence. In 1788, Moulins was designated as the seat of a new bishopric; and Father Galloys La Tour was on the point of becoming its incumbent. The Revolution, however, prevented his consecration. But Father La Tour became the heart of the resistance to the "Civil Constitution". Claude Laplace, pastor of St. Bonnet and of St. John struggled alongside this leader, while Antony Butaud-Dupoux, pastor of Yzeure thought to rally a band of "jurors" around his church, as he awaited to be placed officially at their head a few years later as the

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[14]Goyau, ibid., pp. 506-507.

[15]La Goyau, op.cit., pg. 508.

[16]La Gorce. Vol. I, pg. 416.

[17]Idem., ibid., pg. 508.

[18]La Gorce, Vol. I, pg. 369.

[19]Idem., ibid., pg. 367.

[20]Gabory, op.cit., pg. 117.

second bishop of the Department of Allier.[21]

In 1791 Vivarais was placed under the guidance of Lafont Savine, a likable and learned gentleman and not without his virtues. Unfortunately, he was a false and ill-balanced spirit. He took the oath, but he was not of a sufficiently virile character, nor of a sufficiently clear and firm will to place himself at the head of the majority of the members of his diocese, among whom were the schoolteachers in Privas and St. Andeol.

The Brothers had received a very warm welcome from Cardinal Lomenie Brienne when he occupied the episcopal See of Toulouse.[22] Transferred to Sens,[23]of which Melun was a dependency. he became the Archbishop to the Brothers at the Holy Child Jesus House, and, as consequence, the Archbishop to the Superior-general, with whom he had some conversations in 1784.[24] He was not in a position, however, to exercise the least moral authority over Brother Agathon. His moral mediocrity and his want of faith had become public knowledge. A soul eaten up with ambition, egoism and cupidity, he inspired contempt. What a dizzying fall, even in the eyes of an unbeliever! At one time Prime Minister, Brienne no longer mattered in the State. The Pope had stripped him of his "purple". And the former Archbishop of Sens, one of the highest prelates in the kingdom, was not even listed among the ten "Metropolitans" provided for by the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy". Since being reduced to the status of bishop of the Department of Yonne, he had abdicated his jurisdiction over Melun. He was no longer a subject of conversation among the Christian Brothers.

On the other hand, the Brothers had to live under the authority of Jarente Orgeval, Bishop of Orleans, who was inferior to this three colleagues and accomplices; he had the morals of Talleyrand, but without his intelligence, consistency and foresight. According to one of his contemporaries,[25] who wrote of him that he was "covered with ermine and silk, striking grand and theatrical airs and draping himself for display like a woman ...with nothing serious in his character." On the 20th of January, 1791, Orgeval appeared before the mayor and the city officials in Orleans and proclaimed that "he intended to take the oath prescribed by the Decrees of the 13th of July and the 27th of November last, in his Cathedral Church". On Sunday, the 23rd of January, he was as good as his word.[26]

Was it his example that the diocesan clergy meant to follow? With exceptions, priests were much better, however, than their bishops. Alexandre Jarente's gesture obviously made their decision easier; but it would not suffice to explain it. While in the first flush, the principal pastors in the episcopal city, the Superior of the Major Seminary, the professors in the college and a number of vicars prepared to swear fidelity solemnly to the Constitution,[27] Gallican education, political convictions, and, among the more dedicated, an unquestionable zeal and a desire to serve removed all room for scruples. For retractions to occur it required both the reading of the Papal Briefs, which were widely known after the month of May, calm reflection and fear in face of the Revolution's thrust. Thus it was that in August, 1792, in the Department of the Loiret, out of 350 titulary pastors, about 100 of them were "non-juring", whereas in 1791 only 35 pastors in the entire diocese made up the tiny band that refused to

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[21]Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pp. 24, 43, and 44.

[22]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 519-522.

[23]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 520-521.

[24]Cited by Sicard, l'Ancien Clerge de France, Vol. II, pg. 50 and Leflon, in his biography, Etienne-Alexandre Bernier (Paris, Plon, 1938), Vol. II, pp. 2 and 3.

[25]Municipal Archives of Orleans, Register of oaths, f-o 4.

[26]Ibid., same Register. Eight of the statements, from the 17th to the 20th of January, are prior to the Bishops'. Thirty-three forms are filled out. The last written oath is dated "the 27th day of the 1st month of the Year II" (the 18th of October 1793).

[27]3

bend the knee.[28]

La Gorce believes that "if one were to have closed the list six months after the law of the oath and three months after the Brief of Pius VI, the number of faithful priests would have been between 52% and 56%.[29] Flanders, Artois, Alsace, Rouergue, Gevaudan, Velay and, on the whole, the Western provinces, remained "attached to the ancient faith". Elsewhere, "on the southern slopes of the Cevennes", in Gard and Herault, opposition appeared -- "noisier, but somewhat less durable".[30] Even in some of the loyal regions a minority of "jurors" emerged, who were not recruited from among churchmen of modest circumstances and limited influence. Thus, in Lisieux, in opposition to 32 "non-jurors" (among whom the "Chaplain of the Brothers at St. Yon") the pastors of St. James and St. Desir were avowed "Constitutionals".[31]. Where certain kinds of support was wanting it was possible for many a brave man to falter. The *non possumus* of the humble was all the more heroic and meritorious.

Indecision might have seemed imaginable in a number of dioceses in which what was needed was a sharp revival. In spite of warning signs, people had been for a long time living optimistically. Throughout 1790 Bishops were still extolling the "august" Constituent Assembly. In Angers it was possible to hear Bishop Lory exhorting Catholics "to have your children lisp the names of God...the Fatherland; have them pronounce the oath of fidelity to the Nation, the law and the king -- the oath which has become the cry of every French citizen."[32] This was the same "cry" that Bishop La Laurencie of Nantes hurried to utter just before the fateful Decree of the 27th of November. But he soon had reason to regret his enthusiasm; rather than speaking out loud and clear, he took refuge in Paris at a time when the struggle was just beginning, and the voice of a leader should have been ringing out.[33]
More numerous instances of the same over-eagerness were to be found in the ranks of the parochial clergy. On the 26th of October, 1790, Father Bernadet, the great benefactor of the schools in Toulouse, wrote to the city officials: "I swear and promise to obey the Nation, the laws and the king".[34] And yet, a few weeks later, he had, conscientiously, to flee into Spain in order to evade the "Civil Constitution".

Gradually the truth emerged and inspired decisive action. Episcopal instructions were issued to dictate a line of conduct for the faithful. The letter of the fiery Bishop Asseline of Boulogne was spread throughout the kingdom. His colleagues admired and imitated it. But city governments moved in quickly to stifle these appeals. The Bishops of Vannes and of St. Pol-de-Leon were exposed to investigation and police threats.[35] In November 1790 Bishop La Ferronnays had his pastoral letter "suppressed" by the City Council of Lisieux.[36]

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[28]Leflon, op.cit., pg. 4. The Superior of the Major Seminary in Orleans, Remy Charpentier, "retracted his oath in a letter (addressed to Mr. Salomon, the mayor, stamped in Paris, and arrived on the 17th of May 1792". (Municipal Archives of Orleans, Register of oaths).

[29]La Gorce, Vol. I, pp. 398-399.

[30]Idem., ibid., pp. 416-417

[31]Municipal Archives of Lisieux, D. 125. By "the Brothers of St. Yon" here we must understand the Brothers who were teaching in the school in Lisieux

[32]Gabory, op.cit., pp. 42-43.

[33]Idem., ibid., pp. 60-61.

[34] Goyau, op.cit., pg. 509.

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In Bayeux, Bishop Cheylus suffered the same fate: the City Council, deliberating on the 17th of December "considered that the instruction, attributed to the Bishop...and published in his name, could not be his work, since it contains opinions diametrically opposed to his oaths, and because of the unpatriotic sentiments with which this document is filled and the anti-constitutional principles it includes are obviously the product of a pen that is the enemy of the happiness and the peace of Frenchmen, and because if the Bishop has accorded it his approval, he could have done so only in a moment of thoughtlessness" In consequence: "there shall be drawn up and sent to the city's pastors a letter carrying an admonition of the dangers inseparable from the publication of this so-called instruction, an invitation not to publish it, and, if need be, a prohibition against proceeding thereto, under pain of being responsible for the consequences that might result therefrom and of being prosecuted as in violation of the law."[37]

In Rheims the Archbishop decided to have the Bishop of Boulogne's instruction on the spiritual authority of the Church read at the homilies in the parochial Masses. The mayor, informed of this plan, which he thought excessively bold, called "an extraordinary session of the City Council" on the 9th of January, 1791, and, as at Bayeux, the pastors were ordered to disobey their bishop.[38]

Because the Church was falling into bondage and because the dangers of persecution were worsening, many bishops resolved to leave France. Some ten or so of their colleagues had already preceded them on the road to exile. In the course of the summer of 1791[39] the great bulk of them would follow. To inform and support their faith Catholics had to await the rare and uncertain messenger, the watchword that came from afar and therefore was powerless to be adapted to circumstances. The only ones to remain with them were the few intrepid prelates, driven into hiding, disguise and apostolic vagrancy. And in the episcopal palaces and in the Cathedrals the "Constitutionals" sat enthroned, many of whom were candidly unworthy and would stoop to the shame of total abjuration; while the most sincere of them (such as Gregoire in Loir-and-Cher and Fauchet in Calvados) combined religious conviction with political fanaticism; and the most edifying of them (such as Charrier La Roche in the Lower Seine) would carry the taint of sacrilegious usurpation until their return to Roman unity.

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During this period of confusion and gloom Brother Agathon continued to turn his eyes toward the only light. To his credit, he remained the man of the Institute, whose symbol is the star and whose motto is the words *Signum fidei*. He never forgot the testament of the Founder who prescribed for his followers "total sub−mission to the Church" and an unfailing union with the Holy See. In our earlier volumes we have studied the Brothers' line of conduct in relation to Gallicanism and Jansenism. We have spoken of the hostility the Brothers faced in order never to have to deviate from that unity. The power of a long tradition kept them upright and experience with small persecutions prepared them against the fear of bigger ones. For twelve years bonds had been established between the Sovereign Pontiff the Superior-general that a world of adversaries could not have broken. Between them there was, first of all, the union founded upon the divine command, to which were added personal sympathy

[37]Municipal Archives of Bayeux, 1 D 3. Bishop Cheylus' pastoral letter was published in the series Baiocana, Caen, 1909.

[38]Municipal Archives of Rheims, 202, Deliberations of the Municipal Council. [38]

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[39]Goyau, op.cit., pg. 509.

and genuine affection. Pius VI was aware of Brother Agathon's spiritual and moral quality. The educator's writings, the results he obtained in his Communities and in his residence and primary schools kept the Pope informed. He was keenly interested in the Institute, whose work went on in his own neighborhood at *Trinita dei Monti*, and which he was getting ready to expand (as we shall see) with the opening of a new school in the extremely poor quarter of Ponte Sant' Angelo, near the church of *San Salvatore in Lauro*. The immediate proof of the devotion and the educational competence of the Brothers was supplied him when he saw the French teachers at work instructing young Romans; their character left him with no room to doubt the doctrinal sobriety and the decisive influence of the Superior.

Brother Agathon's gratitude and the ardor of his fidelity were shown in his letters to the Pope. Not even the Revolution could interrupt the correspondence, an exchange which was renewed at the beginning of each year. The Superior's "Greetings" for the year 1790 moved Pius VI with the sadness of its tone. It drew forth the following reply, dated the 6th of the Kalends of March (February 24): "May it please the divine Mercy that the troubled times, of which you quite correctly complain, will improve...for both the Church and for the Society. It is with a lively spiritual joy that we learn that you and your Congregation pray profusely to this end...The conduct of your Brothers in this city is so edifying and the zeal for the education of children so lively that they confirm and greatly increase our goodwill toward you and your Institute"[40]

The "Civil Constitution of the Clergy", the law of the oath, was in force when, during the following year, an explicit declaration of filial attachment arrived in Rome from the Holy Child Jesus House. It brought the Pontiff "the certain assurance of the constancy" of the Brothers. It "greatly consoled his soul, nearly crushed by so many disruptions". Such was the language of the letter of acknowledgment at the end of January, 1791.[41]"May Our Lord Jesus Christ", added Pius VI, "hear the pious hopes of good people and, with His powerful arm, curb the disorders by which he allows the Church, His Spouse, currently to be tormented!" In that so very cruel season, it was understandable how a burst of allegiance would receive an especially warm welcome; and to a "very dear son" and to his Brothers, loved "with a paternal love", the Holy Father "granted, with all his heart, the apostolic benediction".

This was precious encouragement that prepared the Brothers for heroism. There would be other instances -- none more convincing, but closer to hand, more profuse and more vehement. Loyal souls light the way for, and mutually comfort, one another. The union of people who share the same thoughts and are threatened by the same difficulties is strengthened. It becomes all the closer when blood-relationship lays claim to complete spiritual understanding. There are some appeals that sound in the deepest part of one's being and their echoes go on infinitely. The letter we are about to look at was, surely, for the person who received it, not a cry that awakened the conscience (since his did not sleep), but a prophecy suited to justify the harshest decisions, dissipate doubts on gloomy days, and irrevocably determined a life. He saved the letter, and, to propagate its power, he shared it with those around him; and, as a modest legacy but a remarkable relic, it was bequeathed to his Institute.[42]

We have already met the man who first received this document. He was Nicolas

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[40]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1913, pp. 62-63.

[41]In the original, "7 Kalend. Feruaris". Motherhouse Archives, file BE x. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1913, pg. 63, and for April 1938, pg. 106.

[42]Motherhouse Archives, File Ha p 4. Original letter. Cf. quotations in Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 563-564.

Bienaimé, Brother Philippe Joseph. The letter he has handed down to us was written to him, like the earlier one on the 1st of January, 1789, by his brother, the pastor of Gigney. When he received it the Brother belonged to the large Community in St. Yon, where he was one of the better teachers in the residence school. The course of studies had remained unchanged, and the pupils continued to be numerous and docile. The confusion of the period stopped at the doors of the chapel and the classrooms. But we come now to the 25th of March, 1791. Three days earlier the National Assembly had voted the law extending the obligation of the oath to all teachers. Would the Brothers at St. Yon be able much longer to plead the special character of their "free residence school", which was not an "institution of public education"? Injustice breeds injustice; and no Catholic conscience had the right to consider itself immune to persecution.

Bienaimé wrote to his brother: "Since the religion of Jesus Christ was founded in France, nothing has been seen that comes near the Revolution, of which we are the melancholy witnesses and the unfortunate victims...Religion is collapsing: we are falling into schism. O my God! Save our country! Remember your ancient mercies and scatter the efforts of the impious conspiring against You and Your Christ!"

The pastor of Gigney had not sworn the oath, and, with the Grace of God, he would never swear to "what the Church had not authorized". (At the date of writing, priests and faithful alike were unaware of Rome decisions.) The law considered every "non- juror" as having resigned his post: "In two weeks, the usurper" who will expel the legitimate pastor, "will be named". We shall be forced to witness "the beloved flock" in the grip of the "plunderer". Father Bienaimé "was giving up his position rather serenely", because his sacrifice, as he wrote, would serve the expiation of sin and the winning of Heaven. But he was grieved for his parishioners, most of whom, on his account, courted "personal disaster". The Department of the Vosges "is one of 83 in which reside most of the 'jurors'": in the District of Epinal only five pastors opposed the law.

And yet, Mansuy Bienaimé, a remarkable young man and a credit to his elder brothers, was determined to receive Holy Orders in the Roman Communion. The Bishop of Saint Die ordained him a priest on the 19th of March, the Saturday of Ember Week, at 3 o'clock in the morning.[43]The real head of the diocese "had to take advantage of the dark of the night to ordain" ministers of religion -- "What a sight!" Doesn't it seem as though we are returning "to the time of the early persecutions of the Church?" Brother Philippe Joseph, "far removed from the theatre of (these) woes", should not forget that members of his family "need great and abundant Grace in "(their) sad circumstances". But the persecuted will be able to say: *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit.*

Then there begins the moving, solemn exhortation to the Christian Brother. The priest imagines the most probable hypothesis, the one which would indeed be fulfilled in its essential details.

"As for yourself, my good and dear brother, you are, indeed, as you write, the spoilt child of Providence. You see the lightening strike on all sides, but its bolts spare you...May your happiness endure always! May the Deputies spare your humble existence, as they have done so up to now! But I fear that their destructive blasts will be vented on your Institute, useful as it is. It's not the thirst for gold that will urge them to take up the matter of your dissolution. From that point of view your poverty will be your safeguard. But will they not require that you teach the rudiments of their poisonous doctrine in place of the teaching of Jesus Christ? And will not the new, so-called bishops write catechisms in which they mean to established their power over, and their independence from, the visible Head, and the inutility of the

[43] At the conclusion of his letter Father Bienaime asks Brother Philip Josep to find Mansuy a tutorship in a Catholic school. "Your Superiors who know Rouen thoroughly will be good enough to give some thought to such a project".

Church's mission. And in that case, what will you do? To teach such things would be to de−stroy the kingdom of Jesus Christ; to refuse to do so would be to tempt the sharp edge of the persecutor's sword.

"May the just God deliver you from both of these misfortunes. But, if a choice is forced upon you, my dear brother and good friend, renounce the devil and remain inviolably subject to the authority of the Church. Return, if need be, and with your sweat, wet your native earth and compel it to win for you bread that you can eat in innocence. Let us sacrifice everything, even life itself if that becomes neces−sary, to obey the law of the land; but let us stop where sin begins. I write to you in this way without an uneasiness. I am profoundly convinced that schism is as horrible to you as it is to me, and that your last breath, as well as my own, will be, I hope, as I do in the divine mercy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman.

Father Bienaimé was right to trust Nicolas. When he appealed to a Christian Brother he was preaching to the converted. The Superior-general was unable, with his "Circular Letter", to forestall the Church's leaders. But, shortly before the arrival in Rouen of the pastor's letter, the Community in Rheims received instructions which agreed in every point with the judgment and foresight of the valorous priest. The document entitled "Behavior that the Brothers of the Christian Schools will Adopt Regarding Usurping Bishops and Pastors", bore no signature. It was a sort of "working paper", impersonal, and formulated in clear, brief and vigorous language. Brother Agathon might have sought out its doctrine from one of the churchmen in his circle, a reliable theologian, devoted to the ancient French tradition, as the conclusion to conversations in which the situation was surveyed as perceived in February, 1791, after the first oaths and the first episcopal and vestry elections. He himself had certainly inspired some of its passages and endorsed, and assumed the responsibility for, all its proposals. He transmitted it clandestinely, by carefully selected emissaries, to the principal houses of the Institute, with the order to have copies made and delivered to the Directors of the primary schools. The text found in the Municipal Archives in Rheims includes the note " to all the dependencies, including St. Menehould", i.e., probably to the Brothers in the cities of Champagne. The circumstances justified both discretion and caution.[44]

We are dealing with (and the opening sentences prove it) directives prior to the Papal instructions. The Brothers found themselves in difficult circumstances, which demanded immediate solutions, frankly, though guardedly, specified.

"The rules which they, as well as all other faithful persons, will have to follow, will be constantly mapped out for them by legitimate bishops, from whose teaching and unity they must never depart, come what may. These worthy bishops will themselves remain united to the Holy See and to the body of Catholic Bishops, and that is where the true Church will be found, infallible in its judgments and outside of which there is no salvation."

Then there appeared the indisputable principle: "To be in union or communicate with usurpers, to acknowledge them as pastors, would be to fall into heresy and schism; it is quite agreed that Christian Brothers would not do that."

Now, a "usurper" was the priest who, after an election, would replace a "non-juring" pastor; in a parish he would be the pastor who holds his spiritual authority exclusively from a bishop who has been appointed by procedures provided by the Civil Constitution. But what attitude was to be adopted toward priests maintained in their posts after they had sworn the oath? "Juring" pastors, legitimately established up to now, are in possession of their jurisdiction. Until the Church clarifies the current difficulties of the French Church, the Brothers must seek the counsel of faithful bishops or their vicars-general, if possible, and

[44]The copy of the document in the Motherhouse Archives (Brother Agathon file) was made from the Rheims text. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes has twice published this text: in April 1914, pp. 155-156 and in January 1938, pp. 14-15.

conform their conduct accordingly. In places where they are not in a position to consult (such priests), there are at least some "non-juring" priests, thoroughly devoted to their former pastors and to true principles; (the Brothers) can take their advice, which is all the more to the purpose in that it arises out of local conditions, which must be considered and which cannot be anticipated from this distance. All good and Catholic ecclesiastical Superiors will observe the same language concerning the same points of faith and discipline.

We can understand the distress of the poor Brothers in dioceses where the legitimate bishop had already ceased to reside or, as in the dioceses of Vivier, Sens and Orleans, where the bishops had betrayed their trust.[45]We have explained above the special situation of the Brothers in Moulins with respect to the bishopric of Autun. They were prey to pangs of conscience in "Constitutional" parishes, faced with pastors upon whom their schools depended and who meant to preserve their au−thority over the pupils and the teachers. The author of the "letter" did not claim to have the answer to this particular case. Provisionally, he counsels recourse to a director who is exempt from every sort of compromise.

"While awaiting the decisions of respectable judges in matters of faith, let the Brothers become informed through ecclesiastical Superiors whether they may assist or have their pupils assist at the parochial Masses celebrated by "usurpers", receive and have their pupils receive, the Sacraments at their hands... Let them carefully avoid every reprehensible extreme..."

As once before in the quarrels with the Jansenists, De La Salle's disciples would scrupulously know their place: -- unshakable in their orthodoxy, sincere in their undertakings, sober in speech and respectful of persons. On these conditions they continued to perpetuate the Saint's tradition and to observe a Rule which, for over a century, had lost none of its power.

Considerations such as these added their weight to counsels of a practical order. And this second part of the document is inspired by a lively "Lasallian" spirit and unfolds in such an urgent, resolute style that one is inclined to recognize in it the mind and the hand of Brother Agathon.

"Honest people, those who abide by principle and by the Catholic faith, have their eyes on the Brothers; they cannot, without being sorely grieved, view the Brothers sharing in the squalid lies which today cover with shame the churchmen who have cravenly sacrificed their consciences to personal interests or to human considerations; it would be loathsome, something that would be inexcusable in a Christian Brother, to deviate from one's devotion to the Founder, to the Holy See, and to the body of the Bishops. At this point there reappear, as a direct appeal of Father to sons, and as an entreaty which has continued to resound throughout the history of the Lasallian family, quotations from testament of 1719.

The advancing peril must not be concealed, nor the sufferings to which generous souls will not doubt be exposed. "If there has been a critical time for the Brothers, this is it. It is a motive for them to ask God, through constant prayer, to direct them through His Divine Spirit, to place upon their lips the seal of circumspection and, in their entire conduct, the rule of prudence which will keep them out of the reach of all just reprimand. For the rest, if they are faithful to God, he will not abandon them; His providential care must reassure them and give them strength so as not to fall under the mindless suggestions of people who neither fear nor love God."

Could the outbreak of violence go so far as to close the schools? Even that eventuality must be faced "with the eyes of faith". Happy the Brothers, if they share "the persecution that so many worthy churchmen are enduring"! Their duty demands that they fulfill their functions to the "last extremity", that they leave it only "under constraint" and after having

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given notice to the pupils and to their parents "of the reasons for the teachers ' withdrawal".

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We are now informed concerning the Institute's orientation at the time of the application of the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy". The ship sailed on without abandoning its course nor listing in the storm. Assailed more furiously by winds and waves, it sought to pursue its course under the promptings of a captain who never lost control of the helm. For the structure and its possessions catastrophe was to ensue, but its energies would remain intact.

We come to the second month of that melancholy Spring of 1791. Decree followed upon decree. In many a place the city governments engaged in an increasingly formidable pressure upon the Brothers. The obligation to communicate with the usurpers, the obligation of the oath, the threat to close the schools -- were all so many attacks upon conscience. The legal abolition of the Institute seemed to be the target of these struggles. Meanwhile, the Pope spoke. His censures, breaking the circle of mercenary silence and replying to anxious expectations, would quickly resound throughout the kingdom. Henceforth, no Catholic would be able to plead ignorance in order to seek a compromise between earth and Heaven.

It was important that at the height of the crisis for the Brothers not to feel the agony of abandonment. Small Communities of three, five and even of seven Brothers were, in their isolation, exposed to severe risks. They endured every local influence. A glib-tongued, well-meaning mayor, close friends whose intentions were better than their doctrine, would undertake the siege of the schoolteachers. We might imagine them saying: "Dear Brothers, are you going to destroy with your own hands the work of so many years, leave the children in the gutter, and reduce your−selves to penury. The civil oath is nothing but a formality... We've taken it ourselves with the best will in the world. We must bow before public opinion, and sacrifice our personal views to the safety of the State. Be good citizens. You will still be good Christians."

The temptation was insidious, and the picture of approaching distress made one shudder. But, then, quickly and at greater length there was the appeal to nobler motives: fidelity to professional duty, dedication to children, gratitude to the school's benefactors, and love of country. Many, perhaps, would succumb if they did not receive light and strength.
Brother Agathon knew the heart and mind of his Brothers; and he experienced to the depths of his own soul the pain of their uneasiness, of their doubts and their complaints. Who, if not he, would comfort them? At this crucial moment when the temporal and the spiritual (and, perhaps, even the eternal) lot of his own men was at stake, who was in a better position to speak to them than the author of the marvelous "Circulars" of 1777, 1782 and 1784?[46] The method he chose to transmit his instructions was surprising. Once again he used a cleric as intermediary. Since the matter was sensitive, he wanted a particularly authoritative pen to deal with it *ex professo*. He probably revised the proofs and must have arranged for the distribution of copies.

*Reflections on The Snares that Ill-intentioned People Attempt to Set for Religion and for the Good Faith of Christian Brothers*is a long title for a brochure of only twenty pages, which is classified in the Motherhouse Archives in Brother Agathon's file. Words written over one another and handwritten corrections seem, indeed, to suggest, in spite of the printed format, a trial press-run. But these change absolutely nothing of the meaning and the tone of the pamphlet; they are simply nuances that reveal a mind's quest for accuracy.[47] [48]

[46] SeeVol. II of the present work, pp. 464-466.

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The author of the Reflections belonged to a group of the most intransigent and rigid priests. This is especially seen in the treatment of the vows. The little work is without a date, the name of the printer, or a signature. Such measures of extreme caution remind us of the perils of the times; they also reveal the other reason for the round-about means adopted by the Superior-general: since, in April, 1791 the Institute existed and its schools were in operation, it was important not to worsen, through the publication of official "Circulars" the relations between the Lasallian Communities and the civil powers.

The anonymity, however, was presented in such a clear light that the Brothers were in no uncertainty as to its priestly character. The style, in its unction, its doctrine and in its imperative language, was ecclesiastical. No one had to wait for the statement on the final page to become aware that "the author" was "a pastor...sincerely devoted" to De La Salle's disciples and more concerned with their "salvation" than with their "temporal success".

The beginning introduces us to the figure of a man of the Church: "I have always been penetrated, my dear Brothers, with respect and veneration for your holy vocation...These views are not special to me. All the friends of religion and truth, all the friends of order and the common good; pastors whose consolation you have been up to now; poor families whose light and resource you have been...think in the same way.

The "regularity", the "fervor", the "simplicity", the "humility" and the "charity" of these teachers of youth make them altogether worthy of their reputation. But now a great danger threatens them: the oath is to be administered to them. Several have already met with "entreaties in this regard; and several have incurred persecution. All have remained steadfast"; the facts assure us of this excellent behavior.

But "there may be some...weak ones; even the strong can stumble; all, then, need to be cautioned and it is with this in mind" that we "invite them to steep their souls" in the advice of a counselor "who is jealous" of their "honor" and of their eternal happiness.

Is it permissible "to communicate with 'Constitutional' pastors"? Two sentences suggest that the Brief of the 13th of April had not yet come into the Brothers' possession."Your persistent dedication to principles that have been held as certain and inviolable until this moment is a guarantee...of the total obedience that you have vowed to the Church's decisions, when they are known to you. Until they are explained, you are too well instructed in the way in which the Church wishes the faithful to act with respect to false pastors, usurpers and schismatics...for us to think that we must go into the matter here."

Therefore, as long as the "Constitutionals" are driven to proclaiming their legitimacy without Rome's approval (and we cannot imagine that the infallible Church would give this "society" of bishops and priests "its pure and simple approbation") good Catholics "will refuse to fall into line under their crozier".

This was the initial response. There remain all the problems raised by the oaths, which must be considered without confusing clearly distinct facts. The history of the last months has gone through two stages: the first takes as its point of departure the Decree of the 27th of November, 1790, aimed at Church functionaries continued in their offices and obliging them to cooperate in the support of the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy". The Brothers of the Christian Schools do not fall under the perview of this measure. If city governments claim the contrary, it is much less to assure the observance of the law than out of a "desire to damage" the Brothers, who have never joined "any faction" and have "always taught submission to the

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[48] In the printed text the title concludes as follows: "... intended for the Brothers of the Christian schools". The words "for the religion and for the good faith" are handwritten. On page two the word "legitimated", applied to the "Constitutionals" for simple stylistic reasons is replaced by "institution". On page three the words "fine souls" becomes more explicitly and more loftily "persons genuinely devoted to sound doctrine and to the faith of our fathers". These examples suffice. The definitive version of the text was published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pp. 16-25.

higher authorities". Nevertheless, the effort is made to injure the Brothers in whatever way: if they do not take the oath, they will be declared rebellious; and, if, under constraint, they take it, they will not be able to keep it, and they will be accused of perjury."

But that stage is now passed. "The Assembly has just decreed" the obligation of the civil oath for "employees in institutions of public education". We are now in the period following March 22nd, 1791. What from here on in must be the Brothers' position?

"Since the articles of the 'Civil Constitution of the Clergy' form part of the State Constitution, they all fall under the civil oath." Now, in several respects, the National Assembly has set itself "in opposition to the dogmas of the Catholic Church". There is, therefore, no middle ground between refusing the oath and apostatizing. "This is the constant teaching of the bishops who have written about the matter ...It is the teaching of the Holy See, which is currently quite well known."

The very formal references here seem to be to Bishop Boisgelin's Explanation of Principles and the Brief of the 10th of March, which confirms the tenor of the former statement.

"Let the Brothers, then, follow the example of the 126 bishops and of other "non-juring" clergy who have chosen "to be expelled from their posts and deprived of their living", "to be sentenced to exile", and to draw down upon themselves "persecution, infamy and the wrath of a misguided public ...How could an oath that would be a sin on the lips" of so many learned people be lawful on yours? If it is an offense against God, you cannot commit such a fault, even to save your Congregation. For it is not permitted to do evil even for the good that might come of it."

Come what may, the Brothers should willingly side with the persecuted. They would be quite wrong to concerned with the future. "Persons genuinely dedicated to sound doctrine and to the faith of our fathers have eagerly embraced the cause of the clergy who have remained steadfast; can the Brothers who have sacrificed everything for Jesus Christ fear to be abandoned?"

The author of the pamphlet then goes on to face the members of the Lasallian Congregation with the only hypothesis he believes acceptable: a rejection of the oath along with the consequences of such a rejection, scil., the loss of livelihood and the predictable hostility. Surely, every wrong if preferable to damnation: and "one can only be damning oneself by leaving the bosom of the Church". But must one, humanly speaking, abandon hope?

The inability to teach in public schools would not involve the impossibility of opening private schools. Parents would not think that the former teachers were unworthy of trust because they eluded obligations which made them "neither better men nor better citizens". In this way the Brothers would find a natural use for their talents and a means of livelihood.

Furthermore, even as "non-jurors", there is nothing to prove that the Brothers would be deprived of the pension that their Superior was seeking for them from the legislators. The oath has not been required of other pensioned Religious. Would the Nation's representatives act contrary to their solemn declarations? "Having repudiated" (they said) "any purpose to control opinion and having repudiated even more vigorously any plan to tyrannize over consciences", they have merely decided to replace "non- juring" civil servants.

It is important not to invent vain anxieties. But, then, should the worst misfortunes occur, the just will preserve their serenity of soul. "You shall become something pleasing to God... Deserve His Grace by the holiness of your life and you will know what you have to do..."

For the last time, the fiery preacher turns his attention to the timid, who might have been left wavering by these more sublime considerations. He pursues them into their defenses.

Submission to the laws would not guarantee "the common use" of the houses of the Institute. All "mortmain" property "will be confiscated by the State. And city governments

will not acquire it for the Brothers." Would those who take the oath fancy that they will be maintained in their employment as individuals after the abolition of their Religious Congregation? "That will happen only as long as there is a shortage of teachers who are more 'political' or more highly thought of by the Revolution.
The Brothers' previous profession "will draw upon them the contempt of those who are currently making a stir in the world; it will cause them to suspect (incurable attachments) to ancient principles.The cities which were so harsh in disputing minimal salaries with the Brothers will show them no 'favor' when they shall have the Brothers completely at their mercy."

And thus, in a welter of words (which has dictated some pruning on our part) the arguments, the entreaties, the warnings and the commands pile up. The author harshly stigmatizes Brothers who, through "ignorance", "fickleness", or "irreligion" court inexcusable capitulation or "criminal betrayal". He promises them "the contempt of good people", "the insults of their pupils" and "eternal disgrace". Leaving them to their remorse, he pleads with them "to respect at least a Group which has nothing on earth more precious than its reputation", and, as a consequence, before executing their gesture of apostasy, to await the dismemberment of the Institute or to mitigate the scandal by first of all separating themselves from their confreres.

He anticipates, therefore (and this anticipation justifies the essay's conclusions) that the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was going to be dissolved. He meant to provide with defenses Religious who, expelled from their houses, must make their way, unwillingly, along the highroads of the world. "There were dangers with respect to the faith, with respect to morals, and with respect to families -- what a quantity of dangers!" If the Brothers neglect "the practice of mental prayer", the Sacraments, spiritual reading, the examination of conscience, and un−less they avoid profane distractions, their virtue will quickly "be shipwrecked".

Let them understand thoroughly that their return to civilian life, in the conditions in which it is effected, releases them from none of their obligations. Perpetual vows endure "for all times and circumstances". Temporary vows retain their specified duration.

How, under the circumstances, must these obligations be understood? "You will fulfill (my very dear Brothers) the vow of poverty by keeping your heart detached from the love of earthly goods..., and by enduring without murmur the privation of a part of what is necessary. You will fulfill the vow of obedience by your submission to your bishop and your legitimate ecclesiast−ical Superiors...by your readiness...to return to your Community at the first command of your Superior-general... You will be conforming to the vow of chastity by carefully avoiding the occasions (of failure)...As for the vow of teaching tuition-free, you will fulfill it by catechizing youth...The interdiction (against teaching in public schools) cannot destroy the genuine spirit of your profession...Your success and the edification of your behavior will make (your classes) precious in the judgment of Christian parents. The obligation of tuition-free instruction will (of course) cease when subsidization is terminated... But...the absol−ute necessities that your well-to-do pupils will procure for you must be turned to the advantage of the poor...As a private, lay educator you will be in a position to provide education for salvation for the rich and the poor alike.

In this way the Institute will survive in each of its members; who "will uphold" its reputation by edifying "the world", by inducing it "to acknowledge its injustices" to them, and by working to strengthen religion "which is wavering" throughout the kingdom of France. They shall not lose hope; and their fidelity, carried to heroic limits, may become the pledge of resurrection.

It was a magnificent program that Brother Agathon was well up to embracing while asking his Brothers to subscribe to it. In the course of the next twelve years, faithful men

devoted themselves to the task of accomplishing it point for point. Scattered among the ruins, they did not sit petrified lamenting their lot. They could have been seen in quest of young minds to save from ignor−ance and souls to save from sin. Even in the worst of times, some would succeed in dispensing instruction, in the spirit and according to the methods of their Holy Founder. Their pedagogical skills would assure them of their daily bread. From their pupils they would receive a modest compensation that was absolutely necessary for their existence, but without forgetting the evangel−ization of the poor. After all, they were the true disciples of "their venerable Father": and servants of a persecuted Church, prepared to bear witness in blood, martyrs in intention, or right up to the consummation of the sacrifice, in the prisons or on the convict ships of the Republic: -- servants of the Nation prepared to obey Assemblies and magistrates, not objecting to civic commit−ments, provided that authorized counselors or wise priests put their conscience to rest.

The most generous elite among them considered themselves bound by their vows. They would abstain from all contrary assignments in order to resume the integral practice of their Rule the moment all human obstacles relented. On that day, a small, gallant band would be found at hand for the rebuilding. It would have been too much to have expected the same sacrifice from many hundreds of Brothers, who did not bear the indelible mark of the priesthood and who, in the vigor of their age, had been uprooted by an unprecedented crisis from their Communities and tossed, perhaps forever, into the midst of a confused, lawless and unbelieving world. The Reflections of 1791 was satisfied to be severe about principles; but the example to which it appealed (the Austrian Religious dispersed by Emperor Joseph II and obliged by the Pope to live their monastic obligations to the full) at the height of the French Revolution lost its power to convince, especially for the Christian Brothers.

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A man who faced so many dangers could not be suspected of blindness nor of weakness. He believed that his duty as leader assigned him a position in the middle of the battle. He wanted to follow close at hand the debates in the Assembly, personally intervene with public authorities, use friendly influence, and attend his Parisian Brothers upon whom the agitation of the capital weighed as quite serious and immediate threats.[49] We find him at this time in the house on the Rue Neuve in the company of his secretary. Postponing the study of the slow, laborious negotiations for the arrangement of pensions (which dragged on beyond 1791) and for the closing of schools, we shall seek out the secrets of the Superior-general's thought and the reflection of his attitudes in the letters of Brother Solomon, whose martyrdom in the days to come will seem like the fulfillment and the reward for combat in the cause of the Roman faith.

While still at Melun on the 9th of January, Brother Agathon wrote to the Director of the Community of St. Menehould:[50] "You know that the Assembly of French Bishops has declared that the oath decreed on the 27th of November cannot be taken in good conscience. This meant that the Institute must take the identical position. However, the future seemed to be holding some happy surprises: We are perhaps not as close to having nothing to do together than you thought. The truth is that, for the moment, our legislators are promising to leave us alone...Pray God not to allow them to change their minds."

What leader of men has not contrived, in the surrounding gloom, to be on the watch for the faintest glimmer of hope, in order to encourage his forces? A vote in the Assembly led

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[49] . ...The Very Dear Brother Superior cannot leave Paris so as to be in a situation to see close at hand what concerns us and to be able to speak with the Brothers who have questions." (Brother Solomon's letter of the 15th of April 1791; cited in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 107.)

[50] To Brother Florus, "the 9th (sic) of the year 1791". Motherhouse Archives, Brother Agathon file.

to the rumor that the obligation of the oath was going to be "suspended": "The Parisian pastors" had asserted that they did not want to take the oath. And so, the Superior-general, for the consolation of Brother Florus, collected a cluster of cheerful reports: "Since the Revolution our schools overflow with children;...they enjoy a great reputation." The only thing lacking is material prosperity. But "we wouldn't be reasonable if, in these unhappy times, when everybody is suffering, we should refuse to share anything of the general distress".

This optimism, in other respects qualified by strategic silence, was understandable in a nonconfidential letter which was Brother Agathon's (and his Secretary's, in whose handwriting it was) reply to Brother Florus' New Year's Greeting. It wouldn't last hardly beyond the first weeks of the year. On the 9th of February the Superior and Brother Solomon moved to Paris.[51]The law approved on the 26th of December had already been rigorously applied. Oath-taking scenes had unfolded in Cathedrals and in parish churches. There were also some dramatic "refusals", such as that of Father Pancemont, the pastor of St. Sulpice, threatened by fanatics, losing consciousness and dragged into the sacristy, where his moral strength proved unshakable:[52]-- a model to his flock, which included the Christian Brothers on the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des Champs.

The Brothers and the Superior, who supported them by his presence, unhesitatingly rallied to the side of the "non-juring" pastor. They soon followed him to a church, where Pancemont, expelled from St. Sulpice, attempted to hold Catholic worship under the cover of a broadminded ruling from the Directory of the Department. On Palm Sunday a hostile mob, led by the agents of political clubs, overran this Theatine edifice. The faithful continued to have a way assisting at Mass in certain convents, especially in the chapels of the Franciscans, the Mathurins, the Daughters of Little Calvary, the Bernardines of the Precious Blood and in the Seminary of the Foreign Missions -- where people entered silently and with precautions similar to those of early Christians descending into the catacombs -- and with the Irish priests who were still under the protection of French hospitality.

Brother Solomon informs us about this heroic perseverance, this genuine rebirth of the faith inspired by persecution. Along with his Superior, he cooperated to breathe the spirit of resistance, not only into the Brothers, but into all groups accessible to his influence. The Le Clercq family, during the years 1791-1792, received detailed reports of the situation.

On the 15th of February a letter was addressed to Mlle. Rosalie:[53] "I read with a great deal of satisfaction the Bishop of Boulogne's instruction and learned with similar pleasure of the episcopal resoluteness that he showed in these times of misfortune and affliction for religion. They elected a bishop in St. Omer, who, ac−cording to current practice, will also be the bishop of Boulogne, but, in truth, he will only be a usurper, as are the new pastors, and it will not be al−lowed to the faithful to recognize them or communicate with them. Real bishops, who in these times are worthy successors of the Apostles, must constant−ly give the real faithful a rule of conduct to be followed in order to avoid sharing in the schism, which is close to the point of breaking out in the French Church, if God does not quickly come to our aid. From one day to the next, we await the Pope's Brief on all these exasperating difficulties; it is even said that it has already arrived, but that they do not want to make it public, because it does not approve, as it cannot approve, of the new Constitution of the Clergy".

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[51]Brother Solomon's letter to Rosalie le Clercq, the 15th of February 1791, no. 95 of the family papers (copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a). Cf. Chassagnon, op.cit., pp. 320-322.

[52]Goyau, op.cit., pg. 509.

[53]See the reference above.

The lot of the Institute was thus bound up with that of Catholicism in the kingdom: "I have every reason to fear our suppression, for, while they have left us alone up to now, we expect that, if the Revolution holds, they are going to require the oath of us, which we cannot take, and they are going to want to oblige us to teach the Constitution, we cannot conscientiously do..." The profession of faith is as clear as one would want it; and the writer adds the following sentence which indicates that the Superior was ready for any eventuality, setting up plans that would snatch De La Salle's work from destruction: "We hope, however, ...that Providence will afford us some way of preserving at least a part of our Institute; if not in France, then perhaps elsewhere".

We shall content ourselves here with this initial glance cast beyond the frontiers. Brother Agathon's preparations would translate, when the time came, into realities that were rather different than what he had anticipated. His lot was one of stress, suffering and sacrifice; others would reap the harvest.

Immediate action was directed toward defending sound doctrine, impeding the progress of schism and saving men of good will from compromising their principles. As soon as the instructions from Rome were known, they had to be publicized in spite of official prohibition. Pamphlets containing the papal instructions were clandestinely printed and sent about in small packages to selected addresses.[54] Tracts, commenting upon the directives were also included. Brother Solomon, with the knowledge and consent of his Superior, became one of the workers in this project. At the Brothers' house in St. Sulpice he prepared parcels and wrote tirelessly. We know that it was through his efforts that there arrived in Boulogne certain apologetical and polemical pamphlets: *Counsels for Catholics*, *Error Unveiled*, *The Defense and Principles*..., to cite only some of the titles.[55]He found a way of sending the *Avis aux catholiques* "under the seal of the National Assembly", so that it was distributed by the mails (letter of the 15th of April 1791). Later on (during Lent of 1792), there followed the letters that Father Pancemont addressed, as pastoral sermons, to his dispersed parishioners. Miss Le Clercq volunteered to bring these texts to famil−ies and to any inhabitant of Boulogne whose religion needed to become informed. Her brother congratulated her for her ardent, competent and efficacious zeal. There is no doubt but what he recruited for Catholic propaganda other auxiliaries in the cities where the Christian Brothers retained influence and support.

This activity was not always confined to the four walls of an office. From time to time it was necessary to leave the Paris region, either under the pressure of events or simply to resume contact with the Motherhouse. Consulting the ledger in the Brother Procurator's treasury, we read that on the 15th of August 1791 333 livres, 6 sols and 8 deniers were paid to the Community on the Rue Neuve "for four months board-and-room for the Brother Superior and his Secretary"; and on the 27th of December 416 livres, 13 sols and 4 deniers were paid for five more months.[56] The long stay in the capital involved interruptions that are indicated by the following adjustments in the charges: 30th of April, 1791: "journey of Brother Superior and his Secretary to Paris: 44 deniers"; 11th of September, "10 livres, 16 sols, 6 deniers, spent by Dear Brother Solomon in a journey to Paris"; 27th of November, "5 livres, 3 sols, for Brother Solomon's journey from Paris to Melun and ...return to Paris"; 27th of December, "journey of Very Dear Brother Superior, 29 livres, 7 sols.

Behind the bookkeeping figures we glimpse the very active life of the Superior and

[54]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. I, pg. 423.

[55]Motherhouse Archives, HA m. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 106.

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his faithful associate, both of them hastening to the appeals of Brothers, running risks to the limit, but also strengthening themselves in Community prayer and in the joys of friendship; and, everywhere, quickening their Congregation. But we can never know their weariness, their anxieties, nor the reactions produced and the thoughts raised by the scenes of which they were the witnesses.

We must now return to Brother Solomon's letters. There is one of them which is of capital importance. It was begun at St.Denis on the 8th of April and finished in Paris on the 15th. It emphasizes the attitude of the Superior and his Brothers when the schismatic pastors took office. The hurried style, careless of grammatical errors, in itself reveals the emotions of the moment and the state of alarm in which Catholics then lived: "M. Gobel, bishop of Lydda, took possession of, or rather usurped, the See of Paris on the 27th of March, and the pastors a week later. As a consequence, the Brothers in the parishes where there are usurping pastors have stopped bringing their pupils there, which has excited the rage of the people, who, for the most part, do not dream of going to Mass and who perhaps scarcely assist on Sundays."

The mob did not want to hear about freedom. As far as it was concerned, to evade the officials of the "Constitutional" Church was to be a self-confessed bad citizen. It organized assaults against those who kept to the faith of the Roman Church especially against women. Already Sisters suggesting Christian instruction had been treated shamefully.

"Today, the 8th, should be the Brothers' turn...the real pastors have advised them to withdraw from (the schools) so as not to give an excuse for violence...Brother Agathon, the inspiration of his subordinates, could not believe that he was immune from attack. "Fearing that they would make an attempt on his life", he sought refuge at St. Denis; Brother Solomon attended him in this provisional exile. Perhaps we shall no longer be able to appear in Paris in our Religious habits...May God grant us to accept that out of devotion to the faith and out of His love!"

The letter just sat there for a week. The Superior told his companion to proceed to the Motherhouse. On the 15th of April and under the cover of a lull in the violence both had returned to the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des Champ; where the Secretary got back to his letter: "I made a trip to Melun, where everything is still peaceful, because there still aren't any usurpers...I also went to Versailles, from where the Brothers have had to flee, because of the threats made against them when they refused to bring their pupils to the parish.(The members of this Community withdrew to their families; Brother Solomon was to entrust his letter to one of them, "a very well-mannered young man", who returned to Boulogne, saddened to have to leave his Congregation.)

A dispersion (this one partial) also affected the Community in St. Sulpice. The Brothers who surrounded the Superior-general dressed in "plain clothes". So "disguised", Nicolas Le Clercq had completed his recent missions. And so outfitted, in order to attend Mass, he sought out chapels served by priests who, not being public functionaries, were not, until further notice, subject to the oath.

In Paris, "we no longer dare appear otherwise" than in civilian clothes. It was a very clear symptom of persecution, and the first step toward the inevitable secularization. However, the Assembly persisted in its silence regarding the future it had in mind for the teaching Congregations: "It seems that this is done by design. Seeing the Brothers quite determined neither to take the oath nor to recognize usurpers, they seek to get rid of them by the ill-usage with which they threaten them and that has already been practiced on some of them."

Brother Solomon concluded by giving assurance of his own steadfast resolution: "You are right to regard as apostates from the true religion all those who have purely and simply taken the oath. I hope that God will grant me the Grace of not being guilty of that

offense. I would prefer to flee to Quimper-Corentin or even go to Scioto[57]

That was something not enjoyed in the Paris of 1791, except in silence and in the practice of innocent dodges, or under the cudgel of denunciation and cruelty. Only imperious duty kept Brother Solomon in the city. He might have envied his Brothers in Boulogne who up to then satisfied their city government without offending their conscience. How happy he was when, from the end of June until the 5th of July he enjoyed the advantage of a brief vacation at Melun! "There I wore the Brothers' robe", he wrote to his family on the 16th of July, after his return to his "observation post". "Here we don't wear it at all". The Superior-general's absence probably coincided with his own at Corpus Christi. On that day, Thursday the 23rd of June, a painful incident occurred on the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dames-des-Champ.

"They came, with armed soldiers, looking for the Brothers who lived in the house, in order to force them to take part in the procession at St. Sulpice. In effect, the presence of the Brothers was being demanded at a "Constitutional" act of worship; and the Brothers yielded to force: "They went, some of them, in secular dress."[58]

The Secretary's health suffered as much from such shocks as from overwork. From the 2nd to the 12th of September he went to Melun to rest.[59] His feverish pace began again and continued until the 12th of November, when another pause, from the 12th to the 20th, occurred "in the country". "After a stay of nearly eight months in the capital, didn't I have reason enough to breathe better air than what I was getting in this sort of Babylon?" Behind this banter he was concealing a secret. The mystery was quickly revealed, and, as we reflect upon it, it becomes extremely important. Brother Solomon had secluded himself "with the hermits in the Senart Forest" for an eight-day retreat under the direction of "Father Clorivière".[60]

No historian of religion can be unaware of the personality of Pierre-Joseph Picot Clorivière. Born in 1735, he entered the Jesuits in 1756, and, after Clemen XIV's Brief, he became a member of the diocesan clergy. His writings (such as *The Model for Pastors* and the *Life of Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort*, which continue to merit reading) had exercized a salutary influence on priests. He himself provided an example of all the priestly virtues. Intractable on the matter of "the oath", he miraculously escaped the guillotine. And then suspected by the Imperial police, he susptained, without trial, five years of imprisonment, from 1804 to 1809. After Napoleon's fall, he restored the Jesuits in France. He was a man of intrepid mind, a great soul endlessly impatient for self-dedication, and a sublime spirit with prophetic insight.[61]

We can imagine the influence that Picot Clorivière had on Brother Solomon, and, through him, on the consciences of those who sympathized with the future martyr. Nicolas Le Clercq's correspondence is quite explicit in this regard. In it he discusses with Mlle. Rosalie a project which the former Jesuit had very much at heart. In order to pave the way for the

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[57]The United States, where his Brother Augustine had just settled to attempt to restore his fortunes.
in order to have freedom of conscience.[57]Family papers, Letter #96; copy in the Motherhouse Archives GF a. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 324, 327, 330, 333, and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pp. 107-108.

[58]Letter of the 16th of July 1791, to Rosalie Le Clercq. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives GF a.

[59] .[59]Letter, 15th of September, to Rosalie Le Clercq. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a. The Account Book has an entry for the 27th of December for an expenditure for "Vichy water for D. Brother Solomon, 14 livres, 8 sols".

[60]Letter, 25th of November 1791 to Rosalie Le Clercq. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a.

[61]Father Burnichon, La Compagnie de Jesus en France, Histoire d'un siecle (1814-1914), Vol. I, pp. 45 et sq., (Paris, Beauchesne, 1914). The publication of Father Cloriviere's writings in hiding where he lived during "the Terror" is the work of Rene Bazin.

rebirth of the monastic life, abolished by the legislature, he proposed to create, under the name of the “Daughters of Mary”, a society of religious women, practicing the “spiritual and corporal works of mercy” in the world. They were to be genuine Religious, bound by vows, but without a special habit and without official ties to Superiors, maintaining, in the eyes of seculars, their own independence. It was a bold and original concept -- to the point of rashness, but well adapted to the circumstances, and, in a new age, promised generous results. Brother Solomon dreamed of including his own sister among the first recruits. He was absolutely devoted to the thought of his director. The retreat in the Senart Forest had confirmed him in his zeal for Roman orthodoxy and in a resolution for fiedlity that was capable of holocaust. Formerly, St. John Baptist de La Salle had found help, approval and practical example among the Jesuits. His principle disciples had given ear to the same voice.

CHAPTER THREE

The Brothers' Options in the Face of Schism

Enlightened by grace, and supported by the traditions of his religious family and assisted by eminent counselors, the Superior-general had not yielded to the tide that swept so many priests and monks who, pondering confusedly illusion, prejudice, ambition, greed and treachery, threatened to remove forever a part of the Church of France from Rome. De La Salle's successor stood erect and firm upon the ground on which the Institute was built. Would his Brothers follow him to a man?

His instructions, letters, conferences and his attitude, like that of the people around him, was unambiguous. Either the Christian Brothers would refuse "to anything to do" with the "jurors", and as regards themselves, reject the civil oath or they would break at once with the Catholic Church and their Congregation.

Religious worthy of the name would not waver. In matters of obedience and renunciation they had received God's assistance; and the energy of their leader supplied a model for their courage.

But a society, even though it recruits its members selectively, is made up of very different kinds of individuals. First fervor sometimes cools with age; and willpower is always in short supply. There are minds that build illusions and idols in the shelter of which they shield their consciences. And, as Brother Agathon had remarked earlier, in 1790,[1] great disorders upset the balance of unstable personalities. The Superior seemed to be putting his finger on "false brethren". And, of course, he was familiar with some of them. But he was also thinking about the imprudent and the gullible. He had come to fear, for certain Directors, the impulse arising from public opinion, the exhilaration that comes from flattery and the illusions initiated by high-sounding language. The title of the pamphlet we have just analyzed as well as its details (entering into the liveliest examples and the most tiresome repetitions) gives evidence of the preoccupations of Religious Superiors and of their spokesmen, who had been alerted to all the "traps" into which Religious "of good faith", but impressionable, presumptuous or timid, might stumble.

There were very few of this sort among the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Neither the teachings of the Founder nor the commentaries of the Superior had remained a dead-letter. The mass of collected documentation will enable us, in spite of some inevitable gaps, to follow in chronological order (almost day-to-day) the huge resistance to, and the rare support for, "the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Sometimes we meet with nothing more than the dry declaration of a "rejection". Elsewhere, there are elaborate reports in which individual replies are given in writing and reveal the way people thought, the diversity of their reactions and the range of their understanding.

Avignon was in the forefront of the cities that required their teachers to take the oath. It was evidence of the revolutionary zeal of that city, which had not yet been officially "reunited" to France. On the 1st of March, 1791, the city commissioners visited Rue Dorée, the institution directed by Brother Florence, the former Superior-general. Why should he listen to them? From either a legal or a religious point of view he saw no reason for submitting to their demands. On the evidence of the "Diary" of the taffeta-weaver, Coulet, only one Brother agreed to take the oath. The city offered him lodging with the Oratorians,

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[1] See above, pg. 35.

"along with a good pension". On the 4th of March the "recusant" Brothers were "suspended" from their educational functions[2]

We are unaware of another example of such flagrantly illegal action prior to the Decree of March 23rd. As we shall see presently, pressure had, of course, already been brought to bear on other Brothers' Communities. But even the most ardent partisans of the Revolution were merely getting "the lay of the land". Generally, people appreciated that the Decree of the 27th of November 1790 did not obligate any but teachers in clerical orders.

This, as we have seen, was the view of the Deputies from Brest. And their constituency endorsed this view - however provisionally. The new decree had hardly appeared before Brest greedily pursued its application. On the 26th of March the city decided that Brothers Fabien, Fraternus, Constantius and Hermanfroy should cease teaching, because, rather than attend the services of "juring" priests, the Brothers persisted in their practices, which were contrary to the Constitution.[3]

This was a group that remained completely faithful. In contrast, there were (at the same time and in another seaport town) Brothers Stanislaus, Caprius, Diodorus, Servulus and Ozias, who took the oath. They were the entire Community in Toulon. The Director, Brother Stanislaus (Georges Isnard, the nephew of Brother Benezet, the dauntless builder of the residence school in Marseille) had prevailed upon his all-too-docile subordinates. Brother Stanislaus was intelligent and energetic, like his uncle (who was dismayed by his nephew's desertion), and he was not unaware of the road along which he was setting out. On the 27th of March he wrote a letter to the Avignon officials, his fellow-citizens, congratulating them ecstatically on the "noble purpose they had formed of walking in the footsteps of the mighty lawgivers who had won immortality by their revitalization of the French Empire. He wanted to disclose to them the impulses of a genuinely patriotic heart which... was proud to have sworn the oath at the altar, to maintain the Constitution with all his power...He appealed to the people of Avignon as his protectors against the Brothers on Rue Dorée who regarded him as a "schismatic" and an "apostate".[4]

While this revolt was being perpetrated in the distant South, the Brothers in Paris were playing the role of apostles on the other side. The oath does not seem to have been formally administered to them; yet they felt obliged to make a choice. On the 6th of April several citizens, fathers of pupils who attended classes in St. Roch's parish, appeared before the president and the commissioners of the Royal Palace sector. They declared that, on that day, the children had come home without having been taken to Mass according to custom. Their teachers merely had them say the Rosary at school.

It was an important gesture. St. Roch had lost its legitimate pastor, Father Marduel, who was an unyielding adversary of "the Civil Constitution". The Brothers did not wish to have anything to do with the "juror" who had replaced him.

The Office of the sector invited the Brothers to explain their conduct. With the exception of the Brother in charge of temporal affairs, they all appeared. The Director,

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[2] . Documents collected by Brother Saturninus and used by Francis Martin in his article, "Les Freres d'Avignon pendant la Revolution" in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1938.

[3] Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la maison de Brest.

[4] Departmental Archives of Vaucluse, R F0-93. A list attached to Georges Isnard's second letter "to the municipal officers in Avignon" on the 22nd of November 1792 gives information concerning the names of the Brothers who continued to serve in the tuition-free schools in Toulon. To those who were in the Community during the previous year there were added J.B. Catalan, Brother Marcel, "from the former school in Bordeaux", and Pierre Nadal, Brother Ursin, "from the former school in Marseille". (Ibid., R f0 86, 87, 88).

Brother Boniface, made a collective response that was as simple as anybody could want: "Believing that it was a matter of conscience for them and desiring to maintain their conscience in all purity, they had unanimously decided not take the children entrusted to them to the services celebrated either by the actual pastor or his vicars, since they do not acknowledge any other pastor of this parish than Father Marduel and the priests delegated by him".

There follow the signatures of Brothers Boniface, Thibaut, Alexander, Simplicius, Chaumond, Luglien and Valerian[5]Two days later, Brother Solomon's letter suggests that the same steadfastness inspired the decisions taken at the Madeleine, Gros-Caillou, St. Étienne's du Mont and St. Sulpice. The Brothers would "withdraw" rather to submit to constraint. At the proper time and place we shall examine the ultimate consequences of these departures.

We turn now to Dijon, in the month of April. We do not find the same consensus that reigned in the Parisian Communities. Politics was rife among the Brothers on Rue Maison rouge. The Director, Brother Dominique, ran into accusations levelled by some of his subordinates: he was not a patriot, and he did not teach the pupils the *Declaration of the Rights of Man;* and he annoyed the teachers whose opinions differed from his own. Brother Ulbert denounced his superior to the District Administration. The matter followed its course and the Directory of the Department of the Cote-d'Or was informed. At its session of April 9th it came to the following decision:

"Concerning what has been pointed out to the effect that the Brothers of the Christian Schools did not teach their pupils the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the articles of the Constitution...and, indeed, that they do not intend to take the children whose education has been entrusted to them to daily services in the parish church the Directory decided that M. Gelot, one of its members, and M. Bazire, a member of the District Directory, will go immediately the Brothers' residence to receive testimony from them, as well as whatever information they believe suitable".

No sooner said than done. The "Superior" of the institution introduced the teaching personnel to the delegation: there was "M. Conrad, M. Antege, M. Ulbert, M. Gereon, M. Adolf and M. Eustacius of Jesus". The Director then withdrew at the request of Gelot and Bazire. There followed an interrogation of the six Brothers. "Do they teach the Declaration of the Rights of Man"? Yes, but the orders of the Departmental Directory on this question were given to them only a week ago. Indeed, two of the teachers knew about the matter only by hearsay.

On this point Brother Dominique's colleagues seemed unanimous. The second question, which was even more sensitive, brought out a discrepancy between Brother Conrad and his fellow-teachers. On Sunday, April 10th the "Constitutional" clergy were to take possession of St. Nicholas' church. "Will you accompany your pupils to the parish services?" Brother Conrad explained his scruples: "His conscience did not permit him to embrace 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy' as long as the Pope had not spoken". And, as a consequence he did not think that he would be able to take the children to St. Nicolas'.

Brothers Antege, Ulbert and Eustatius said just the opposite. They say nothing in 'the Civil Constitution', decreed by the Assembly, that is contrary to the dogma and the faith of the Catholic Church. As a result, they would change nothing in their relations with the parish. More cautious, Brothers Gereon and Adolf made no declaration of principle; but they did not quite say clearly that they would go to the services with their pupils.

When it came time to sign the report, "several of these gentlemen" objected that, with

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5 .[5]Chassagnon, op.cit., pp. 324-326, according to the police Archives of the city of Paris, Butte des Moulins section, no. 518.

respect to the 10th of April, they would be sorely embarrassed to accompany the children, since, according to the Brother Director's orders, the children were to go to the parish Mass with their parents. Brother Dominique was recalled and asked the reason for his arrangements. His confrere, Gereon, had warned him, he said, that a disturbance was to be feared...on the occasion of the installation of the public functionaries who were to replace the existing pastors and vicars: he did not think (therefore) that it was suitable. It was an evasive reply which, in fact, misled no one as to the Director's real views. He also refused to certify it by his signature.

Thus, in the Dijon Community five Brothers were slipping into schism. The civil authorities hastened to push them down the slope. On the very morning of the Sunday that the "Constitutionals" were to enter St. Nicolas' church, the members of the District Directory met, and "the Brothers of Christian Doctrine" were the subject of discussion. Making up a Congregation and essentially responsible for the education of children, in this capacity they must be considered as public functionaries and bound, in virtue of the Law of December 26th, to take the oath decreed by the National Assembly. Such was the language of the report of the meeting. The District's counsel became the Department's decree. On the 16th of April the General Council of the Commune invited the Brothers to comply, under the pain of being excluded from public education.

The swearing-in was to take place on the following day. Brothers Ulbert and Antège took the oath in St. Michael's church, while Brothers Eustatius of Jesus and Gereon took it in St. Nicolas' and Brother Adolf in St. Philibert's.

Alongside Brother Dominic, unshakable in his refusal, stood none but Brother Conrad, and, perhaps, the serving Brother But Brother Conrad (Antoine Joseph Corette) did not take long to succumb. The example of his confreres weighed on his mind; and he couldn't stand the isolation when the "jurors", now complete masters of the house, elected Brother Eustatius of Jesus as "Superior". In a letter dated the 29th of April, the Minister, Delessart, in the name of the king, seconded the Directory of the Cote-d'Or's removal of the "recusant" Brothers.

It was at this moment that M. Corette (but surely without the "swagger" of Brother Stanislaus in Toulon) took the leap. On Sunday, the 22nd of May, "at the end of the parish Mass in St. Philibert's, at the foot of the high altar", and in the presence of Claude Renon, Deputy Solicitor for the Commune and delegated for the occasion, swore "to fulfill faithfully the functions that are, and will be, entrusted to (him), to be loyal to the Nation, the law, and the king, and with all his power to uphold the Constitution of the kingdom decreed by the National Assembly and approved and accepted by the king". Five days later he wrote to the Departmental Administrators that he had "satisfied the law" and offered them his services "for whatever they might think him competent".[6]. Presently, we shall see him as the head of a school in Auxonne.

Brother Dominique quietly turned over the books to the man who usurped his position. In June he paid out the funds sent from the Procure in Paris to the school in Dijon and carried forgiveness of injuries and meekness to the point of drawing up a "model receipt" in order to simplify Brother Eustatius' task.[7]

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In chronological order we come to Versailles, Noyon and Bordeaux. In these three cities, as in Paris, the question of schism was raised obliquely, as it were. The Brothers were not asked

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[6]Motherhouse Archives HA p-4. Copy of documents from the Departmental Archives of the Cote-d'Or

[7]Motherhouse Archives HA p-4, copy of Brother Dominique's letter to Brother Eustatius of Jesus, on the 17th of June 1791, authenticated as a faithful copy of the original preserved in the Archives of the Besancon Community of St. Claude.

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to support "the Civil Constitution", but to follow the "Constitutional" clergy. In Picardy and Guyenne, as in Paris, (with a single exception) the oath met with a flat rejection.

The Directors of the parochial schools in Versailles were introduced to the Commune Council on the 13th of April, 1791. They came "to demand the freedom of thought legislated by the National Assembly"; and they volunteered "to remain at their post" if the authorities would be good enough "to dispense them from accompanying their pupils to Mass".

Out of the Brothers' hearing the Council deliberated, and the mayor then announced to them the decisions that had been taken: "The city is aware how useful you are for the education of children; and it knows your zeal; with regrets it will witness your departure from the work you do so well. But it cannot compromise with the law. And it does not mean to embarrass your conscience. But the (educators of youth) must love our laws, so as to lead our children to love them."

The Directors preferred to resign and added that "the Brothers in the other two schools (Notre Dame and St. Louis) were of the same mind, except one, who refused to discuss the matter".[8]The one who stood aloof was Brother Severinus, "called Lambert". During the following September he reminded the Directory of the Seine-and-Oise of his conduct in order to obtain relief. "At the time of the installation of the 'Constitutional bishop'" he had "resisted" his Superior's orders. His confreres had taken off, while he had not left Versailles, although "he lacked everything". The administrators gave him permission to live in the Brothers' house in Notre Dame parish, "until better times would procure him employment".[9]

In Noyon on the 15th of April the Director, Brother Aubert, was questioned before the municipal assembly. He was accused of having forbidden the pupils "to assist at a Te Deum sung for the king's convalescence in what was formerly the cathedral and at a service for Mirabeau". The fault seemed a serious one: to prohibit prayer for the king, and to parade one's indifference on the death of a famous orator were things that would make a man forever suspect. Brother Aubert retained his composure: "Although we do not take our pupils to the services of "Constitutional" priests (he said), we leave them free to go alone or with their parents; this is how we deal with Jewish or heretical children when we have them in our classes".[10] To be happy with such a reply the citizens of Noyon needed to have, not only a great regard for, and confidence in, the Brothers, but they also had to have a keen desire to keep them on in the schools in spite of the laws. Actually, the situation dragged on without any further unreasonable demands being made.

The people in Bordeaux were rather more rigid. On April the 19th the president of the General Council posed the following questions to Brother Louis of Jesus and the nine Brothers in the two schools:

"Is it true that since the installation of the constitutionally elected pastors, you have refused to bring your pupils to the churches of St. Eulalia, St. Michel and St. Dominique"?

"Do you consider M. Pacarau[11] as the true bishop of the Department of the Gironde and the clerics that the electors have just named pastors of the city and the faubourgs as the only ones to whom this title belongs"?

Questioned individually, the Brothers' answers were consistent: they had "indeed abstained since the installation of the new pastors from taking their pupils to the churches

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[8]Chassagnon, pp. 331-332, according to the Departmental Archives of Seine-et-Oise, Report of the municipal Assembly, no. 857

[9]Departmental Archives of Seine-et-Oise, Series Q.

[10]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 589-590, following the Communal Archives of Noyon

[11]Pierre Pecarau (1711-1797) former Canon of St. Andrew's, elected Metropolitan of the Southwest on the 15th of March 1791, consecrated on the 3rd of April.

mentioned...Their conscience was loath to acknowledge the new bishop and the new pastors until their nominations had been validated by the universal Church".

The Commune drew the harshest conclusions from these admissions. The Brothers whom it "paid" to teach the poor could not have misunderstood their character as public functionaries. Since they "do not obey the laws of the Nation, they show a lack of good citizenship that is diametrically opposed to their duty as educators. As a result they must leave the schools".[12]

It was a severe sacrifice for dedicated teachers to be suddenly parted from their pupils, and in the grip of anxiety about abandoning souls to the mercy of upstart pedagogues and partisans to a schism. And while it required heroism, it was carried out with a marvelous simplicity.

That at the same time a defection should occur was only a narrow margin of shadow in a field of light. For the rest, no region could claim a monopoly on fidelity. "Of two working together, one is taken another is left."[13]And so it was in Versaille, Dijon and Avignon. In a city like Bordeaux there wasn't a single defection. In Toulon, on the other hand, the entire Community capitulated. On the 25th of April the three Brothers in Montelimar were caught in the same trap. "Do you swear (asked the city officials) carefully to watch over the pupils of the parish who are entrusted to you, to be faithful to the Nation, to the law and to the king and with all your might to support the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly and approved by the king"? Brothers Rigomer, Calistus and Augustine repeated this oath.[14]The latter two were still in Montelimar in 1789; and, in association with a third (called Brother Bernard of Mary), they declared they never retracted.[15].

We pick up once again the thread of our chronology. Since March of 1791 the Community in Laon sustained a controversy, from which it emerged at the end of April undamaged and with its honor intact. On the 2nd of March the "three administrative bodies" (Commune, District and Department) visited "in company with M. Marolle, Bishop of the Department of the Aisne, the various charitable and educational institutions" in the city of Laon. "Several Superiors and members of these houses" manifested resolutely and without solicitation the repugnance they felt in regard to M. Marolle and said "that they would never recognize any bishop except M. Sabran". The next day, at the request of the deputy Attorney-general of the Commune, the municipal government decided to send a copy of "the law of the 27th of November to the Superiors of the hospitals, the Congregation, the Marquette Sisters and the Brothers of the Christian Schools". They would invite them "to make known their intentions within the time prescribed by Article 3 of this law". They were also warned about seditious writings that might have been sent to them.[16]

On the 7th of March the city received from Brother Leufroy, Director of the Christian Brothers and Brothers Abel, Arnold, Ferme and Sebastian, his associates, the reply demanded by the situation: "We have read attentively the article of the decree concerning the oath...It

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[12]Report of the deliberations of the general Council of the Commune of Bordeaux, no. 90, f0s 141-142. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives HA n; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1910, pg. 351 and for July 1912, pg. 286. [12]

[13]Report of the deliberations of the general Council of the Commune of Bordeaux, no. 90, f0s 141-142. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives HA n; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1910, pg. 351 and for July 1912, pg. 286. [13]

[14]Luke, XVII, 36. [14]

[15]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1938, pg. 33, note #3, according to the Departmental Archives of Drome

[16]Municipal Archives of Laon, city deliberations, Register no. 2, f-0 39.

refers only to publicly functioning clerics. For the rest, we shall give, in every other circumstance, every possible proof of our dedication".[17]

The language is marked by its quiet assurance. Brother Leufroy was not unaware that, quite apart from being right, he could count on a lot of friends. One-hundred-and-seventy-two citizens of Laon had signed a petition addressed to the General Council of the Commune: "Duly disquieted by the rumor being spread abroad that (we) are going to lose the Christian Brothers, to whom the city has obligations that only ungrateful people could neglect, (they wrote that) the Brothers are not in a situation to be harassed regarding 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy', since they are not clerics;...it should be enough for the good of the city that these very highly regarded teachers continue to instruct children in the elements of the Catholic religion, reading, writing, etc. No decree orders "the destruction of this valuable group": administrative bodies "whose only power is to execute the law" cannot therefore take the initiative in such a step.[18]

Obviously the city government in Laon acted in this affair with great reluctance. The Mayor, M. Matigny,[19] resigned on the 5th of April. After his departure, the Commune sought, at least apparently, to satisfy the higher administrators, who had spelled out their demands and their threats. On the 21st of April the City indicated to the Brothers that if they failed to take the oath within five days, the District and the Department would forthwith dismiss them. The time-limit was on the eve of expiring when five of the Brothers in a new letter, petitioned "the Gentlemen making upon the General-council" to "outline the action that they were expected to follow".[20]There is the suggestion of a covert arrangement, and there is a document to prove it: -- Brother Arnold's letter. Cautiously, Brother Leufroy had appointed his Sub-Director to lead the way, who, nonetheless, quite officially, wrote in the name of the entire Community:

"To the Mayor, city officials and distinguished gentlemen in the City Hall of Laon: The Christian Brothers, full of gratitude for the goodness you have shown them and the signs of zeal which inspire you for their preservation, are pleased to send you the formula of the oath that they can take: I swear and promise to be faithful to the Nation, to the king and to the civil law, with the formal exception of anything having to do with the spiritual order and the Church.[21]

Of course, this qualified oath did not correspond either with the spirit nor the letter of the constitutional law. That made little difference to the Brothers in Laon, once they had obtained the protection of the city without disturbing their conscience - which is what happened. The people in Laon, on their mountain swept by the sea-breezes, escaped the noxious atmosphere of other regions and preserved a taste for true freedom. On the 30th of the following May their mayor was quite prepared to put a church at the disposal of the "non-conformists", i.e., Roman Catholics and their priests, and to go so far as to supply them with "a security guard" for as long as there were "bigots" who were not "familiar" with such a

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[17]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, Laon file, no. 105.

[18]Ibid. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 585.

[19]There had been a Martigny who was mayor of Laon in 1719. (Cf. Vol. II of the present work, pg 53.)

[20]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, city of Laon, no. 105. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for September 1908, pp. 300-301.

[21]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, Laon, no. 105. The letter has no date; but it must have follow very closely upon the one from which we have just quoted. Cf. Brother Lucard's "embellishments".

novelty.[22] The Brothers, whose oath was legally invalid and who had opened their chapel[23] to "non-jurors", continued to receive subsidies from the Commune.

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Immediately after this flexible attitude was translated into a fair accommodation, we meet with a series of "refusals" in the "Southern Province". On the 23rd of April, 1781, there was the unanimous resistance on the part of five Brothers in Castres.[24]. On the 27th of the same month the mayor of Albi, M. Esperou, discussed with his Council the attitude of the Brothers of that city: "Without appearing to be openly disobedient to the laws (since we have not asked them to take the oath), they teach doctrines in their schools that are quite opposed to those very laws. The mayor thought that the whole thing was going to end up in a misunderstanding. "The Brothers of the Christian Schools must, as public functionaries, take the oath at once". The Brothers, however, refused. Nevertheless, Albi retained them provisionally until November.[25]

Montauban did the same thing after having heard on the 9th of May from Brother Zacheus, the former Assistant to the Superior-general (who, since his resignation, had been placed at the head of this fairly important Community), with the simple declaration: "I certify that, having left my confreres free to respond according to their conscience to the proposition I made them of taking their pupils to the parish services as they did formerly, they all replied that they would not do so, even if I were to command them to do so. When I asked them if they would sign their statement, they said that they would. The signatures of the six Brothers are, in fact, included with that of their Director.[26] The Brothers in Nimes seem to have decided in the same way.[27]

At first Toulouse had declared that since the Brothers were not strictly speaking, functionaries, and since the Assembly left in suspense a lot of secular Congregations, it was necessary to maintain the status quo, and until further notice, not to require the oath. But, then, in May, the Directory of the Upper-Garonne objected to this leniency and reminded the city officials of the language of the decrees of the 22nd of March and the 17th of April.

An incident which occurred two days after the installation of the Metropolitan Sermet unleashed a controversy. On the 9th of May the Brothers thought they would have their pupils assist at Mass in St. Savior's chapel, when the chaplain came to tell them that he would not be celebrating Mass. The Brothers and the pupils were getting ready to leave, when a "Constitutional" priest, M. Vignaux showed up vested and approached the altar. His appearance simply accelerated the rush for the exits.

Within the hour accusations reached the City Council. And the next morning, before an extraordinary session of the Assembly, "in a small chamber in the city hall", a counselor launched into an attack: "Yesterday you heard the complaints of several citizens concerning

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[22]Municipal Archives of Laon, Register of deliberations of the city government, no. 2.

[23]To, among others, the Carthusian Dom Ancelin and the Premonstratensian Dom Colinet, according to information supplied by the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for September 1908, pg. 300.

[24]Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 337. The Director of the Community in Castres was Brother Cherubin of Jesus (Joseph Ducord) whom we shall find there after the Revolution

[25]Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 277-278.

[26]Municipal Archives of Montauban, Series GG. Cf. Lemandus, op.cit., pg. 99.

[27]On the 31st of May the Directory of the Department of the Gard ordered the District of Nimes to replace "the so-called Ignorantin Brothers who have neither taken the oath…nor have offered to do so". Motherhouse Archives. HA p-4.

the irregularity of the behavior of the Christian Brothers in the Faubourg of St. Stephen, who affect the most criminal contempt for priests who have complied with the law...". Declaring that the Brothers' tendentious language in favor of resistance stirs up "scandalous" divisions in families, the author of this indictment went on to depict in gloomy colors the previous day's scene in the chapel.

The Council ordered that the accused be immediately summoned. Nicholas Tupain, "known by the name of Amand", appeared. This was the eminent educator, former Director of St. Yon and thereafter of Nimes, a man who for two years had been devoting himself to the children of Toulouse - Brother Amand of Jesus. Time was when the city officials of Toulouse, along with Father Bernadet, had heaped praises upon him. But he was still thought of as "the model" Brother.[28]

He answered the city authorities' questions with firmness: he said he was determined not to communicate with "juring" priests. He could not "take children to Mass" except to the chaplain's Mass or that of some other cleric who had not taken the oath.

"Did he intend to continue the education that the children of the citizens of this city had been receiving in the schools subject to his jurisdiction and, to that end, did he intend to take the oath that had been decreed"?

He asked only that he might fulfill his task, but he would not take the oath, "which violated his conscience". And he certified this refusal with his signature. Brothers Juvenal, Hevichy, Senen, Paphnucius, Raymond and Demetrius drew up and signed identical statements. And with that, the report was concluded.[29] It was easy to assume that sanctions would follow. However, Toulouse, like Albi and Montauban, did not move from word to action right away.

Since the Brothers denounced 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy', they expected to be expelled from the schools. Opportunism and the devotion that both families and cities had for them, as well as the inconvenience of replacing superb teachers postponed their departure. In the following chapter we shall study the slow dissolution of school-structures in the period between 1791 and 1792. But first of all we shall call attention (essentially a matter for explanation and clarification) to the options open to the Brothers.

We are in the second half of the month of May. The most remote Departments knew and were applying the decrees which sought to curb freedom of conscience. On the 18th of the month the Brothers in St. Brieuc informed the mayor that they preferred to withdraw from their duties rather than take the oath.[30]. At Vannes, on the 26th, the five Brothers in the school summed up in a few forceful words the twofold objection of the faithful Christian: "They would not take the oath required by the law concerning public functionaries, and they would never recognize M. Le Masle as bishop of Morbihan".[31]

Would the Brothers in Normandy echo the voices of those in Brittany? Unfortunately, not the Brother in Bayeux. The Director of the school, founded in 1788 by Bishop Cheylus, was Brother Damian, who, with an able and enterprising hand, had organized classes, furnished a house and opened a chapel.[32] This Lorrainian from Nancy, who had made his novitiate at St. Yon and was the former student of Brother Solomon at the 'higher

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[28] See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 444.

[29] Lemandus, op.cit., pp. 73-78, according to the Capitol Archives of Toulouse.

[30] Motherhouse Archives, no. 445, Saint Brieuc file

[31] Departmental Archives of Morbihan L 815; quoted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 40

[32] Concerning Brother Damian see above pg 38 and Vol. II of the present work, pp. 468 and 519.

scholasticate' at Melun, was a remarkable teacher. Born on the 17th of November, 1752,[33] "he showed the maturity of his age", as Brother Agathon once wrote of him. There was about him that sense of sufficiency that overflows in pride. His talents as teacher and as administrator he found gratifying; and, in order to exercise them as he pleased, he rid himself both of his religious obligations and the recognition he owed his bishop. His activities disclosed a cold determination and his words an egotistical discretion.

The scene in Bayeux unfolded on the same day as the one in Vannes; and the two, taken together, constituted a diptych of opposing panels. The General Council had decided to hear the Brothers. They entered the meeting hall. "Three of them, namely, Dominic Mamel, in the Congregation called Damian, Joseph Quillet, called Wilfrid, and Louis Charles Renaux, called Audinot.[34].

"M. Mamel, Director of Education, (declared) that he and his confreres ardently desired to continue to teach the young, that they were, to this end, prepared to abide by the law and take the oath; that while they were only three, they were ready to supply a fourth teacher, with whom the General Council and the city would have reason to be pleased; but they pleaded with the city to consider that their salary, as Brothers associated with an Order, obliged them to live a life of privation, for which they were compensated by the consolation of doing good, of fulfilling their vows and (by) the certainty that the Order would not abandon them in old age and infirmity; that they besought the city, then, to take under consideration the need to change the way they dress and to clothe them decently so as not to incur contempt, and to capitalize their future status, so as to procure the means for a more comfortable life, more conducive to their good health..."

It was a business deal: Brother Damian and his two accomplices exchanged their vows and their habits for an income that would provide them independence.

And people listened to them. An eminent citizen, Jean Richard La Marre, immediately offered them 600 livres "for" (at least temporary) "support of the institution" until such time as the legislators should decide upon a system of national, tuition-free education. The Council fixed on a lump-sum of 2,770 livres for the teachers' salaries; and invited the mayor and the city officials "to place the Brothers under their special protection". The oath was taken the next day, the 27th of May, at 10 o'clock in the morning.[35]

On the 1st of June one of the administrators wrote to a member of the Assembly, Delauney, on a victorious note:"We have succeeded in obtaining the oath from our Brothers... They are perhaps the only ones (of their Society) who have taken it.[36] He was, of course, boasting: Brother Damian had competition in Toulon.

Dominique Mamel's personality, like Georges Isnard's, gave a certain ring of sensationalism to the scandal of their conduct. It also provided a measure of the height from which they had fallen. The Bishop of Bayeux could not contain his indignation. Two months earlier he had been thinking how to secure the Community's future. On the 27th of March, when he thought he was in danger of dying, he drew up a will in which he set aside 40,000 livres for the Brothers' school. But the Director had handed the place over to the enemy, and,

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[33]Departmental Archives of Calvados, D, "Register of Admissions of the former Congregation of Brothers", deposited in the District of Melun.

[34]The report read "Regnauld", but he himself signed "Renaux". In the copy of the "Register of Admissions of the former Congregation of Brothers" (Departmental Archives of Calvados, D) Quillet's Christian name is Louis Caesar and not Joseph

[35]Municipal Archives of Bayeux, 1 D3 16, folios 5 & 6.

[36]Communicated by Canon Le Male, Archivist of the diocese of Bayeux.

what was worse, had conferred upon himself, a deserter, both its disposition and its use. it was an odious betrayal of Bishop Cheylus, who, forced to flee his diocese and France, wrote from the Isle of Jersey on the 1st of December, 1791, these vengeful words: "What has become of the school that we built with our own hands and which was so dear to us?...A shameful oath, against which the lewd lips of the one who pronounced it sought to reassure us, has turned it into a perilous benefaction and destroyed all affection for it in our heart.[37]

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However, the Community that was nearest in point of geography did not suffer contagion from the bad example. The Brothers in Lisieux bore witness to their upright intentions. In the General Council of that city, assembled on the 3rd of June, M. Blache, presiding in the absence of the mayor, spoke of the unanimous opposition that the Decree of March 22nd met with "from teachers and other persons responsible for public education". The city had requested them by letter "to appear in the parochial churches, at the end of the High Masses", in order to take the oath in the presence of the representatives of the Council. Nobody showed up. The Decree of the 17th of April, recently published and posted in Lisieux, made it impossible to accept such setbacks. On a proposal of the president and a motion by the attorney-general, the Council voted the following measure: A letter was to be written to those involved informing them to appear the next day at the city hall to take the oath. Failure on their part to obey this injunction would have the result that the names of the "recusants" would be sent to the Departmental Directory.

On the 4th of June Louis Joseph Ribout (called Brother Cherubin), Jean Louis Duchesne (called Brother Nizier), and Joseph Duroisel (called Brother Hilary), the Director and the teachers in the Christian Brothers' school, appeared before the Council. "Each of these gentlemen...in preambles" entered in "explanations" which expressed the desire "to add conditions" to the prescribed oath. Brother Cherubin placed on the table a letter which read as follows: "We, the undersigned, the Superior and the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Lisieux, in order to satisfy the demands of the city officials...swear to watch over carefully and instruct the children who attend our classes, with the same zeal which has inspired us up to now, to be faithful to the Nation, the law and the king, to support the Constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and approved by the king in every−thing that concerns the political order and which is not contrary to the rights of the spiritual authority or to the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman faith, in which we wish to live and die. Done at Lisieux, this 4th day of June 1791."

The four Brothers teaching "classes at St. Germain", Ansbert, Nizier, Hilary and Anthelme, and the two Brothers teaching "classes at St. Jacques", Roland and Osee, along with Brother Cherubin, their Director, signed this carefully considered statement, in which they affirmed their intense desire for conciliation and their purpose, which was no less clear, not to trespass the line separating political loyalties and religious disobedience.

The Council demanded that the men standing before them swear the oath unconditionally. But they "persisted" unalterably along the line adopted by the entire Community. Since the summons had failed, the fate of the schools in Lisieux became inevitable.[38]

At the same time a similar drama of conscience was unfolding in Dole. Both "non-juring" clerics and Brothers, who were confused together as clergy, received the order to adopt definitive positions by June 5th. Brother Barthélemy addressed the magistrates as

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[37] Written on the 1st of December 1791. Municipal Archives of Bayeux.

[38] Municipal Archives of Lisieux, D 63. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pp. 39-40

follows: “Citizens, you see me here obeying a man made law. But, in granting to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, I shall not neglect to render to God what is God’s.”He then uttered exactly the same formula that had been adopted by his confreres in Lisieux -which suggests that it originated in directives coming from higher up. He added: “I am prepared to teach these views to the children entrusted to me and to inspire them with patriotism and civic virtue”... A single Brother, Adalberon, disassociated himself from the rest of the Community. He was a native of Comte, whose family name was François Renel; his cousin, a man called by the same name, was a vicar in Dole, who would die on the scaffold on the 2nd of January, 1794. Brother Adalberon proved himself unworthy of a noble relative. Retained in the school after faithful Brothers had been scattered, he gained a reputation, even among the revolutionaries, for having an “unruly mind” and for being a “dangerous fomenter of trouble”. In what follows we shall have a word to say about his misadventures.[39].

During the same period the story of the “non-jurors” and “jurors” in Auxonne was being acted out in a very different arena. It provides us with an initial idea of the arrangements that some cities contrived to recruit teaching personnel after the departure of the teachers affected by the Decree of the 17th of April. The four Brothers in the small town of Auxonne, Brothers Hippolytus (Barthélemy Jacquot), Gonzales (Jean Baptist Poirson), Sergius (Denis Duvivier) and Jovitus (Nicolas Jacquot) were unanimous in rejecting the oath. Expelled from the school, they demanded, during the month of June, their clothing and other personal property, or the equivalent as indemnification. “Steadfast in their religious principles,” they wrote, “and unable, with their opinions, to submit to the law of the oath decreed by the National Assembly”, they accepted the “punishment levelled” against them. But they did not consider themselves rebellious, since in resigning their function, they were simply availing themselves of an option recognized by the lawmakers.[40].

The General Council had been taxing its ingenuity to find replacements for them. And it turned for help to some schismatic Brothers in the capital of the Cote-d’Or. Brothers Eustasius and Conrad, in a letter dated the 5th of June, promised to come to Auxonne with two of their confreres, “who have sufficient ability and who have taken the civil oath”.[41] In the end Brother Eustasius thought it better to hold on to his post in Dijon. In his place he sent Brother Adolf to the new Community in Auxonne and found two other collaborators for Brother Conrad in the persons of Brothers Cecilian and Vigor. The latter (Jacques Simonot), a young Brother in the schools in Dijon, had left the Institute on the 28th of December, 1790. Brother Cecilian’s formal associations with the Institute are unknown.[42] Neither of them, then, logically, can be included in the number of “juring” Brothers. Louis Saragenet (Brother Valbert) quickly succeeded his compatriot Brother Vigor: he had made his novitiate at Maréville in 1782 and was professed at Bapaume. He left Artois in 1791 with an obedience from Brother Agathon, authorizing him to return to his family to await better days.[43] He, too, was a loner, a vagrant who had associated himself with the “Constitutional” party. With all that, he was virtuous, and, indeed, edifying, as we shall have occasion to point out.

On the 28th of June Antoine Joseph Corette was elected by his three confreres as “Superior” of the institution in Auxonne.[44]

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[39] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1927, pp. 29-32, following the Municipal Archives of Dole

[40] Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4, copy of a document in the Departmental Archives of the Cote-d’Or

[41] Municipal Archives of Auxonne.

[42] Motherhouse Archives, Historique de l’ecole d’Auxonne.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Municipal Archives of Auxonne.

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Toward the end of the Spring of 1791 many local administrations intensified their zeal against the Christian Brothers. The Law of the 17th of April, publicized everywhere, tolerated neither procrastination nor exception. Indeed, in some places it was applied in the most rigorous and harshest manner. Some of its interpreters considered as "public functionaries" not only teach−ers in charity schools who, for the most part received a regular salary from the municipal budget, but also teachers in residence schools, who were compensated by the families of their pupils, and who, in effect, constituted associations for private education. Thus it was that the huge institution of St. Yon in its turn was exposed to attacks by revolutionaries. De La Salle's most important foundation, the site of the Holy Founder's tomb and for a longtime the residence of the Superior-general, St. Yon was not to be spared in the anti-religious turmoil. Its personnel proved worthy of its glorious past.

The report of a Justice of the Peace in St. Sever drew the attention of the District of Rouen upon the Community of St. Yon. The Brothers were accused of selling panelling and furniture to a carpenter named Desfontaines. They were, of course, attempting to accumulate some capital in anticipation of the worst eventuality. But in the eyes of certain jurists they were diminishing the value of a future national property. However, the matter was dropped for the want of proof: it simply served to set in motion activities on the part of the District, the Department and the Commune. "At all events, we regard it as urgent to ask the Brothers to take the oath", wrote the District bureaucrats as they forwarded the judge's report (23rd of May 1791) to the Directory of the Lower Seine. Vimar, the Attorney-general for the Commune of Rouen came to the same conclusion[45]

On June the 9th at 9 o'clock in the morning he came to St. Yon along with Martin Alexander Leguilliez and Pierre Nicolas Belhoste, city officials. They were escorted by soldiers. The previous evening, after an exchange of letters between the Departmental Directory, the attorney for the District and the mayor, the city's legislative body had deliberated. Leguilliez and Belhoste were commissioned to "receive oaths personally from each of the Brothers...in the language of the Law of the 17th of April last and of the Laws of the preceding 26th of December and the 22nd of March".First of all, they ordered the Brother Director to hand over the account books and a copy of the declaration of properties deposited on the 26th of February, 1790, at the former bailiwick. They then proceeded to the roll-call of the members of the Community.

At the time the Community was composed of a Director, a Sub-Director, a Sub-Procurator, two Prefects, a Secretary, twelve teachers, three Brothers in charge of the reformatory, two teachers in the school annex in St. Sever, thirty Brothers who dealt with temporal affairs and eight who were aged or infirm. These sixty-one Brothers, the largest group of De La Salle's disciples in the kingdom, came from the most diverse regions: but only three were from Normandy. Among the others, there were twelve from Lorraine, eight from Picardy, six Flemings, six from Champagne, six from Chartres, six from Comte and five from Artois. Paris, Touraine, Brittony, Bourbon and Bugey furnished the rest of the contingent. In the person of these Brothers the "Western" and "Eastern Provinces" of the Institute, and teachers trained in the novitiates of St. Yon, Maréville and Dole bore witness. To the "Circulars" and the confidential communications of Brother Agathon, to Brother Solomon's letters, we add this "report", dated the 3rd of June, 1791, which leaves nothing undisclosed respecting the names, the jobs, the ages, the birthplaces and the opinions of a

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45 .[45]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 565-566, according to the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine.

great number of Brothers; and we shall certainly be edified by the spirit and the attitude of the Lasallian Congregation at one of the most critical hours in its history.[46]

Only one of the Brothers at St. Yon was unable to reply to the commissioners' questions: Brother Dorotheus, teacher of arithmetic in the free residence school, had left a few days earlier for "his native Artois". None of the sixty called agreed to take the civil oath. Their statements, more or less brief according to temperaments and habits of speech, did not differ essentially. Signatures, placed opposite, guarantees their exactitude.

The odd thing is that it was the Director whose statement was the least clear-cut. Perhaps he was refusing to speak for the future. Perhaps his caution is explained by a desire not to compromise his institution's situation beyond what was absolutely necessary. For the thirty-four years he was a member of the Institute, professed with perpetual vows, Brother Aventine (Pierre Vaillant) never yielded an inch, so fiercely did he fulfill his responsibilities as a leader. Just over fifty-years of age, at the time, he was at the height of his powers and of his experience. "Regarding the oath", notes the report, "Brother Vaillant declares that it is not currently his intention to take it".

After him, his Sub-Director, Brother François, testified "that he was unable to take the oath for reasons of conscience". The Sub-Procurator, "formerly master of novices", Brother Alberic (François Pierre Sylvester), well know for his Treatise on Arithmetic,[47] defended his refusal in the following terms: "the oath seems to him to include something contrary to the religion of the Roman Church". Brother Mansuy, Prefect in the reformatory, and Brother Hermas, Prefect in the free residence school, both invoked reasons of conscience.

Thereafter, no order of precedence was observed before the commissioners, who seemed to have called, indiscriminately, teachers, old men, and serving-Brothers, although the law, even when interpreted in its most unfavorable light, concerned only teachers. We shall note, in passing, the professions of faith of some of the teachers. Brother Gerbaud (Sebastian Thomas), teacher of arithmetic and a future Superior-general, was just as resolute as his elder brother, François (Brother Hermas). Extremely modest and, after all that we know of him, concealing an intrepid spirit under a clumsy appearance, was satisfied to emphasize the essential word: "I cannot take the oath". Nicolas Bienaimé, teacher of writing in the free residence school (the Brother Philippe Joseph who could recall the exhortations of the pastor of Gigney) was equally terse: "He did not wish to take the oath". With slight variations we become aware of statements of personalities that are bolder and more lively. Brothers Salvator, Albin, Eustacius, Honorat, Hellier, Geminus, Waast, Hermon Aristion, Elisee and Sernin believed that, for the example of their colleagues, they had to gather all the energy of their determination in the briefest sentence. Only Brother Geminus weakened it somewhat with the addition of the phrase, "for the moment". Brother Eleonor (Laurent Gardiau), a native of Estavayer, pointed out that he was neither "irrevocably attached to the Institute" nor French -- valid reasons, in his opinion, for refusing to take the oath.

From older Brothers and Serving-Brothers we gather replies that are generally longer and also more touching in their candor. Brother Constantine, in his seventies, said that "his salvation did not permit him to take the oath". And his contemporary, Brother Gordian, stated "that he had vowed obedience, that he must follow his Director's example; that since the latter had not sworn the oath, he, Brother Gordian, may not do so either: therefore, I shall not

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[46] This document, preserved in the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, was copied and verified against the original on the 27th of May, 1862 by Brother Lucard and placed in the Motherhouse Archives, File Ha p-4. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 567, where there is a very disappointing summary of this most important piece of evidence, which suggests that the author could scarcely have examined it at first hand.

[47] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 529-530.

take it. The assistant Porter, Brother Nicasius of Jesus, "was not prepared to sign": we can imagine him uttering rather dryly these five words.

More conciliatory, and perhaps with something of a smile, the Brother Infirmarian, Brother Domingus (Jean Nicolas Hevon), came forward in his turn: "The National Assembly has, of course, done some good things, but it cannot legislate everything". He neither approved of, nor did he take, the oath. He was a man who refused to sacrifice the pleasure of a clear-cut conscience. The Brother cook, Theodore, was illiterate (he shaped a cross for his signature); the Brother sacristan, Vilmer, the Brother carpenter, Valbert, also knew to what religion obligated them. The Brother gardener, Simon Pierre, had his ready-made conviction: "The new Constitution is contrary to the law of the Church".

We conclude on a more delightful note: the young Brother Epiphanius (Pierre Moinot), "responsible for the linen in the free residence school", didn't think he was too badly treated in the distribution of work. He did not hesitate to proclaim that "he would rather loose his job in the Institute than to take the oath". Heroism can take many forms.

The Brothers who taught in the charity schools in Rouen seemed to have followed the pattern set by the larger Community at St. Yon. On the 5th of July seven of them appeared before the city officials to declare that they intended to withdraw from their institution on Rue St. Romain.[48]

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We return now to the Southern Province and the two small Communities of Crest and Mirepoix for the events of the 6th and 8th of June. The Community in Crest had two Brothers, Telesphorus and Aurelius, whom their pastor drew into schism.[49] Brothers Jean François, Pierre Joseph and Orens, who alone had remained at Mirepoix after the residence school had been removed to Carcassonne,[50]redeemed in Ariege the weakness of their confreres in Drome. They informed Mayor Gabriel Clauzel that "the oath offended their conscience" and gave him notice "they would not take the children to Masses" celebrated by "Constitutional" priests.[51]

In the Eastern Province, during the same period, the Brothers in Nancy sent a letter to the city government the text of which has been lost, but which certainly contained a categorical refusal on the subject of the oath, since, on the 15th of June, nine more docile "tutors" were named to assume the responsibilities for the schools after a solemn ceremony of oath-taking.[52]

On the other hand, we possess the correspondence and the proceedings regarding the institution in Rheims. The direct heirs of the Founder in his native city, like the guardians of his tomb in Normandy, maintained the honor of the Lasallian Congregation. And the "counsel" the Superior-general sent them at the beginning of 1791 had not remained a dead-

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[48]Municipal Archives of Rouen, 72/3

[49]Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 338. The two teachers in the school at Saillans, in the same Department, Brothers Tranquillian (Antony Salomon) and Antony of Jesus (Peter Galeron) also followed the example of their pastor, Father Maurel and his Vicar, Father Menassier. The date of their swearing the oath certainly belongs to 1791, but the Historique de la province meridionale (Vol. II, pp. 327-328) gives no further details.

[50]See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 568.

[51]Municipal Archives of Mirepoix, Register of deliberations in 1791; Report of the 8th of June 1791 (Copy in the Motherhouse Archives HA n).

[52]Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pp. 146-147 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pg. 123.

letter.

M. Diot, the "Constitutional" bishop of the Department of the Marne, had been consecrated in Paris on the 1st of May. He announced his arrival to the inhabitants of Rheims in a letter dated the 7th of May.[53]For the Catholics of the diocese there then arose the question of supporting a church separated from Rome. The Religious Communities openly indicated their intention of not recognizing the new bishop. It seems that, quite legitimately, they had formed the hope that their freedom would not be restricted. Indeed, the Directory of the Marne, on the 8th of June, had written to the Directory of Rheims concerning the "Sisters of Charity and other convents of nuns": "The failure to take an oath which the law does not require of them does not present the shadow of an offense...If citizens can be allowed the free exercise of religion, who can better enjoy this freedom of conscience, if not persons who are totally dedicated to the public service and the comfort of humanity"? Care should be taken that Rheims not "experience" scenes like those that "have disgraced the capital".

On the 13th of June, Mopinot, President of the District, his attorneys and the Attorney-general, drawing the broadest conclusions from these instructions, asked the city government "to take the necessary precautions so that religious opinion might be respected and that parents be encouraged not to demand of the Christian Brothers and of Sisters in orphanages" any duties except those to which their strictest commitments obligated them -- "i.e., to teach children to read and write...and to instill the first elements of religion". Parents themselves should take their children, or have them taken, to Mass, "in the way that is most convenient to them". The public had been made aware of these directives by posters.[54]

It was a ray, unfortunately all too brief, of understanding and wisdom. Even the Constituent Assembly had had one of these moments of clearsighedness a month earlier when it acknowledged that "non-juring" priests had the right to say Mass in "Constitutional" churches when it authorized, at least implicitly, "non-conformist" to assemble in particular buildings for religious celebration.[55] The Directory of the Seine was also compelled to adopt more liberal views. But the times welcomed no such practices. Revolutionary violence brooked no obstacles. It broke or it swept away men who, with timid and uncertain hand, sought to contain it. Among these "moderates"-for-a-day were tomorrow's fanatics.

The Rheims Commune, for a century, had rarely sided with the Brothers.[56] And it would not change its principles now that it found the Brothers among the adversaries of 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy'. On the 14th and the 16th of June it reversed the Districts' advice by suspending provisionally the teaching provided by both Brothers and Sisters. Did it believe that it was thereby going to bring them to their knees? Probably not, since at the same moment it was planning a competition designed to find replacements for them and anticipated, for those selected, the use of income set aside for educational purposes. Rather it wished, prior to the final condemnation, to force the intransigents to justify its decision, so to speak. And it obtained from the Departmental Directory the Decree of the 19th of June, according to which "the General Council of the Commune delegated commissioners to hear

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[53]Municipal Archives of Rheims, no. 202, f0 75, Municpal Council deliberations.

[54]Municipal Archives of Rheims, Public Education (1790, the Year III). Placard printed under the direction of the District and includes both letters.

[55]Decree of the 7th of May 1791. La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. I, pg. 432.

[56]See Vol. II of the present work, Part Three, chaps. i and iii.

the Brothers individually concerning the Law of the 17th of April last".[57]

The interrogation was held on an historical date, Tuesday the 21st of June, 1791, when Louis XVI's carriage rolled across the plains of Champagne, toward St. Menehould and Varenne, and the excitement surrounding that flight shook Paris and the Constituent Assembly. The extraordinary news spread throughout the Department of the Marne: Plaiet, Member of the Directory, and Roze, Attorney-general, on the 22nd went out to meet the king, returned to the capital after his arrest. The Rheims National Guard was mobilized to meet the melancholy procession at Chalons.[58] There is not a hint of these events in the report which details the procedures quietly pursued by "Simon Jean Baptist Oudin-Deligny, municipal official, Louis Felix Boisseau, Sr., leading citizen", and Pierre Nicolas Begin, clerk of the court, in the house on the corner of the Rue Neuve and Contrai.[59]However, transcending mere coincidence, we might view the prince and the Brothers suffering in the same cause: Louis XVI seeking to deliver his soul from remorse and from the slavery into which a schismatic Constitution had thrust him, while the lowly Brothers defended the integrity of their faith.

Brother Leander (Gabriel Cathala), Director, lead the municipal delegation to "an upper room", listened to the reading of the Departmental Decree, and, "having summoned several Brothers", announced that he was prepared to furnish whatever "information" was required.

The clerk of the court then took the names of twenty-one members of the Community in Rheims: Brothers Leander, Saturninus, Louis of Mary, Matthew, Procopius, Herve, Amand, Patroclus, Crepin, Francis Borgia, Maurice, Silvert, Exuperian, Emilian, Valentinian, Flavian, Flores, Edward, Theophilactus, Vivien and Adalbert. At that point Oudin and Boisseau asked that "those present withdraw"; and one-by-one they called "the members of the Community" to learn their intentions. Those who submitted to the Law of the 17th of April would be kept on as teachers.

The Brother Director and his Sub-Director, Brother Saturninus, replied quite frankly and without any qualifiers that they could not "take the oath". Eleven of their subordinates imitated this impressive brevity. Among them we might single out Brother François Borgia (Jean Jacques Jegadin), Brother Maurice (Louis Joseph Proisy), and Brother Vivien (Rene Gaudenne) who will turn up again throughout this account.

Brother Matthew (Guillaume Bouquet, Prefect in the residence school) did not part company with his Director, but he did leave some doubt as to his perseverance. He seems to have pondered that passage in the anonymous Reflections in which the author, addressing Brothers who were inclined to take the oath, appeals to them to postpone the step until the Institute shall have been suppressed.[60]

The clerk of the court notes that Brother Matthew "stated that he could not take the oath before the National Assembly had legislated regarding their Congregation; and (then he) signed". In nearly the same way Brothers Emilian and Theophilactus qualified their provisionally negative answers: both intended to wait until the Assembly had spoken concerning the fate of the Institute "before deciding" or "in order to decide" on the oath.

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[57]Municipal Archives of Rheims, Public Education (1790, the Year III).

[58]G. Lenotre, le Drame de Varennes, Mame ed., pp. 148-152.

[59]Municipal Archives of Rheims, Public Education (1790, the Year III), Report of the 21 of June 1791. Cf. Essai sur la Maison Mere, 1905, pp. 99=100; the paraphrase of the document contained in the Essay is misleading in places.

[60]See above, pg. 76.

Brother Theophilactus (Pierre Denis Vernier) added the following sentence, which sounds a revealing note: "but, at the moment, I am not ready to take the oath". The Serving-Brothers, Valentinian and Flavian, note quite correctly that the Law of April 17th does not involve them. Such, too, was the comment of a "certain Brother", known by the name of Adalbert (Laurent Perseval), a simple servant who had "never taught class", nor had he been "responsible for any instruction", nor, judging by the awkwardness of his signature, could he have been literate.

Finally, there were two old men who were forced to appear, Brother Amand (Joseph Sohier) and Brother Patroclus (Claude Mabille) refused to tarnish the last days of a meritorious life by moral weakness. Vainly, Brother Patroclus attempted to shape the letters of his name in the written report. "His great age and trembling hand" prevented him.

Overall there were twenty-one statements and twenty-one refusals of the oath -- eighteen of which were without reservations. At noon, in the face of this setback, the commissioners withdrew. During the afternoon of that memorable day, they were satisfied to examine titles to property and income and verify accounts. Their signatures and those of the Brothers Director, Sub-Director, Procurator and Prefect witness to the punctual termination of the proceedings.

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The preceding pages have perhaps thrown sufficient light on the state of mind and the reactions of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the early period when the laws concerning the Constitutional oath were extended to the teachers in the public schools. There was almost total resistance on the part of the large Communities, and total defection on the part of some small groups led on by ambitious Directors or badly protected against political or even ecclesiastical pressures. There were some individual failures or suspicious hesitations among the faithful masses of the Brothers.

The enforcement of the Decree of the 17th of April continued through the second half of 1791 and the first seven months of 1792, prior to the appearance of new legislation and the disappearance of the Institute. We must note in July 1791 the rejection of the oath by the Brothers in Nantes and in Condrieu, and in September by the Brothers in Dieppe.[61] On the 1st of October "M. Floribert, M. Dizier and M. Lin", Brothers in the school in Nogent-le-Rotrou, announced to the city government that "their conscience forbade them from fulfilling the formality of the oath". They were to be replaced by Citizens Martin Bordeau and Pierre Tortugie. The latter was no stranger to the Institute. In 1793, in order to obtain a pension granted to former Religious, he was to prove that he had been a novice at St. Yon and that he had taken at least temporary vows. But we do not know to what Community he belonged, when he was discovered by the people in Nogent.[62] On the 2nd of October the Brothers in Charleville made their choice, with only a single defection, Brother Hugh (Jean Alleron).[63]

The situation in Puy-en-Velay seemed less clear. In June 1790, during the inventory of properties, the schools were operated by Brothers Louis August, Jean Antoine, Palemon, Bernard of Mary, Secondinus, Evans, Nazaire, Pompey and Macedon.[64] The documents covering Le Puy, after that date, are silent concerning Palemon, Secondinus, Bernard of Mary, Evans, Nazaire and Macedon who (with the exception of Palemon) did not return to the Institute at the beginning of the 19th century. Bernard of Mary was no longer in the

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[61] Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4, and, for Condrieu, Cf. Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 307-308.

[62] Departmental Archives of Eure-et-Loir, L 20, L 151 and 153.

[63] Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 337.

[64] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for Janaury 1934, pg. 35; and Motherhouse Archives, Le Puy file.

Community in 1791, but earlier we found evidence of him among those who took the oath at Montelimar.[65] On the 8th of October of the same year the Departmental Directory of the Upper Loire allocated subsidies to Brothers Louis August, Rozier, Jean Antoine, Ezechias and Pompey in order "to return to their families" and to buy civilian clothes.[66]It might be argued on the strength of this administrative arrangement that these five Brothers, up to then responsible for the education of youth in Puy, rejected the civil oath at about this time. We do not come across any of them among the seven "teachers of the Christian Schools" on the payroll of the city in February 1792, three of whom (Brothers Nicanor and Nereus, and a M. Pascal) "had entered the Brothers in Avignon on the 13th of December 1787" and were certainly listed on the registers of the Congregation.[67]

Toward the end of 1791 Cahors dismissed Brother Étienne of the Sacred Heart, Director, and his associates, all of whom were recusants.[68] Soissons had long since thrown out its Religious personnel from the school that was built in 1788 by Brother Jonas. If we are to accept his recollections, the expulsion went back to the 1st of April, less than two weeks after the approval of the decree binding teachers to the oath.[69]However, it was only in December that M. La Porte, the inspector of the civil rolls, received a report "from M. Mairez, former Superior of the Community of Christian Brothers in Soissons", explaining that, since he lost his position for refusing to take the oath, he was absolutely destitute.[70]

Six of the eight Brothers who made up the Community in Amiens rejected the oath. The schismatics, known by their civilian names of Brother Poiret and Brother Coin, assumed the responsibility for the parish school of St. Jacques. The Directory of the Somme, on the 28th of December, allotted to them a personal salary of 400 livres. Jean Louis Poiret, otherwise known as Brother Barnabas, soon left Amiens for Montdidier, where the school had been totally emptied of its former teachers. There he renewed his act of adherence to the schismatic Constitution at the beginning of 1792. Still residing in that city in 1801, he certified that he had not "retracted any of the oaths required of him by the laws".[71]
There was a Brother Adelard, of Abbeville, who made the same statement.[72] However, in this school there was no "juring" Brother in December 1791, when the city seized it after the

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[65]See above, pg. 96.

[66]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1934, pg. 36.

[67]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 271-274.

[68]Letter dated May 29, 1809, National Archives F-17 453.

[69]The first drafte of a note for La Porte, National Archives, F-1 d II M-2, Mairez file.(Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1).

[70] Departmental Archives of the Somme L 419 and the Register of deliberations of the city Council of Montdidier. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 33, note #3.

[71]Departmental Archives of the Somme, L 419.

[72]All evidence considered, we deny that Brother Adelard was a "juror" stricto sensu. On the 25th of April 1792 Brother Agathon authorized Martin Charles Moreau (Brother Adelard), at the time "in the Community at Abbeville", because of circumstances, "to withdraw when it seemed to him the thing to do. (Archives of the Somme L. 417) In February 1793 fifty-two residents of this Department demanded the "removal" of a number of "unsworn clerics": the "school Brothers" Dieudonne, Moreau and Richard were ented as numbers 31, 32 and 33 on the list. (Departmental Archives of the Somme, "Second Bureau, no. 164", copy delivered by the Secretary of the Directory of the District of Abbeville)

Roman Catholic Brothers had been expelled.[73]

For reasons into which goodwill did not always enter, some local municipalities neglected, over more or less long periods of time, to administer the oath to elementary school teachers. Public opinion and family spoke louder than the law. We shall see that in rare instances this silence could shelter the conscience of many Religious. Elsewhere, when extremists got the upper hand, the Brothers were finally forced to choose. If a difference of opinion existed among the bureaucrats, the most violent outweighed the hesitancy of the others. How elude the injunctions of the letter of the law without sacrificing one's popularity, official honors and vested interests?

On the 6th of February, 1791, in Moulins the Attorney-general of the Commune notified the mayor that of the five Brothers in the charity schools he knew of "none that volunteered to take the oath prescribed by the National Assembly". At the time, the mayor gave him a deaf ear. Three months later the Attorney-general renewed the charge. The Law of the 17th of April had been voted: he was insisting upon its enforcement. The city government replied: "A law cannot be executed until it is published by reading, posting and registering". As soon as these formalities were satisfied, action would follow promptly. This eagerness, however, proved hollow; and the Brothers remained in Moulins throughout the whole of the year 1791.

It was not until the 9th of February, 1792, that the Directory of Allier, acting on the "formal rejection of the civil oath", ordered the dismissal of the teachers from Moulins. Four "juring" teachers replaced them, one of whom was Citizen Nicolas Allamasse, a former Christian Brother who left the Institute before the Revolution.[74]

In Marseille the Brothers' resistance was brought up before the Council of the Commune in a meeting of the 27th of March, 1792. There followed severe measures against the residence school that we shall have to explain.[75]

The story of the Brothers in St. Malo also deserves some attention, since one of them was an heroic victim of revolutionary persecution. In 1791 three Brothers, August (Jean François Dravenel), Monitor (Maurice Martinet) and Luke (Alexis Ville) continued to enjoy the confidence of the people of St. Malo. The Brothers were, according to the statement of the city officials at the meeting of the 15th of October, "men subject to an austere discipline, whose morality never ...met with the least criticism, and who joined to the detachment which their Institute made their highest law, care for the education of children". As a consequence, the Council, meaning to practice discretion, postponed the moment for injunctions and sanctions: "It would be quite difficult to find teachers who... were completely like them... When one removes a man to replace his with another, the goodwill of the latter must not make us regret his predecessor, since should that happen, people would think that the law that had been thought necessary was a bad one.[76]

In this way the will of the Parisian Assembly was quietly ignored by the Bretons. Not until the most serious events followed one upon the other and the legislature was nearing the

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[73]What is certain is that Brother Adelard took the "Liberty-equality" oath on the 10th of December 1792. (Register of deliberations of the General Council of Abbeville).

[74]Brother Gustave of May, op.cit., pp. 45-46, following the Departmental Archives of Allier, L 60 and the Municipal Archives of Moulins.

[75]Motherhouse Archives, HB s.

[76]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 592 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1910, pp. 7 and 8.

end of its tenure, did St. Malo yield to the universal impulse. And yet, within the city, like an unsinkable rock, there remained a center of unrelenting energy. On the 6th of July 1792 Brother August, Director of the Christian Brothers' school, along with the "professed" Brothers Monitor and Luke, addressed the mayor and the city officials in the following terms: "At all times your dealings with us have been a quite flattering testimony for us that the burdens we have borne to merit your confidence have not been in vain, and we find a new proof of this in the letter you have done us the honor to write us on the 4th of the present month. Gentlemen, if it were possible, we would redouble our zeal and our dedication in the accomplishment of our duties in order to retain your goodwill; but regardless of the desire we might have of obtaining that advantage, we, nevertheless, declare that we abide in our firm determination to contract no engagement except the ones we have taken on the altar-steps when we vowed ourselves to God, to procure His glory and the public good"...[77]

Two years later, Brother Monitor would seal this superb profession of faith with his blood.

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Is it possible to draw a final conclusion from this accumulated testimony? If it were simply a question of an overall judgment, doubtless the impartial reader would agree with us: in the confusion of the times, amidst the conflicting voices of so many clerics and Religious, the Christian Brothers generally spoke out loud and clear. Over against the monks in the Abbey of St.Wandrill who, following their Prior, Dom Jean Ruault, had, to a man, sworn fidelity to the Civil Constitution and declared their intention of abandoning their habit and their rule,[78]the sixty Brothers at St. Yon offered an honorable example. They and the vast majority of their confreres could not fall under the lash of Pierre Gorce's severe appraisal of monasteries for men. The Catholic historian describes in the following language the attitude of many monks immediately after the Law of the 26th of December, 1790: "...What was in ascendancy was neither fervor nor apostasy...For men, weakness prevailed over constancy ... Religious were questioned: in general, they answered neither 'yes' nor 'no'. They did indeed want to be tried, but not too much, and, in elegant language, they marked out with a sincere and quite human simplicity the line beyond which their courage refused to go.[79]

Even the reasons which determined the conduct of most of the Brothers who took the oath did not seem to derive from any base selfishness, nor from the quest for the goods of this world, nor from a desire for an easier and freer life. Their vocation as educators appeared (obviously, mistakenly and, perhaps, regretfully) more important than their vocation and obligation as Religious. The recantation of some of them, and the care these teachers took to preserve Lasallian methods, the teaching of catechism during periods in which cities still tolerated the practice in the schools, the dismissals which overtook them during the Terror and under the Directory because they refused to follow the patterns set by the Revolution, the steps undertaken by the most compromised among them (a Dominique Memel, for example) to return to the Institute after 1803, the contribution they made at that time to the rebuilding of the Communities, and, finally, the complete reconciliation of those who were in a position to resume the Brothers' "Robe", and their edifying deaths (others of them, who remained "in

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[77]The original is in the Municipal Archives of St. Malo, Series I, no. 263; facsimile reproduction, including signatures, in Bulletine des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1910.

[78] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 568, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine.

[79]La Gorce, op.cit., pg. 164. Cited in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 32.

the world" would make the same sort of end) -- these, in our view, are so many proofs of the innocence, if not the seriousness, of their intentions. Their courage forsook them when they had to make a choice between abandoning "pupils" and obeying unjust laws. They told themselves that to bow temporarily would not be so very shameful, since they would be saving the schools for better days. We shall find the same reflections among those of their confreres who, having rejected the "Constitutional" oath, were comfortable (and this time without dangerous risk to their souls) with the obligations and the promises demanded by successive governments between the 10th of August, 1792, and the Constitution of "the Year III".

In the light of these considerations we confess to being something less eager about marshalling the statistics for those who did take the oath. Such an undertaking runs the risk of being over-rigorous, in the moral sense of that term, while being anything but that in the mathematical sense. However, a conscientious scholar has already accomplished this task, using data supplied by the Congregation's archives as well as those in the public domain. He comes to a total of seventy-five "Civil Constitutional Oaths",[80] or about 12 % of the overall compliment of Brothers, at least as established by documents dating from 1789 and 1790.

Our source acknowledges (and we concur) that this estimate cannot be established on thoroughly certain grounds. We are without information regarding some dozen of the 116 Communities that were in operation within the limits of continental France at the beginning of the Revolution.[81]

Furthermore, the times and circumstances of the oaths are described with such imprecision that we cannot say without fear of error that we have proof for any given instance of adherence to the schism. It might well be nothing more than a case of taking an oath in favor of liberty and equality. Indeed, after a careful scrutiny, we believe that it is impossible to include among those who, strictly speaking, took the oath four of the five Brothers in the St. Madelene Community in Avignon,[82] two of the three Brothers in Chateaudun,[83]as well as Brothers Amos and Amable of Jesus in the school in Rodez.[84]

We must also be careful not to ascribe to the Institute's charge former Brothers called back into teaching by the cities, as we have already described in connection with "Brothers" Vigor and Vaubert in Auxonne. We must inquire whether the transfer of certain schismatics from one Community to another had the effect of introducing them twice into the lists. Thus, we cannot consider as "Constitutional" Communities either Auxonne (whose personnel was

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[80]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1938, pg. 38.

[81]Recent investigations support the conclusion that the school in Arras, for which Brother Agathon had done the spade work, was never finally opened. According to a letter from Brother Bernard, Director of Bapaume, to Brother Eunuce, dated the 4th of August 1788, the "start" of the school in that city was anticipated for the month of October 1789. The Brothers were "very much in demand" there. (Motherhouse Archives, H 17, "Historique du district de Saint-Omer".) Having evidently become precarious by the end of 1789, the project ceased to be discussed. Statistics for 1790 which refer to twelve classes and 520 pupils in Arras are, therefore, worthless. There is reason to believe that what was being discussed was not what actually existed, but what might have been the case had the contract of 1778 been allowed to take its normal course. There is no need to speak here, of course, of the schools in Switzerland and Italy. St. Victor's College in Fort Royal, Martinique, seems to have been a special case which we shall examine later on.

[82]This is what the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 34, note #1, following the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse, seems to acknowledge, after having advanced another opinion on page 32.

[83]Jean Francis Pluche took the oath on the 25th of October 1791 (Departmental Archives of Eure-et-Loir, L, 84), but his confreres, Barbeaux and Beauquesne, seem to have followed him only as regards the "Liberty-equality" oath, at the beginning of October 1792 (same source, L 25 and L 81).

[84]They took the oath on the 25th of November 1792, while Brother William of the Passion had submitted on the 18th of November, 1791. (Motherhouse Archives HA p 4.)

altered by Brothers come from Dijon) nor Pont-Saint-Esprit where, on the 9th of June Brother Mark proclaimed his distress to the District because the Community "had fallen off from its condition as a "juring" group purely and simply,[85] as he saw himself and his confreres replaced by three non-juring Brothers from Crest and Marseille--Brothers Aurelius, Jean Dominique and François Regis.

To the capitulations already noted we might add those of the Brothers in Damery[86] and Rethel[87]-- in all, six at the most; after which there remained only about twelve isolated defaulters in Agues-Mortes, Agde, Avranches, Boulogne, Calais, Caen, Carcassonne, Montauban and St. Menehould. Passing through this last city at a time which, unfortunately, he forgot to record, Brother Vivien met a certain "Director" who had remained at his post after the departure of the "non-juring" members of his Community and who had extended to the traveller the sincere hospitality of a placid and comfortable landlord.[88] The most notable instance of revolt appeared in a letter that a "Brother Denis" wrote to the Legislative Assembly. It was dated from Montauban, the 1st of December, 1791, although we cannot verify the author's presence in that Community at the time of the group rejection of the author pronounced earlier by Brother Zacheus. The writer praises the "august representatives of a free nation" for being devoted "to the defense" of the "miraculous Constitution". He pleads with them to concern themselves with the education of youth, with that "good education" by which "abuses and impotent fanaticism are reformed..." Protesting against one of his Superior's policies,[89] he asks that if the Institute lost its legal status, all non-professed Brothers be granted pensions. "They have the same work and perform the same services for the public (as do the professed Brothers). He continues (and his personal appeal throws light on the meaning of the brief):

"As for myself, I have been with this group for seven years...Since the beginning of the Revolution I have done all I could to inspire my pupils with a great love for the Constitution. I have explained the laws to them as far as that was in my power...For a long time now I have wanted to submit to the oath for public functionaries; but I have been unable to do so without immediately resigning from the group; otherwise, I would be laying myself open to all sorts of unpleasantness, both from my superiors and from other persons as well. In order, Gentlemen, that you may have no doubts concerning my convictions, I convey them to you in writing: I swear to be faithful to the Nation, to the law and to the king, and to defend the Constitution with all my power.[90]

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[85] Motherhouse Archives, HA n

[86] According to Histoire de Damery by Father Bourgeois

[87] John Louis Martinet, Francis Chapeau, J.B. Marchand (Motherhouse Archives HA p 4). The subsequent friendly relations between John Louis Martinet (Brother John Damascene) and Brother Agathon and the imprisonment of John Baptist Marchand (Brother Maximilian) during the Terror (See below, pg. 287) raise a question here. It is certain that the Brothers in Rethel operated their school well beyond 1792. But had they, like so many others, merely taken the oath of "Liberty-equality"

[88] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1 "Inventory" drawn up by Brother Vivien. Besides the Communities mentioned in this chapter, those in Aix, Ales, Bapaume, Bourges, Chartres, Darnetal, Langres, Mende, Mezieres, Millau, Montreal, Nimes, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Troyes, Uzes and Vire were invited to submit to "the Civil Constitution of the Clergy" in 1791 or 1792. Thus, we come to a maximum total of seventy-eight Communities distributed over sixty-nine cities. Further, it is pretty nearly certain that the oath sworn by Brother Gibelin in Carcassonne was an isolated gesture, subsequent to the suppression of the Community and, in any case, executed outside of it. Oaths by Brothers in Dauphin, Major and Aix are problematic. In the other Communities we have just mentioned the "jurors" are not named. At a more appropriate place we shall quote the splendid "farewell" of the Brothers in Langres.

[89] See below, pg. 191.

[90] Proces-verbaux du Comite d'instruction publique de l'Assemblee legislative, published and annotated by J. Guillaume, Paris, 1889, Appendix VIII, pp. 397-398. (Document in the National Archives, F-17 1692). The details supplied by Brother Denis do not allow us to identify him with a Brother of the same name whom we shall meet later on (Part Two, chap. iv).

"Brother Denis", who did not dare face the disapproval of his superiors or his colleagues, sold out his conscience in secret for a crust of bread. But we can easily imagine the disarray of young Brothers, less mean-spirited and less cynical, when they were tossed back into the world without material resources and without moral support. What they then did, they thought, involved nobody but themselves. And in fact, if they took the oath, not as Brothers but simply as citizens, we should scarcely have the right to include them in the list of the "seventy-five".

This, it seems, is the case with Brother Aretas (Louis Bleriot), after his return to Boulogne. On the 28th of November, 1791, Brother Solomon wrote to his sister: "Look at the faith that we can place in the young! ...The former Brother Aretas was so very sensible when he was here...And there he is today, a "Constitutional" and a schismatic in every sense of these words. My God enlighten and convert him"![91] The conversion would occur without the light ever having (as we believe) been completely extinguished. We shall meet with Louis Bleriot again, as the principal of a secondary school in which religious instruction was provided and religious services celebrated.

Others sank more deeply into difficulty. Thus, Bleriot's compatriot, Jean Louis Leroy (Brother Mamert), who was the second native of Boulogne to deceive the hopes of Nicolas Le Clercq. The "Constitutional" bishop of Pas-de-Calais, Porion, accepted him into the ranks of the clergy, and, in spite of a notoriously inadequate preparation, ordained him.[92] In similar circumstances, two other former Brothers, according to Lucard, became priests in the diocese of Aude. The notes of La Porte, the first Bishop of Carcassonne after the Concordat, confirms the historian's testimony for only one of these: "Jubelin", a Brother before the Revolution, was slack enough to permit himself to be ordained by Bezaucele, the "Constitutional" bishop. He realized his mistake in '94 or '95. For a long time he had performed no functions; extreme poverty, he said, forced him to resume them in spite of his conscience. He had hardly begun when he came and threw himself at my feet, pronounced his retraction, accepted a few months' penance, and I allowed him to say Mass. He is at Montseret, where he serves as an assistant. He is pious and has excellent manners, but he is fickle.[93]

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[91] Motherhouse Archives, R-2. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 338, note #2. "Aretas" was indeed Louis Bleriot's religious name, and not "Azetas" (St. Yon Register, pg. 192).

[92] Lucien Misermont, Le Serment a la Constitution civil du clerge ...Paris, 1917, pg. 112 (following a document in the National Archives, AF IV, 1911). John Louis Leroy, born in Boulogne, in St. Joseph's parish, on the 13th of December 1767 is the last Brother list in the St. Yon Catalogue. He entered the Institute on the 19th of January 1790.

[93] Copy of the document kindly sent by Mgr. Riviere, Vicar-general of Carcassonne, December 1938. Brother Lucard's Annales, Vol. II, pg. 580, note #2, represents Bishop La Porte's evaluation in the following terms: "Good priests (in the plural), full of zeal. While their theological knowledge may not be up to the level of their calling, they make up for their lack of knowledge by their piety and they do a great deal of good in the parishes." The text seems to have been severely "strained" Further research, due both to the kindness of Mgr. Riviere and of the Brother Archivist at the Motherhouse in Rome, who completed the work, enables us to add some details. In two lists of priest in the Narbonne region there are the following entries: "Jubelin, good habits, little learning, took oath and retracted, is at Montseret. (1st list). Gibelin, residing in Montseret: has good habits, a simple man who has little learning. (2nd list) (Montseret was was a dependency of the Deanery of lesignan). Further, the man in question signed a declaration in which clerics of the diocese testified to their submission to the Church and the government after the Concordat. He signed, "Gibelin, priest at Montseret". His name then was really Gibelin and not Jubelin. The Institute's admission registers declares that "Michael Gibelin, Brother Gregory, born in Alais on the 5th (or 7th) of December 1755" had "entered on the 22nd of August 1771, that he made triennial vows on the 3rd of October 1773, that "his vows having expired on the 14th of January 1781...he left from Uzes, (and that) "he reentered the same month of the same year". The account books, called "Board for Novices", informs us that he had been granted six ecus on the 13th of February 1781 "for the return of the former Brother Gregory, Michael Gibelin, from Alais". (If this time he remained in the Institute, it was not under the same Religious name, since John Tessier, from Aigues-Mortes received the name of Brother Gregory on the 2nd of July 1783). Bishop La Porte was right when he characterized this "simple" man as "fickle" who, in his various metamorphoses, did not take the time to get an education!

The account of Brother Genet's retraction, preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, suggests a Brother who yielded only at a very late date and his guilt is perhaps exaggerated, if the oath which he was obliged to take did not explicitly include a schismatic declaration. It is true that cities were continuing to require adherence to "the Civil Constitution" long after 1792.

From Avignon Brother Genet sent "to the mayor and the city officials of the Commune of Aigues-Mortes", on the 4th of October, 1795, the following humble confession: "...Urged by an ardent desire to restore calm and tranquility to my soul, disturbed with remorse for having, in a moment of fear when I was in prison, taken the civil oath, and convinced that I cannot be restored without retracting this oath, by these presents I do so retract it (through the good offices of my confessor) with the promise that I shall repeat it in person and in the presence of the city authorities when circumstances permit.[94]

"Throughout the entire Institute of the Brothers only three or four members took the oath."[95]Brother Luccard's triumphant assertion in his Annals is not borne out by the test of history. Indeed, its improbability leaps to the attention of the least well-informed person. Brother Paul Joseph, in his *Essay on the Mother House*, ventured to propose different figures: "Out of the eight-hundred Brothers to whom the oath was administered", he writes, "twelve or fifteen were so weak as to submit to it."[96] A great religious family, not wanting for a genuine reputation, does not need to surround itself with fables. "To assume that no one succumbed to temptation is to suppose a rare and pretty nearly impossible state of perfection."[97] On the strength of this principle and authorized by Superiors who knew that their Congregation, as born of the Church, had nothing to fear from the truth, the Editor-in-Chief of the Christian Brothers' Bulletin undertook the honest research demanded by the circumstances. We have accompanied him on the paths that he has taken and we have also explored the adjoining territory. On the whole, our conclusions agree with his. For reasons that we have already suggested, our own are somewhat less harsh. It has seemed necessary that we temper our findings with exceptions, indeed, with excuses, and go on to make partial revisions. We have especially striven to set up sharper distinctions between differing lines of conduct by detailing the circumstances in which they occurred and by providing textual evidence. We have excluded oaths that cannot certainly be identified, or without exaggeration be placed on the same footing, with the schismatic declaration. In this way, our study (as can be seen) deals with hardly more than fifty "jurors". No more than our predecessors, we do not pretend to offer precise details. Accounts of this sort are not drawn up like financial statements. We are talking about people, and latitude must be left for qualitative evaluations. Furthermore, scholars will continue to uncover unpublished documents in archives. However, we do not think that judgments on essential points will be profoundly altered.[98]

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[94]Motherhouse Archives, HA n. The document is not signed. It concludes with the remark: "Done at Aigues-Mortes, on the 4th of April 1795", which seems to be the place and the date of the retraction in the presence of a confessor. Someone named Tessier (doubtlessly Brother Gregory, from Aigues-Mortes) wrote at the bottom of the paper: "Dear Brother Genet was the last of the Community to teach in this city because of the suppression of the Institute by the Revolution of 1789". Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 580, note #2 and Chassagnon, pg. 338, note #2.)

[95]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 580.

[96]Op.cit., pg. 98. The figure of 800 Brothers is quite exaggerated, since (as we have already said and repeat) a good number of the Communities eluded the obligation of the oath.

[97]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 31

[98]It must be further noted that the term "Brother" employed in some documents does not always apply to the members of the Lasallian Institute, but to lay-Brothers of other Religious Orders. As a consequence statistics may be misleading.

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And, then, too, we run the risk of creating false impressions by remaining silent concerning the very special situation of the Christian Brothers in a number of French cities. We have seen that in Noyen and in Laon, for example, the rejection of the oath and a complete break with parishes (when these fell into the hands of "Constitutional" clergy) did not bring about the closing of schools. Sometimes the cities preferred officially to ignore the Brothers' passive resistance.

It even happened that "arrangements" were planned. On the 15th of December the Assembly of the Commune of Ardres adopted the following resolution: "In the operation of his school Brother Paulinus will name as assistant a person, either of his own Order, or anybody else he may wish, with the exclusive responsibility of instructing the children in the principles of honor and loyalty that citizens owe to their nation; without, however, they themselves being disturbed in their religious views, provided that public demonstrations do not disturb the public order. As a consequence, they will refrain from speaking to the children in a way opposed to 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy' and inculcate in them a respect for and obedience to the established authorities. An usher, selected by the city, would take his place among the pupils during Mass: in this way Brother Paulinus and his assistant would be dispensed from attending services conducted by a "juring" pastor; but the decree forbade them from taking their pupils to "non-juring" priests.[99]

Such a resolution suggests that officials did not insist on obtaining the oath required by the Law of March 22nd from individuals bound to it, even though the former may have pretended to do so. Elsewhere, there was clearly no question of forcing consciences: the town of Vans, thoroughly recovered from its former Calvinist ardor, merely forbad its teachers to dispense any anti-constitutional propaganda.[100] In February 1792 the superintendents of the Commune discovered a pamphlet entitled *Principles of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church for the Use of the Faithful in Times of Schism and Persecution* in the hands of some school children. The City Council demanded an explanation from Brothers Eucher de Marie and Pierre Celestin. The two teachers replied, shakily, that they bought the printed matter from pedlars and they distributed copies as prizes, as though they were holy cards. They got off with a strongly worded lecture and the confiscation of the offending pamphlet.[101]

Brother Pontian, Director of St. Marguerite's in St. Omer turned out more to be more daring: he forbad Bishop Porion entrance to his chapel. The city administration was satisfied to prohibit public worship in the oratory. On this occasion the Superior-general summoned the Brother Director on the 30th of June, 1792; and it could only have been to congratulate him.[102] No demand regarding the civil oath arose for as long as the Institute survived.[103]

We are fully informed concerning the policies of cautious administrators through the

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[99] Motherhouse Archives, HB n. Historique d'Ardres. Quoted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 13.

[100] The same thing is true for the village of Mens, in the Isere. Regarding the Brothers, the Municipal Archives does not mention either an inventory nor the taking of an oath. On the other hand, they do indicate the regular payment, every three months, of the salaries for these teachers until the end of 1792.

[101] Municipal Council deliberations for Vans (Ardeche), for the 8th of February 1792. Quoted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1923, pg. 124.

[102] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pg. 183.

[103] Blessed Brother Solomon wrote on the 28th of May 1791 (letter to Miss Le Clercq, no. 105, in the Motherhouse Archives): "In some cities, and St. Omer is one of them, the governments have promised the Brothers that they will not disturb them until a decree of the Assembly decides what to do with us, that the oath will not be demanded of us and that they will not require them to go to the parishes."

following report which the mayor and the city officials addressed to the District on the 5th of July, 1792 – "Year IV of Liberty":[104] "We have written to the Professors and the Assistant Professors in the University, and to the teachers in the College, to ask them whether they have obeyed the Laws of the 22nd of March and the 17th of April 1792. All of them, with the exception of Assistant Professor Le Bon, have replied to our letters...As for the Brothers and Sisters in the charity schools, we can assure you, Gentlemen, that according to the information we have obtained, it would be tantamount to destroying absolutely these public institutions to bring to the attention of the persons responsible for the direction of the schools the law which subjects them to the oath". The Brothers in the Community on Rue St. Euvertus in this way remained on the periphery of legal obligation until the events of August 1792. Their only difficulties could only come from their relations, in this case inevitable, with the pastors of a city in which schism seemed to have been seriously organized.

In Aurillac, Brothers Florentius, Wulfran, Odo and Ammian took advantage of the same sort of support, which however was purchased at the price of some suspicious acts of accommodation. Thus, the four Brothers participated in the celebration of the Day of French National Unity on the 14th of July, 1792, during which Mass was celebrated by a "juring" priest. They did not give up their school until June of 1793.[105]

Similar security was provided in Bourges and Ales. The members of the Directory in Cher, on the 16th of July, 1792, told the City Council of their surprise at finding the Christian Brothers still at their posts, although they had not taken the oath. "We are aware", they admitted with feigned forbearance,"that your many duties must have often caused you to neglect this point; but if you delay any longer to be seriously concerned with it, we shall have to conclude that you are openly sheltering men of whom the law disapproves".[106] Even at this date, the Brothers still appeared in public in their religious habits.[107]And the Brothers in Alès continued to be responsible for public education: it was only on the 4th of October of the following year that the city called upon them to leave, "since they had not taken the oath".[108]

In his "Memoirs" Brother Montain states that he rejected this illegal commitment, as did the other members of the Community in Chartres. And he adds that "this is what made the city officials peevish". Doubtless, the peevishness was shortlived: the people in Chartres, as far as they could, prolonged the life of the schools, which they had at one time welcomed with suspicion. Bishop Bonnet, of Eure-and-Loir, distinguished himself by his tolerance: he "left" the common people's teachers "in peace". They were not expelled until the 8th of October 1792 and immediately were taken in by kindly neighbors.[109]

The Brothers, considered as "public functionaries" and, as such, targeted by the Constitution Assembly's decrees, were secure for the time being from the consequences of their refusal or their silence only through the goodwill, the dilatoriness and the calculations of local administrations. Brothers in residence schools did not live under such tight dependency: quite properly they could deny that their teaching was subject to official control. It was, of course, the Letters Patent that authorized the opening of these schools and the assumption of

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[104]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, L, 463.

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[105]Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 292-297. Further on we shall return to the case of Brothers Florentius and Wulfran, who weere arrested in the Year II.

[106]Motherhouse Archives, Historique de Bourges, HB s 29.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Municipal Archives of Ales.

[109]Motherhouse Archives, HA q, recollections of Brother Montain (Brother Lucard's copy) and F J j, Chartres file.

the care of children and youth. But if not to the Communes, they were accountable to families. When the "free residence schools" began, there were neither "foundations" properly so-called nor financial arrangements between the Institute and the cities. De La Salle's initiatives, like those of his successors, were given free scope in this arena. And very far indeed from coming to their assistance, people in Rouen and Rheims believed early on that a part of the income that came from these famous institutions should be channelled into the elementary schools. As for the "reformatories" that were associated with several of the residence schools, they were certainly a part of the machinery of the repressive structure, the penitentiary system, of the "Ancien Regime". However, they were not included on the list of State prisons. In them the Brothers filled the role of voluntary guards in exchange for the king's support. And they were always ready at the pleasure of the civil powers to abandon this thankless task that was tacked on to their central mission.[110]

Simply because there was a difficulty in finding replacements for them, the Brothers in Maréville and the Rossignolerie enjoyed a relative calm during the first years of the Revolution. At both Nancy and Angers it appeared as though the Communities of the two reformatories would escape the obligation of the oath, as defined by the decrees of the 27th of November and the 22nd of March. For the same reason the Brothers at St. Yon, after a legally dubious interrogation on the 3rd of June, won a rather extended reprieve. The institutions in Montpellier and the one on the Charlemagne Estate in the outskirts of Carcassonne, both of them simple "free residence schools", did not seem to have experienced the anxiety endured by the Brothers in Rheims on the occasion of the "inspection" of the 21st of June.

More than any other institution, the Infant Jesus House in Melun felt the full force of the law. How was it possible to confuse a residence for Superiors and retired Brothers with an educational institution? Brother Solomon's letters and the account books reveal that conventual life went on without interruption, although not without some uneasiness. There, a "non-juring" priest, a former Carmelite, had for a long time been saying daily Mass. And the Brothers continued to wear their "robes".[111]

However, on the 10th of May, 1791, the Attorney-general for the Department wrote the mayor of Melun:"...the Directorial Assembly ...informed, Sir, that the Christian Brothers, to whom public education is entrusted in the city of Melun, have not yet taken the oath required by the law, has instructed me to obtain detailed information in this matter. As a consequence, I ask you to ascertain whether these ambiguous clerics have satisfied the law, as well as other people who fulfill similar functions in the city, and kindly inform me promptly as to the results of your inquiry, in order to put the Department in a position to make a report on this subject".[112]

The language showed malice. To speak of the Brothers as "ambiguous" was to suggest that, as neither clerics nor laymen, they were seeking refuge in an equivocal situation. And to press the mayor for a response was to suggest that his kindness to the Institute was suspect.

However, it was labor lost. The city did not alter its ways. On the 1st of June it declared that it was necessary to "await the law".[113]But it was quite certain that, prior to this

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[110]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 535-569, "The principal residence schools of the Brothers in the 18th century".

[111]Brother Solomon's letter, no. 106, dated the 22nd of January 1792. Motherhouse Archives GF a. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 348.

[112]Departmental Archives of Seine-et-Marne, Lq 1536; quoted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 108; cf. Luccard, Vol. II, pg. 580.

[113]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 109.

date, the law of the 17th of April, which imposed disqualification on "non-juring" teachers, was known in Melun. In context, what was in question was a legislative text that was in process of formation: we can assume with a degree of probability that the officials in Melun were alluding to the eventual suppression of "secular Congregations". As long as that was still to be determined, the headquarters of the Christian Brothers would enjoy the rights of an institution authorized by "Letters Patent". Its members were exempt from obligations that involved only College and University teachers. Three Brothers, of course, taught school in the city; but their jobs, at least for the time being, concerned the city too acutely for it not try to be silent about them and to include them implicitly in the general rule that covered their confreres.

Actually, there is no archival documentation to justify the allegations that were current at the time. The "Motherhouse" personnel could not have declined to take an oath that was not demanded of it.[114]As for the Superior-general, it is unimaginable that he would hesitate to return to Melun from Paris to give example and encouragement the moment the news came of a summons directed against the Community of the Holy Child Jesus. But we can find no trace of such a return. And the crucial indicator is the fact that Brother Solomon's letters, ordinarily so full of detail, are silent on the subject. When the advocates of the Terror wanted to strike at Brother Agathon they did not brandish peremptory, murderous laws dictated by the Legislature and the Convention against "non-jurors". They simply accused him of maintaining a secret, and therefore a guilty correspondence. But who, better than this courageous superior, the organizer and the soul of the Brothers' resistance, deserved the reputation for being condemned for rejecting the oath?

[114]These are the clear and convincing conclusions of the author of the articles in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 109. For an opposing view, but without supporting proofs, cf. Essai historique sur la Maison Mere, pg. 98 and Chassagnon, pg. 348.

CHAPTER FOUR
The Collapse of the Schools

In a letter, written on the 8th and the 15th of April, 1791, in which Brother Solomon reports his labors and anxieties working with the Superior -general and living in Paris, there is a statement which describes the situation of the Institute at the moment in which 'the Civil Constitution of the Clergy' was quickening the movement of events: "It is believed that the Assembly will be taking up our case between Easter and Pentecost. And there is little doubt but what it will decide for our suppression, which, by that time, shall have been well advanced through the dispersion of the Brothers in the various cities in which they are, and will continue to be, persecuted. Everywhere there is a rage against those who are called 'recusants'".[1]

These predictions were quickly confirmed. On the 27th of May, writing from the Rue Neuve, he sent off the following lines: "Here we do nothing more than occupy a house which is ours until the nation declares it its own...We have stopped teaching in Paris, Versailles, St. Germain, Brest and Amiens, because we have refused to take the oath and recognize the new pastors."[2] Overall there were already ten Communities wiped out.[3] Thus, the following day, Brother Solomon added: "some cities bring good out of evil...not only for Religious who are already suppressed", but also for the teachers in the primary schools. The secretary was referring to the happy exception of St. Omer, as well as the city governments which practiced similar delaying tactics. But else−where the "Clubs" vented their rage, and persecution brooked neither delay nor obstacle: the Brothers must "go".[4]

The death throes were preceded by eighteen months of suffering, repeated amputations, assaults upon the entire organism and slow torture. The Brothers were expelled: their educational institutions were seized for payments to be made to the teachers who replaced the recusants, or to "juring" Religious, separated now from their Superiors and reduced to the lay-state. To these partisans of the new order was awarded the income from foundations (and, more often than not, a generous increase) along with the "salaries" that contracts had guaranteed to Lasallian Communities. Gradually rents and real estate, which belonged privately to a still legally existing Society, were confiscated. City governments, as though fearing that their greed would be stymied, exercised a more than jealous vigilance over their impending inheritance. They anticipated their alleged rights of succession; and many of them simply seized what was handy or convenient. There were episodes of widespread looting which characterize revolutionary periods. The goods of this world must change hands without even awaiting for the law to moderate injustice!

Every day a fresh bit of destruction was perpetrated. A house whose inhabitants have been dispersed tumbles into ruins. There were those, as we have seen, who went over to the

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1 Letter no. 96 in the "family documents". Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 335 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 107.

2 Letter no. 97 in the "family documents", Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 335-336.

3 It should be recalled here that there were two Communities in Versailles and four in Paris (five, if the Brothers in Mount St. Étienne were an autonomous Community at this time).

4 Motherhouse Archives, R2, autograph letter no. 105.

enemy. But mostly people went into hiding or fled, while preserving, at least, the spiritual values, the honor of the Congregation, fidelity to a teaching vocation, and sometimes a religious vocation and the Christian virtues; and while collecting, as well, for personal solace and future restoration, the precious relics and the lowly mementos, the religious objects, books, paintings, statues, documents and the writings that derive from a Founder and his immediate disciples -- the quintessence of the common patrimony. Once under siege, a place knew it would fall. But it never dreamed of surrendering. Overrun, it continued to resist. At the principal fortifications the command stood firm, even though, as it happened, it was no longer in contact with all of its forces, except through some very uncertain channels. Its orders were still reaching the nearby islands of resistance, the more compact and stronger groups. And up to the very end it was assured of the obedience of its principal lieutenants, and it had its own messengers and liaison officers. Brothers Director came to meet Brother Agathon in Paris and left with final instructions. We have met with his secretary at St. Denis and at Versailles. We shall find the Superior-general hurrying personally to Rouen. These were fearful journeys for a man wracked with illness who, in the chaos of insurrection, in the disarray of hopes, in the confusion of communication and in moments when funds were running dry, had to resolve difficult matters, liberate uneasy consciences and put his hand on the least calamitous solutions. Meanwhile he attempted to make arrangements which spared the lives of the vanquished without dishonorable compromises. Once we have sorted out the plot of the story, we shall attempt to throw some light on the various aspects of this activity. For the moment our attention is riveted upon a most melancholy scene: - the piecemeal collapse of a century of educational progress, following, or nearly following, the refusal to take the oath. It was all the inevitable consequence of the battering-ram tactics launched against the Catholic edifice by the Constituent Assembly before the assault which, conducted by the Legislative Assembly, would bring down, in a heap with so much other wreckage, the final defenses of the Christian Brothers on French soil.

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For the closing of schools, as it was for the options regarding the oath, our task consists in following the chronological order in the style of a chronicle. As we turn the pages of the distressing calender we come first to Avignon. There seems little doubt but what, for several weeks, the disorders that occurred there went unperceived in Paris and in Melun. Destruction had been visited upon flourishing schools founded with the support of Popes; and the oldest of them went back to the time of St. John Baptist de La Salle himself. Calamities overwhelmed the Brothers in this city, the headquarters of the Institute in the South of France, and their Director, Brother Florence, even more wracked and ravaged at the end of his long life than he was during the ten years of his generalate. It was a drama that unfolded far from Brother Agathon and his aides, and in a region that had become prey to profound disturbances. Events here had paralleled the course of events in the kingdom of France. Indeed, in this pontifical enclave events followed one another at a more rapid pace and with a particular violence. And here the Revolution determined the fate of the Brothers without their Superior being able to consider intervening, or without knowledge of the details of the extent of the havoc ever reaching him.

Revolt against the authority of the Vice-Legate broke out in September 1789. And it turned into civil war throughout the whole of Comtat-Venaissin, while Carpentras decided to remain faithful to Pius VI, and Avignon demanded reunion with France. On the initiative of the Constituent Assembly a plebiscite was organized: 102,000 votes favored annexation, 17,000 were opposed and 31,000 abstained. However, Paris did not dare despoil the Holy See, nor trample common law under foot. Anarchy grew apace, and hatred gained the ascendancy. Blood flowed in the collision of adversaries, in assassinations and in slaughter.

Sinister brigands led by Jourdan, called "the Headhunter", terrorized Avignon. On a single day he slit the throats of sixty people in the prisons of the Papal Palace and stuffed their bodies into a hole in "the Ice−house". "Mediators" sent by the Constituent Assembly were partial to the demagogues. Having won another election in the majority of the Communes, they returned to the task of pressuring their colleagues to approve the peoples' decision. Three "Deputies from Vaucluse", on the 9th of September 1791, appeared before the Assembly: "Do not spurn", they said, "a hundred-thousand Frenchmen who are throwing themselves into your arms". On the following day, one of the mediators, Lescene Maisons, presented a dark picture of the woes in the Comtat. Annexation alone would restore peace. And, on the 14th of September, the Constituent Assembly, according to Jacques Menous, decreed that "the United States of Avignon and the Comtat-Venaissin, henceforth, formed an integral part of the French Empire".[5]

The last days of the Lasallian Institute in the City of the Popes coincided with these upheavals. The triumphant Revolution left Brother Florence with no hope of saving the schools. In the midst of dreadful events, he considered himself lucky to avoid the worst. On the 7th the city administration conducted an inventory of the Community's property. On the 15th the Brothers in "The Grey Penitents", the "Picpus" and the "Madeleine" schools were replaced by six teachers, some at a salary of 600 livres and others at 400. On the 18th it became the turn of the Brothers in the "Alms House". And in April it was necessary to arrange for the departure of the novices. Until further notice, the Director and some of the Brothers remained in a nearly empty building. Many expressions of sympathy from the population of Avignon continued to reassure the Brothers against the prospect of expulsion. And, vainly, on the 16th of November more than three thousand citizens petitioned the municipal officials to restore the Brothers to their schools. The Brothers were condemned to inactivity until orders came from Paris (henceforth the bureaucracy's capital) obliged them to leave the home purchased with their own funds in 1766, and seek asylum with their families or friends, and earn a meagre income from tutoring in the city. Before the final break-up, Brother Florence, mindful of the bonds that united the Community in Avignon with the one in Rome, sent Brothers Emery and Germier off to Italy. He provided them modestly for their journey and outfitted them in secular apparel. Thus, he contributed to the gathering of a handful of men who, snatched from the deluge, and meeting in the city sacred to Christianity, became the depositary of the tradition and the instrument of renewal. Brother Florence himself, along with his beloved Sub-Director, Brother Maurillian, in their old age and abandoned to the will of Providence, bowed before every misfortune and danger.[6]

The French Communes which, in Brother Solomon's phrase, were "enraged with the Brothers",[7]were less concerned with finding replacements for them than with ridding themselves as quickly as possible of "enemies of the Constitution". It made little difference that the children's education was suffering or that it was being interrupted as long as "principles" were being preserved. Or at least Brest thought so, and was delighted by the concurrence of their Deputies, Le Gendre and Moyot, now completely recovered from their recent bout of moderation.[8]. As soon as these two members of the Constituent Assembly learned the Brothers' position concerning "jurors", they wrote to the city officials: "It is pitiful that the "Ignorantin" Brothers have gotten into this quarrel. If we could overlook the fact that they are citizens, if there weren't a dangerous possibility of reopening the floodgates

[5]Moniteur, nos. 11, 12, 13, September 1791. La Gorce, op.cit., Vol., II, pg. 25. Rene Pinon, Histoire diplomatique de la Nation francaise, pg. 364.

[6]Bibliotheque Calvet, Avignon, Ms. 2494, Mr. Chambaud's diary. Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 167, 168, 172, 331. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1938, pg. 59.

[7]Letter quoted, 28th of May 1791.

[8]See above, pp. 53-54

of arbitrary authority, this would be the occasion, without ceremony, to rid the city and indeed the District of them. You have made up your mind to withdraw from them a trust of which they have become unworthy...[9] Thus, we have legislators who come close to lusting after a "despotism" whose harshness was not too excessive to punish the impertinence that disregarded the infallibility of their lawmakers.

The Directory of the District was not so fanatical as to refuse the Brothers their furnishings and their personal property. However, the schools in Brest were closed. The General Council of the Commune planned to reopen them, with teachers who were to be paid between 1,000 and 1,200 livres; and it itself arranged a program of studies and a minutely detailed schedule. However, the matter dragged on: by the end of September the Council was still awaiting decrees from the Assembly concerning public education, so as not to adopt incautious provisions or assume useless expenses. It wasn't until the 20th of October that it lost patience and decided at that time to select five new teachers.[10] For seven months the children had been without intellectual and moral guidance.

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Would the cities which withdrew the Brothers' right to teach in the public schools deny them the use of properties, even in places where, through gifts, legacies and perfectly legal purchases, proprietary rights had been obtained by the Institute? Would the cities prevent them from retaining, after expulsion, if not the school buildings, then at least what had been acquired for the use of the Community, when they could prove that they had purchased it or that they had wholly renovated it through their own economies?

In this connection the Department of the Seine contrived a singularly severe system of laws. We have spoken of how the Brothers in Paris preferred to give up their schools rather than be forced to "communicate" with the new parochial clergy. Furthermore, did it make any sense to talk about "voluntary withdrawal"? The Brothers had yielded to the threat of assault and battery. Besides, they had just barely anticipated the orders of the public authority: on the 6th of April, once the parents' denunciation condemning the "unconstitutional" conduct of the Brothers in St.Roch had been received, Bailly, the mayor of Paris, and Perron, the commissioner of police, wrote to the Royal Palace Section that it was time to "prohibit these schools until further notice".[11]

The Superiors did not think that a friendly settlement was impossible; since the Institute had not been suppressed, the Brothers, while dismissed from their jobs, were in no position to claim the pensions granted by the Assembly to former Religious. As long as the Institute preserved its legal existence, it seemed logical and fair that it be maintained in the possession of its estates, titles and equipment.

Hence, Brothers Perseverance, Abraham and Principe, in St. Madeleine's parish, asked the pastor and the churchwardens for restitution for furniture. "Only reasons of conscience" forced them to resign: "The well-founded fear of ill-treatment" caused "their hasty withdrawal". A report by Brother Philip of Jesus, the Procurator-general, seconded the request: contracts made with the cities, it was recalled, acknowledged the teachers' proprietary claims over the furniture after thirty years of use; further, since 1780, the Brothers

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[9] Letter dated the 1st of April 1791 (Municipal Archives of Brest, LL 46) quoted in the Ms. Historique des etablissements des Freres a Brest, deposited in the Motherhouse Archives.

[10] Motherhouse Archives, 852853, unpublished documents on the public schools in Brest.

[11] Bibliotheque Nationale, French collection, new acquisitions, no. 2666, folio 283. Quoted by Chassagnon, pg. 326.

in the Ville-l'Eveque quarter spent 1,157 livres for the restoration of old, and the acquisition of new, furnishings.

Informed of the matter, the Departmental Directory asked for a preliminary opinion from the city administration. A Commission called together for the purpose had no difficulty in agreeing on the decision of the 27th of May 1791 to the effect that, in virtue of the Letters Patent of 1724 and 1777, the Brothers had "the free use and administration of their property". But, it declared, these rights remained subject to the integral fulfillment of their obligations as teachers. And, as such, they took their place with public functionaries, and, as a consequence, were subject to the oath, which they rejected on the occasion of the installation of the new pastors, and they stopped teaching. Agreeing with the attorney for the Commune, the members of the Commission concluded that the Brothers' properties should be seized, "without prejudice", however, "to the livelihood" of the members of the Congregation.

The Directory's decree didn't come until the 2nd of September. It challenged the comparison of the Brothers to Religious who derived from the Law of the 14th of October 1790 "the right to carry away the furnishings of their cells and objects for their exclusive and personal use". Legislative silence regarding secular Congregations left the presumption that the Brothers in no way "shared" in this "preferential treatment". Moreover, "since the purpose of the Christian schools is the education of youth, the common good demands" that the former teachers be replaced in order to guarantee "the continuity" of educational "services". Housing and furnishings followed the fate of the schools and not that of the faltering teachers. The Brothers would be allowed to keep nothing more than their clothing and their "personal linen".

However, the Institute appealed to the Decree of the 28th of October 1790 (and ratified on the 5th of November), which delayed the sale of property designated for educational and charitable purposes. Since the National Assembly was maintaining the status quo in this matter, did it not appear illegal to deny the Brothers the administration and use of what still belonged to them? In response to this sound argument the Parisian bureaucrats modified their position. Earlier, the Brothers failed to qualify for the "privileges" granted to monks; and now, in order the better to oppress them, the Brothers were to be considered exclusively as "Religious"; and so they unquestionably were, "since they took vows". Therefore, their property must be auctioned off as soon as possible. Such was the decision of the Departmental Directory on the 8th of June 1792. True, it was the moment when the Legislative Assembly was suppressing secular Congregations. But its decree had not yet received royal approval. No matter! In order to put an end to the recusants, revolutionary zeal and impatience superseded irrevocable law.[12].

We proceed now to the dismissal of the Brothers from Versailles (as described by Brother Solomon), and Soissons (as made known through the protests of the Director, Brother Jonas, who had been reduced to penury), to the expulsion of the Brothers from Nimes, effected at the beginning of June 1791, and to the closing of some twenty other schools in the course of the next two years. Later on we shall point out some features of special significance as well as those of a general nature.

On the 12th of April 1791 in Bordeaux the Commune Council was "convinced" that "the Brothers had to be replaced". It declared that it was "nearly" certain "of providing successors at least as competent as they were as teachers" and "hardly more expensive". The matter was reported on the 18th of June by M. Crozilhac, who (we hasten to add) paid a magnificent tribute to the Brothers in the city's five schools: "The entire institution seemed ...to conform with the ideas that created it...The Brothers...fully justified the trust of the

[12]All of these documents are taken from the File S 7046-47 in the National Archives. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 586-587 and Chassagnon, pg. 334

Commune by their quite regular lives and by their most constant assiduity in their tasks, up to the time of the consecration of the Bishop (Pacarau) and the installation of the "constitutional" pastors...

The Brothers, however, stumbled in their refusal to recognize the Church's pastors. Ever since, there has been an outcry raise against them both on the part "of the law and of all good citizens". It has become the duty of the municipal authorities "to dismiss them", and to substitute in their place men who are determined to unite "knowledge and zeal for the education of children with an absolute dedication to the Constitution of the kingdom".

Less ungrateful and more generous than the Parisians, the people in Bordeaux allowed the Brothers to keep their personal property. Further, they guaranteed the payment of salaries for the current trimester and a sum "equivalent to a month's salary, for travel expenses".
The writingmasters got even with their competitors whom they had so envied. Five members of their guild obtained the Council's consent to teach writing and arithmetic. Reading and catechism became the perquisites of a former Discalced Carmelite, a former Franciscan, a priest and two tutors sponsored by the "Doctrinaires". The new teachers were allowed 6,880 livres instead of the 5,000 paid annually to the Brothers.

The installation of the "jurors" took place on the 1st of July. "Everything went well", the commissioners responsible for the induction of the new personnel announced to the Council. "The Brothers cooperated honorably in everything that was asked of them and they provided their successors with all the instruction and information they could have wanted.
Travel expenses were given on the 7th of July to the Director, Brother Louis. However, some of the Brothers prolonged their stay in Bordeaux until 1792.[13]

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This correctness and goodwill shown by the Brothers of the Bordeaux Community at a cruel moment when their lives were being shattered could not have surprised their fellow-citizens. De La Salle's followers had learned from him to join a quiet gentleness to their firmness. Once again they had given proof that political passion was no part of their inspiration and that they were exempt from obstinacy and pride.

But at Saint Brieuc, if their words have been correctly reported, the Brothers' humility seems to have gone beyond limits. Indeed, some of the things one of them said to his pupils sound very strange indeed; and when he was criticized for having ulterior motives, he showed a rather ill-informed conscience.

The understanding which obtained between the Brothers in Saint Brieuc and the civil authorities in 1790[1415] continued on into the beginning of May of the following year. On May the 7th the District received a word of thanks from Brother Furcy, the Director, for the settlement of an overdue payment. On the 19th the three teachers, Brothers Furcy, Gerontius and Josiah, informed the Directory of the Cotes-du-Nord of their rejection of the oath. They added that the city had hired them to remain at their posts until notified to the contrary by the higher authorities.

Indeed, they had not long to wait. On the 13th of July, at the recommendation of the Commune Council, which was obliged to execute the law, the Department arranged for the naming of new teachers (La Touche-Bourel, Bidan and Treguier -- a former Franciscan) who

[13] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1910, pg. 352 and for July 1912, pp. 287-288. Motherhouse Archives, file HA p-4.

[14] See above, pp. 39-40.

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took the oath on the 22nd of July and were installed three days later. It was at this point that the Brothers made their farewells. The report tells how the Director, as well as his assistants, exhorted the children to obey the new teachers. Brother Gerontius is reported to have said: "The law will no longer allow us to teach you, and in its wisdom, it has provided you with people who have a great deal of knowledge, and who will share it with you joyfully ...We shall meet again, I hope, at the end of the world". The pupils in each of the teacher's classes were said to have wept; and most of them were reported to have walked out of school as a sign of protest.

It is reported of Brother Josiah that he eagerly yielded his chair to the former Franciscan. "My children (he said) although you are losing me, you are getting a better teacher than I. Obey him ...do not weep ...let none of you leave class ...you would cause me pain." Did he wish simply to give a lesson in good manners and show that his young troupe was still under his control? The city commissioner noted with satisfaction that not a single pupil stirred. Brother Josiah's self-respect might have been better served by a more reserved and more honorable way of establishing calm.

Henceforth, La Touche-Bourel, Bidan and Treguier occupied the classrooms. But they did not take over their predecessors' residence. In his letter of the 19th of May to the Directory, Brother Furcy recalled that the house on Rue Vicariate (ceded to the Institute in 1746 by Canon Brohel) was "the Brothers' in fee simple until the National Assembly ordered otherwise". At first the administration did not contest the matter: and the Religious Community, in the company of two rent-paying priests, retained the residence. Furthermore, on the 10th of October the Department suggested that the city government consider itself the Institute's tenant in the use of the school building. Such a solution, however just, did not long prevail. On the 9th of December the City of Saint Brieuc declared its intention to expel the "unemployed" trio and their equally refractory guests, who were in rebellion against the law.

On the following day the Brothers were summoned before the municipal judges. Brother Director and Brother Gerontius repeated their rejection of the oath. Brother Josiah was satisfied to make a statement concerning his conditional perseverance: "Once his Congregation was dissolved and he was released from his obligations to his current superiors, he would do what he considered right."

The Council decided to grant each of them a bed, sheets and clothing. It prohibited them from performing any teaching duties (even privately) for as long as they did not submit to 'the Civil Constitution'. Quite explicitly it denied them for the future all rights over the residence. The position of the Directory of the Seine was henceforth accepted in Brittany: a teaching Congregation ceased to own property when it stopped fulfilling the mission which legitimatized its existence. And, at St.Brieuc the Brothers, as a consequence of their breach of civic duty, had lost their reason for existing. Had they not gone so far as to write "pamphlets inducing people to insurrection"? (A reference, perhaps, to some of the brochures which reminded Catholics that the Holy See and the Bishops had issued condemnations.)

Religious objects belonging to the Community (except a "consecrated stone", that Jacob, Bishop of Cotes-du-Nord had received) were deposited with the mayor's secretary. On the 21st of December, at the orders of the Departmental Directory, a check for "travelling expenses" was delivered to the evicted Brothers. The Directory, more sensitive to the "civilities" than the city government, sent the Brothers "to the competent court" for any decisions concerning the ownership of real estate.

Indeed, on the 31st of January, 1792, "M. François Maurice Flammand, also called Furcy, former Superior of the Christian Brothers" sued at law "the mayor, the city officials, and the attorney of the Commune". But the court did nothing more than sustain the action of

the political authority.[16]

In connection with the schools in Rheims we shall note similar discrepancies of positions and procedures between departmental bureaucrats and those of the Commune, without, at least as regards Christian education, any great success for the Brothers' cause. In the preceding section we described the generous policy of the Directory of the Marne, the resistance it met with from city officials, and which ended in the closing of the Brothers' and the Sisters' schools toward mid-June of 1791.[17]Even before the insistence on the oath, there were Religious who believed that the situation was hopeless: this conviction was borne out by the testimony which, on the 28th of May, Brother Vivien had the pastor of St. Pierre's parish, Nicolas Malherbe, write for him: "...Brother Vivien, member of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a native of Paris, parish of St. Gervais, called in the world François Rene Gaudenne, has for several years, fulfilled the role of teacher in the Christian schools in my parish with an assiduity and a zeal which have won him the respect and praise of the entire parish, as well as with gentleness and charity which have gained him the hearts of children and parents like;...the reason for his retirement is so praiseworthy that it contributes to the extraordinary value I place on this Dear Brother and to the regret I have in losing him.[18] Three weeks later François Rene Gaudenne was listed among the recusants. Following his example, others gave up teaching on about the 14th of June. Brother Leander, in his statement on the 21st, indicated to the delegates of the Commune the retirement of six teachers from the primary schools.[19]

After the report drawn up by Oudin-Deligny and Boisseau the authorities in Rheims could only become more intransigent. Noting the rejection of the oath, and alleging, besides, the "uproar" and "complaints" created by the counter-revolutionary doctrines of the teachers of both sexes, they confirmed their previous decrees: Classes would continue to be suspended.[20] From that moment several Brothers prepared to leave. Brother Vivien, surely a cautious man and careful to gather vindicating documentation, on the 27th of June stuffed into his pocketbook a second testimonial letter -- this one written by his Director, Brother Leander "in our house in Rheims, the cradle of our Congregation". There, "since the 16th of February 1783", Brother Rene Gaudenne has always fulfilled his duties...lived in an irreproachable way, both in his zeal for the education of youth, and in his attitude toward Community exercises.[21] On the 25th of July Peter Denis Verrier, Brother Theophilactus, received a passport from the city administration to travel to "his birthplace", Ouhans, in the Doubs.[22]

Nevertheless, the Departmental Directory was uneasy. Popular education was adrift. How could the Brothers be replaced, and how could their replacements be paid? At the

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[16]Documents in the Municipal Archives of Saint Brieuc and the Departmental Archives of the Cotes-du Nord, quoted in Cahier de Saint Brieuc, no. 445 in the Motherhouse Archives.

[17]See above, pp. 111-115.

[18]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Vivien file; document published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July, 1933, pg. 210.

[19]Municipal Archives of Rheims 1790, Year III, report for the 21st of June 1791.

[20]Municipal Archives of Rheims 1790, Year III, document 282.1, undated, (tuition-) "free schools for the poor of both sexes".

[21]Motherhouse Archives, Vivien file, document published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pp. 210-211

[22]According to a manuscript letter, dated "Vendemaire 3 in the Year XI", from Vernier, who had become Secretary of the Sub-Prefecture of Baume and who had asked for a "formal letter acknowledging his leaving a house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", in order to have the matter of his pension as a former Religious settled. (Transmitted by Brother F.M.)

headquarters of the Department of the Marne there were both legal and humanitarian scruples: nobody wanted to see the members of the teaching Congregations dying of starvation. And once their livelihood was secured, what was left of the available funds for the salaries of the new teachers? Always tending basically toward moderation, and faithful to the plan they had outlined a month earlier, the administrators thought that, on the 20th of July, they had uncovered a quite ingenious solution.

They were, they said, "profoundly affected by the current interruption in the public schools for both sexes, as much through the refusal of the teachers to follow ancient custom as through the erroneous application of the Law of the 17th of April last, of which they had "hurried to provide an interpretation" (admittedly, a broad one!) in their "letter of the 8th of June last to the Directory of the District..." It was a fine instance of distributive justice: the Brothers were wrong, in this view, while the Brothers' adversaries in Rheims were guilty of bigotry.

Both parties threw the Directory into a maddening quandary. Apart from the foundations which, for a century, had supported De La Salle's Institute and (for the education of poor little girls) Canon Roland's,[23] it would have been impossible to have maintained the structure of the tuition-free schools. "No law authorizes the disposition of Colleges' funds beyond diverting what is absolutely necessary for the livelihood of teaching communities, until the National Assembly legislates on their lot".

There was only one way of getting around the difficulty: make the Brothers and Sisters teaching in the schools, while dispensing them from the "constitutional" oath. Remind them (a thing that suited the taste of the times) of their vow "of teaching the poor tuition-free", and assure them, as far as possible, of the terrors of the law. This seemed to have been the purpose of the final preambles and enactments."...Such a populous city cannot be...without education for its youth". Neither "can" teachers of either sex stop teaching "without violating their primary vow". Otherwise, they will incur "the loss of revenue" and, indeed, eviction from their residence. (The threat, while significant, was still speculative; but from Chalons to Saint Brieuc there was agreement on this point.)

Nevertheless, the Directory of the Marne sought "to reconcile freedom of conscience and worship (decreed on the previous 7th of May)[24] with the obedience that every public servant owed to the law". It decided that "the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the Sisters of the Child Jesus" will have to "appear in the schools of the old and new parishes of the City of Rheims, on the usual days and at the usual hours, under the pain of prosecution as refractory to the rule and the vow of their Institute; (The juxtaposition of terms is marvelous. But there is more to come.) "...without being forced', the decree went on, "to bring the children to church," since this duty was not strictly "imposed upon them by their founder". And the city government was then ordered "to comply with the arrangements set forth in the letter of June 8th...until the legislature has organized the department of education. The schools must be opened on the 1st of August.[25]

It was, of course, a praiseworthy effort, but clumsy: the attitude of the people and the severity of the legislation doomed it to failure. Hardly had the General Council of the Commune taken in hand its headquarter's decision than it adopted a contrary position. And, in order to be certain of winning the day in spite of Chalons, on the 25th of July it appealed

[23] Concerning Nicholas Roland and his Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, see Vol. I of the present work, pp. 90-112.

[24] See above, pp. 112, note #55.

[25] Municipal Archives of Rheims, 1790, Year III, document 300.1. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1907, pp. 10-11, taken from the above decree (with a erroneous date).

”to the Deputies of the National Assembly: “The execution of the law which you have drawn up concerning the oath…has, in this city, encountered unexpected difficulties from the Brothers and Sisters in the Christian Schools…Every imaginable means has been used to prevail upon the Brothers to take the prescribed oath…It has been impossible to persuade them: they have declined it with in insurmountable obstinacy”.

The purpose in all of this became immediately clear: the Brothers on Rue Contray had to be seen as rebels, absolutely unworthy of being treated with consideration. We are indeed far removed from the wariness shown by the Chalons Directory. The eager revolutionaries in Rheims despised all half-measures or conciliatory solutions: contrary to every regard for poor children and their families, the Commune closed the tuition-free schools without awaiting the normal break at vacation time, because the least delay would involve the most unfortunate consequence! The Brothers and Sisters, who formerly brought their pupils to daily Mass, had “refused to attend the Masses celebrated by “juring" priests" or to bring their pupils to them. Hence, there were “scandals”, rumors, whisperings and the possibility of violence among the people. “Feelings were running too high” to hope that they might be “contained”.

How could one possibly think of returning these unreliable teachers to the classrooms? The people who were to take their places should begin immediately. True, there was a lack of funds. And it was agreed that the Brothers’ and Sisters’ institutions could not be “despoiled of their incomes”. Nothing could “be removed except what was intended for education”. And the financial situation of the city was such that it did not allow of an increase in taxes nor the raising of a loan. There remained the use of the surplus income of the College and the University. The Departmental Directory was opposed to the transfer of funds for the benefit of the primary schools. Let the National Assembly intervene and authorize the Commune to dip into the College treasury, if only for a few months.[26]

On about the 24th of August a “notice to the public concerning the reestablishment of schools” was posted in Rheims. It was more than six weeks since the schools were closed. The mayor had sent up a cry of alarm. Let “everybody who up to now has been dedicated to public or private education, including anybody who is deciding to embrace that profession” offer his services.[27]

On the 31st of August, the Departmental Directory capitulated: it allowed the city to appropriate from the general funds of the Commune “supplemental monies necessary for the operation of the schools”, on condition of subsequently balancing the budget “by additional assessments to be paid to the register of tax payers from landed and bonded taxation”. The Directory no longer attempted to rescue the Sisters, who, as regards the oath, were not “on a collision course” with the legislature.[28]

Presently, the General Council drew up a “regulation for the tuition-free schools”: it appointed the teachers, and it selected six “administrators” who were to visit the classes, at least every week, and to enter their comments into official reports. The Brothers were dismissed, but their programs, methods and text-books were meticulously preserved: “Speller, Conduct, Duties of a Christian, Civility , Psaltery, Small and Large Catechisms, and Abridged French Grammar”. And only the children of the poor had access to this education.[29]

On the 3rd of September ten teachers were appointed: according to information

[26]Municipal Archives of Rheims, 1790, Year III, document 300.2, meeting of the General Council for the 25thof July 1791.

[27]Municipal Archives of Rheims, file cited, document 346.2: “Notice to the public…etc., approved for publication, 23rd of August 1791, and signed: HURTAUT”. This document states quite clearly that the schools were closed for two months. (Cf. the contrary assertion in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1907.)

[28]Municipal Archives of Rheims, ibid., document 357

[29]Ibid., file cited, document 355.

contained in documents emanating from the Commune, four of them had once belonged to De La Salle's Institute: Martin Papillon, Lesage, Jean Nicolas Ferbus and Claude Thival. With the exception of Martin Papillon who, on the 12th of September, had demurred, they had all taken the oath. The Community of Brothers that had remained faithful turned over to the municipal officers the keys to the schools of St. James, St. Hilary, St. Timothy, St. Peter and St. Stephen and withdrew to the residence on Rue Contray until the final dissolution.[30]

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In applying the schismatic laws rigorously Rheims made it a matter of conscience to strike at the Brothers' economic interests. Meanwhile, Toulouse, once Brother Amand of Jesus and his colleagues had rejected the oath, was in less of a hurry to send the Brothers away than it was to reduce them to starvation. During the early days of July 1791 the Director of the Community wrote to the Departmental administration: "On the 16th of the present month, the Christian Brothers will be unable to continue their public instruction, because they have no funds for their support. Since Father Bernadet[31]has retired, he no longer pays their salary. Thus, unable to provide for elementary needs, they find it impossible to maintain their patriotic institutions, unless you condescend, Gentlemen, to take them into consideration and have them paid an annual salary of 500 livres in credits or 450 livres in cash, until such a time as your wisdom shall decide upon their replacements.

The Directory of the Upper Garonne sent the request back to the Commune Council. The city officials were very careful indeed not to grant salaries to recusants. Such was the conclusion of the chairman, M. Fedas, on the 30th of July: "The Brothers, doubtlessly impatient to test our patriotism and perhaps believing themselves to be indispensable to Toulouse, or deluding themselves that their dismissal would occasion discontent by leaving a vacuum in the education of the young, dreamed up the idea of asking the Department for a pension". It was enough to recall the Brothers' behavior "since the nomination of M. Serment, as Southern metropolitan". The time had come "to accept their resignation" and to provide their replacements. Fedas had no difficulty in obtaining his colleagues' approval.

It was the end of an undertaking which, two years earlier, had begun under such favorable auspices. In the 31st of July the seven Brothers, without funds and "without any hope of help", asked for their passports "so that each of them might return quietly to his own birthplace". "In their distressed condition", they were counting on travelling money, so well deserved for "the services they bestowed freely upon the youth of Toulouse". On the 6th of August they closed the schools; and on the 15th Brother Amand of Jesus left for Bourgogne.[32].

On the 21st of the following September the Community in Nancy was dismissed. As already described,[33]the capital of Lorraine had decided against the recusant teachers on the 15th of June. In order to replace them it had called upon the School Teachers' Guild. However, the residence, provided the Brothers long ago by order of King Stanislaus, was still occupied by the Community, which devoted itself to religious exercises while it waited for the fate of the Institute to determine its own suppression. It was a situation not unlike that of the Brothers in St. Brieuc, but with the difference that here the property belonged to the city. Since several classes were being conducted in the building, we can imagine the annoyances

[30]Ibid., documents 359, 360, and 369.

[31]The pastor of St. Stephen's who left for Spain in January of 1791.

[32]Brother Lemandus, op.cit., pp. 79083, according to the Archives of Toulouse

[33]See above, pg. 111.

that must have resulted from the presence together of the former teachers and their successors. Objections were raised: the Brothers, charged the new teachers, were continuing to maintain relations with pupils and parents; they were seeking "to insinuate" among the people who frequented the house their "erroneous and dangerous opinions", the effect of which translated "into disobedience and near insurrection" among the children. Clearly, Catholics were taking the watchword from the Brothers who had been pushed aside.

The municipal administration, informed of the accusation, did not seem to attach any particular importance to it. Nevertheless, in its meeting of the 15th of July it planned the departure of the Brothers, who were no longer able, according to the city officials, to lay claim to the use of the buildings. It became "immoral to support in inaction and idleness men, for the most part young and healthy", who were henceforth without jobs. The crisis came during the summer vacation: not only was the Community in Nancy expelled from its residence, but it lost its income. The landed property acquired with capital provided by Stanislaus and other benefactors fell into the hands of the civil authorities who set aside the rents from the property to defray the costs of the new public school teachers.[34]

The Brothers in La Meurthe had received permission to move their personal property; while those in Condrieu, in the Department of the Rhone-and-Loire, had left the region in July with a small quantity of money granted for travel.[35]

In October the recusants in Puy carried off "three-quarters of their salaries", clothes, linen and "nothing else".[36] Only two weeks were needed to complete the dissolution of the schools in Lisieux, but five months were required to clear away the debris. On the 5th of June 1791, the day after the oath was rejected, the Brother Director, Cherubin, told the mayor: "Sir, the threats hurled at us yesterday at the City Hall have so alarmed three of my confreres that they insist absolutely on withdrawing, in spite of my entreaties to detain them. As a consequence, they left this morning...If our services are acceptable to the municipal officials, on the conditions we have proposed...and we are paid what is coming to us, we shall continue. Please...let me know their intentions, so that I may ask the Brothers to replace those who have left.[37]

Was Brother Cherubin cherishing an illusion? No compromise was forthcoming. And what was left of the Community was not slow to follow the example of the earlier fugitives, Brother Nizier, Osee and Ansbert. On the 19th of June the attorney for the Commune, along with four distinguished citizens, appeared at the Brothers' residence (established by Bishop Condorcet); no one was at home but the Director. Brothers Roland, Hilary and Anthelm had departed that very day, without his knowing (or his willingness to reveal) where they had gone. His statements were made not without some hesitancy, since, questioned on the matter of linen and personal property which he was able to provide the travellers, he pointed out to the delegation from the city "that a father must not be required to testify against his children". Nevertheless, he did supply a very brief list of the objects taken.

He was asked if he would be willing to watch over what was left of the personal property and if he would, indeed, "continue public education in the house...until he was

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[34]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-et-Moselle, L 1490. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pp. 125-126. Chas. Pfister, Histoire de Nancy, Vol. III.

[35]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 307-308.

[36]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1934, pg. 36.

[37]Municipal Archives of Lisieux, D 63, autograph joined as evidence to the Council report.

replaced". His unhesitating response was in the affirmative.
He settled down, as best he could, to a sorry, solitary existence on Rue Bouteiller She He was still of an age (nearly sixty) and condition to teach. According to information originating from the city administration, he was supposed to have especially stressed arithmetic with his pupils. However, without security for the future and without assistants, time and work must have weighed heavily upon him. The officials in Lisieux lost confidence in him; and they opened a campaign to replace him with a team of tutors who would be inspired by the new spirit. Finally, on the 29th of August they proposed seven names for the Directory's approval. On the 2nd of September the District issued a favorable judgment. The Department delayed until the 19th before it stipulated that the teachers' salaries "could not surpass the total income" enjoyed by the Brothers.

Weeks passed. The time had come for the oath-ceremony prior to the opening of school. On the 6th of October the appointed teachers recited the traditional formula of the oath. One of them, acknowledged to be "quite competent", had once worked with the Brothers who (according to the city authorities) would have liked to have him enter their Society. The Commune Council thought only to congratulate themselves, so thoroughly "cheered were they by the defection of Brothers whose "principles" so little squared with French law. Brother Cherubin was warned to make ready his exodus. On Sunday the 23rd of October, the pastors of St. James, St. Germain and St. Desire, from their pulpits at High Mass, announced that "the new teachers' installation would take place" the day after next, replacing "the former ones who had proved refractory to the Law of the Oath". And on that Tuesday, the 25th, Father Bunel, the pastor of St. Germain, surrounded by his clergy, welcomed into his parochial church a retinue of representatives from the city government, the seven tutors and the schoolchildren. The *Veni Creator* was sung and the Mass of the Holy Spirit was celebrated. Thus, in the eyes of people inclined to be pacified by appearances, nothing had changed: the same pomp, the same liturgy had long ago marked the arrival of the Brothers in institutions founded by the bishops or by the civil authorities. On Rue Bouteiller one of the municipal officials, a M. Caboullet, spoke; and, M. Lecuyer, the dean among the teachers responded. Furnishings, instruments, papers, titles, everything, along with the house, was handed over to the usurpers. This transfer was effected without incident: occasionally a revolution dispenses with noise and riot. But when Brother Cherubin handed over the keys, a work had collapsed which would not see a new dawn until the next century.[38]

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In quick succession followed the fall of the schools in Albi, Cahors and Vannes. The Brothers in the Rouen Community, fruitlessly urged to abandon their Congregation in order to become municipal teachers, maintained their classes temporarily at the request of the magistrates. But on the 1st of November 1791 they were ordered to leave. The Brother Procurator at St. Yon sought to have them credited at least with certain rights toward a retirement pension. The administration "suggested that they petition the National Assembly". They got nothing but a handout of 80 livres apiece, with which to take care of immediate necessities.[39] In December Abbeville and Montauban, following St. Brieuc's example, usurped the ownership of the buildings on Institute property.[40]

During the same period the schools in Moulins were experiencing their final hour.

[38] Muinicipal Archives of Lisieux, D 63 and D 125.

[39] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for November 1907, pg. 386.

[40] Ibid., for April 1938, pg. 112.

This city had postponed as long as possible its parting with the Brothers, who had been endowed by Louis Aubery in 1710. Nevertheless, its leaders edged toward extreme positions. They refused any longer that public education should escape their control. The dismissal of the recusants was decided upon for the beginning of 1792. Armed with the decree of the Departmental Directory, the municipal officials ordered an inventory of furnishings to proceed in the presence of Brothers Roger, Bertauld, Leon, Savinian and Nabord.[41] In a review of the inventory, the authorities demanded the keys to the house, as well as the keys to the cabinet containing the deeds of title; and they went so far as to demand the "silver crosses", which were prizes for pupils.[42]

A petition was circulated among the inhabitants, which protested against the ingratitude of which the Brothers were the victims. Passed on to the administrators in Allier, it did nothing except stir up their hostilities: "ill-will", they told the petitioners, "has deceived the trust of good citizens".[43] The Moulins section of the "Society of the Friends of the Constitution" naturally united in chorus with the people whom it had raised to the pinnacles of power: It was not its fault if it was possible "to extort from honest, but misguided citizens an insidious petition", designed to "place administrators between the peoples' resentment and disobedience to the laws". Its position tended only to "turn the schools away from their want of patriotism and from their hypocrisy, (from their being) arsenals of fanaticism, where a desperate faction, incapable of affecting the present, attempts to seize the future and exercise its corrupting and poisonous influence upon future generations." The rhetoric was indeed Jacobin, but it fell from the lips of an episcopal vicar, Sebastian Dubarry, a former Father of Christian Doctrine and professor in the College of Moulins.[44]Less than three years later, suspected of "moderatism", he would share, in the prisonships of Rochefort, the captivity and death of priests and Religious whom he had attacked with his invectives. There, too, among the martyrs (whose cause is being studied in Rome) we shall meet with two Brothers from Bourbonnais.

On the 16th of February Thomas Michel Bazin and Jean Baptist Le Coeur, municipal officials, and Peter Soaisne, Attorney for the Commune of Vire, "set out on Grand Haut Chemin, armed with an order from the Directory of Calvados. They notified Brother Gordian of Mary, Director of the School, of the Departmental decision which expelled him along with his associate, Brother Cresent."[45]

Brother Gordian assured the civil authorities of his respectful obedience. However, he needed time: he was caring for ten resident pupils, and information had to be sent to their families. Besides. he wanted to obtain permission to remove the linen, clothing and furnishings from two rooms. Both teachers "were totally without income" and a long way from their native regions. Brother Gordian was thinking of rejoining his relatives in Doubs, in the district of Pontalier; while Brother Crescent had nearly "a hundred leagues" to travel to

[41] February 11, 1792. Departmental Archives of Allier, Q. t, 65; op.cit., of Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 60-63.

[42] Departmental Archives of Allier, ibid.

[43] Ibid., L.60.

[44] Departmental Archives of Allier, Ibid., L 831, provisional, meeting of the Society, for the 25th of February 1792. The references are Brother Gustave of Mary's, op.cit., pp. 58, 59, 64-65. The former "Bureau", founded by Louis Aubery, which had administered the schools in Moulins was completely stripped of its powers by the Departmental Directory on the 28th of July 1792, after the death of the Rector, Claude Coujard. (Allier Archives, L. 60).

[45] At this time there was no possibility of a third Brother in this school.

the outskirts of Soissons.[46].

The municipality probably did not appear cruel: but it kept the property, the income from which had supported the small Community; although it might have acceded to a very modest request. The exiles left Normandy pretty much like tramps, without compensation for their dedication and without knowing how they would gain a livelihood after all the years given to the service of children (The Director was sixty years old, while his assistant was forty-four.) And while they were poorer than members of suppressed Orders, the law provided them with no retirement pension.

The most flagrant injustice befell the Brothers at the residence school in Marseille. They were as conciliatory as they could be respecting people and opinions; and they trained their pupils to handle weapons in a way befitting young "patriots"; they contributed to the support of the national guard; and they paid their share of "voluntary" taxes. But in 1791 their firm position regarding "jurors" made them suspect in the eyes of their seething fellow-citizens. One of their former pupils, a M. Lieutaud in his old age told the story of how the revolutionaries, every evening, raised shouts around the institution. On the day the people learned of the arrest of the king at Varennes, the Brothers who conducted the resident pupils on their walk near the Carthusian monastery were jeered.[47]

Immediately, the Brothers began to anticipate the worst. Pupils of foreign nationalities left France. The Director thought it wise to set up stipends for his associates so that a sudden dismissal would not catch them by surprise. He began by dividing the cash on hand at a rate of 1500 livres for each of the finally professed Brothers and 600 livres for those with triennial vows; he then distributed the monthly allowances pro-rated according to seniority. Then, he awaited events.

Just as at St. Yon and Rheims, the local administration in the Bouche-du-Rhone, in the application of decrees regarding the "Constitutional" Church, did not distinguish between Brothers as "public schoolteachers" and Brothers as teachers in private institutions. Both the teachers in the schools in Marseille, living together in the residence on Rue La Roquette and the Brothers in the residence school close-by to St. Victor's Abbey since 1759, were grouped together in the category of teachers subject to the oath, and, by their rejection of that oath, charged with rebellion.

This is why, on the 27th of March 1792, a member of the Council of the Commune endeavored to obtain the disbarment of the dissidents. Since, henceforth, teaching was forbidden to the Brothers, the city administration made provisions for the selection of their successors. Thereupon it took possession of the residence school, prepared to pay the Congregation, "provisionally", a nominal fee or one fixed by the assessors. And the Brothers were called upon to supply a list of their pupils as well as the house's bank-books.

Brother Macarius, Director, in a letter dated the 29th of March, objected that the Legislative Assembly had not yet decided upon the future of the Institute nor upon the disposition of its property. In any case, nothing should be done without an order from the Departmental Directory. The extraordinary action of the Commune, along with the threatening demonstration of the populace, were disturbing to families; already, over the past three days, fifty pupils had left the school.[48]

Brother Macarius immediately alerted his Superiors in Melun and Paris. Brother Philippe of Jesus, the Procurator-general, wrote a letter, dated the 9th of April 1792, to Deputy Haudouart: Marseille, he told the latter, wants to confiscate our house. It was a

[47] These were the recollections of Mr. Lieutaud, of Ciotat, written in 1864 (when the author was 84 years old) and preserved by Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pp. 599-600).

[48] Historique de la province meridionale , Vol. II, pp. 179 et sq. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 601.

seizure, "obviously contrary to the Decree of the 26th of September 1791", which defended teaching Institutes until further notice. Saint Brieuc, Abbeville and Montauban had provided examples of such confiscations. If the Assembly persisted in doing nothing, not only would it be failing in justice, but it would be compromising the national interests. Indeed, the cities would become the mistress of properties over which they had no recognized right, and which, after the dissolution of the Religious associations, are supposed to fall under the dominion of the State.

The Procurator had hardly penned these lines when the news of the famous "Good Friday Session" reached him: the legislators had abolished all Religious Congregations. We shall recount the details of this day later on. The decree was still in its first phase, i.e., its acceptance in principle. Nevertheless, disconcerted by this dreadful blow, Brother Philippe of Jesus decided, for the moment, not to send his letter.[49]

From that moment the fate of the residence school was sealed. The Directory of Bouches-du-Rhone authorized an audit of the Brothers' accounts and the delivery of the account-books to the Commune's agent. On the 12th of May the Southern Departments Journal carried the following notice: "M. Charles Guinot, having been just named by the municipal administration as the principal instructor in the residence school that once belonged to the former "Ignorantin" Brothers, and free to select the teachers and associates required for a successful education, informs us that he will occupy the same premises.
The educational program would not be altered. Two days a week the priests in the parish and the ministers of other religions will be entrusted to instruct the young people separately according to their own dogmas and cults. Ethics will be taught to all without distinction."[50]
Thus, Guinot was prepared to transform Brother Benezet's and Brother Macarius' pious school into an educational experiment guided by the principles of "the philosophers". This odd undertaking did not proceed without conflict and clamor. The some forty pupils who remained in the school protested with the unruliness of their years: they tore up their books, smashed the tables and rooted up the trees in the garden. Their agitation, however, had only the staying power of a grass fire. The mayor of Marseille placed soldiers at the disposition of the new Director of the school, who, on the 16th of May, thanked the municipal officials for the "security" they had provided and let it be known that they might, without further inconvenience, remove the troops.[51] For the former teaching faculty it was a moment for painfully moving farewells. Two months earlier, on the 1st of March, it had witnessed the deaths of its "Deans", whose *Nunc dimittis* put the finishing touch on the brilliant and prosperous history of the residence school: Brother Genereux, former Assistant, in his eighties, and employed in the western and southern provinces of the Institute well beyond his resignation from the Regime in 1767,[52]and the convert from Judaism, Brother Dominian, who had been baptized on the 15th of August 1749 in the Cathedral of Marseille, with the name of Pierre Louis, and admitted to the novitiate in Avignon on the 26th of October 1754, had bequeathed to his Brothers in Religion the memory of his lofty virtue.[5354]

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[49]Motherhouse Archives, HA p-4, copies of Brother Philippe of Jesus' letter.

[50]Municipal Library, Marseille, file 1716.

[51]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 179 et sq. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 601.

[52]The date of his death, which is not included in the general register of the Congregation was supplied us by an inventory of the personnel of the Marseille residence school.

[53]Motherhouse Archives, Historique de Marseille (no. 38). Pierre Louis' (his Jewish friends called him Benjamin) godfather, a wealthy Marseille business man, named

[54] Pierre Gouffre, a former pupil of the Brothers' residence school and warden of the Confraternity of the our Lady of

The Director, Brother Macarius, embarked for Italy; and he brought with him the sacred vessels and the priestly vestments from the chapel. According to a tradition left by the chroniclers, his artlessness led him to be victimized by a swindler on board the vessel on which he was sailing. The man, dropping anchor in San Remo, told his passenger that he had time to visit the city. The Brother left the boat for a few hours, but when he returned, the vessel was gone. The dishonest ship's captain had made for the open sea taking with him the Brother's treasures.[55]There was some question as to whether the exile was obliged to discontinue his journey. On the contrary, we have reason to believe that he spent some time in Rome.[56]According to Brother Lucard, he was seen again in Avignon, where, under his civilian name, Pierre Bilhac, he is supposed to have made a living giving private lessons. This remarkable teacher, who had won such an extraordinary reputation for the residence school in Marseille, ended his days in November of 1794 in obscurity.[57]

Like him, but with better success, other Brothers from the southern province and from the eastern regions travelled to the refuge which Rome had thrown open to their fidelity: by sea, or on foot, by way of the coastal roads or over the Alps, as fugitives weighted down with little baggage and careful to avoid casual encounters, Brothers Esdras and Yon, as we have already pointed out,[58] opened the route in 1790. Other groups followed in 1791. Overall there were about twelve Brothers, among whom were Brothers Esprit of Jesus, Benjamin and Philadelphius.[59]And now, "beyond the mountains" there were several of Brother Macarius' former associates: the "instructor in navigation", Brother Guillaume de Jesus (François Marre) who, since 1773, trained future captains in the merchant-marine, teamed up with Brother Emery, the Director of the novitiate in Avignon, to take refuge in Rome; there they were joined by Brother Charles Borromeo (Étienne Laurent), teacher of geometry. There were also the Bursar, Brother Brice (Antoine Rambaud), Brother Candide (Jean Renaud), Brother Amedy (Joseph Antoine Elie) and the Prefect of the residence school, Brother Desire (Antoine Bourel) who, later on, would be accused by a former pupil of having taken the oath, although it is impossible to find a trace of such a lapse in the documentation, except a recantation extorted by an uproar among the resident pupils.[60] Brother Gontran, Director of the Community in La Roquette, Brothers Liberat and Claude, and a short time later, Brothers Gaetan and Louis followed the example of the courageous exiles.[61]

A different lot, but no less worthy of praise, was that of Brother François of Jesus (Antoine Cadoux). Former Sub-Director of Brother Macarius, he was already seventy-five years of age at the outbreak of the Revolution. He did not emigrate. But rather, withdrawing to the Department of the Drome, and then to Lyons, he pondered returning to the classroom as teacher and catechist. Providence would use the old man to replant the seed of the Institute

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Perpetual Help, was, through a deed notarized on the 19th of December 1757, committed to pay the Institute 100 livres annually during the life of his godson. (Letter deposited, according to the author of the Historique, in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse).

[55]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 678.

[56]See above, Part II, chap. iii.

[57]For Brother Macarius conslut the Index to Vol. II of the present work.

[58]See above, pg. 43.

[59]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 330-331.

[60]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 37, note #5.

[61]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 331.

in France. Brothers Patrick, Thomas and Severinus left the Religious state, but not the cause of Christian education. Of the curious career of Brother Patrick we shall have something to say in the sequel. Brother Laure, a humble serving Brother, returned from Marseille to his hamlet of Chaturagne, in the Upper Loire: once the worst days were behind him, he taught young peasants. One of his pupils was Matthew Bransiet who, as Brother Philip, became De La Salle's tenth successor and would number his former teacher among his most edifying subordinates. Finally, while Brothers Bienvenu, Eustasius and Marachius dropped out of the Institute (and out of history), Brother François Regis (Jean Pierre Barois) cast a quiet shadow. We glimpse him first of all, unfortunately, taking the oath, which won him a position as teacher in Pont-St. Esprit; he then redeemed himself by a devoted zeal, which landed him in prison during the Terror; dedicated to a family responsibility (his invalided sister required his presence and attention) he did not seek readmission to the monastic life; but with all his heart he layed the groundwork for the Brothers' return to Avignon.[62]

Thus, the Revolution scattered lives to the four winds. Hopes, resolves, plans, strong points and weaknesses, heights and depths -- everything was churned up, knocked about, confused and whittled away in the frightening whirlwind. Here and there one remarked the piles of dead leaves; and the heart shrunk at the sight of the broken branches. But one had to bend down and look at the seed, which the thorns had not choked nor had the heat parched. Tomorrow, the shoots, springing out of the good earth, would blossom once more. And there were words, clear-cut and courageous, which gave promise of the resurrection. We have already heard from the Brothers at St. Yon, the Brothers in Rheims and at St. Malo. We turn now to the Brothers in Langres. When the final decisions of the Legislative Assembly were about to strike them down, for nearly six years they had been operating a marvelously vigorous school. Their Director, Brother Rupert, with his intelligence and his resolute wisdom had won the commendation of the entire city. Canon Diderot, the founder of the project, had died in 1787. But his colleague, Neret, who survived him, spent a fortune on the schools, which, in 1789, taught more than 400 pupils: on the 11th of the month of March that preceded the opening of the Estates-general, the Bureau presided over by Canon Neret had decided, by an action taken in Bishop La Luzerne's palace, to increase the Community personnel by three Brothers. And the municipal administration "fully approved" this initiative.

The storm would have to double in violence before it uprooted the young tree that clutched so eagerly at the soil of the lofty hillside. But the fatal moment had come: Brother Rupert and his associates refused to be separated or abandon their work without having defended their action. Among their fellow-citizens they distributed copies of a leaflet which they entitled: "Reasons which force the Brothers of the Christian Schools to discontinue teaching youth". "The contract (they wrote) that we made under the protection of the law assumed the permission of our continuing on as a legal body, and the new laws are opposed to this. These same laws prescribed that we, as public school teachers, should acknowledge, under the law of the oath, a Constitution which abolishes us and proscribes our vows, which separates us from our legitimate pastors and which places us in a situation of recognizing as bishop one whom Jesus Christ has not given to the Church. It has therefore become indispensable that we resign our posts so as not to compromise our conscience. We wish everywhere to be true and loyal patriots; but also, true and sincere Catholics. Believe us to be such, O you who have welcomed us with delight, who have honored us by your approval, and have experienced, we hope, some sorrow at the news of our farewell".

[62]Motherhouse Archives, inventory of personnel at the Marseille residence school in 1792, and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 189.

"We have not changed our teaching" is the conclusion of this declaration -- as rigorous as a syllogism. Then come the "good−byes", as announced. Nobody was neglected (not even the "pontiff", nor the "founder" nor those who "cooperated" with him, nor the "magistrates", nor the fathers and mothers, nor the children. To each are addressed expressions whose somewhat conventional solemnity disguises a lively emotion and profound affection. To their pupils the departing teachers recommend that they love their religion, bishop, parents, the king and their country. In closing, they ask for prayers for themselves. It is a marvelous conclusion, with a simplicity that suffuses the whole: "Ask Our Lord, dear friends, that He grant the Brothers, your teachers, always to be faithful to their vocation, just as we ask the same thing for you, dear children, whom we leave with so much sorrow and only for reasons of conscience. We shall ask Him, all our lives, to inspire you with a sincere love for the faith that we have taught you..."[63]

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De La Salle's Institute was, thus, partially destroyed, some fifty Communities were scattered and institutions and property were confiscated before "the Nation", through its legislators, directly and finally, attacked the Congregation itself and before the "Regime", which governed the Brothers, ceased to be recognized by the civil powers. At the same time, the Brother Procurator General, Philippe of Jesus, had undertaken conversations with several members of the Assembly, which, as we shall see, were on all sides both courteous and well-intentioned, even though their effectiveness for the individuals involved could only tend to soften the backlash of the irremediable disaster.

In communities which endured in spite of the rejection of the oath or under cover of a calculated and (in the best sense) conspiratorial silence, city administrations and Directors attempted, in order to serve the people, to support the schools for as long as possible with the frequently precarious funds that they had at their disposal. It was the ultimate gamble of effort, dedication and patience, a painful advance along circuitous paths, endless, obstructed and strewn with pitfalls or hopeless struggles, when one emerged on to terrain selected by the adversary.

The Brothers in Laon clung to one of those rare sectors that was relatively peaceful. At first they prepared to withdraw, since, in May 1791, they petitioned the District to grant them a pension for their declining years, if "the plan for national education" banished them from teaching. The municipal officials pointed out that they "had no knowledge of such a plan"; and since the Brothers were going to stay in the schools, it seemed superfluous to consider the request.

Nevertheless, since the impoverishment of erstwhile benefactors, money was in short supply. The Community had recourse to borrowing, alms, and even pay for hire. It was suggested that the Brothers charge tuition -- "at ten sols per month"; but they refused to compromise on the question of gratuity. "We shall suffer, but we shall keep our Rule", Brother Leufroy replied.[64]the Brothers received from the city, which the Directory of the Aisne had left mistress of its own fate, a bonus of 450 livres. This "token of respect, in the situation in which they found themselves", touched the Brothers deeply. All five of them signed a letter of sincere thanks: "The unanimity of approval in their favor...roused their

[63]Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la Communaute des Freres de Langres. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 41.

[64]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for September 1908, pp. 300-303.
On the 11th of November 1791, six months after their conditional and restrictive oath,[64]See above, pg. 98.

feelings". Such "a mark of good will...will provide them with a perpetual reminder" to dedicate themselves with greater zeal than ever to their work as teachers.[65]

In the Department of the Aisne, which witnessed their work since the end of the 17th century, the Brothers of the Christian Schools were defended against revolutionary demands by the respect and the gratitude of the populace. Although there was the occasional fanatic, like the peasant Vigneux in Laon who took it into his head to insult the Brothers, the municipal officials dealt fairly with their complaints and compelled the boor to apologize. At Easter in 1792 the Brothers were still able to invite a "nonjuring" priest to preach in their chapel on St. Peter's Lane.[66]In Guise Brother Justin (Jean Balthazar Lemaitre) continued his teaching without serious interruption. He had succeeded Brother Victor in 1762 and looked upon successive generations of youngsters in Guise as his sons. On the 6th of October 1791 the Council of the Commune granted him a subsidy of 300 livres; and in the following January, to compensate somewhat for the loss of annual revenue, reduced to zero by the political upheaval, the old teacher was granted a supplement of 50 livres and six "measures" (more than 300 litres) of wheat.[67]

In Noyon, another city in Picardy, we meet once again with Brother Aubert, still at work with his docile crew.[68]

We know that St. Omer was pledged to allow freedom of conscience to its Religious teachers in their schools, until the promulgation of the law which abolished their Society.[69] We have noted the names of the various localities where, with differing shades of feeling, procedure and attitude, a similar tolerance reigned.

In Orleans, which sought to come to terms with the Revolution, concern centered persistently around the great poverty of the teachers. The new mayor, Salomon, submitting a report on the schools to the the District administrators, said that the abolition of income, once set aside for the tuition-free schools, put the Brothers in a most difficult situation. The Director, who had died in April of 1791, could not be replaced; and Brother Clair, the Sub-Director, assumed charge of the Community, now reduced to eleven members, and he himself taught the children in St. Euvertus' parish.[70]. In September Brother Clair drew up a disappointing budget for his institution, which "could not avoid contracting 1,265 livres of indebtedness". The receivership set up for the property of the clergy was deaf to all claims. Its lack of concern determined the Departmental Directory to intervene: and with its authorization, toward mid-October the District "advanced" the Brothers 400 livres "to pay (their) suppliers".[71]

Penury did not prevent the courageous group of eleven Brothers from welcoming, in February 1792, 1,280 pupils to the classrooms of St. Euvertus, Holy Cross, St. Marceau, St. Patern and St. Laurence schools.[72]Nevertheless, the future appeared so uncertain that, on the

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[65]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, Laon, no. 105. Cf Bulletin cited and Lucard, pg. 586; the latter dates the document under consideration as of 1792, which is inexact.

[66]Bulletin cited, pp. 303-304.

[67]August Matton, Histoire de la ville de Guise (Laon, 1897), Vol. II, pg. 668.

[68]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 668.

[69]See above, pg. 128.

[70]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 464

[71]Ibid., 468

[72]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 464, "Information concerning the public buildings in the District of Orleans", February 1792, "Ninth institution, Charity Schools in the City of Orleans".

previous August 9th, the Superior-general, in an "obedience" sent from Paris and countersigned by Brother Solomon, deemed it necessary to dispense "M. Étienne Benoist, called Brother Clair... professed in the Institute, which he entered on the 20th of February 1750"[73] from all residency obligations. The Director of the schools in Orleans, resolved upon the struggle to the bitter end, was in no hurry to use his dispensation.

The Brothers in Nantes could not, in their view, accomplish anything with the administrators of the city and of the Lower Loire, who, on the 4th of July 1791 agreed upon the eventual dismissal of the recusants.[74] However, the threat had been in remission for more than a year. A M. Joseph Henri Defargues, writingmaster, offered to substitute a "national school" for the Brothers' school on Rue Mercoeur. He described his "educational system" to the Directory of the Department. Without discouraging him, the officials postponed his offer until such a time as the Institute should be legally dissolved. After the debates which showed that the Assembly was ready to have done with the Brothers, the writing master returned to the attack. And, on the 8th of August 1792, the city government of Nantes "considering that it is urgent to provide for the replacement of the teachers, that their notorious want of patriotism and their negligence at the present time renders them dangerous and useless, granted its support to Citizen Defargues in order that he might obtain from the Department and from the District the use of the school premises.'[75]

In the South, where only about ten Communities survived of those which had not fallen into schism, we need to pause only over the curious efforts of Brother Bernardine. This Brother who, for twenty-five years, gave abundant proof of his ebullient vitality and enterprising daring,[76] directed the school in Carcassonne, after having given the impetus to the schools in Castres. He had with him Brothers Corentine, Sosipater, Privat and Palemon.[77] Concerned to save his school, even as he saw the Institute on the verge of dissolution, he thought to escape the common lot by carving out an independent existence. Without any doubt, we have to consider him faithful, *in intimo corde,* to his Superiors and to his vows. The future would show that on this point he could be granted the broadest credibility. But while he contended that he was uniquely responsible for his actions, and while he protected his school from interference at the hands of both the city administration and the "constitutional" clergy, would he thereafter be considered a "public functionary"? Such indeed seemed to have been the purpose that directed his action.

On the 1st of July 1791, along with his four assistants, he created an association which, to all appearances, converted all of them into lay-teachers, and turned the school in Carcassonne into a private institution. The Brothers maintained obedience to the Director within their residence and jointly controlled the linen, furnishings and money. Income was obtained from resident pupils; and Brother Bernardine was not without hope of receiving subsidies from the administration. If one of the associates abandoned the project, little more would be required than to provide him with travelling expenses.

But was the arrangement viable? Its creator might flatter himself that for several months there had been no reaction from the local authorities. (There are no certain indications

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[74] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 587, according to the Municipal Archives of nantes, Series BB.

[75] Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, L 608. According to the report prepared on the 23rd of January 1792 by Brothers Josaphat, Martin and Ireneus for the administrators of the District of Nantes, the institution at that time still numbered seventy resident pupils and 230 (tuition-)free pupils. Cf. Ibid.

[76] See the Index to Vol. II of the present work under "Brother Bernardine (Pierre Blanc)".

[77] This is probably the "Palemon" we met with in Le Puy in 1790. (See above, pg. 116).

of oath-taking nor of any rejection of the oath. And Pierre Blanc was not a man to compromise with his conscience.) On the 11th of October he welcomed into his group a Brother whose name was "Digne", a vagrant since the dissolution of the Community in Agde. Thereafter, he joined to the group a "Brother Marcel" who henceforth would associate his existence with that of Brother Bernardine.

However, the horizon darkened. On the 16th of January 1792 agents of the Commune wanted to affix seals at the entrance to the school. The Director objected and succeeded in maintaining his rights. The school remained opened. An isolated fortress at a distant tip of France, it appeared to be protected from more violent attacks. Not that enemies were unaware of its existence: but the intrepid Bernardine resisted them. On the 16th of June, in a letter to City Councilor Hurisson, he openly declared that he intended to make a public reply to his accusers.

He did not surrender his weapons until after the 10th of August, when the triumphant Revolution overran the last vestiges of resistance. But he still did not lose hope. We should be prepared to see him reappear at the first light, to stir up out of the ruins and to effect, with an ardor peculiar to his character and his way of thinking, the restoration of the Institute.[78][79]

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We have drawn attention to the special situation of the residence schools. Their teachers were nonetheless suspect: but in spite of everything the magistrates prolonged the life of several of these institutions.

In Angers, the Directory of Maine-and-Loire and the Directories of the District and of the city, in the public interest, thought only of steps designed to retain the Brothers, even in opposition to the Brothers' wishes. The three governmental bodies connived to this end on the 13th of April 1793. It was incumbent upon them to practice an alert supervision over the Rossignolerie. "Most of the families in the Department had children in that school". Besides, the "reformatory" residents involved responsibilities for the administration.

"The Brothers' behavior", however, tended to arouse suspicion. Obviously, the Brothers, "preyed upon by the enemies of the Constitution", were contemplating plans for departure. "Public outcry denounced furtive removals and clandestine sales" of furniture. "Such rumors seemed to gain support through the Society's surrender of similar institutions entrusted to its care throughout the kingdom". Supervision was necessary in order "to clear" the Brothers, "or in order to restore them to normalcy, if they have departed from it". Imagine "two-hundred young people in the free residence schools...without guides", without teachers? As for the individuals shut up in the reformatory, no one would run the risk of having them let loose in the region. Among them, besides, were unfortunates who had "become insane", and for whom it would be "inhuman to leave to die without help".

Commissioners, therefore, went immediately to undertake an inventory, to ascertain the condition of the treasurer's office and to secure the names of the Brothers and the residents. This work was completed during the night of April 13th-14th. A pile of "thirty-nine empty suitcases" alerted the suspicions of the official delegation. Brother Placidus of Jesus, the Director, questioned on the subject of the luggage, replied unhesitatingly that they were intended to contain the personal property of the Brothers who were prepared to leave the school if the oath was demanded of them.

"You cannot abandon your task before your replacements are appointed", he was told. The Brother Procurator was made responsible to the Nation for all receipts and expenses; and

[78] Lemandus, op. cit., pp. 129-130. Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 234-236.

[79]

Brother Placidus and his Council, composed of four Brothers (Cheron, Candide, Clair of Mary and Liboire) were asked for and gave assurances of remaining at their posts.

In the days that followed this procedure gave rise to lively discussions among the teaching personnel. Brothers Samuel, Savior, Symphorian, Romain, Evre and Alype insisted that the signatures of the members of the Council did not obligate them, since they were not personally called upon to express their opinion. Nor were they bound by their "simple vows", which the law did not recognize. In conscience they believed that they would be free of their responsibilities when the Institute was dissolved. Finally, since the teachers in the "Rossignolerie", received no salary, they could not be regarded as public functionaries. They based themselves on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in order to claim complete independence.

Nevertheless, their "temporary" cooperation had been obtained by the city administration provided that it guarantee and respect their religious convictions and the disposal of their property. A letter addressed immediately by the school superiors to the Departmental Directory confirmed the "tutors'" decision. Recalling that the Brothers' property did not fall under the category of Church property and raising once again the question of the oath, the letter asked the authorities of Maine-and-Loire to state their position as clearly as possible concerning support for "resident education" and the reformatory.[80]

Things went no further until the end of 1792. And it was the same in Maréville. The Laws of the 22nd of March and the 17th of April 1791 determined only the sending away of the novices from the great institution in Lorraine. Indeed, the Brothers had, as it turned out, quite uselessly trained young people for teaching, whose fidelity to the Church had rendered them legally unfit to function as teachers.

We possess an interesting statement of one of them, Brother Seine, "called in the world, Claude Bertin": "Present circumstance oblige (he wrote) that he withdraw from the Institute; but he would always be united in heart and soul with those who would continue to be members, even in foreign countries".And he promised to rejoin the Brothers, once the opportunity arose.

There follows the testimony of the Director of Novices, Brother Julian, dated the 22nd of April 1791: "Claude Bertin, born in Liffol-le-Grand, near Neufcha−teau in Lorraine, remained in the Institute for nearly four years as a novice;[81]he conducted himself well; he left as the result of the circumstances in which we find ourselves through the new French Constitution". This testimonial was "to facilitate his return, should Providence permit" the happiest of eventualities.[82]

The free residence school disappeared,[83]but the reformatory buildings continued to be filled. The Community, directed by Brother Jean of Mary, continued to be taken up with the insane and the "dissolute". Aware that it was indispensable, it took advantage of the tolerance granted it by the Directory of Meurthe. It welcomed hospitably many recusant priests. At the beginning of 1792 there were about sixty of these clerics at Maréville, among whom were several Carthusian monks from Bosserville. Masses followed one upon the other in the magnificent chapel, as well as prayers before the Blessed Sacrament, "which was never

[80]Motherhouse Archives, Angers file, taken from documents published by the Revue historique de l'Anjou.

[81]In virtue of the "Cirular letter" of the 23rd of August 1789, Brother Seine could not have taken vows.

[82]Motherhouse Archives, file HA p 4.

[83]4

without worshippers".[84]Such hospitality, natural to a man of Brother Jean of Mary's character and habits, atone for an earlier laxity[85] as well as throw light upon his courage and convictions.

The "Constitutional" clergy in Nancy was, of course, scandalized by this daring. In order to put an end to it, it got up a military mission. On the 31st of July, under the direction of the episcopal vicars, the National Guard descended upon the Brothers' school. There was a great clatter of arms and a lot of shouting. A promise was wrung from the Director that he would get rid of his guests. Indeed, some of them got as far as the frontier, at Deux Ponts or at Treves. But other recusants took advantage of the refuge provided by Maréville. The Attorney-general of the Department, without much success, demanded their expulsion. For a long period of time, they were running up against the quiet, but spirited, tenacity of Citizen "Andrew Toye".[86]

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At first glance, the position of the Brothers' principal house in Normandy seemed to be more serious. Since the questioning that took place on the 3rd of June 1791 the Brothers were living under the threat of dissolution. Would they continue to be tolerated at St.Yon in spite of their rejection of the oath? Would they be thrown into the street without the least indemnification, without the least subsidy? These questions distressed them. To get things straight and to muster arguments against those who would withhold justice, the day after the incursion by the municipal officials, the Brothers hastened to appeal to the lawyers in Rouen. Boieldieu, a well-known barrister and father of the celebrated musician, at their request, drew up an excellent brief. The document was printed by the Widow Dumesnil, the publisher of the classical writings of the Institute, on Rue Neuve-St. Lo, with the following epigraph, borrowed from Virgil: *Miseris succurrere disco*.[87]The very choice of such a text shows the extremities to which the Brothers and their advisers believed the Congregation had been reduced.

Brother Director, Aventine's explanation preceded the jurist's analysis. The Director established clearly the fundamental difference between residence schools and primary schools: While the instruction whose beneficiaries are the poor do not escape the supervision and control of the public authorities, and while, as a consequence, the Brothers who dispense that instruction are considered functionaries (even though the Nation does not assume the responsibility for their support), St. Yon appears, doubtlessly, to be free of such administrative ties. "In so far as it is a residence school", it is defined as "a private institution", with the right to determine for itself "the manner of its instruction, the recruitment of its teachers and its pupils, and the behavior of its personnel. These are the principles that can determine the direction of the juridical reply.

Then Boieldieu enters upon the scene. He had no illusions concerning the difficulty of his task: on the one hand there is "right" and "equity", and, on the other there is "politics" -- two points of view that are perhaps irreconcilable. However, "no matter how dangerous it is"

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[84]Chartrian, Histoire du clerge sous la Revolution, pg. 46, quoted by Charles Pfister, Vol. III, Histoire de Nancy.

[85]See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 546.

[86]This, it will be recalled, was Brother Jean of Mary's "civilian" name.who, high up on his vast estate, seemed to be on the watch for movements on the flat−lands and to be ready to go on the defensive.[86]Pfister, op. cit., and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 136.

[87]Memoire a consulter pour les Freres de la Maison du Saint-Yon...etc., 1791. Brother Lucard, in is Annales, (Vol II, pp. 569-576) quotes from it generously. See also Canon Farcy, Le Manoir de Saint-Yon, pp. 98-107.

to “oppose” the maxims of justice to “the wishes of the multitude”, he is prepared, “through the love of the truth which, in every courageous soul, must prevail over fear...” to “prove the merits” of his opinion.

The expulsion of the Brothers can only be the punishment for a crime. But, the rejection of the oath, of which they are accused, does not have the character of a violation of the law. “The National Assembly did not wish to infringe upon the imprescriptible rights of man, among which it itself has, judiciously, included religious opinion. For the rest, the duties of public functionaries do not devolve upon the teachers of St. Yon: the parents of the pupils, alone, can demand of them an account of their system of education. Otherwise, freedom of religion becomes an empty expression: a government which would prefer the “Koran to the Gospel” would be placing fathers of families in the position of abandoning their children to Islam or to sacrificing them to ignorance. “Reason... demands then that citizens who do not hold their vocation in dependence upon the political body” (such as, “the teachers in a residence school”) must not be constrained to the obligation of the oath.

After this consideration of a general nature, the lawyer examines the special situation of his clients, the members of a Religious Institute. No law had suppressed the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: thus, the Rouen school preserves, until further notice, its legal rights.

In the absence of a specific law, would it be possible to plead “public interest” in order to force the Brothers “to clear out” of the residence school? The argument turned against the adversary. It would be improbable that a like combination of distinguished talent, educational experience and dedicated charity could be found. And if it were necessary to get down to more vulgar considerations, people should be quite happy with such a high quality education, which costs the State nothing.

Logically, this conclusion was compelling: the Brother at St. Yon deserved respect and gratitude, and in losing them, the public would lose very much indeed. The circumstance, however, required a look at the worst hypothesis: the destruction of the system, and the confiscation of the property. Does the local government believe that it is dispensed from all further duties to the Brothers, if, in returning them to civilian life, it suggests that they rejoin their families and seek a new means of livelihood?

It cannot restore “their vanished hopes, the ease of thought and the vigor of youth, their inheritance handed over to their descendants...” To dissolve a group without being concerned with what happens to the individuals who compose it, is not that pure tyranny? Is it not a disregard both for the social contract and for the laws of humanity? If the Departmental Directory dissolves the Community in the Faubourg St. Sever, it must grant a pension for life to each of its members from the moment of their expulsion.

This brief, which after a century-and-a-half, retains an unquestionable emotional power and a persistently real and gripping truth, was ready before the 17th of June. At that date Brother Aventine submitted a copy of it to the Directory of the District in Rouen accompanied by the following letter: “The Brothers were convinced that, in consideration of the important services they have continued to make to the nation, they would escape the planned destruction which seems to threaten the great institutions of the kingdom”...Unfortunately, their confidence was not of long duration: the fateful law which has legislated the administration of the oath has brought discouragement to their unhappy home. Then, recalling the visitation of the three commissioners with its martial display, the Director repeated in the most solemn manner the Brothers’ collective rejection of the oath, which the authorities had vainly sought to bend under the force of fear: “To take the oath...is an illegal act to which (they) will never submit.” And he demanded, following Boieldieu’s

opinion, either the status quo or indemnification for life.[88]

De Bonne, Bouvet, Lefebre and Anquetin, the District Administrators, wished to be restricted by neither of these solutions. In their view, "it was impossible to save the Brothers, even temporarily, without violating the law. Not to take the oath is not an offense", doubtlessly (a purely formal concession to the jurist's opinion): "but, it is a legal impediment" to the mission of a teacher.

In order to liken the teachers at St. Yon to public functionaries, in spite of the positive proof that had just been provided, the four revolutionaries repeated the confusion, systematically committed by their predecessors in the "Ancien Regime", between residence school and tuition-free school. Had not St. Yon been recognized by Letters Patent from Louis XV "to train candidates to teach in charity schools and to operate (the charity schools) in Rouen"?[89]

Hence, in the eyes of the civil power this school no longer existed the moment that the Congregation, abandoning the primary schools, became faithless to the stipulations of the fundamental legal document. The property it possessed fell, *ipso facto*, into the public domain. Everything in the institution in Rouen must be taken over by the city government: each Brother may be allowed only the furnishings in his room, objects for his personal use and 80 livres "to purchase his basic needs". As for the pension that was being sought, the National Assembly might provide it, if it so pleased.

Once the Brothers' departure had been demanded, the District cared little about the future of the people housed in the institution: the free pupils were sent home to their parents; and the inmates were turned over to a "porter".[90]

The Directory of the Lower Seine had the good sense to reject these brutal and simpleminded measures. We shall presently take a look at the objections it raised, not unwisely, to the zeal exhibited by the District. In the following November, it agreed only to the dismissal of the Brothers teaching in the primary schools.[91] Those at St. Yon were to remain at their posts in spite of the threats that constantly hung over their heads. More than ever did earth take on the appearance of a place of passage. They had to detach their hearts from every earthly good, from familiar things, and gradually look upon themselves as transient guests in their own home. The soil which had sheltered the remains of their Founder, and then, in the course of the century, received Brothers Irenée, Timothy, Claude and Raymond,[92] would no longer be the resting place for Brothers who died. On the 2nd of June 1791 the Chaplain, François Normand, led to the Community's cemetery the funeral procession of M. Jean Baptist Griset, born in the parish of St. Mary, in the diocese of Besancon...professed in the Institute" as Brother Macarius, who died the night before, "comforted by the Sacraments of the Church", in the forty-eighth year of his age:[93]-- the last

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[88]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 576-578, according to the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine., L, 1159.

[89]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 354-361, and pp. 508-510.

[90]Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L, 1159. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 578-579. The document is dated the 22nd of June 1791.

[91]See above, pg. 154.

[92]See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 169.

[93]St. Yon Obituary.

burial of a son of De La Salle in the enclosure purchased by his initiative. A week later the Departmental administrators withdrew this privilege from the members of the Congregation. Claude Bonnette, from St. Andrew's parish in Chartres, in Religion Brother Jean Joseph, who died on the 21st of November, would be "set down at the door of the church" at the end of the Mass for the Dead, and would be interred "in the common cemetery by the pastor of St. Sever, in conformity with the Decree ...of the 10th of June.[94]

The obituary register, begun in 1728, would never be used again. Father Normand, Brother Aventine, and Brother Vilmer, the sacristan, for the last time appended their signatures. Soon it would be the house itself that would die. Some of those who were still among the living would not await its end to abandon it. On September 3rd a Claude Toussaint Bertault, called Brother Ariston, appeared before the municipal officials. He disowned the "common life", since he had located a civilian job, and he asked to leave St. Yon "while retaining his rights" to a retirement pension. The administrative authority was eager to grant him an exeat.[95]

This example was followed by six more Brothers. The personnel list on the 13th of June 1792 contained only fifty-three names, among which continued to be Brothers Aventine, François, Alberic, Mansuy, Hermas and Gerbaud.[96] With his associates at reduced numbers, Pierre Vaillant operated his residence school and reformatory -- but at the cost of what bitterness and insults!

Members of the district, whose hatred was unappeasable, furiously pursued the destruction of the school. One of them, Anquetin, particularly malicious, found an opportunity to reopen the legal case. On Thursday the 22nd of May 1792, as he was dining in "a garden near Rouen", he wrote to Thieullen, a Deputy Attorney-general for the Commune, he saw entering "a boy of fourteen years of age, a resident pupil at St. Yon", who dropped by to say "hello" to the innkeeper. The diners drew the young man into a conversation, and he turned out to want to make the most of the opportunity. "He gave indications of being completely lacking in patriotism". "It's your teachers", they told him, "who inspire you with such principles and, of course, they would punish pupils who said the opposite." Bragging and scoffing are characteristics of these years. The youngster declared that, "for the time being", the teachers would not flinch, but they were quite capable of finding a good excuse to take their revenge for this presumption.

Learning that the boy's father was an "exemplary patriot", Anquetin appealed to the son "to walk in the footsteps of the author of his days". To this pompous talk the kid had a quick retort: "We should imitate our father's virtues, not his errors". For the fanatic, this idle talk of a silly child turned into a precious windfall. After having reported it on the 25th of May in his letter to Thieullen, he exclaimed: They go so far as to destroy "filial devotion" in the hearts of these children! It was the *horresco referens* -- an appropriate introduction to an indictment.

"I was indignant (he went on) to see the education of youth in hands capable of perverting them. The Brothers of the Christian Schools who behave with such little Christianity were founded for education. The law does not allow them to educate unless they take the civil oath, which they refuse to do, and therefore they must be sent away. The delay of the decrees regarding the new educational system is not a reason for protecting them; since it would be better to have no education at all than to have such a wretched one. I am aware that they have been withdrawn from the tuition-free schools in town; but they are left with their vast institution in which we are told there are more than five-hundred resident pupils. If

[94] Ibid.

[95] Municipal Archives of Rouen, 72/3.

[96] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1149.

that is the case, then there are five- hundred evil citizens that they are training for society. Since their Institute is for tuition-free education when, in fact, they cannot continue tuition-free education, then, it seems to me that they must not be allowed property which they possess only on that condition, and which enables them to perpetuate a private, unpatriotic and pernicious education. Doubtless, most parents are not aware of what they are risking; they do not know the poison in which their children are steeped; but the city administration, situated so as to watch over the preservation of social principles, by closing its eyes, incurs society's blame for the evils that such a toleration can cause..."[97]

Thieullen sent the letter to the members of the district , who themselves sent it on to the Departmental Directory while insisting on the urgent need for a radical solution. The higher administration did not wish its zeal for the Revolution to seem any less ardent than that of other elected bodies: on the 20th of June 1792 it agreed that the suppression of the school "was only too long in happening". But under the cover of this rhetorical precaution, it once again set forth objections of a practical nature with which were mixed feelings of compassion and justice and which, for a year, curbed the fury of Anquetin and other zealots like him.

The Directory did not want to deprive the "individuals" at St. Yon (especially the aged and the infirm) of all income. Imitating the recent decision of the Legislative Assembly, it recognized the right to a pension of Brothers who had spent themselves in the service of children. Once the Community had been destroyed, the income which provided its livelihood would no longer suffice for the personal support each of the former Brothers. From then on "what a bill of expense...for the public treasury"!

A still more thorny question was the "reformatory", where food, housing and supervision required "monetary advances". But the Interior Minister had just been encouraging the Departmental Administration to suggest a location for an asylum for the insane. St. Yon fulfilled the requisite conditions: it was therefore crucial not to tamper with that institution. Wise, temporary measures, worked out in meetings between the Commune and the District and submitted by the Department to the ministerial administration would pave the way (or so the magistrates of the Lower Seine assumed) for the realization of an enduring project.[98]

It was in this way that the Institute's former headquarters, the land of St. John Baptist de La Salle's delight, the sanctuary of so many vocations and of such heroic virtue still remained for a few more months (before forever losing its glorious destiny) in the hands of the Founder's legitimate heirs.

[97] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1159. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 594-597.

[98] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1159, "the administrators constituting the Directory of the Department, to the Gentlemen of the Directory of the District of Rouen".

CHAPTER FIVE

The Suppression of the Institute

Perceiving the mentality and the direction of revolutionary legislation at the end of 1790, Brother Agathon could not fail to conclude that it would only be by a miracle that the Institute would escape destruction. Several detailed steps that he took at the beginning of the following year testify to this foresight. The friendships that he cultivated at Melun gained for him a freedom of incalculable value, which he used, rightly, to preserve the interests entrusted to him and for the good of the Brothers.

On the 27 of January 1791, the account books note the purchase of a trunk, for which eight livres were paid and which was "intended to contain the deeds and other documents" that needed to be protected. We know that the authorities in the Seine-and-Marne had purposely postponed the inventory prescribed by the Law of the 6th of November[1]

In this way valuable documents and the Congregation's principal archives were able to escape profane scrutiny and irretrievable losses. They were to be withdrawn from the Holy Child House until a safe place could be found for them. On the 8th of February, everything was ready for the transfer: on that day the treasurer listed an expenditure of 20 livres, 9 sols and 6 deniers for a journey to Paris by the Brother Superior-general, the Brother Procurator and Brother Martin, and six livres to defray the cost of a journey for Brother Solomon and the expenses for transporting the trunk. Brother Martin was the engineer who had fitted out Melun and the Rossignolerie and who had built clocks in both of these houses. He must have been employed on the construction of some delicate mechanisms: he remained in Paris only for the length of time required to check locks and to situate the trunk. And he returned immediately to the Motherhouse, along with the Brother Procurator, while the Superior and his secretary went on to take up quarters on the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dames-des-Champs.

Brother Agathon then gave orders for the sharing of considerable sums of money among the Brothers: on the 20th of February 6,620 livres were distributed "to all the professed Brothers of the Community" in Melun, and 1,000 livres "to three non-professed Brothers". Then we note in the same account books, between the 7th of March and the 12th of April, a number of sales of furnishings: pewter and copper vessels, basins, bathtubs, fabrics, tables, an anvil, a kneading trough, a "small electrical motor" and liturgical vestments: a cope, two dalmatics and five chasubles. The bookkeeper made no secret of the reason for these sales: these objects were being sold off "in order to build up a wardrobe for the Community as well as for travelling expenses, in the event of the suppression" of the Institute.[23]. In less than six weeks the total sum realized from the sales rose to 2,240 livres. The municipal officials were fully aware of what was going on: when, on the 14th of April, *lente festinantes*, they visited the Brothers and opened the famous account book, and, on the page on which the most recent activities were recorded, they verified the closing out of the inventory and calmly affixed their signatures. It is difficult to imagine anything more civilized.

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1 .[1]See above, pg. 47.

2 Account book for the March 24, 1791

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On this score, then, the Superior-general could feel at ease. The bad news that then came from so many other houses commanded his attention, and imposed fixed limits to his activities. He knew that his directives were being generously followed by the majority of his Brothers. And there can be no doubt that he was pained by the lapses of which some were guilty and by the quite formal desertions, especially desolating when it came to certain heads of institutions whom he had thought worthy of trust. He foresaw the closing of the schools; but he experienced with grief that the adversaries of orthodoxy, not satisfied with this initial sacrifice, were determined to punish the refusal of the oath by the confiscation of property. Together with Brother Philippe of Jesus, he struggled to save the Brothers in the Parisian schools from penury. Toward the end of June the Procurator-general of the Institute set before the administrator of public properties the distressful situation of his expelled "confreres". Would it be possible to allow the Brothers to have at least "the money budgeted for food"? "Natural law" demanded it; and, besides, the Constituent Assembly had shown greater concern for members of monastic Orders that had already been suppressed.[4] On the 2nd of September Brother Agathon himself sent a letter to the Directory of the Seine, in which, in legal language, he made a capital distinction. Recalling that the civil and ecclesiastical powers were agreed in recognizing the legal existence of the Brothers, the Superior showed that the "professed" Brothers, constituting "the body" of this Society, preserved an individual right over the collective properties and revenues. It was crucial also "to distinguish clearly between inheritances, real estate, buildings and incomes originating in acquisitions" effected by the Regime of the Institute from gifts and legacies involving, as their fundamental stipulation, the practice of the teaching profession in parochial schools.
The cities and the Departments could not "arrogate to themselves" the least part of anything in the first category "without committing a shocking injustice". The Institute remained the owner and administrator of the estate which was unencumbered by any educational responsibility. And to deprive the Institute of that would require a new law. It would then be altogether fair "to provide", to the largest extent possible, "for the subsistence and support" of the Brothers who have been despoiled of their common patrimony.[5]

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Legislation which would determine the fate of the teaching Congregations had been awaited for nearly two years; its future victims were like men condemned to death, tortured by uncertainty, gradually losing hope, experiencing the earth opening up beneath their feet, and weary of living with personal anxiety. Quite logically, the National Assembly, with the installation of a new system of public education, had ordered the dismissal of these teachers. But it had assumed too many projects for it to bring them all off. Mirabeau's sketch, a posthumous work published by Cabinis, was a last-will-and-testament that went unexecuted. Tallyrand had been working on a vast plan for educational reorganization. But it was not ready to be submitted to his colleagues before September, 1791.

With him the principle of universal education triumphed over the prejudices and objections for which, twenty-eight years earlier La Chalotais had become the most prominent and most scathing spokesman. "For all men", declared the former Bishop of Autun, "there must be a primary education, common to all". And this "indispensable" instruction was to be tuition-free. To it would be added, "for a large number", a program of studies capable of

[4]National Archives, file S 7046-7047. Cited by Chassagnon, pp. 333-334.

[5]National Archives, file S 7046-7047 and Chassagnon, pp. 339-341. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April 1938, pp. 112-113. The position the author of this article gives this letter suggests that, while he dates it correctly, he confuses it with the "petition" to the Legislative Assembly on the 24th of the following December.

providing the mind with a broader development and of directing pupils towards their "particular goals". At the highest level, elite minds would be prepared to serve the nation by specializing, according to their aptitudes, in the arts and sciences. In a society properly so-called, this masterful report concluded, "while no one person could succeed in knowing everything, it would, nevertheless, be necessary to teach everything".

The author was wanting in neither skill nor enlightenment. He was completely familiar with the results obtained in the primary schools, the colleges and the universities of the "Ancien Regime". He borrowed from the best educators, especially when he advocated both the diffusion of elementary knowledge and the skills and values of the sciences, and when he insisted, in dependence upon Locke and Fenelon, on the necessity for reflection and personal research, which obligates each mind to renew, in a way, the efforts of "invention" and psychological liberation accomplished by other minds. While he relied upon the State to organize and direct education at every level, he refused to create a monopoly in favor of the teaching profession: "While each one has the right to receive the benefits of education, each has reciprocally the right to compete in spreading it...All skills are called upon to contend for public esteem. By its very nature, every privilege is odious: an educational privilege is still more odious and absurd".

But, in reality, this apparent liberalism tended to deny to the Church its educational mission, and to construct, apart from the ancient religious establishment, a "national", secular edifice on foundations of dubious stability. There were to be no basic dogmas: "Since theology is changeless and science is progressive, there is an incompatibility between them". As the "Philosophers" associated with the *Encyclopedia* had insisted, morality was to be the sole support of the educational enterprise. Nor did they mean the "morality of the Decalogue"; or, if they did, it was reduced to social obligations. Here, once again, there was a victory for the eighteenth century, assured of the fundamental goodness of man, and, as a consequence, hostile to moral reformation and holiness of life. All that need be done was to make sure that society did not oppress nature or "corrupt" it. The members of the Constituent Assembly had prepared the remedy: it was called "the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen". It was, indeed, useful, although elements of it were not all from the same sound sources, nor equally durable. It was incomplete and too slight to resist human passion or the caprice of heads of State. The Revolution would contrive other rules sanctioned by violence.[6]

This doctrine required new preachers. As a consequence, teachers of another day would have to cede their places. But when would the latter cease to be employed? Tallyrand's Bill included 208 articles: the Assembly, which had been in session uninterruptedly for two years and four months, succumbed to fatigue from its innumerable sessions and its colossal undertakings. On the 14th of September it was satisfied to issue a decree that was limited to a statement of principle: "Public instruction, common to all children and tuition-free for those parts of it that are indispensable to all men, would be created and organized".[7] This was the "free education" for which De La Salle and his sons suffered so much, harvested now from their heritage at the moment when France was on the point of forgetting about them.

In order to gain a more favorable hearing, the author summarized the essential elements of his work into thirty-five articles. In a meeting on the 25th of September he asked for at least a first reading and discussion of them. Buzot was firmly opposed, not because he

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[6]Allain, L'oeuvre scolaire de la Revolution, Paris, 1891. Augustine Sicard, L'education morale et civique avant et pendant le Revolution, Paris, 1913, Alfred des Cilleuls, Histoire de l'enseignement libre dans l'ordre primaire en France, Paris, 1898. J. Herment, Manuel d'histoire de la pedagogie, Namur, 1923.

[7]Duvergier, Lois, Vol. III, pg. 241, cited by Chassagnon, pg. 395.

supported another position, but because, he recalled, the moment was inopportune: the members of the Constituent Assembly were “approaching the end of their political existence”. How could they take up a plan that demanded “thorough-going reflection”? They should hand this concern over to their successors. “It would be better to do nothing when one hasn’t the time to do something well.” Both Prieur and Camus spoke in agreement with these sentiments; and the inquiry into the Bill was postponed “to the next legislature.”[8]

These men, who had destroyed so many things, left France like a construction yard: they had certainly carved out straight lines through the maze of the antique “city”; they had begun some foundations and they had raised some walls that were not all rickety. Nevertheless, people circulated among the ruins and already perceived the cracks in the new construction. Other edifices, undermined, swayed dangerously: the next blow of the pickaxe would bring them down. The workers of 1789, 1790 and 1791, worn out and worried, turned their backs on that task. They pleaded, however sincerely, qualms about disinterestedness, and a desire for calm, in order to debar themselves from the completion of the project. They handed on the work to a young demolition team, proud of its role, ignorant of the difficulties and impatient to show its power to wipe the slate clean.

Accomplishments, however, remained in suspense: thus, the question of public education dragged on, forever posed by the theoreticians, but never resolved. On the other hand, what easier than to topple what exists. Programs for suppression, expulsion and interdiction continued to be the order of the day: they got done without too much delay.

During the weeks in which Tallyrand, concerned for educational anarchy, vainly sought to draw his colleagues’ attention to this crucial point, Massieu, the “Constitutional” bishop of Oise, elaborated his report concerning the secular Congregations. Brother Solomon wrote on the 15th of September: “The Bill...has been presented and read to the Assembly”.

The schismatic prelate first enumerated the principal duties of these societies: education of youth, teaching of religion, formation of ministers of worship, and health services; and then he emphasized that “in order to fulfill functions so appealing and so essential to the public good, it does not “seem necessary to commission some special body". “We observe”, he states, “these functions equally well performed by governments that have nothing to do with such societies”. According to him, when one is “sufficiently moderate in one’s desires to be satisfied with food and clothing, while being useful to others”, there is no need to depend upon “an affluent society”, whose combined wealth is either of little use or becomes something belonging to special people of suspicious refinements. If we are talking about education, talent and morality must be enough.

This statement of principles is followed by considerations of fact. Nothing is more harmful for the Church and for the State than “the spirit of faction --- the germ of dissension ...and scandal”. Of course, it does not prevail everywhere. The author of the report insisted on acknowledging that some Congregations, not “the least deserving in the eyes of religion and the nation” measured their opinions and their conduct by reference to “public spirit”. But others had “joined in a coalition with the enemies” of the Revolution; they have followed the counsels, or bowed to the threats, of “hostile leaders”. This was a clear allusion to the men who, in the past, exposed to the insults of the Jansenists and to the abuses of Gallican power, distinguished themselves by their submission to the Holy See.

Massieu concluded that it was necessary to put an end to the secular Congregations, whether composed of clerics or laymen; however, societies of women, both nurses and teachers, escaped prohibition.

The Bill was aimed formally at the Christian Brothers. The teachers “employed in

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[8] Moniteur for September 27, 1791.

educational institutions" would be retained only as individuals, obliged to fulfill their responsibility "until other measures can be taken."[9].

The Brother Secretary suggests as a certainty that the text was discussed on Monday the 19th of September. Actually, the Massieu report was not granted the distinction of a session. Like Tallyrand's, it was filed in the archives of the Constituent Assembly. But the Legislative Assembly knew where to find it. Before breaking up, the first Revolutionary Assembly maintained the status quo both for the teachers and for their instruction: "The teaching body and the public instructional and educational institutions...will continue to exist in their present form and follow the same rules that have been guiding them".[10]

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The new Deputies had hardly assembled before they declared their intention to break out of this temporary solution. On the 14th of October they established a "Committee of Public Education". Condorcet, the most distinguished of its members, succeeded Talleyrand; and it was from him that people were looking for the oracles to govern the future of youth. But prior to April of 1792 nothing was forthcoming. And even then people were satisfied to listen to his pronouncements without translating them into practical directives.[11]

But the inference to be drawn from their action (the disappearance of the Congregations) did not seem to be any the less urgent. There was a tendency to view it independently of its consequences. On this occasion, the initiative belonged to Claude Fauchet --- Massieu's colleague in the "Constitutional" episcopacy and, like him, inspired by a sectarian and vengeful spirit against dissidents. His partisan ardor disturbed his judgment, overpowered his eloquence and transformed this sincere believer, this priest who respected his priesthood, into a demagogue. In Calvados he conducted a fiery political propaganda blended with a persevering apostolate.[12]In revolutionary circles he enjoyed a prestige that was associated with his oratorical successes and his widely known writings. On the 23rd of October he was unanimously applauded when he invited the Assembly to legislate without further delay on the future of the surviving Congregations. Since their activities and their property were both in question, it was necessary immediately to inform the Committee for Public Education and the Committee for Estates of the matter.[13]

Such a prelude confirmed Brother Agathon's most pessimistic predictions. Quite rightly he thought the time had come to obtain peace of conscience and a livelihood for his Brothers, under the exceedingly probable assumption that they would be obliged to return "to the world".

Their religious status first of all demanded the zeal of the father of a family. In October there was forwarded to Rome a "petition", the Latin text and its French translation have been deposited in the Superior-general's file, along with the reply of the Holy Office.[14]

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[9]Masseiu's printed report, Bibliotheque Nationale, Le 27/ko. Cf. Aulard, La Revolution francaise et les Congregations, expose historique et documents, Paris, 1903, pg. 210, and Chassagnon, pp. 343-345

[10]Decree of September 29, 1791. Moniteur for September 27, and Duvergier, Vol. III, pg. 367.

[11]Guillaume, op. cit., pg. xviii. Chassagnon, pg. 396.

[12]Father Charrier, Claude Fauchet (1744-1793), Paris, 1909.

[13]Moniteur for October 24, 1791; Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 396.

[14]Motherhouse Archives, BE y 5. The Archives of the Brother Procurator to the Holy See also contains a copy of these documents, in a slightly abridged version.

These two document require explanation.:

"Most Holy Father, Brother Agathon, Superior-general of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness, begs leave to reveal that the Institute of which he is the leader is in imminent danger of being suppressed in France by the National Assembly, either because it is absolutely determined to dissolve all corporations, or because the Brothers have evinced an insuperable aversion for the civil oath, and they have consistently refused to acknowledge the false pastors who have replaced (their) legitimate pastors.

In these grievous circumstances, some of the members of the Institute have made their complaints to the petitioner, in order to explain to him how difficult, not to say impossible, it would be for them (seeing the variety of states Providence would oblige them to embrace) to observe in the world the five vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, stability and tuition-free education, to which they are bound either for three years or for life.

However, as according to the Bull of Pope Benedict XIII, of happy memory, the dispensation from these vows is reserved to the Holy See, they seek urgently that, since the matter is easier at a moment when the Institute still exists and it would become more difficult if it were dissolved, we obtain from the Holy See (assuming suppression) in favor of the Brothers already dispersed or who shall be dispersed, whether within or without the kingdom, a quicker manner of dispensation, which would be more convenient for the Brothers and which anticipates all difficulties and delays capable of imperilling their consciences or injuring their interests.

"For these reasons, Brother Agathon, responsible for presenting to Your Holiness the desires and the prayers of the Brothers, places them at His feet and beseeches Him to be indulgent with regard to them. Convinced that his request will be quite useful for the salvation of souls, which thereby will be delivered from danger, he humbly solicits this grace, along with Your Holiness' Apostolic benediction, praying that God will preserve Him for many years to come, for the blessings of Christendom which He governs so gloriously. There follows in the original (in Latin) this signature: "Frater Agatho, Supr. Generalis, Orator humilis."

The Sovereign Pontiff assented fully to this petition. Following is the ancient translation of the Decree which, on the 15th of November 1791, emanated from the Holy Penitentiary: This court, "after having obtained special and explicit authorization from Our Holy Father Pope Pius VI, declares by these presents that, as long as matters remain in France in the condition in which they are actually, the venerable Father in Jesus Christ, Antoine Eleonor Leon Le Clerc de Juigne,legitimate Archbishop of Paris, may, either by himself, or by other churchmen endowed with the necessary knowledge and authority, whom he shall deputize especially for this purpose and who shall not have taken the oath prescribed by the National Assembly, dispense all and each of the Brothers who shall ask to leave the Institute known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, from the vows that they made as the result of their entrance into this Institute, provided, however, that these vows are really simple and without any other character, and that, in case it is necessary to dispense them from the vow of stability and perseverance, he may, in virtue of the same apostolic authority which has been explicitly conferred upon him, grant them, as he pleases, in both the interior and the exterior forum, the freedom to leave this Institute, when they shall ask it, with the formal declaration that the Brothers thus legally discharged are totally and absolutely disengaged from the obligation of observing these simple vows of their Institute, every special and particular reason to the contrary notwithstanding. For the rest, let each Brother be informed and let each of them who shall continue to live in celibacy be exhorted in the Lord, to return to their first Institute, should Divine Providence return conditions to their former state".

The decision was formulated in sufficiently broad language so that Archbishop

Juigne's personal intervention need not have been required for more than a few days. The Archbishop, terrified by events, had left his diocese and the kingdom in October 1789. He sent his directives first from Savoy, then from Constance and finally from Augsberg. To have to seek out this prelate in exile rather than having to ask the Holy See for individual dispensations would be to shift the difficulty without resolving it. Juigne, therefore, delegated his powers according to the conditions and with the reservations set forth in the Roman document. And in this way we account for a passage written five months later by Brother Solomon: "Yesterday I had the pleasure of seeing the Archbishop of Arles[15] and to speak with him. He showed me a Roman "Brief", in which the Pope delegated to the French Bishops the power to absolve reserved cases and also to dispense from simple Religious vows.

"Please God", the saintly Brother added, "may I not have to apply."[16] Many other members of the Congregation (without having their zeal rewarded with martyrdom) would also persevere, and not just during the worst hours of the storm, but in the sudden shifts of wind which would interrupt periods of calm and in the tedious, monotonous and endless days during which even heroism skidded toward extinction. The "spirit of faith", pure intention and acquired habits rescued them from boredom and, in the midst of "the world", created "cloisters" which protected their central vows.

After ten years, a particularly courageous elite, heedful to discern the Providential signs on a brighter horizon, would recall the exhortation with which the Holy Penitentiary concluded its Decree. A quantity of formerly professed Brothers, who had not established families, "would return to their first Institute."[17]

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The Brothers had received "the word that issued from the mouth of the Lord". But man must also have bread. The Superior-general then went in quest of earthly food for his children. From whom could it be securely sought, if not from the elect of the nation, the omnipotent masters who arranged for peoples' fate and the use of their property?

Following the "Massieu Report" and "Fauchet's motion", the Committee for Estates was to have taken up an inquiry into the pensions for former Religious. Figures had been thrown about --- quite inadequate, and pretty nearly ridiculous as regards the members of secular Congregations: they were talking about a maximum of 250 livres. For the elderly, deprived of every other resource, this would have meant dismal poverty. To ward off such a threat Brother Agathon sent the legislators a reprint of his message of October 1790,[18] along with a postscript: "When the Brothers had the pleasure of presenting the above address to the Constituent Assembly at a time when it had to decide their fate, they awaited its effect with confidence. It was like a clap of thunder for them when the public press informed them of the "reading" of a Bill that might be described as murderous...The reprieve allowed for the destruction of teaching groups is truly an admission on the part of the Assembly...of the

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[15]Blessed Jean Marie du Lau, who, like the man who interviewed him, was a martyr in the Church of the Carmelites and who, at the time of the interview, was residing at the Chatillon House on Rue Petit-Bourbon (today Rue St. Sulpice). Chassagnon, pp. 408-409.

[16]Family documents no. 103, letter dated April 13, 1792, to Miss Rosalie le Clercq. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 416-417.

[17]It is probable that the number of dispensations sought were numerous; but, for the lack of documentation, we shall never know.

[18]See above, pp. 45-47

reality of the rights that these groups have to the national gratitude; and the revulsion stirred up in all honest hearts by the niggardliness with which some have dared to propose that the nation disgrace itself in dealing with these groups, has revived their hopes...If the new Assembly...believes it must dissolve the Congregation, it is surely too generous...to condemn individuals to the shame of penury and to the torments of a slow death. Confiding in the "French character" and abandoning themselves to Divine Providence, the Brothers had faithfully revealed their financial situation. Was it not just to set their pensions in proportion to their services and to the huge capital that would fall into the public domain, should the Institute be suppressed? Furthermore, they were only asking about allowances for lifetimes that were destined for an early extinction, "since in this Congregation a member who reaches the age of seventy is something rare."[19]

The account book for November 11th 1791 has an entry for an expenditure of sixty-one livres for the paper and the printing of this address. Other steps, equally agonizing but more confidential, would be taken. We know about them in exact detail from the register of correspondence kept by the Brother Procurator-general.[20]

Included in it, in the first place, is a kind of questionnaire, obviously intended for some of the members of the legislature, cautious patrons of the Motherhouse. The "grievous position" of the Christian Brothers is described to them, and they are questioned as to the measures to be taken.

"Always dedicated to their vocation,(the Brothers) ardently and nearly unanimously desire to be preserved. But they are without hope. While the National Assembly has not yet decided upon their suppression, they have already been forced, by reason of the oath and the schism, to empty nearly half of their institutions. Every day, their Superior-general learns of their dismissal from several cities, some of which have even wanted to seize their property. They are denied salaries that are owed to them and items of personal property...Most of them have scarcely enough clothing to change into in order to return to their birthplace, and, indeed, some dare not go for fear of being assaulted...

"In these circumstances, what must the Regime of the Institute do? If it waits for the decree that suppresses it, it runs the risk of seeing all its houses without exception" completely wiped out. "If it asks that the decree be speeded up, such a request will be in contradiction with its previous appeals (and) offensive to the Assembly..."

The alternatives were painful, and the state of things so embarrassing as to be nearly inextricable. In order to get out of it, "certain persons", whose goodwill and friendly feelings were beyond suspicion, advised obtaining from the legislators "permission to sell...the Congregation's real estate, so that the income from the sale could be divided among the members bound by perpetual vows", in proportion to their seniority in the Institute. In this way, the professed Brothers would receive a small stipend which would temporarily help them to get by. "They would, of course, prefer it to a small (and probably risky) "pension".
But such a request would perhaps give rise to violent criticism. "Wouldn't the Brothers become more odious" in the eyes of the Deputies and the people? And wouldn't every sort of obstacle be thrown up against the sale and the sharing of property?[21]

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[19]Departmental Archives of the Seine-and-Marne, Az 1416. "Address to the National Assembly on Behalf of the Regime of the Institute," printed in Melun, Taube, 1791.

[20]A Notebook of 34 pages of medium size, entitled "Copies of letters relating to the Suppression of our Institute." Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4. The pages are "numbered," first, alphabetically from "a" to "f" and then numerically from "1" to "28."

[21]Notebook cited, page "a." Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 605-606; Chassagnon, pp. 399-400; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 112.

The reading of this text reveals immense humility and abnegation. In this abasement, in which only a fatherly love could acquiesce Brother Agathon showed the same heart, the same virtue, as in the most prosperous years of his generalate. Intrepid as ever in the face of magistrates, energetic in the redress of conscience, he seemed now to give way before tyranny only after having placed faith and honor out of reach, and after having assured his Brothers of a minimum of well-being at the expense of his own justifiable pride.

Politicians advised against hazardous or chimerical projects. The Assembly would never have agreed to a division of property; and if it had the least chance of realization, its results would have proved singularly delusive. Like Church properties, the Institutes' estates would not have attracted buyers except those who made offers well below the appraised evaluation and paid for it in the paper money of the period; which would have produced too meager an income to alleviate the distress of five-hundred Brothers.

In fact, a new "petition" would take these observations into account. While it repeated several of the paragraphs from the confidential report, especially the preliminary declaration, it asked that the "decree of suppression be speeded up", that the real estate of dissolved corporations "be declared national property" (which, it was thought, would prevent cities, such as Montauban, Abbeville and Saint Brieuc, among others, from attempts at encroachment), and that in return the State pay the members of the Congregations a fixed stipend established according to their years in Religious life, following the scale set up by the Constituent Assembly for members of the major Orders.

These were the desiderata that Brother Philippe of Jesus, in the second half of December 1791, transmitted to Ducastel, Deputy for the Lower Seine, Haudouart, Deputy for the Pas-du-Calais, Sedillez and Vaublanc, Deputies for the Seine-and-Marne.[22] He placed his confidence in their friendly intervention; and hoped to have supplied them, "clearly" and "simply", "with sufficient materials to plead the (Brothers') case successfully."[23]

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The purpose of these contacts, wrote the Brother Procurator to Ducastel, can no longer be "our preservation", which now exists only in "our wishes". If the Institute must disappear from "the French Empire", the moment seemed to have come to guarantee its survival in foreign countries. De La Salle's native land had been the first to benefit from his work; but the Founder, by sending Brothers Gabriel and Gerard to Rome, had directed his attention beyond the frontiers and had indicated his purpose to bind the Institute's life, its mission and its growth to the enduring universality of the Church of Christ.

Nor need one think of distant lands: neither the money, nor the men nor the circumstances favored vast undertakings. As in the mother country, the Revolution had left the colonies in disarray. The Brothers in Martinique were abandoned to themselves, without viable relations with their Superiors; and St. Victor's College was dying.[24] Quite naturally Brother Agathon looked toward the States bordering continental France. In February 1791 his Secretary, as we have noted, suggested that strategic exiles would rescue the Congregation's

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[22]Notebook cited, pages "b" to "f," 1 and 2. Cf. Lucard, pg. 606; Chassagnon, pp. 399-401, and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 112.

[23]Notebook cited, pg. 2. Letter dated December 21, 1791 to Sedillez.

[24]Sydney-Daney, Histoire de la Martinique, Vol. II, pg. 29.

future.[25] In April the plan took shape. It had nothing to do with Switzerland where, nonetheless, there was the school in Estavayer, in the Catholic canton of Fribourg. Rome and Ferrara were regarded as the places of ultimate refuge, but the Superior scarcely thought of the Brothers immigrating to Italy: "the house is full", wrote Brother Solomon of *Trinita dei Monti*, where he himself had dreamed of coming to rest. Would not "Brabant", in any case, be generally available? Yes, indeed, there was "some hope of making foundations there", if, in spite of unfavorable prognostications, Divine Assistance opened the way.[26]

But on the 22nd of January of the following year the Brother Secretary-general, in a letter to his sister,[27]described a sharp setback: "Brother Amaranthe has been here (in Paris) for several days. He opened a residence school in Brussels, but the teachers in that city would not allow him to continue. The father of the late Madame Conseil was useful to him in that country; in spite of that, he was unable to remain there...He couldn't write from Brussels; to do so he was waiting until he was well settled...the plan failed because people wanted too much to succeed.

From this summary information the author of the *Historical Essay On the Motherhouse* in 1905 drew inferences which, in some areas, were rather venturesome. Thus, Cardinal Frankenbur, Archbishop of Malines, was supposed to have authorized the former Director of the Brothers in Boulogne[28] to teach in his diocese; but difficulties arose on the part of the schoolteachers and the public authorities, who were "imbued with a 'Josephist' mentality". Finally, Brother Agathon's representative was thought to have returned to France "after a few weeks of fruitless efforts".[29].

The rediscovery of the documents dealing with this affair in Brussels has enabled us to reestablish the facts exactly.[30] In substance, there was a report to which was joined the advice of the Privy-Council and a decision of the Governor-general of the Austrian Low-Countries, dated December 1791.

The tenor of the report, signed by an imperial functionary, M. de Berg, is as follows: "In a petition of the 21st of November, Nicolas François Le Coeur, native of Champagne in Lorraine, Brother of the Christian Schools, in which Institute he is known as Brother Amaranthe, explains that he had to leave his vocation for failure to participate in the work of the so-called National Assembly and for refusing to take the alleged civil oath; that he wishes to found a residence school in St. Joos ten Noode, faubourg of Brussels, outside the Louvain Gate, in the style of a prospectus joined to his petition...For which purpose he asks a concession of His Majesty".

According to the prospectus mentioned above, the petitioner promises to raise his resident pupils in solid piety and to teach them writing, arithmetic, foreign exchange, both single and double entry bookkeeping, French grammar, geography and the elements of mathematics.

The superintendent in Brussels, who, in the Church hierarchy, assumed the general direction of parochial education and the supervision of the tutors, believed "that the young

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[25]See above, pg. 81.

[26]Letter dated April 8, 1791, to Mlle Le Clercq. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a.

[27]Motherhouse Archives, R. no. 106 (autograph). Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 123.

[28]In this capacity Brother Amaranthe was acquainted with Brother Solomon's family and friends.

[29]Essai, pg. 97

[30]General Archives of the Kingdom of Belgium, Austrian Privy-Council, file 1099 A. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pp. 123-124.

people could be entrusted to the petitioner". But there was no vacancy at St. Joos. Since the active teachers, "indeed the most experienced ones", scarcely gained a livelihood from the lessons they taught, "it was impossible to admit someone new" without causing ruin among the teachers already established in the neighborhood. As a result, "the concession should be granted" only under the reservation of the rules that are in force and to be negotiable only when an "educational post" is vacant.

This decision of the spiritual authority, dated the 3rd of December, testifies to a certain goodwill and does not imply a final refusal. It seemed then that Brother Amaranthe had not met with the worst sort of welcome at the Archbishop's palace in Malines. Indeed, it is possible that, for several months, he was allowed to assemble pupils at his home. And in this way, Brother Solomon's language, "He began a residence school" might be explained. Unfortunately, he was impatient for an official recognition: he had "wanted too much to succeed". And then he ran up against, not "Josephism" (there is not a trace of a conflict between Church and State in this affair), but feelings of a xenophobic tendency and especially a pronounced suspicion of anything coming from France.

The Privy-Council, following its reporter, declared that "nothing demonstrated the superiority of the petitioner to the point at which it would be necessary to allow a departure from the established order in his favor". And the functionaries added: "Superior merit must be all the more demanded ...in that the petitioner is not only a foreigner ...but, ...beyond that... a French refugee, and that, for very sound reasons, abundantly deduced from several counsels and consultations, and especially a quotation from a protocol dated the 11th of May last involving doctors of the University of Rheims who had, to no purpose, sought the establishment of a residence school at Perulwez, it had been thought suited to the circumstances not to welcome requests or any plans that might tend to give French exiles, in general, influence over the instruction and education of youth. It was therefore proposed to their "Royal Highnesses" to decree a demurrer.

A letter, signed the same day by the Archduke Albert and the Archduchess, was sent "on the 10th of December, to the superintendent of schools: "Sir, having examined the counsel you have given on the 3rd of this month concerning the request of Nicholas François Le Coeur, we are informing you that ...the petitioner's request has been turned down. Moreover, we inform you that we agree with your concern with being careful never to admit foreigners to the position of school teacher or director of a residence school for education at the expense of the nation's natives or other subjects of His Majesty, except for reasons of eminent superiority of talent, and then only after a sojourn of several years in the country have been able to provide their morals, their characters and their minds with a sufficient experience, which written testimonials cannot obtain for them"...

Fear of revolutionary contagion (that was thought to be carried even by the victims of the Revolution) was, at bottom, inspired by the representatives of Austria. Five years earlier they were inclined to call upon the disciples of De La Salle in order to set up a system of normal schools. At the time they were happily contemplating "a less expensive establishment"; and they emphasized the unparalleled fame of the Brothers in the neighboring kingdom, and found nothing out of the way in subjecting their young people to "the influence" of foreign teachers.[31]

Everything now seemed to conspire against the efforts of the Superior-general, who was twice-over the victim of events in his own country. Some members of the Congregation managed to set up in Belgium, to teach there, and even to direct genuine educational institutions, under the protection of the local clergy and with the concurrence of the local

[31] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 522-523.

magistrates. We shall deal later on with the courageous attempts, the more or less enduring successes of Brothers Julian and Jonas and some of the other exiles. But these actions, which were also strewn with obstacles and interrupted by the invasion of the armies of the Republic, were, in the final analysis, nothing more than the efforts of individuals. Those who began them, having returned to civilian life after the dispersal of the Institute in France, did not have to administer an overall plan to the bitter end. Under the most favorable circumstances they observed friendly relations with each other, or, indeed, at the height of the turmoil, they lost sight of one another. Only in Italy did the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools preserve its name, its unity, its rules and its hierarchy. The moment has come to follow the history of this group, for which the Holy See provided a temporary organization and the means of subsistence.

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Beginning with the last days of 1791, Brother Agathon habitually resided at Melun. From indications supplied by the account book it is possible to conclude that he no longer came to Paris except briefly while travelling and even then at great intervals[32] As the fatal moment neared in which the secular Congregations were abolished, the Superior's place could be nowhere except with his Brothers, to talk to them about their future obligations, to persevere with them in prayer and to experience the last consolations of Community life. Henceforth, he would conduct his public business by proxy: the responsibility for corresponding with the members of the Legislative Assembly would fall to the Brother Procurator-general, Philippe of Jesus, to take steps and measures, sometimes in Paris, to visit important patrons, sometimes in Melun, to keep his Superior informed of debates in Committees or of the inclinations of political powers. In these endeavors he was draining his (already endangered) health and exhausting the resources of a skillful logician and a marvelously patient man.

He was supported by Brother Solomon whose mission, if not more oppressive, was still more painful. He had finally taken his position on the outposts, in the deserted buildings on the Rue Neuve, which the school Brothers, stripped of their stipends by the "Constitutional" pastor and made uneasy by a platoon of Luxembourg Guards, were forced to abandon. No doubt, neighborhood gossip progressed apace; but nothing betrayed the Brother's identity to the passing crowd. The man who went quietly about his business was known as Citizen Nicolas Le Clercq. He dressed like a Frenchman, with a "fine cockade" in his hat. His hair "was bound in a pigtail" like " a good patriotic soldier" --- the sort of "get-up" that gave no whiff of the "aristocrat."[33] Certainly, it was better that the demagogues had no knowledge of how his days were spent. He continued to attend chapels in which the "enemies of the people" officiated, and to "stir up" his family with long letters and with bundles of pamphlets against the "jurors". He strengthened his soul with Eucharistic piety. And while he laid plans for the future, it was always with the primordial concern of associating himself with the Roman Church. When his aged father died on the 15th of July 1790,[34] his brothers and sisters proceeded to a "disposition" of the inheritance: Nicolas, along with Rosalie Le Clercq, asked for "the portion...most conformed to the Will of God". He did not think that he could "decide" upon a return to his native city: "There are far more means (for Catholic worship) in

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[32] . "Thirtieth of July 1792: 13 livres, 17 sols, 9 deniers paid for five days of room and board for the Brother Superior in Paris, along with the Third Brother Assistant." "Thirtieth of August: 19 livres, 16 sols, 6 deniers spent on traval by Brother Superior."

[33] Brother Solomon's letter to Mlle Le Clercq, dated the 22nd of January 1792. Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 106.

[34] Chassagnon, pg. 308. Death certificate dated July 17, 1790 in St. Nicholas' parish in Boulogne.

the big cities, where, besides, one is not so well known."[35] At other moments, however, he found himself a semi-hermit in Boulogne, "in the little room behind the saltworks, or...at the ferryboat slip," unless he chose "some lonely...street" in "upper-town". But he didn't linger over these fancies. His most steadfast resolution was to maintain interior peace while embracing the trials of each day. Like genuine saints, he was joyful. With humor he describes the huge house in which he lived, where he had "no end of space to rent", because, during the day, he occupied it along with a single companion, Brother Berthier who, each evening, took off to bed down in another lodging. The cook at the Carmelite monastery brought dinner, the leftovers from which provided another meal. Besides, Brother Solomon had at his disposal "certain abstinence foods" and, if he had to, as, for example, for an unexpected guest, he could whip up an omelette ---- "an enjoyable activity" which, he thought, prepared him to get out of a tight spot, if he had to do without help from others.[36]

These were the colorful moments in a constantly unfolding drama, in which Brother Solomon played an important and serious role. When he returned to Melun,[37]as he did from time to time, the reason for these journeys was important: the Brother Secretary was the bearer of valuable information; and he was responsible for circumspect and delicate missions. The people he ran into on his doorstep would have been quite surprised by his connections with a journalist whose influence had been growing in 1792 --- the editor of the French Patriot, and the most highly regarded man in the Girondist Party in the Legislative Assembly, Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville.

Brissot was Nicolas le Clercq's first cousin by marriage. The accidents of his adventurous career had once brought him to Boulogne, where friends had introduced him to rich merchants in the city, the Duponts, who, intelligent and worldly, were repelled neither by the politics nor the "philosophy" of the time. In 1789 several members of this family took their seats in the Provincial Assembly in Boulogne.

Very close family ties bound François Dupont to the Le Clercqs. His sister had married Nicholas' father, and "Uncle François" asked nothing better than to advise his nephews and guide them into lucrative professions. And while the entrance of several of them into Religion had upset him, he continued to bestow upon them an openhearted affection. The patriarchal simplicity of the Le Clercqs, their antique and integral faith, contrasted with the luxury and the opinions of this other family circle, and Brother Solomon noticed these differences. We might well believe that it was not without surprise and with a certain uneasiness that he learned of the wide-open welcome reserved for Brissot who, doubtless witty and warm, had a dubious reputation, lived a nomadic existence, and entertained opinions and participated in activities that were rather suspect.

The story ends in a marriage. Brissot conceived a grand passion for the daughter of the house, Felicity. When Mlle Dupont became, under the supervision of Madame Genlis, one of the teachers of the Princess Adelaide of Orleans, the journalist was living in Paris. Mme. François Dupont had warmly recommended Brissot to her relatives in Paris. The two young people met once again at the home of Mentelle, professor of geography at the Military School. The romance continued "happy and untroubled", according to Brissot in his Memoires. And the son of the Chartres pastry-cook, the bohemian who, out of self-flattery, had added the Anglicized form of the name of his native village to his family name, Brissot

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[35]Letter dated January 22, 1792.

[36]Motherhouse Archives, R-2, Letter no. 108, dated March 22, 1792 and GF a, Letter (a copy) no. 104 (Family documents). Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 409-410.

[37]The account book notes Brother Solomon's return "from Melun to Paris (expenditure for July 30, 1792).

de Warville married the heiress of the brewers and aldermen of Boulogne. In his in-laws he found an unswerving devotion. Mme. François Dupont "supplied for the expenses" of her son-in-law. And he confesses that he "was undermining the finances of a family that had adopted me and for which I would have shed my blood." The European Courrier, which he had launched to give scope to his pen and to exploit a profitable business transaction, yielded nothing but disappointment, debt, lawsuits and prison. His wife had joined him in London; and she was still with him, along with their first child, when Brissot, returned to Paris and was thrown into the Bastille in 1784. Immediately, Mme. Dupont left Boulogne and "crossed the Straights...in a simple rowboat", for the want of "a vessel ready to set sail". There, she alerted her daughter who, no less courageous, moved heaven and earth to obtain Brissot's release. Aided by the financier, Claviere, the future minister, the two women saved the unfortunate journalist from bankruptcy.[38]

The Revolution raised Brissot to the heights before treating him as a criminal. Did this man, whose in-laws had only yesterday come so generously to his rescue, expect his recognition to come from his relationship to Felicity Dupont? Firm alliances between old French families were proof against the worst sort of storms. The Le Clercqs had not broken off with their cousins. And so it was that the devout life of one of the "Carmelite martyrs" and the romantic but troubled existence of the Girondist continued to cross one another.

During the Constituent Assembly Brother Solomon was already in contact with the Brissot household. On the 14th of April 1791 he wrote: "Yesterday, dressed in civilian clothes, I paid a visit to my cousin (Mme) Warville; she had given birth two weeks earlier...She was nursing her child, and was still some−what delicate. I could only chat with her for a moment so as not to tire her out.[39].

When Paris sent the editor of the French Patriot as its represent−ative to the Legislative Assembly, the family in Boulogne sent its mail to the politician's address in order to take advantage of the free postage. In this way, Nicholas Le Clercq had several occasion to visit Felicity at her home. But her celebrated husband became less accessible, and Brother Solomon notes in his letter of the 22nd of January 1792 that "I have not yet been able to meet with M. Brissot at his home since he became Deputy. And so, I have not been in a position to let him know how I think, although he is not unaware that it is quite different from his own. I wrote him a letter from Melun when I sent him one of for my brother, Augustine, and I have also written to his wife. I have not received a reply; but it's true that I didn't ask them for anything that required one. She tells me that letters are no longer postage-free for them. So, if you have something to send me, send it to my own address: rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs.[40]

But this was not a permanent chill. Brother Solomon saw Mme. Brissot again in March and gave her 427 livres in paper money, which was owed to Brissot by Augustine Le Clercq.[41] Then, from his point of view, the Brother considered the belligerent policy against Austria, into which Brissot, quite influential in the Legislative Assembly, was dragging the country. Sharing the hopes of the people faithful to Louis XVI, Brother Solomon guessed that "between now and May there will be something" new: a declaration of war, of which there is

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[38].P. Brissot, Memoires, (1754-1793), published by C. Perroud, Paris, Vol. II, pp. 185, 300-301, Vol. II, pp. 6-7, 10, 12, 24. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 417-418.

[39]Letter no. 96 in the Family documents

[40]Motherhouse Archives, R-2, Letter no. 106. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 419.

[41]Letters dated March 1, 1792 (Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 107) and March 22 (no. 108).

so much talk, will perhaps lead to "the suppression of the Assembly."[42]The majority of that body, which his cousin controlled, inspired in him nothing but fear: "An act of the love of God is worth more than all the fine and sweeping decrees proclaimed so noisily on the streets of Paris...What a pity! Poor France, to what a state you are reduced![43] But whatever might have been the Brother Secretary's legitimate criticism and understandable repugnance for Girondist policies, he sought to use the influence of the personal sympathy that Felicity Dupont seemed still to lavish upon him in her relations with her husband, for the advantage of his Institute.

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Above the State, the apostles of the age admitted no authority; and between the State and the individual citizen they rejected every intermediate power. Every group and every association must be smashed. But 1792 the best minds remained, at least theoretically, respectful of individual liberty; and their hearts were not closed to compassion. Who, indeed, in that age was not, by his own testimony, "sensitive"? In spite of their quarrels, Frenchmen searched for grounds of understanding and areas reserved for courteous conversation and indispensable accord. It was there that men like Brissot and Brother Solomon were found. And it was in such an arena, however narrowly circumscribed, that a man like Brother Philippe of Jesus could manoeuvre.

As allies, he accepted members of the "Constitutional Club", constitutional royalists on the "Right" and the most moderate of their colleagues in the "Center". He expected, besides, favors from some men of the "Left" --- not only from Brissot, but also from Condorcet. He never asked them for anything that would have put them in a position of rejecting their positions. His appeals were restricted to moving their souls.

His principal body of correspondence was exchanged with the Secretary of the Committee for Estates, Pierre Charles Victor Vencens, Deputy from Gard. The fairness and moderation of this legal authority, a native of Normandy and former lawyer in the bailiwick of Neufchatel-en-Bray, inspired confidence. On the 3rd of January 1792 he asked Brother Philippe to supply him with an overall picture of the Congregation's income, along with the number of Brothers who were members.[44] The Procurator responded the next day with the following figures: 500 perpetually professed Brothers, 220 with triennial vows; and 80 "who have completed their probation and have served less than four years in the schools"; 116 houses, 20 of which belong to the Institute (their value could not be estimated at the time; the Melun and Avignon properties and residence schools constituted a group of considerable value); 74,747 livres of clear income, of which 31,717 livres are corporate revenue ("and not included in this...figure was the income from about 100 acres of arable lands and vineyards... in Carcassonne, Dole, Chateaudun and Mezieres..." as well as several debts payable by the Province of Languedoc to Montpellier, the total of which was not exactly known).

This statement tended to give the broadest possible base for the calculation of indemnities. The same quite justifiable goal inspired the following supplementary information: 1. Independently of the properties mentioned above, which is exclusively the fruit of their own labor and thrift, (the Brothers) will be giving to the nation all the school

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[42]Letter of March 1.

[43]Letter of March 22

[44]All the documentation in this paragraph is taken from Brother Procurator-general's correspondence register, Motherhouse Archives, file HA, p 4. Cf. Lucard, Vol. I, pp. 607-613; Chassagnon, pp. 401-405 and 417; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pp. 113-117.

foundations, several of which are in real estate, as in Nancy, Soissons, Auxonne, Nogent-le-Rotrou, Vire, etc., and which belong to them in the same way that the property of the suppressed Orders belonged (to them);

2. Because of the importance and the direct purpose of their services, the Brothers have deserved at least as much at the hands of the Nation as the Mendicant Orders, most of which have given up none of their property except their residences;

3. Beyond the fact that they constitute a genuine Congregation, like the Vincentians, the Doctriners, etc., they have, over and above, in their favor perpetual vows, which caused them to renounce their temporal interests in favor of other members of their families;

4. Most of them are more exhausted at forty years of age through the arduous work of teaching than people are at sixty in other Orders.

At the end of January a second report (a copy of which was sent to Vaublanc Jaucourt, Sedillez and Jolivet) insisted on the sacrifices of both a general and individual nature consented to by the Brothers for the "common good". The retirement pensions would be inadequate, if the Committee refused to consider them both "as compensation and reward". The Procurator did not scruple to bolster his argument with the assertion that "at Melun" the Community spent a thousand francs on each Brother (which, strictly speaking was true only since the recent decline in the numbers of the Community).

Having played his trump cards in this way, the Procurator experienced the keenest disappointment when, on the 4th of February, one of the Deputies described the plan worked out by the Committee for Estates: the Christian Brothers were included among "teachers in the second class". As such, they would receive only half the pension benefits provided for those in the first class. Hence, a Brother who had at the most only five years in the Institute would return home with an alms of 75 livres, or the ridiculous sum of 15 livres for each of his years of service. Brothers who could prove that they had more than five years of Community (up to ten full years) were given a scanty annual pension --- 10 livres for each year of teaching. Finally, lengthy periods of dedication were scarcely rewarded any better. In order to calculate the annual pension of a Brother grown old in the harness, his number of years teaching were multiplied by the sum of 15 livres; but the pension of the most senior member of the Congregation in the second class could never exceed 600 livres.

Brother Philippe of Jesus was indignant: "Why should a Christian Brother have only half of what is given an Oratorian or a Doctriner? Are the services of the Brother valued at exactly half of the others? Are their needs any fewer? If a difference were to be insisted upon, the gap should be narrowed: five or six hundred livres at a time when the cost of living was rising could not allow people worn out by classroom work to feed, lodge and clothe themselves. A maximum of 900 livres for forty years of service would not be "excessive"; and smaller pensions should be increased accordingly.

This time the Brother Procurator's petition was not only sent to Vincens and the usual group of friendly Deputies.[45]To which Rataud was added. Brother Agathon's representative ventured to make his appeal to a very prominent person, the Chairman of the Committee for Public Instruction, philosopher and renowned mathematician, Antoine Nicolas Caritat, the former Marquis of Condorcet. He wrote to him on the 5th of February:

"Although I have no other claim upon your goodness in favor of our Congregation than your love of justice and the patronage with which the late Bishop of Lisieux, your respected kinsman, honored us,[46] with the greatest confidence, I appeal earnestly to you to use the influence that your talents and enlightenment have so justly won for you in the

[45]For Bishop Condorcet and his associations with the Brothers' Institute see Vol. II of the present work, pp. 393 and 513-514

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National Assembly and in your Committee to gain for us a fairer arrangement in the case in which we are suppressed. You see, Sir, in the petition and in the remarks subjoined,[47] the motives for our just demands. This is why I limit myself to beseeching you to support them with your eloquence and with your power. My confreres as well as myself hope that you look upon us as worthy of your support, men who have generously sacrificed their youth, talents and resources for the tuition-free education of the poor...

The plea was lacking neither in skill nor in good taste: the tribute paid to Bishop Condorcet, coming from a Religious, could not displease the nephew and philosopher, no matter how far he was removed from the beliefs of his uncle: what the circumstances demanded with respect to an influential political figure was a discreet flattery; and, then, by emphasizing the role played by the Brothers in the spread of tuition-free education, the Procurator was taking direct aim at the concerns of the Marquis-turned-man-of-the-people.
And yet the effect of this step, although not absolutely useless, was rather slow in appearing. A letter from Vincens, dated the 25th of February, did not exactly raise Brother Philip's hopes: "Once the Bill has been finally decreed, after long discussions, it will be difficult to make any changes in it at that time; but your valid observations will find their place in the discussions". The Chairman of the Committee for Estates expressed his good will: "No one (more than he) desired that work be rewarded, and that old age and weakness be supported". But his "position" prevented him from undertaking personal initiatives until there was a new situation: it compelled him to stress majority decisions and not "his own ideas".

Haudouart, the Deputy from the Pas-de-Calais, exhibited less optimism. He wrote to the petitioner on the 26th: "I greatly fear that the Committee for Estates is going to persist in the first version of the Bill, with which you are familiar; and I am all the more justified in believing that the Committee for Public Education ...having itself inveighed ...against the quota of proposed pensions, no one will obtain ...its agreement to an increase. And if the Committees do not change their opinions, as is probable, you sense that they will have the greatest influence in the Assembly ... "Efforts to economize, whether just or not", always had a chance of being "heard", as this lawmaker noted in 1792. Nevertheless, along with Vincens, he would seek ways of obtaining, in particular cases, a softening in the severity of the texts. And Haudouart, who was a compatriot of Brother Solomon, ended his letter with an assertion of his "most sincere devotedness".

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We scarcely dare to pause at these painful debates, these negotiations of an obviously low order and apparently mean-spirited. We note especially the charity which inspired the negotiator with respect to his confreres and the sympathy that certain public figures continued to manifest in favor of De La Salle's followers. Decisive events were on the verge of occurring. In its brief existence the Legislative Assembly was approaching "the point of no return" --- war against Europe, religious persecution, the unleashing of revolutionary passion and the vilification of the a "thrown" which was on its last legs.

While Brother Philippe of Jesus set out on a campaign to secure a few mouthfuls of food for his ill-fated confreres, marked out for destruction and dispersal, the future itself of secular Congregations continued to be at risk. As Nicholas La Clercq wrote to his sister on the 1st of March:[48] "There exists a printed report (for suppression) by the Committee For Education, but it has not yet been discussed nor decreed".

Actually, it had been almost three weeks since this report had been submitted to the

[47] Brother Philip of Jesus sent Condorcet a copy of the complaint and the needs summarized above

[48] Letter no. 107.

Assembly.[49] Its authorship was not Condorcet's, but Jacques Gaudin's, a former member of the French Oratory --- "the infamous renegade from our altars". In 1781 this priest had published a book against clerical celibacy; if he did not totally serve "Baal", he believed that in the schismatic church he had located the highroad for his ambition and for his morbid hatred. He was Episcopal Vicar for Roderick,the Bishop of Vendee, and at the same time he represented (a bizarre choice) this predominantly Catholic Department in the Assembly. Belatedly and scandalously embracing his own theories, he contracted marriage at the age of sixty-one. Presently, he became a librarian in Rochelle and then a judge in the courts of that city.[50]

The former Father Gaudin blithely assumed the responsibility for dealing the deathblow to the teaching Congregations, including the one that had fostered him. Their destruction seemed to him to have no untoward consequences: "How many young people, whose natural talents have already received a splendid education and whom the Revolution has left without a calling...will compete...for posts (in national education) when they see them useful and honored! You need only will it and they will come in droves..."[51]

The author of the report was convinced that, by destroying the educational congregations, one would find the people educated by them rushing to the service of the country. It was a version of the enduring legend of the goose that lays the golden egg! Indeed, creating a mythology that fanatics in our own time would perpetuate, Gaudin, in the tones of a funeral oration, eulogized the marvelous teachers who had maintained and developed the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle: "The Brothers of the Christian Schools, commissioned, in many cities, to teach reading, writing, arithmetic and elementary commercial subjects, have successfully fulfilled this function and have gone on to found numerous residence schools that have won the full confidence of the public. What, then, was their offense? The entire indictment was contained in a single sentence: "This group, founded under the auspices of the Jesuits, has continued their fanaticism and intolerance". This historical resume, singularly arbitrary, partial and imprecise, was all that the heirs of Gallicanism and Jansenism, and the successors of Voltaire and La Chalotais required. It was at least thirty years earlier that, pointing a finger at the "Ignorantin Community, the writers in the New Churchmen, lawyers and "philosophers" had first pronounced the *delenda est*.[52]

To put all scruples to rest, there was nothing like a fresh orchestration of the classical theme: Once the Congregation had been dispersed, we "will welcome those of their members who wish to devote themselves" to the cause of popular education. "Monastic despotism" curbs the "patriotism" of many of the Brothers; once the authority of the despots (the Superiors) is smashed, individuals will rediscover their civic pride along with their freedom.[53]

The storm raged so violently that lightening seemed in the offing. However, as Brother Solomon wrote, it was a pent-up anger. It is probable that there was some desire to give the Committee for Public Education the time to complete the second part of its program: Condorcet deferred putting the finishing touches on what was hoped to be a work of genius,

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[49] Submitted on the 10th of February 1792. See Aulard, op. cit., pp. 221-226

[50] Gabory, op. cit., pp. 118-119.

[51] Aulard, ibid., pg. 221.

[52] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 402-433.

[53] Aulard, op. cit., pg. 226, Cf. Essai sur la Maison, pg. 104; Chassagnon, pg. 413, and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pp. 119-120.

the "report" which, to the mind of its encomiasts, was a synthesis of the thought and theory of its educational precursors.

But a too long delay begets impatience. On the 6th of April there arose in the hall of the Riding School one of Gaudin's former confreres, the Deputy Ichon, who had once been Superior of the Oratory in Condom: he asked for precedence in favor of the Report on Secular Congregations. The majority approved, and the former Father Gaudin read his invective. The question was whether he would he prevail without opposition? In the Assembly the "Right" loathed crude manoeuvering, while in the benches on the "Left" Brissot and Condorcet voiced their reservations. And, then, within the ranks of the "Constitutional" clergy the victims found a defender. Like Fauchet and Gregoire, Le Coz was a priest who had been won over to the Revolution, and he was stubborn in his Gallican allegiance and in the repudiation of his obligations to the Holy See (as he would make abundantly clear on the occasion of the Concordat of 1801!) But, also like the Bishops of Calvados and Loir-and-Cher, he had a proud but sincere mind. In this Bishop of the Department of Ille-and-Vilaine, ambition was allied with priestly virtue.

"The Constitution (he declared) is...a shambles. Do you wish to make matters worse? ... Legislators who are friends of humanity and must overturn a public institution inquire whether something better can be put in its place...I believe that the Congregations which presently operate public education cannot be suppressed without great damage to society". We shall see immediately where this preamble was to lead: "Among the Congregations that must be preserved...I distinguish the "Doctriners": this Congregation is very useful for the class that is less well-off. In many cantons, or, indeed, in small cities, these are the societies which instruct children in elementary notions. By suppressing them you deprive 600,000 children of the means of learning to read and write". Which teachers did the speaker have in mind? There is no doubt but what it was especially the Brothers. He lumped them together with the Fathers of Christian Doctrine --- under a name that would be less compromising in the ears of his colleagues. But the Brothers were the ones (and not the Fathers, who had become teachers of the classics and of the middle class) who dispensed primary instruction to the sons of workers and artisans, and whose vocation it was to spread that kind of education everywhere.

An obscure Deputy from the Vosges, Maraut by name, demanded that the discussion be terminated immediately. The people for whom the bishop was arguing "insinuated the poison of aristocracy and fanaticism into the minds of children". The policy of suppression can tolerate neither criticism nor repentance. Docily the Assembly complied.[54].

In order to win the full cooperation of the indifferent and timid and to provide the appearance of consolation for the advocates of a lost cause, it remained only to bedeck with flowers the victims who were about to be sacrificed. Once again it was a priest who assumed this responsibility --- a priest scarcely worthy of commendation, a hypocritical sycophant, prone to cowardice and betrayal, suited soul and body to the role of high priest with the devout and solemn countenance and the ruthless heart.

Gaudin, crude and brutal, cast discredit on his victims. The "Whereases" of his Bill dwelt on "the extreme decadence", the "incapacity", "the uselessness" and the "danger" of secular Congregations.

At the session of the 6th of April 1792, Torne, "Bishop of the capital of the central provinces,"[55]. rose in opposition to the "abusive" text. Undoubtedly, "the most highly rated and most estimable Congregations had to be dissolved. Indeed, "what an obstruction is to the human body, such is any corporation of citizens to the body politic...Individuals adhere all the

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[54] Aulard, op. cit., pp. 231-232. Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pp. 340-341. La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 141

[55] i.e., from Bourges

less to the nation to the extent that they are more attached to the small 'whole' of which they are members".

For the salvation of the State, a radical, final solution was necessary. The evil would be averted only by severe measures; so that no one would be left to hope that "a miraculous counter-revolution would restore life" to these parasitic societies.

It should not be forgotten, however, (and here there occurred a cunning diversion) that we are facing the "educators of French youth": "The pupils are striking back at ...their former teachers". "The honor" of the Assembly demands that immolation must not "appear" to be enacted with glee. It is "sufficiently justified" by the common law: to taint it with "passion", "bitterness" and "ingratitude" at the very moment we are intending to reintroduce valuable ingredients into the social body would be a grave miscalculation and an unwarranted error.

As a result, but not without pausing lengthily over the charitable Congregations, and not without having insisted, in long-winded discourse, the interdiction of the clerical and Religious habit, Torne proposed the following language for the decree: "The National Assembly, considering that a truly free State must not tolerate in its midst any corporation, not even those which, dedicated to public education, have deserved well at the hands of the nation, and that the moment the Legislature succeeds in abolish−ing Religious corporations is also the time in which it must forever sweep away the apparel which was peculiar to them, the necessary effect of which would be to recall them to mind, to call up the image of them and to suggest that they still exist, let it be enacted:

First Article: The general corporation that the entire clergy of the kingdom forms, the partial corp−orations which, under the name of secular clergy, monastic order, Religious societies, clerical and lay secular congregations whether of men or of women, whatever their functions, under whatever name they exist in France, whether they include only one house or several, are extinguished and suppressed as of the publication of the present decree.

According to the Moniteur both the "Whereases" and the article were widely applauded and gained "a near unanimity" of the vot−ers.[56]

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In the memory of contemporaries, this death sentence was bound up with its Good Friday date. Its composition, in which a pompous preacher and a crafty procedural artist seemed to have collaborated, admitted of no loopholes. The innocent, adorned with filets, were handed over to the bloodthirsty gods, and, meanwhile, the axe had been exquisitely sharpened.

On the 13th of April Brother Solomon announced "the fatal decree" to his relatives: "It remains to be learned (he added) whether the king will approve. Some say yes, others say no. May God be blessed! But if the decree is approved, we must believe that its rigorous execution will be demanded...The nation will seize our property and perhaps provide a pension for our old men and offer jobs to teachers in the new system of education. But since it will be necessary to take the oath, God help those who become entrapped! And how fortunate for those who are strong in their religion and who have faithfully fulfilled its obligations!...It seems that we are no longer wanted in France. Soon, perhaps, there will no longer be any authorized religion..."[57]

Such foresight revealed an informed mind. However, as regards the approval, it could

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[56] Aulard, op. cit., pg. 233 et sq. Torne's discourse, reprinted according to the copy preserved in the National Archives, AD, XVIII, 176, alone occupies forty pages of the volume. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 413-414 and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 105.

[57] Family documents no. 103. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, GF a. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 441-445.

not be gotten from Louis XVI as long as the Assembly had not completed the examination of a text the first lines of which (actually the essential ones) were the only ones adopted[58]
The Committee for Public Education, with Torne's cooperation, would complete the outline. At the same time, it strained to organize (on paper) the new educational system. On the 18th of April, at its sixty-seventh meeting, its members agreed (a humble beginning) to make the term "schoolteacher" a privileged term.[59] Henceforth, what at one time were called "tutors" would be called "primary schoolteachers."[60]

In the same week Condorcet finally presented his system. He conceived of five instructional stages: at the base, there were the primary schools, and then the secondary schools, followed by the "Institutes" and after them the "Lycees", and at the summit, a "national Society for the arts and sciences". All instructional programs were determined according to ideas that were dear to the *Encyclopedists:* for the most part, humanistic culture ceded its place to studies based upon mathematical reasoning, the observation of nature, and the results of experimentation. Latin appeared only at the third instructional stage. As Bishop Torne had insisted in his recent lecture, even early instruction was to include "a methodical introduction to the scope of the sciences": without which "the teachers' activity" would have "only remotely" followed "the progress of human knowledge".[61]Without any doubt the Brothers had measured their steps in relation to this progress, since, along the route they had followed, they agreed with the philosopher-turned-pedagogue. The numerous primary schools that Condorcet hoped to spread throughout the nation (he had planned for one for every four-hundred inhabitants) would be maintained by a single teacher who in the space of four years would teach not only reading, writing, the "elements of grammar", and the rules of arithmetic, but also "simple methods of exactly measuring a piece of land, and for measuring and building", knowledge of "the country's products", and the "procedures of agriculture and the arts". In matters having to do with a purely "earthly" instruction, the disciples of "the Great Teacher", in their tuition-free primary schools and in their technical schools had not fallen short of these goals.[62]The scope of their instruction had gradually broadened in the course of the 18th century as far as available finances and the social context would permit. Who then, rose up against them, to throw a barrier in their way. It wasn't the people in the Church, but bureaucrats bogged down in routine, "aristocrats" and "philosophers" made uneasy with seeing the people snatched from ignorance.[63]

On the whole, they would have subscribed to these views of the statesman: "It will be easy to push back the limits of public education, when the improvements in the life of the people, the more equal distribution of wealth and progress in the methods of teaching (sanction such an initiative); when...the lowering of the debt and the reduction of superfluous expenses (will supply the means) to dedicate a greater portion of the public income to genuinely useful projects".

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[58] ."In Paris, as well as in Melun, priests and Religious continued to appear in religious garb", notes Brother Solomon in the letter from which we have just quoted.

[59]Trans. Note: The Committee replaced the older terms ("maitre", "maitress", and, as we shall see below, "regent") by "instituteur", "institutress". In the current translation we have been rendering the older terms indifferently by the English "teacher" and "schoolteacher".)

[60]Guillaume, op. cit., pg. 187.

[61]Discourse of April 6, in Aulard, op. cit., pg. 240.

[62]See Vol. II of the present work, especially Part Three, chap. iv.

[63]Ibid., Part Three, chap. v.

Nevertheless, the Brothers were dismissed. The time came when their Society had become troublesome and odious. Children were being lead along ways on which their former guides refused to enter, because they thought them evil, and designed to end up in a quagmire, blind alley or a precipice.

According to Condorcet the schoolteacher was not indifferent to the rules of conduct; but the moral principles formulated "in the schools and in the Institutes" should be "those which, founded on our natural sentiments and on reason, belong equally to all men. The Constitution, by acknowledging the right that each man has of choosing his own religion (blocks) entrance to an education which...would give particular dogmas an advantage contrary to the freedom of opinion. It was therefore rigorously necessary to separate morality from the principles of every particular religion and the propositions of theology from public education. "Temples" would remain open for souls in search of a faith".[64]

And so spoke, in once "Christian" France, the nephew of the Bishop of Lisieux, the younger brother of the "Encyclopedists" and the precursor of the "neutral school".

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The celebrated report arose like a proud colonnade on the horizon: it was not without beauty and majesty, and it gave glimpses on to vast but disquieting perspectives. It inspired the admiration of the masses. But it was in incomplete and unusable monument. Generations would come and go, the world would change and the Revolution would have become a hundred years old before a new group of rationalists would turn the work to account, and recover the elements of a system conceived in opposition to French tradition and the Providential order of things.

In 1792 there were no workers for the immense task of national education once the laborers trained by the Church, and who had remained faithful to it, had been rejected as unworthy. Nevertheless, there were those who fell to the work of demolition. The inquiry into, and the vote on, the Bill concerning the secular Congregations continued apace, in sections, from the end of April until August. On the margin of the tragedy which, from the beginning to the end of the period, summoned the attention and gripped the soul, we must take a look at the obscure, the monotonous drama, often enough a fabric of banality and meanness, in which however lives and noble consciences struggled.

At the threshold of his misfortune, we shall at least be comforted by Brother Solomon. On the 29th of May, he wrote: "The decree of suppression...has not been approved. Will it be? I know nothing about it. Will I continue in my vocation? I don't know that either. But what I do know very well is that twenty-five years ago yesterday I took the Religious habit which for more than a year now I have not had the privilege of wearing in Paris; and that twenty years ago yesterday I made perpetual vows. May God give me the Grace to keep them until death, or at least those that remain in my power, if I am obliged to return to the world."[65]

In this voice which answers its own questions with a prayer of thanksgiving and a firm resolution we hear something of an echo of the famous prayer attributed to Madame Elizabeth of France. It was very well for the saintly Brother to live like a cast away on his raft, since the worst shocks left him still unmoved in the depths of his soul.

Not too far removed from him, the Brother Procurator, by the obligations of his office and by obedience, persisted in struggling against the gale. He repeated his exhausting strategies until the last hope was submerged. In May, June and July he assailed the members

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[64] Guillaume, op. cit., pp. 190-205. Cf. Herment, op. cit., pp. 313-314.

[65] Family documents, Letter no. 104; Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 422.

of the Assembly with his declarations and petitions. He had hoped in Brissot; and to him, on the 4th of May, he sent, at the same time as to Locointre, a copy of his January report,[66] to which he added a commentary on the Congregation's revenues, the personal resources of the Brothers and the special differences that a Religious would find in assuring his livelihood, between the relative well-being of even an impoverished Community life and the risks to be run, the ex−penses to be borne in the complete isolation that would follow upon dispersion. He sought the support of the Deputy for all the members of the Lasallian family, "even for those who have been forced to abandon their functions" and "especially for those...who, through their age and infirmities, have both more needs" and less chance of gaining a livelihood. In support of this request, he invoked the friendship "of Brother Secretary-general, who has the distinction of being related" to M. Brissot Warville.[67]

This letter, it seems, receive a "gracious welcome". Brother Solomon, who assumed the responsibility for evaluating its effect, brought from his cousin the promise of help in raising the pension-grants. Brother Philippe, on the 7th of June, expressed his gratitude to the politician and took advantage of the situation in order to return to the unfortunate affair in Marseille, left in suspense for three months.[68] He expected from Brissot's "sense of justice" a quick remedy for the usurpations of which the people in Marseille were guilty.[69] Obviously, it was asking for too much: the party-leader could not risk compromising the popularity he enjoyed with the Jacobins in Province.

A little later there arose the "matter of the bells" -- minuscule in comparison with the confiscation of a residence school, but, nevertheless, significant. The District of Melun presumed to remove two bells from the carillon in the Holy Child Jesus House. The Brother Procurator interceded on the 16th of June with the Directory of the Department of the Seine-and-Marne, and then, on the 2nd of July, with a bureaucrat in the Ministry of the Interior. He recalled that the Institute was not yet suppressed, that, on the contrary, the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies had supported it in its right to possess property, and that they were not church bells, and that in Rouen, Nancy and Angers, the Brothers' chapels were spared such practices.[70]

Once the calamities began actually to occur, Brother Philippe, like the faithful steward, busied himself immediately with obtaining the payment of outstanding debts. The paymaster in Montpellier had refused to deposit the salaries owed by the Province of Languedoc, so little certainty had he that the Congregation would survive. "May it please the Assembly to order the payment", was the burden of a petition from the Procurator, dated the 16th of July.[71] Three days later, the municipal officers in Melun "certified and attested that the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is actually existing and that the Regime of this Congregation resides in this city". The document is covered with the stamps of the District and the Department, and dated the 24th of July.[72]

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[66] See above, pg. 202

[67] Motherhouse Archives, file HA p 4. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 420 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April 1938, pg. 118.

[68] See above, pg. 157.

[69] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 601-604, and Chassagnon, pg. 421.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4.

[72] 3

Thus, on the 30th the Institute's treasurer as was able to enter into his books the receipt of the funds from Languedoc, payable and paid during the preceding year. At the same period he received overdue funds from Bourgogne, Paris, Brittany, Aides and Gabelles. Overall the sum came to 9,388 livres, and very important for the Superior-general who was doling out money to the Brothers in preparation for 'the great departure'.[73]

Precautions of another sort seem to date from the same period. We have seen that in February 1791 Brother Agathon presided over the transfer of a heavy trunk from Melun to Paris.[74]. Henceforth, important documents were protected. But at St. Yon, in a "small closet" under the garret of the chapel, there was a treasure of greater value: clothing, priestly vestments and instruments of penance which had belonged to De La Salle. These were genuine relics for the followers of the Founder and, in the more or less immediate future, quite certainly for the entire Church.[75] It would seem necessary to remove them from the danger of profanation. The Community in Normandy, following the wishes of the Superior, relinquished them. Many years later Brother Vivien of Rheims handed them back to the leader of the reconstructed Congregation. But how had he obtained the collection? Regarding this question, we adopt the hypothesis by Brother Agathon's recent biographer:[76]François Rene Gaudenne, having obtained his exeat from the school in Rheims,[77] did not, like Parsifal, go to seek the Holy Graal of his Institute in Rouen. Rather, certifying the authenticity of the objects he had rescued, he declared that he had "received them as they came from St. Yon."[78] In the context, the sentence can have no other meaning than that he was entrusted with a packing-case sent from St. Yon.

On the 23rd of June 1792 Brother Superior-general wrote a letter to Brother Vivien who, during the last century, presented the letter to the Motherhouse Archives.[79] "Overworked," Brother Agathon had to be satisfied with a brief reply to the lines (the loss of which is indeed unfortunate) which his inferior addressed to him on the 16th. He did not discourage him from hoping for better days. Indeed, he seems himself to have indulged in an upsurge of optimism: the frightful day of the 20th of June 1792 (on which His Royal Majesty was subjected to fresh outrages) called forth a reaction in favor of Louis XVI (more imposing and more energetic in humiliation than he ever was as king) that seemed to augur well.[80]

If the climate changes for the better, Brother Vivien would return to the Congregation at the first "signal". This staunch promise earned him Brother Agathon's congratulations; the Superior was becoming "more and more confirmed" in his favorable opinion regarding Rene Gaudenne.

There is nothing vague about this preamble. But the question remains to interpret the essential assertion of the document and to grasp, behind the Superior's reply, the proposals

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[73] Motherhouse Archives, HAm, account book.

[74] See above, pg. 179

[75] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 469-470.

[76] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April 1938, pp. 121-122.

[77] See above, pg. 146.

[78] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1, letter to Brother Thomas, Director of Holy Child Jesus House in Paris.

[79] Autograph letter presently included in Brother Agathon's file, BE y.

[80] Louis Madelin, Histoire politique de la Nation francaise, pg. 530.

contained in Vivien's letter.

"No (declared Brother Agathon) no, indeed, I do not disapprove of your intention to spend some time in Paris. I shall give you there, please God, the advice and reflection you ask of me. And I will supply them in greater detail orally than I able to do here in writing. While awaiting the meeting that circumstance shall arrange, continue, my very dear Brother, in the good dispositions with which God has inspired you".

Accordingly, the two Brothers would meet at Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs or some other place agreed upon during one of those journeys to Paris that the Superior-general had revived during the second half of 1792. Nothing precludes the supposition that they discussed "orally" the matter of the relics, mementos and papers that had to be secured. Simple guidelines of a spiritual nature would have demanded less secrecy. Beginning at this time Brother Agathon feared, with good reason, that the confidentiality of his correspondence had been violated; and he was not unaware that his activities were under suspicion by the leaders of the Revolution, and that after all of the refusals by his subordinates in opposition to decrees, he looked like "an enemy of liberty". Already "dissidents" had been regarded as conspirators; and while, on the 23rd of April, the Minister Roland had to acknowledge as "Unconstitutional" the decrees of the local administrations which had banished a good number of clerics from certain cities or even imprisoned some of them, he had nonetheless emphasized the "dangerous" activities of these rebels and outlined a kind of appeal to the Assembly against the king's veto.[81] It was needful, then, "when writing" to confine oneself to vague expressions and to allusions understood by initiates alone. The Superior of the Institute, in his letter of June 23rd, had simply mentioned a meeting intended apparently for an exchange of views and reflections and concluded his note with the maxim: "Let us honor religion, the Church and our vocation".[82]He would talk openly when he met confidentially with Brother Vivien.Brother Vivien had entered into possession (the fact itself doesn't raise the slightest doubt) not only of the objects come from Rouen but also those brought from Melun: --"The original Bull of Approbation of the Institute, the authentic manuscripts of the decrees of the Chapters...and the letters of our Venerable Father to employ here the very formal language of his statement of 1820".

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In a few weeks these security measures would probably have been too late. The glimmer of hope which had shown the day after the 20th of June vanished in the increasingly thickening darkness. Extremist factions had quickened their energies. In order to sweep France along in their wake, they cited the external dangers which threatened the national frontiers and the work of the Revolution. It was thought that foreign invaders would breach the borders, re-establish the "Ancien Regime" and completely enslave the people. On the 11th of July the Assembly declared 'the fatherland in danger. The capital was full of "confederates" whom the "Clubs" had indoctrinated and incited. The War Song for the Army on the Rhine had become the Marseillaise, and re-echoed, stupendously, against the walls of the Tuileries. Danton unleashed a riot and paralyzed resistance. On the morning of the 10th of August the "throne" collapsed.[83]

Henceforth, the Legislative Assembly was nothing but a tool in the hands of the

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[81]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 145.

[82]Brother Agathon's letter, published in full in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pp. 121-122, had appeared in part in the issue for May 1907, pg. 181.

[83]Madelin, op. cit., pp. 533-534

Provisional Executive Committee (where Jacques Danton still worked his will) and of the insurrectionary Commune. Having opened the sluice-gates of violence, the Assembly now could only drop out of sight.

Swiftly and without the obstacle of the veto, the Assembly dispatched its final tasks. "Feuillantists" or "Brissotists", bent under the blast from the "Left", all agreed to have done. And, in the meeting of the 18th of August, "M. Vincens delivered to the bureau the decree concerning the suppression of the secular Congregations and Confraternities, arranged in order, as he had been required to do by the decree of the 13th of this month..." Three prior "readings" had defined the terms of each article. On this very day the Bill became law.[84]

The "Whereas" was still the one composed by Torne. A grateful nation, in order to assert its "genuine freedom" dispersed its Religious *bene merentes*. And thus the Orders of priests, Oratorians, Doctriners, Vincentians, Sulpicians...and the Society founded by De La Salle lost their right to exist. "Lay Congregations, such as the Brothers of the Christian Schools...are extinct and suppressed", stated the first article of the first section.

None of the teaching corporations escaped extinction. It was important, however, not to appear to cast thousands of children into total ignorance, into complete barbarity. Article 6 required that "all members of Congregations actually employed in public education" continue to do so "as individuals" until "the final organization" (postponed, obviously, to another Assembly). "Those who shall discontinue their work without reasons thought to be valid by the Directories of the Departments, on the advice of Districts and the observations of municipalities, will obtain only half the salary which would have been granted them. The Departmental Directories were to provide for "temporary replacements" (art.7). Vacant posts would be granted, preferentially, to former teachers". (art.8)

In order to exorcize the memory and efface the image of an order of things that had been abolished, articles 9 and 10 prohibited, and listed among the offenses, the wearing of clerical or religious garbs.

The second section dealt with "the transfer and administration of the property of secular Congregations, Colleges, Confraternities and other suppressed groups". All property, real and personal, fell into the national domain. The sale of real estate would be effected "in the same way and under the same conditions" as the sale of the clergy's property. Only "the buildings and gardens" of Colleges that were operating in 1789 would be exempt.

The question of "pensions" was the subject of Title III. In this connection, the Assembly had maintained the division of the Congregations into two classes: "individuals belonging to clerical secular Congregations, devoted at the same time to the service of religion and to public education" made up the first class. "Members of the secular Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", who were listed in the second class, were to receive "as a retirement pension" half of the pension determined for the first class..., namely:

1. Fifty livres a year, paid once, for those who shall have lived in the Congregation for five consecutive years or less;

2. Ten livres for each year in the Congregation for those who shall have lived for at least ten years.

3. Fifteen livres for each year in the Congregation above ten years.[85]The fifteen livres were counted for each of the years one was a member, starting with the first. Thus, Brother Agathon would say that, for forty-five years in the Congregation, the decree allowed him 675 livres. (See below, Part II, chap. i).

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[84]See the complete text in Aulard, op. cit., pp. 291-311. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 615-619.

[85]1

The maximum ... will be 900 livres.

If we reflect on the figures once decided upon by the Committee for Estates, we become aware that the Brother Procurator's diligence and the influence of Condorcet and Brissot had gotten results. The increases favored the youngest, whose travelling expenses went from 15 to 50 livres for each year of work, and the oldest, whose annual pensions could rise not just to 600, but to 900 livres.

Unfortunately for the Christian Brothers, the fairly well- intentioned effect of this measure was pretty nearly totally wiped out:"Those members of secular Congregations who were obligated by the civil oath or to the oath of clerical functionaries by the Law of the 26th of December 1790, the 22nd of March and 17th of April 1791 and who cannot verify having fulfilled this formality will not have any right to a pension.

As for the others (i.e., as affecting the Lasallian Institute, Brothers employed elsewhere than in the public schools), the law subjected them to a new oath (the so-called "Liberty-equality oath"), the interpretation of which shall occupy us presently: "No pensioner designated in the present decree, with the exception of women, will receive the first installment of his pension, unless he delivers to the District Tax-Collector the certificate of the administration of the oath to be faithful to the nation, to defend liberty and equality or to die in their defense".

A subsidiary clause provided for a grant in aid to the infirm, according to their needs and according to the advice of the Directories. All members of the dissolved societies were to preserve their movable property and personal effects: -- the pitiful remains of a collective patrimony, bits of the wreckage that were quickly gathered together, after inventories had been taken, "situation reports" supplied, and the moment came to leave forever the cherished dwellings where people had lived in prayer, work and friendship.

Article 19 of the last Title determined upon the evening prior to the 1st of October 1792 as the final date for the withdrawal from "the national residences."

PART TWO

D I S P E R S A L T I M E

CHAPTER ONE

T h e I m m e d i a t e C o n s e q u e n c e s o f t h e L a w o f t h e E i g h t e e n t h o f A u g u s t

With the new era which the Revolution would date from the 22nd of September 1792, there began the years of dispersal and anxiety. “Sion was no more.” The century old edifice that was the Institute had been levelled to the ground. Chapels were secularized, estates confiscated, school buildings put into other hands, and with an occasional exception, total destruction was always just a few months away. For the Brothers the moment had come for the great exile -- even for those who did not leave French territory (which was the case for most), and even for those who found a haven in the same city in which they had been teaching. For seven years they would appear to live *super flumina Babylonis*. Faithful souls experienced distress in a world which refused them the right to follow their vocation and misconstrued their ideals.

Obscure suffering is nonetheless meritorious; frequently, it was accompanied by a poignant isolation, material privations and uncertainty for the future. There were those as well who confessed their faith, sacrificed their tranquillity, well-being, public esteem, home joys and the lack of recognition of their talents.

Nevertheless, we know well that the glory of martyrs was not lacking to the sons of John-Baptist de La Salle. Bloody martyrs or not, sacrificed by the sabre or the guillotine, painful captivities, especially dreadful, exhausting physical strength and attacking moral energies; sometimes deliverance from the shadow of death after the execution or agony of their captive companions.

At the head of this army- crowned with the laurel wreath- stands Brother Solomon, the “Saint Stephen” of his congregation we dare to say. The degree of suppression had scarcely been voted when Nicolas de Clercq, dragged away from his place in Rue Notre-Dame-des Champs found himself confined within the Carmelite abbey with the archbishop of Arles, the bishops of Beauvais and Saintes, and among the other prisoners, secular priests, Sulpicians, Benedictines, former Jesuits, Cordelians, Capuchins, Eudists and his confrere Jean-Baptiste Estève, Brother Abraham.

The halo of the beatified is spread in some way as well over the faces of the Brother victims of the Rochfort or Rennes hulks whom we wish will not be long delayed in being honoured in the same way; others also because of any canonical process will remain mingled with the crowd of the dead…

It would be better to group all the heroes of the Catholic cause under one title and in a continuous narrative. We will pause to do this when we treat of the period of terror. From the viewpoint of chronology, for the clarity of the circumstances and for his particular glory we will treat here of the Blessed martyr of September 2nd Nicolas Leclercq and the date of his sacrifice. While he was still in prison and asking himself what his lot might be, the legislators were continuing to regulate the distribution of the goods of religious, the sum of retirement pensions, the prohibition of religious habits and the abolition of vows but these most characteristic injustices did not go directly as far as anything criminal. By constraint rather than through complicity, the Brissots, Vergniauds and Condorcets, humbled themselves before Danton. Their personal sympathies, their humane sentiments which formerly would have been expressed were silent and kept to themselves, while the will of the dreadful and savage tribune to Maillard and its cutthroats.

In the future the astonishment of honest people, the embarrassment of politicians whose words had unloosed a terrifying drama would hear news of the massacres. They would force themselves to see it only as a tragic episode, some seeking excuses, others alibis.

Danton and the Parisian commune would only disdain to take responsibility.

Let us return to daily life. Parents and assassinated friends were mourned; perhaps their fate was enviable, surely their memory was already revered. Cruel sadness offered no tomb at which to pray; their remains were buried unhonoured in various places. Official actions argued about their deaths, noted the sharing of succession in impassive language as though there was nothing abnormal about it. Those who lived had concern to defend their interests, undertake works to their conclusion, keeping aware of difficulties and misfortune for which a remedy had to be found.

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Religious belonging to societies that had been dissolved were concerned about the consequences of the law of 18th August 1792. The most serious for their consciences was the obligation prescribed by Title V: there would be no retirement pension for a person who had not sworn the oath to be faithful to the civil Constitution, whether it be at least, "to affirm liberty and equality." Refusing the constitutional oath already reduced some old people to starvation. As to the 'recusants' who were still young enough, they could not expect anything except what they could provide from their resources or their individual work. Other applicants for pensions – those whom legal position or good fortune or interpretation took the texts outside their consideration, or the good offices of those in power formerly dispensed them from a definite choice – should they escape from or give in to the new demands of the lawgivers?

The question became even more urgent when the masters of the country showed themselves inclined to treat with suspicion all the citizens who would avoid it. To swear, to make others swear, became a fixed idea of the French revolution. It is only with great difficulty that one can progress through the maze of oaths that multiplied between 1789 and the 18th Brumaire. The new formula was worked out after 10th August 1792 when the deputies saw that the deposition of Louis XVI brought an end to being "faithful to the king." They promised from then on "to defend liberty and equality and to die at their posts in defending it." After them, after 14th August, all pensioned by the state, as well as all those holding any office, were held to proclaim their civic duty in the same terms. The law of 18th August did not hesitate in extending the obligation to former members of secular congregations. On the 3rd September there was introduced a variation, even more noteworthy than the preceding: " I swear to be faithful to the nation, to uphold freedom and equality with all my strength, the safety of individuals and of property, and to die, if need be, in carrying out the law." From this viewpoint, the oath "liberty and equality" was close to the former civic oath. It was possible, without too many scruples, to believe that it implied acceptance of laws contrary to the teachings of the Church, particularly as it referred to the clergy. But the formula, undoubtedly too verbose, fell into disuse and the less compromising phrase from the month of August was used.

Was this enough in itself to calm legitimate concerns? There were arguments and then there was the successful intervention by M. Émery. The well-known Superior of Saint-Sulpice, an outstanding priest who was very careful to defend Roman orthodoxy, does not need our modest tribute. His strong personality, his expressive and loyal face have many times been highlighted, even quite recently, by the excellent historian Étienne-Alexandre Bernier, bishop of Orleans. It pleases us and we think it necessary to include in our narrative this finely touched portrait:

"Concerned neither by prejudices or political opinions, M.Émery appraised the situations as they were and respected them whether they were revolutionary or of legitimate authority and worked, not with what had been or would be, but with what was. The past that had gone or the possible future did not concern him but only the present as he did not feed on

memories or fantasies. Regarding the present he was not blind: he neither condemned everything nor approved everything but kept an independent position. He made use of what could be used, wished for and found as many things as possible that could be accepted. Where criticism was needed he criticised; if a matter was to be resisted he did so without raising a storm, always concerned not to give his refusals in a way that was harsh and wounding."[1]

Such was the man in the course of the religious events from 1795 to 1800, then at the time of the Concordat, and finally in face of the all powerful Empire. We will find him again in 1810 involved in reconciliation with wisdom and firmness, declaring either his *nihil obstat* or his *non possumus*, a tireless worker in the Catholic restoration, particularly concerned in using his influence in favour of the Brothers of the Christian Schools for whom he showed an enduring and clear minded affection.

After the upsets of 10th August, he judged that if the oath "liberty and equality" could be given an acceptable meaning, taking it would help the apostolate of those priests who were outside of the constitutional Church. The altar, separated from the throne, would be less involved in the fall of a human institution. It had already suffered a great deal; it needed to be re-established on eternal foundations.

M. Émery sent to Gersonne, reporter of the decree relating to the new oath, a short perfectly precise formulation:

"1º. I see this oath purely relating to the civic and political order;

2º. By liberty in general I understand everything that excludes despotism on one hand, and slavery on the other; more particularly I understand that by liberty this state is governed by laws and not personal whims;

3º. By equality, I understand the sharing of taxes among the citizens by reason of their abilities without any privileges; secondly, the application of the same punishments for the same offences without any distinction of persons; thirdly, the right of each citizen to aspire and to obtain the dignity and employment by merit of his services, without anyone being excluded only because of the lowliness of his birth or his poverty;

4º. I understand that what this oath[2] is concerned with is maintaining liberty and equality as so understood."[3]

Gersonne seemed able to understand the language of the distinguished Sulpician. Entrusted in the preceding year with his colleague Gallois to the departments of La Vendée and Deux-Sèvres, where there were signs of disturbance, he had clearly seen and understood what was causing discontent among Catholics. The report of the two Commissioners to the Assembly on 9th October 1791 had the following meaningful expressions:

"We need to point out to you, Gentlemen, that these same people who have been described to you as enraged and deaf to any argument, left us with peaceful and contented hearts when we helped them understand the principles of the Constitution… in respecting the freedom of conscience…"

"We believed that the priests who have been replaced could not be considered… as being in revolt against the law because they continue to reside in the places where they formally functioned, especially when, among them, there are some well-known priests who are content to live as charitable and peaceful men, far from any discussion…"

"We saw that if the faithful have no confidence in the juring priests, it is in no way a means of distancing themselves from the priests of their choice…"[4]

Eight days later, this Gerondin whose experience of the reality had quietened him,

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[1] Leflon, op.cit. vol.1, p.252

[2] M. Émery is referring to the text of 3rd September.

[3] Document published by P.Misermont in his study *Le Serment de Liberté-Égalité*, Paris 1914 pp.34-35

[4] Report published in the Moniteur, 10th-12th November 1791

was inspired to set out a demarcation line between political opinions and religious belief.[5]

So it was with eagerness that he welcomed the comments of M.Émery. The fourfold declaration of this churchman, replied according to him, to the spirit of the decree. From then, our theologian, who had declined any adhesion to the Civil Constitution, no longer continued his balancing act with regard to the required commitment. In order to get rid of misunderstandings, he requested, at the same time, a publication of his explanatory letter.[6]

His example determined the attitude taken by the Sulpicians and, with them, that of a large number of the clergy. "In Paris," wrote P. Lambet in 1796, "all the Catholic priests, all, the canons, all the directors of seminaries, all the doctors of the Sorbonne, all the Superiors and all the members of secular and religious Congregations, all the non-functioning ecclesiastics… believed after mature consideration that this oath in no way wounded religion and so they did not hesitate to take it.[7] Abbé Sicard, the famous educator of the deaf and dumb and who escaped the September massacres, declares in his account of his conduct, that he accompanied his taking of the oath with a civic gift of 200 livres.[8]

Even the bishops outside the country judged this procedure lawful. The opinion was not shared by certain clerics, still too closely attached to the Ancien Régime – such as the enthusiastic Abbé Maury, destined for otherwise shocking recantations, who spread about angry criticisms.[9] Many who, unlike him, were not safe, did not want to do anything because of their very honourable delicate consciences. Thus it was, taking into account the new legislation, the majority of the captives in the Carmelite abbey, resolved - and this was heroic in their circumstances – not to buy their freedom through equivocation.[10] On Serptember 2nd a commission offered the oath "liberty equality" to Jean-Baptiste and René Nativelle both vicars from the Versailles diocese: The doors of the bloody prison were going to open for these two brothers, called for by a number of people from the Luxembourg quarter. They chose martyrdom.[11]

Models such as these were admired and could stir up imitators. Outside the frontiers of the Republic, a long way from the crowd where courageous apostles and upright consciences debated, understandings relative to the 1792 oath risked being especially strict. There were, however, several letters from the Cardinal Secretary of State Zelada which declared clearly that there was no scope for imposing a retraction from a criminal action[12] The minister of Pius VI had even written in May 1793, to M.Émery: "The Pope has said nothing about the oath in question. If it is purely civic, it can be taken".[13] The following year, a decision of the Roman congregation dated 1st April1794, states that "His Holiness has so far given no judgment." Lay people and ecclesiastics in order with French law, therefore, have incurred no canonical penalty. "But", this communication stipulates, "it is up to them to reconcile it with their consciences because, if there is any doubt, they should not swear".[14] The phrase obviously hints that there is some doubt about the meaning of the commitment required. Whichever way it be, the Sovereign Pontiff has not made any public verdict.[15]

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[5] See above

[6] MISERMONT op.cit. p.55

[7] Dissertation justifying submission to the oath to the Republic and the oath of liberty and equality, Paris, 1796, cited by Abbé DELARC, *L'Église de France pendant la Révolution française* (1789-1801), Paris, 1897, t.ii, p.330

[8] Misermont, op.cit. p.24, note 2

[9] GOYAU, op.cit., p.515

[10] Dom LECLERCQ, op.cit. p.61

[11] Abbé GRENTE, *Les martyrs de septembre* 1792 à Paris, Paris, 1919, p.206

[12] MISERMONT, op.cit. p.39, note 1

[13] MISERMONT op.cit. pp.40-41. This letter is not found in the letter of despatches but GOSSELIN, the biographer of Émery, admits its authenticity

[14] MISERMONT op.cit. p.58

[15] GOYAU, op.cit. p.515

The Holy See's reserve left the field open for discussion. This remained afterwards between those who saw little wrong and those of in flexible resistance. This led to the rifts which affected the French Church even after the Concordat. We are lucky if we are not mistaken in not seeing another cause for some things apparently forgotten, some astonishing silences, which developed for some years around respectable names and appearances… Political passions were at work; and even more , almost fatal, born from different circumstances. Men, particularly those whom persecution drove far away from their native land, had difficulty in understanding the attitudes and resolutions of those who were forced to reconcile their principles and the reality and guarded their faith intact without associating it with inappropriate refusals and imprudent and generous intransigence.

Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that patience, breadth of viewpoint and a spirit of reconciliation were in conflict with the worst obstacles. The revolutionary politic sought no appeasement. Not only did it treat those opposed to the liberty/equality oath in a pitiable manner as those opposed to the civil Constitution,[16] but it refused to accept that the observance of the August 1792 oath did not atone for the older refusals. In vain did the riots of 10th August destroy the institutions of 1789-1791. It gave them a kind of survival to continue the struggle against Catholicism. On 26th August, the legislative Assembly struck at exile, menacing recusant ecclesiastics against the decrees of the Constitution with deportation. The directory of Ardèche asked the Minister for the Interior for a guideline: "The first article of the law of 26th August," he remarked, "supposes that the subjects have still a means of declaring whether or not they persist in their refusal of the oath or in retraction of the oath taken. Now, this means appears to be only the taking of a new oath of liberty and equality , since the former had reference only to commitments which had for object the power of the king and the rest of the Constitution which no longer exist."

It can be seen from Roland's reply on 9th November, that the Revolution judged that refusal of the first oath was unpardonable. "The law of 26th August, " said the minister, "accords no delay for functioning ecclesiastics to take the oath demanded by the preceding laws". From now on, those who in a given time do not change their attitude, they remain forever recusants and nothing can save them from the national penalties.[17]

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Brother Agathon profited by these last peaceful hours to hasten the distribution of the available money. During the short period between 19th-28th August 1792, there can be seen in the cash book the sending of 5,500 livres either to communities which were going to be dissolved or to Brothers already expelled from their communities, reduced to being alone or even returned to their homes. Teachers from Fontainebleau, from Meaux, from Troyes, Avranches, Orleans, Compiègne, Nancy, Darnétal, Coutances, Dieppe are to be found on the list. Brother Dominique at Dijon, Brother Salutaire at Poligny, Brother Gonzales, at Rambervillers, others mentioned as being "at home" or "in their family"received amounts ranging between 100 to 500 livres. On 22ndAugust, 50 livres was sent to Brother Abraham, one of the prisoners in the Carmelite abbey.[18] The Institute's procurator did his utmost to recover expenses. 23rd September he managed to receive 1,000 livres "from the aforesaid États du Lnaguedoc." On October 10th, he sold beds and other furniture not part of the inventory. He was able, in some way, to pay off Mother House debts: 316 livres on 15th of this month to citizen Thomas Boucher, the Brothers' chaplain "for three-quarters of the honorarium which will fall due on 15th December… and for 33 Masses…Finally, on 19th

[16] 28th April 1793, the Convention would decree the deportation to Guyana of "ecclesiastics, seculars, regulars, lay brothers and lay people" who have not taken the oath liberty/equality before 23rd March. MISERMONT op.cit., p.6

[17] MISERMONT, Le serment à la Constitution civile etc. Paris, 1917, op.cit. p.33 and 152-153

[18] Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes, Nº davril 1938, p.121.

October, the day on which the account book suddenly stops, a lawyer, a shoemaker and an apothecary receive the balance of their debts.

In the course of the same month, pensions of retreat begin to be paid. Brothers Agathon and Philippe de Jésus ask their doctor Lajoye for certificates of ill-health. The latter replies on 3rd October that "Citizen Agathon, previously general Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, aged sixty-two, stricken by an atrophy of the optic nerve on the right eye and threatened by the same on the other eye, usually suffering from a scurf patch for which the doctor is always treating him, especially for the past five years. The existence of these two maladies leaves no doubt of the impossibility in which this leaves the aforesaid citizen Agathon to be able to undertake any serious prolonged occupation."[19]

The Superior joins this piece to a request presented to the Administrators of the Council of Seine-and-Marne. He is, he says, "in his sixty-second year[20] and has had forty-five years of community life." He briefly traces his curriculum vitae from the time when he began to teach "in the little schools"[21]until his fifteen years in the generalate, during which the Congregation has had to establish the house at Melun and the assembly "of considerable funds" now "in the hands of the nation".

"Excessive work… has so exhausted his natural and intellectual faculties that for him it is impossible to apply himself to any kind of work, whether of body or of mind. He needs to obtain a necessary supplement to the pension of 675 livres accorded him by the decree of 18th August last, as this is too small. His precarious state of health and as well, the cruel change of life he will experience in leaving the house of Melun. Deprived of large resources, he is worthy, he hopes, to receive an annual supplement in proportion to this age, his services and his needs", in conformity with the thirteen article of Title V of the decree of 18th August"[22]

The medical certificate delivered to Brother Philippe de Jésus speaks of "a rheumatic gout infection" already very old which leaves the sick person "incapable of doing anything" during crises.[23] While he also seeks an improvement in his pension, the Brother Procurator does not hesitate in his letter to the department to underline the financial loss to be incurred by all the members of the Institute. 15,000 livres was not paid on the rents of 1792 and only for the Brothers of the Maison du Saint-Enfant Jésus, the difference between the collected revenues they had enjoyed, the allocated pensions will be diminished by a total of more than 10,000 livres.[24]

With the petitions of "Joseph Gonlieux and Pierre Picard" communicated by the departmental directory, the general Council of the Melun Commune receives "the name-status of the aforesaid Brothers " of this town, the "registers and Acts of the Congregation" and the pages that indicate in relation to each one, information on their civil and conventual status. At the meeting of the 17th of October, in the "Year I of the French Republic" the municipal magistrates determined the sums for the annual pensions.[25]

Of the sixteen Brothers who benefited from Title III of the Law of the 18th of August, we note "Louis Francis Demarquet, Barthélemy Thevenin, and Jean Baptist Leclerc".[26]

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[19] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne L 414, 5237

[20] Born 4th April 1731

[21] Cf. Volume 2

[22] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne L 414, 5237

[23] Ibid L 414

[24] Même Bulletin pp. 189-190

[25] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, L 414, no. 838.

[26] His real name was Clerc

These were the three Assistants to the Superior-general: Brothers Paschal, Sylvester and Lothaire.[27]. For more than a year, the latter found work outside of the Institute: "Dear Brother Lothaire (I tell you this in confidence) is in a community of nuns, doing errands for them and acting as sacristan; he is happy and more pleased than a king. He will stay there if we are suppressed,"wrote Brother Solomon to Mlle Rosalie Le Clercq on the 16th of July 1791.[28] In fairness, the role he filled and his activities for over thirty years cannot be forgotten.

Brother Lupcinus (François Joseph Chauffoureaux), born in 1708, entered the Congregation in 1732, former Director of the Communities in Rheims, Maréville and Melun was granted the maximum allowed by the legislature (i.e., 900 livres a year) for more than a half-century of unfailing dedication. Brother Martin (Desiré Chagrin), the clockmaker, went to live in Laon on his pension of 522 livres, 11 sols and 8 deniers, to which, no doubt, he added from what he earned through his skills.[29] Brother Jean Calybitus received 372 livres: as Jean Lehmann, he had already had a career rather out of the ordinary. He was born in Meissen, in Saxony, on the 21st of August 1748, of a Protestant family, and no one knows the circumstances that induced him to leave Germany. "At the time of his recantation in Paris, he did not have to be rebaptized, because he had validly received Baptism in the sect" in which he had been raised. Again, he was unable to produce a copy of the parish register which, in that period, took the place of a birth-certificate. On the 26th of November 1767, he entered the novitiate at St. Yon.[30] He turned out to be a quite compentent infirmarian, which enabled him to become a surgeon in a hospital in Avon.[31]

Younger Brothers, too, had to look for new ways of making a living. Thus, Brother Fulgence (Mathurin Viau), the author of *Principles of French Grammar for Use in the Christian Schools*. Endowed with a remarkable mind and Brother Agathon's "right arm" in carrying on his correspondence, he had just passed forty when he was forced to part company with his Superior.. His subsidy was a very modest 228 livres.[32]

It remained to rule on the petitions of Brother Superior and the Brother Procurator. The Commune Council made the following decision, which was ratified by the Departmental Directory: "Regarding Citizens Gonlieu [33]and Picard, who ask for an annual assistance on account of their infirmities, in consideration of the fact of these infirmities ascertained by the certificate of Citizen La Joye...it results that the two, Gonlieu and Picard, are affected by illnesses which prevent them from supplementing by their own work the insufficiency of the pensions granted them by the Decree,... (the Council) is of the opinion that subsidies will be

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[27] For these three Brothers, see the Index to Vol. II of the present work

[28] Letter cited above, pg. 84.

[29] He died in Laon in 1813 at the age of seventy-one. (Motherhouse Archives, no. 43, Historique du distict de Reims, pg. 204). According to the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 108, he took the "Liberty-equality Oath" on August 24, 1792.

[30] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, D, 19.

[31] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 649. Brother Lucard hypthesizes the Jean Lehmann began medical studies before he was admitted to the Institute.

[32] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, document cited, L, 414, no. 838. Concerning Brother Fulgence and his work see Vol. II of the present work, pp. 528-529.

[33] We recall the variations in the spelling of Brother Agathon's family name: Goulieux, Gonlieux, Goalieu, according to times and different official documents.

made in (the following) manner: Gonlieu, called Brother Agathon, born on the 4th of April 1731, parish of Longueval, Peronne District, admitted into the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on the 20th of October 1747, at the novitiate of St. Yon in Rouen, forty-four years, eleven months and ten days in Community,[34]will be granted: 1) for his subsidy 674 livres, 3 sols, 4 deniers; 2) because of his ascertained infirmities, 225 livres, 16 sols and 8 deniers; or (in all) 900 livres".

"To: Pierre Picard, called Brother Philippe of Jesus, born the 5th of October 1733, parish of St. Sulpice, in the City of Metz, admitted to the novitiate in Maréville on the 16th of October 1751 was also granted, for forty years, eleven months and fourteen days of Religious life, "a subsidy of 614 livres, 6 sols and 8 deniers", and a supplementary assistance "of 185 livres, 3 sols and 4 deniers", or 900 livres.

The administrative authorities specified that the first payment would be made, as the Law required, when documentary evidence was produced that showed that the oath had been taken.[35].The steps taken by Brother Agathon, then, are inexplicable if, perfectly aware of the text of the Law of the 18th of August, he had not followed the advice of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice with whom the Brothers were related by ties of friendship, if (according to the example of the priests and Religious of whom Father Lambert spoke) he decided not to follow, in security of conscience, the example of Father Emery.[36].

On the 19th of October Jean Andrew Chapelle, Mayor of Melun, and Jcques Antoine Gittard, city official, proceeded to the verification of property included in the Holy Child Jesus House's inventory of the 14th of April 1791. "Citizens Gonlieu and Picard" agreed to accept responsibility for protecting the furnishings.[37] Five weeks later, at the "request of Citizens Mamel,[38]Vivien, Dussar, Roger, Beaucourt, Picard, Lehmann and Chagrin, members of the Community residing in the institution, the Brother Superior and his subordinates divided among themselves, with the approval of the municipal officials (and as authorized by article 5 of Title V of the Decree of Suppression), objects of personal property.[39]

Joseph Gonlieu and Pierre Picard temporarily retained their residence in the same place in which they once deployed their talents as leaders, where, all around them, teachers, scholastics, secretaries and the Congregation's veterans, going from Religious services to mental or manual tasks, experienced the comforts of the "fraternal dwelling".[40] We can

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[34]On October 1, 1792

[35]Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, L 414, no. 838. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 621 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July 1938, pg. 190

[36]It is important, however, to suggest that the Archives of Seine-and-Marne has not preserved a trace of the taking of the "Liberty-equality Oath". M. Jean Hubert, Departmental Archivist, and Brother F.M., author of Brother Agathon's biography, could only record this void. Cf. below, pg. 349 for reference to an overdue payment owed to Citizen Joseph Gonlieu after he got out of prison

[37]Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, document quoted in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pg. 191.

[38]The reference here is not to Dominique Mamel, Director of the school in Bayeux, but to someone bearing the same name, probably his brother, Jean François Mamel. Similarly, it is important not to confuse F.R. Gaudenne with "J. Vivien" who is mentioned in the files of the Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne

[39]Report prepared on the 26th of November 1791 by James Antoine and Nicholas Passeleu, municipal officers. Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, i Q 1536; document quoted in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pg. 192.

[40]The tradition reported by Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 627 according to which Brother Agathon is supposed to have retired to Paris and lived there, under the name of "Capitaine", by means of tutoring in mathematics is contradicted by all serious documents. It rests exclusively on the fanciful rumors of a 46-page manuscript entitled Annali dell' Instituto dei Fratelli (in the Motherhouse Archives) which echoes the legends propagated by the Brothers in Rome. (See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 115, note #2).

imagine how the two Brothers must have felt. A few Brothers still kept them company -- a fact of which we are made certain by a report dating from the following year.[41] Among these was the venerable octogenarian, François Joseph Chauffoureaux, whose name appears in this connection in the official documents, and who, sadly, survived the destruction of his Institute as well as the death of his former student and friend, Brother Solomon.

A consolation, which also bore its burden of anxiety, was visited upon this helpless little group. Associated with its sufferings , at the end of 1792, were dissident priests whose infirmities and age temporarily protected from deportation, but who were assembled as suspects by the force of the law at Departmental headquarters. For residence they were assigned to the Brothers' house.[42] Between these guests and the former masters of the house friendships must have been formed and services (both spiritual and temporal) exchanged.

However, the chapel had been emptied of its most precious objects. "Silver" and "brass" things had found their way into the District treasury, while "vestments and linens" were piled up in other administrative depositories.[43]

Then, the police nets began to be tightened, and the number of arrests increased, while the former monastic building became an outright prison. What could have been the life of the Brothers, as "free citizens", in such a climate? The trial and execution of Louis XVI, the creation of revolutionary courts, new laws regarding priests and exiles gave glimpses of the terrifying future. Jacobinism had finally triumphed in Melun: the "Popular Society" fired up the zeal of its thugs, welcomed informers, and insisted on the use of violence. The Mayor and his Council complied with the orders of the "Vigilante Committee" --since the 21st of March 1793 the genuine political power. Danger hung over Brother Agathon's head, and we shall see it fall upon him on the 23rd of July. This drama took its place in the midst of many others, with which we shall deal in describing the events in the lives of the "Confessors of the Faith".

We shall conclude here our description of the fate of the institution in Melun. Since the Superior was a captive, Brother Philippe of Jesus and his companions, after ten months of marginal existence, confusion and anxiety, decided to leave once and for all. On the 29th of July, the former Procurator of the Institute, asked the District Administrator, Lazarus Lauret, to give him "a valid release from the responsibility for the property", after a final verification of inventory. Lauret proceeded immediately to the transaction requested in the presence of Citizens Picard and Benoit; the latter had been a watchman appointed by the Departmental Administration. The report verified the regularity of the expropriations completed since October of 1792; in this way the library's 1600 volumes had been transferred to the district archives.

On the same day, Brother Philip departed the premises along with "the other former Brothers". And the protection of the estate's property fell henceforth to Citizen Benoit.[44] Soon, what remained of the furnishings was offered at public auction -- "chairs, paintings, furniture, cabinets and other ob−jects that served the fanaticism of the former owners". It was important for the District bureaucrats totally "to banish from sight" all "signs of superstition".[4546]

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[41] July 29, 1793. (See below, pg. 238.)

[42] A. Leroy, La Caserne Augereau (monograph dealing with the former Ursuline Convent and the former Brothers' house.

[43] Inventory of January 5, 1793. (Motherhouse Archives, HA n.)

[44] Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, 1 Q 1536. Document quoted in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pp. 198-199.

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The decommissioned buildings would serve at once as prison and shops. In 1811 the site was used as a courthouse and police station. And then, for nearly a century the former "Motherhouse" of the Christian Brothers formed part of a military barracks. Today that barracks has been demolished and replaced by country houses, gardens and quiet avenues bordered by greenery. Nowhere, except in the memories of some very old people and in archival documents, would one find the thrilling evidence of the past.

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Similar relics, some of them still visible on French soil but most of them buried in the dust where the historian toils, deserve to be raised up and, from one end of the country to the other, restored to the light of day. It is not possible here to name or to enumerate all of them. Our purposes can be best achieved by indicating examples selected from a variety of regions and representing a variety or processes of destruction.

In the Northwest region there were sixteen Brothers in St. Omer,[47] who for a long time had been spared and respected. The municipal officials had promised to support them in charge of the schools until the suppression of the secular Congregations. That promise was kept -- give or take a day or two. For it was on the 18th of August 1792, and before the Department of the Pas-de-Calais could have known of the Legislature's vote, that the schools were closed. As reason for the measure, the magistrates gave "the refusal to take the oath". There was no doubt that they were referring to the "Constitutional oath" administered to public functionaries since 1791 and not the "Liberty-equality Oath", which was of a too recent date to have had currency; compelled by the pressure of events the people of St. Omer feared that they would be curiously out-of-step. In a single bound they out-stripped their own moderation. They were, however, assailed by a scruple: "The Brothers must hand out the academic awards and prizes", and then "take their vacation the following week". There would be a week's delay; after which the pupils would receive their awards; and then there would be nothing for the teachers to do but leave. In September "M. Charles Fournier, the former Director of the Christian Brothers" (Brother Pontian, who had locked out the "Constitutional" Bishop without incurring criticism) deposited at the City Hall "two silver watches used in timing school activities and a collection of silver and brass crosses" intended for award-winning pupils.[48]

The Community in Laon, directed by the prudent and imperturbable Brother Leufroy, had, for over the past sixteen months, also enjoyed a favorable treatment. But after the events in Paris the people in Laon had to show what good Jacobins they were. On the 30th of August their General Council named two commissioners, Citizens Mauclerc and Tournant, to seal the doors of the Hospital Sisters, the Christian Brothers and the Marquette Sisters, "because of their stubborn resistance to the enforcement of the law and because of their unpatriotic behavior".[49]As a more severe measure, the five Brothers were immediately lead out into a build−ing called "the Congregational" and placed under the guard of the commandant of the Delvincourt police-station.

The next day the Brothers addressed the following appeal to the city government:

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[46]Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, 1 Q 1536. Commissioner Sorel was responsible for the auction, appointed for "the 3rd Venemiare in the Year III" (September 24, 1792).

[47]Motherhouse Archives, Saint-Omer file, HA q 20.

[48]Ibid., copies of documents taken from municipal archives.

[49]Municipal Archives of Laon, Register of deliberations of the General Council of the Commune, no. 5 f-o 67.

"For more than a century (our) predecessors and (ourselves) have been occupied with the education of children; the public never had to complain about the way in which (we) acquitted ourselves of this important function. (We) do not know why (we) have been dismissed and confined..." Without income, food or objects for their personal use within the four walls of their prison, they "were appealing to the paternal solicitude" of the magistrates, who could not "disapprove" of conduct done in the name of "freedom of opinion".

The Council then authorized one of the Brothers, escorted by a commissioner and a guardsman, to return to St. Pierre's Lane to gather foodstuffs and the necessary bed linens. But it did not immediately release the captives. On the 7th of September, it delegated Charles Antoine Gabriel Huet and Pierre Louis Anton Mopinot "for the purpose of inviting the Christian Brothers individually to declare whether they meant to take the oath prescribed by the Law of the 14th of August last and the subsequent laws.

"Pierre Morin, called Brother Leufroy, Superior", the first one called, listened to a reading of the ritualized formula. Without objection he took the oath of fidelity to the nation, to support liberty and equality, or to die in their defense. His confreres, Brothers Arnold (Jacques Lavine), Ferme (Claude Bulod), Sebastian (Dominic Didier), and Abel (Nicolas Louis Le Grand) made the same commitment and signed along with him.[50]

Their liberation followed, and legal pensions were allotted to them. And what is more: the Brothers were allowed to take possession of their residence once again, and they were restored to the operation of the public schools. On the 11th of September the Departmental Administration was troubled by the steps taken by the people in Laon. "Would you please inform me", wrote the attorney for the Procurator-general to the Councilors, "whether the former Brothers are still in charge of the education of children."[51]Brother Leufroy and his associates had quickly reconquered the trust of the people in Laon. And although their Institute was suppressed, they retained their religious names. The squall had passed and the great winds spared them. Laon seemed such a desir−able refuge that travellers in search of shelter found their way there, as happened in the case of Brother Martin of Jesus and (for a less lengthy stay, but under circumstances that make it worth the trouble to record) Brother Vivien.

During the same period Rheims witnessed scenes of savagery. On the 3rd of September two Canons and a former pastor were assassinated, and into the burning coals in which the remains of the victims were consumed a Father Alexander was thrown alive. On the following day the pastor of St. Jean was murdered and his body dismembered. The former pastor of Rilly also fell victim to a murderous mob.[52]The last of the Brothers trembled in their house on Rue Contray. The closing of the elementary schools and of the residence school, the reduction of income and the outbreak of violence had splintered their group, which in July of 1791 had still been intact. They witnessed the demolition of their chapel, which, like nine of the fourteen parochial churches,[53] was thought superfluous.On the 16th of September 1792, while a Prussian invasion was already threatening Champagne, the Brothers received an order to vacate their property to make room for the "troops which were sacrificing themselves for the fatherland". Brother Leander, Director, had to provide the city government with an inventory of the property and a list of the members of the Community. Few of the Brothers whose names, places and dates of birth and lengths of time in the Congregation he submitted

[50]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, city of Laon, no. 105.

[51]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, city of Laon, no. 105, Attorney-general Pottofeux's letter.

[52]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 310-311.

[53]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1907, pg. 12.

was thought superfluous.

at that time were with him when the final dissolution came. Most of them had returned to their birthplaces -- some to Franche-Comte, some to Lorraine and some to the neighborhood of Rheims itself. Gabriel Cathala remained with some of the senior Brothers; he himself, after fifty years of difficult duty in the Western and Eastern provinces of the Institute,[54]lived uprooted, far from the City of Carcassonne in which he was born in 1728. The material and moral legacy of the Founder seemed obliterated, and his memory blotted out in his own city. A sheaf of titles buried in the archives in Rheims was the only tangible residue of a work which had demanded so much heroism.[55]

In the region of Nancy, stripped of its Christian schools, the Maréville institution survived. This large Community, still protected by its social utility, seems to have gathered some of the derelicts from the other houses in Lorraine. On the personnel list, drawn up in October of 1792,[56] there is Brother Eunuce (Jean Baptist Honore Crepeaux), the former Director of the group in Nancy. Brother Felix (François Volliere), from Tourraine and sixty-three years of age, is described in an appended document as the "local Superior at Maréville". And Brother John of Mary (André Toye-Collegue) is given the title of "Visitor-general of the former Congregation"; he was not yet on the point of emigrating. His nephews and cousins come, like himself, from the village of Abries in the Alpine valley of Queyras, clustered about their uncle, who was the head of the family and filled with solicitude for his relatives: these were Brother Jean Climachus (Christopher Toye-Collegue), Brother Laurent (André Toye), Brother Anastasius (André Toye III) -- a clan which at one time drew charges of nepotism against Brother John of Mary.[57] Further, there are the names of Brother Antherius (Pierre Joseph Rollin), who had been Director of Scholastics in Normandy,[58] and Brother Antidius (Philip Quertant), who was born in Menieres, in the diocese of Amiens in 1741 and who, while completely "secularized", continued on as steward or manager during the most troubled periods.

And then there were the future captives of the prison-ships in Rochefort: Brother Avertin (Pierre François Alexander Vaillant), born on the 20th of November 1762 in Puyseux (Pas-de-Calais) who bore a name similar to that of Brother Aventin, (Pierre Vaillant), the Director of St. Yon, his compatriot from Artois and perhaps his uncle; Brother Donat (Claude François Trimaille) from Comte, fifty-two years of age, previously the teacher of a class in Nancy; Brother Jugon (Jean Pierre Melnotte) from La Meurthe in Lorraine, who was the cook in the same Community as Brother Eunuce; Brother Uldaric,[59] (Jean Baptist Guillaume) from the diocese of Besancon, who entered the Institute at thirty years of age, on the 3rd of October 1785 and was destined for early martyrdom.

The Directory of the District of Nancy, in possession of this list (as well as of the two

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[54]Concerning Brother Leander see Index of Vol. II of the present work.

[55]Municipal Archives of Rheims, D, 232, list of professed Brothers. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pg. 213.

[56]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, H 2355.

[57]Motherhouse Archives, Maréville file, reports of 1787 and 1790. See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 544-546. The list in question includes the name of a fifth of a fifth Brother, who was a native of Abries: Christopher Chabert, Brother Placide of Jesus.

[58]See Vol. II of the present work, pg 527.

[59]Or "Udalric." The two forms are met with in the documents; but because of an authentic signature, "Uldaric" has been recognized in an "Apostolic inquiry" into the prison-ship martyrs by the Postulator for the cause of beatification.

registers of those who entered the novitiate at Maréville and "copies" of the registers of St. Yon, Avignon and Dole) "decided", on the 21st of November 1792, that "there was reason to cut off subsidies to former Brothers, in conformity with Article I, #1, chapter ii, Title III of the Law of the 18th of August". The document was signed by such honest revolutionaries as Durival.[60] The senior members of the Institute might have believed that while they lacked the small creature comforts, they would still be sure of their food.[61]Otherwise, nothing had changed in the daily existence at the institution founded by King Stanislaus, or in living conditions since the departure of the free residence pupils.

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No matter how painful or precarious was the situation of the Brothers at Mareville or in Laon, it was nevertheless clear enough. They had either eluded the obligation of the first civil oath or they made their accommodations with "the powers that be." It was not the same thing with the Brothers in St. Omer or Rheims. In Rouen the hostility of the Commune and the District occasioned some very well-founded anxiety on the part of the Brothers at St. Yon. After the promulgation of the Law of the 18th of August they were quick to write to the Departmental Directory which, until then, had restrained the violence of the lower levels of the beaurocracy. The letter was signed by Pierre Vaillant, François Thomas, Pierre Sylvester, Pierre Guilleu, Charles Joseph Carpentier, Nicolas Bienaimé, Bertrand Le Prince,[62]and twenty-nine other professed Brothers.[63]

« The law ...(they wrote) threw them all into the greatest dismay ...Not only did (it) deprive (them) forever of a vocation to which they had been dedicated from early youth and in which they had hoped to persevere until death, but it also seemed to abandon them to a sort of despair both by the brevity of the period prior to their expulsion ...and by the harshness of its other arrangements with respect to them.

The petitioners were especially concerned to obtain a benevolent interpretation of the texts having to do with their departure. Article #19 of Title V assigned the limit as of the 1st of October. But, it was a matter of record that neither at Melun nor at Maréville had this date been mentioned. On the other hand, an incidental sentence in the Decree authorized "members of the Congregations and lay associations who live by their own labor" not "to leave their residences" until the 1st of November. The Community in the Faubourg St. Sever included among its members a number of "artisans": locksmiths, masons, shoemakers, gardeners, tailors, etc. The letter argued on the strength of their presence to a postponement of the hour of eviction.

But the letter also insisted on the attention that needed to be payed to other residents -- pupils whose families dwelt at great distances and could not be reached immediately, and the insane whose desertion would be inhuman. Regarding these latter unfortunates the Brothers' inquiry paralleled the preoccupations of the Directory of the Lower Seine.

Finally, Pierre Vaillant and his confreres asked for a retirement pension and the right to share among them the furnishings of St. Yon.

The Department's decision came only on the 16th of October. Regarding the pension, it was negative. The Department recalled that the Brothers in the great institution in Rouen had not taken the oath prescribed by the Law of the 17th of April 1791 "involving persons

[60]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, H 2355.

[61]Brother Eunuce's pension, for example, was 696 livres. It appears, however, that since (like several of his confreres) he refused in the end to take the required oath, he got none of this modest income. (See below, pg. 287.)

[62]Brothers Aventine, Hermes, Alberic, Hellier, Honorat, Philip Joseph and Vilmer, respectively.

[63]Documents published by Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 622-625. (Originals in the Archives of the Lower Seine.)

employed...in education." The petitioners were then "directed to appeal to the National Convention in order to decide whether they were all, or only some, subject to the oath". Thus, the Directory, without deciding on the legality of the Commune's calling out the troops in June of 1791, refused to reverse the results. Because the Brothers of St. Yon rejected the oath they were to be deprived of income.

The administrators in Normandy scarcely dared to be more liberal regarding the temporary support of the institution. "In view of the special circumstances", they extended the departure date until the 1st of December.

Actually, the final inventory of gold and silver objects housed in the sacristy took place on the 12th of that month; on the 15th there occurred the auditing of documents and titles; and on the 17th, the checking of the furnishings in the private rooms and classrooms. The 1,192 volumes that made up the library in the free residence school, and the 1,672 volumes included in the reformatory and the 1,856 volumes for the use of the Community were scattered -- some sold, others destroyed, and the rest turned over to public depositaries.[64].

As a crowning duty, Brother Agathon assigned himself the burden and the sadness of assisting at this immense devastation. His presence in Rouen during the first days of December is verified by a "waybill" found in the archives of that city, which indicates the despatch of a heavy "case" of "dry-goods". This consignment, dated the 13th of December, was sent to Melun and perhaps its description disguises the justifiably cautious removal of important documents. "The Agathon signature" was authenticated when the package arrived by Martin Honore Gaultier, judge in the District of Melun, who testified that it came from "the former Superior-general of the former Brothers of the Christian Schools."[65]

Brother Aventine remained in the buildings in the Faubourg St. Sever to arrange for the departures of the last pupils and to return the insane to their families or to the officers of the Departmental administration. He Himself was officially the guardian of the public seals. A short time later, he left St. Yon to take up quarters in Paris on Rue St. Antoine. When he returned to St. Yon on the 3rd "Ventose in the Year II[66] it was as one of five-hundred suspects herded into the former reformatory and free residence school. He didn't leave it until the "9th Fructidor[67]when, after six months of captivity, he went on to settle in Normandy[68]
As a consequence, he was present at, and (except during his stay in Paris) an eyewitness to, the dismal, dreary scenes, the devastation and upheaval that were henceforth typical of the history of that Lasallian institution. In 1793 the gardens and the orchards were leased out to serve a variety of purposes. Prisoners of war, and after that, French troops were billeted within its walls.

At the height of the anti-religious campaign local firebrands pillaged the chapel, demolished the altars and violated the tombs: De La Salle's tombstone was broken into, and the leaden coffin was stolen. But the bones of the Holy Founder were neither burned nor scattered: occupying the same tomb-site, for forty-two years they awaited the restorer's exhumation.

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[64] Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 109 and Canon Farcy, op. cit., pp. 112 and 114

[65] Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 108-109; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pp. 192-193; see also Vol. II of the present work, pg. 600.

[66] ," (Trans. note: 19th-21st of February to 19-21st of March 1793.)

[67]", (Trans. Note: 18-19 August to 17-18 September.)

[68] . Farcy, op. cit., general list of those detained at the new police station called "Yon", faubourg Equality (document in the City Library of Rouen, Revolutionary Archives, Series I.) See page 201 of the book cited.

During the September which followed the desecration there began the work of remodelling with the view of turning the place into a prison for people under suspicion. "Yon" (to use the name given it at the time) was not totally free of prisoners until "Frimaire in the Year III" (i.e., December 1794). Under the Empire, it was the site of an artillery range, a supply warehouse for the capital; and then the soldiers returned, followed again by prisoners -- this time, prisoners of war. Beginning in 1812, the former suburban residence was nothing but a beggars' hangout. In 1825, once again an insane asylum, it was restored to it most melancholy use. In the account which follows, we shall see the fruitless efforts the Brothers made to regain this property -- the most precious and sacred of their possessions.
The chapel had for a longtime been used as a furniture storehouse, where the debris of several churches were piled together. In 1795 the parish Council of St. Sever retrieved religious articles from it for use in "Constitutional" worship. On the 25th of June 1802 an order of Bishop Cambraceres erected St. Yon into the "sixth mission chapel" of the Archiepiscopal city. At the time a stone cross was placed over the door and the inscriptions on the facade were removed; one of the small side-chapels was demolished, and the tombstones were used to reconstruct the floor. This second parish in the neighborhood had only a brief existence; in 1808 it disappeared for the want of funds.[69]

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In Brittany the Brothers' schools had experienced a variety of fortunes. Brest, Vannes and St. Brieuc dismissed the Brothers before the law of suppression. Rennes, whose schismatic bishop had defended religious teachers in the Legislative Assembly,[70]showed less intolerance than did Finistère, Morbihan and the Cotes-du-Nord. The ardor of the Commune's General Council waited until after the 18th of August before it exerted its influence against the institution on Rue St. Dominique. Neither did it act with the harshness of its predecessors in 1738 nor of the parlmentarians whose traditions La Chalotais had once revived.[71]

The municipal officers Burnel and Gaillard, delegated by their colleagues, appeared on the 25th of August on the premises that were still occupied by the five members of the Congregation. At the time, they met only Brother Abdias (Antoine Pilatre), "serving in temporalities" and Brother Valdoen (Pierre Lievin Denis), a twenty-one year old novice.

Immediately the question of the "Liberty-equality Oath" arose. This wholly new formula meant nothing to these simple, upright souls. They heard nothing except the awful word "oath", against which they had been warned for nearly two years. Brother Abdias exclaimed: "(He) shouldn't have waited so long to take the oath". (His naive comment is all the more understandable in that the Community was never under the obligation of making a decision.) The young Brother agreed with his senior. Signatures were required on the report. They complied, the serving Brother in his awkward hand and the novice with his rather trembling pen.

At this point the Brother Director arrived, returned to the house by two National Guardsmen (who, doubtless, had been sent in search of him, although nothing suggests that he was under arrest). He stated his name and position: Jean Simon Perrin (Brother Adorator), "Superior" in Rennes for seven years, and a member of the Institute for forty-two years. In no uncertain terms, he burnt his bridges. Called upon three times, he repeated his categorical

[69] Farcy, op. cit., pp. 183, 215-234, 241-242, 247-253.

[70] See above, pp. 207-208

[71] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 251-253 and 415-420.

rejection: “Never” (he said) would (I) do anything against (my) conscience”.

There were two other Brothers, but they were absent: Brother Noel (François Selonier), who remained out of sight for some time, and Brother Restitut (François Capron), who rejoined the others in the course of the day of August 25th. A novice, like Brother Valdolen, he was entertaining the idea of recovering his full independence, of which he made no mystery in dealing with the city commissioners; and he added, boasting and without winning his auditors’ credence, that he had already taken the oath two years ago(??) in his native region.

This bragging (a childish evasion) won him a treatment that was no better than that of his three confreres. They were all brought, at about the same time as were the Brothers in Laon, to a religious house set aside for the internment of dissidents. In Rennes it was the Junior Seminary on Rue St. Helier. And it was to this place that Burnel had transported the basic necessities (sheets, towels, night clothes and water vessels) asked for by the Brother Director.

Two days later, on the 27th of August, Burnel returned to the Seminary armed with an order from Mayor Talhouet: in spite of their rejection of the oath, the Brothers were set free with the promise of withdrawing to a place that they should designate, and as soon as their passports could be drawn up. Brother Noel, kept informed no doubt through the rumor mill, emerged from his hideout and took his place with the Brothers in seclusion.

Meanwhile, Brother Adorator, accompanied by the commissioner, went to St. Dominic Street. Up to this point he had continued to wear his “robe” and his “three-cornered hat”. He was ordered to put on civilian clothes, since the law prohibited the wearing of any ecclesiastical costume. He deferred to this command “without any difficulty”. With the concurrence of Brunel, he divided among the Brothers “the furnishings and the work-clothes” that each exile was to carry off at the moment of his liberation. Finally, on the 5th of September, the Brothers saw the doors of their prison swing open: they were given the sum of 497 livres, 18 sols and 6 deniers (which represented the Community’s assets) and their verified passports. Concerning the pensions, nothing more had been said: they had been refused them because they rejected the oath. Wasn’t it enough to have escaped the wolf’s clutches? They had only to shake the dust from their shoes at the exit to a city that had been so inhospitable in the past to the advocates of popular education: -- a city which, served disinterestedly for over fifty-four years, had allowed the successors of Brother Gaspard, Brother Vincent Ferrier, and Brother Solomon to depart, certainly without cursing them but also without thanking them.[72]

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We have told the story of how the three Brothers in the school at St. Malo, whose residence since 1791 had located them in the diocese of Bishop Le Coz, were able to prolong their good relations with the city government of St. Malo.[73].Their letter of the 6th of July 1792 put a courageous period to that chapter of their history. The writing-masters, their perennial adversaries, saw that the occasion was ripe to be rid of the Brothers; and they asked the District administration that rigorous measures be taken against “non-jurors”. The Commune Council, made aware of the matter, acknowledged, in its meeting of the 29th of September that “the members of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools” were “generally suspected of a lack of patriotism and of collusion with the enemies of the

[72] Arch. Dép. D’Ille-et-Vilaine, Series D. Used by F.Lucard Bulletin des Frères des Écoles chr étiennes 1911 pp.143-146

[73] See above, pp. 105-106

Republic". Hence, it was enjoined upon Brothers August, Monitor and Luke "to set aside their Religious habit", and the Departmental Directory was asked to provide for their replacement.[74]The three Brothers were quickly become "outlaws", cast into exile or vagrancy.

Finally, since the previous year, the position of Catholic teachers in the Lower Loire had been an unenviable one.[75] Citizen Defargues persisted in seeking authorization to evict them from Rue Mercoeur. However, the District of Nantes, no matter how hostile to these refractory people, in the last analysis feared to endanger education once it had dismissed them. On the 30th of October it put off the examination of another petition from their impatient successor: "Until the National Convention has legislated the form and the manner of (instruction in the) primary schools", we have no choice, whatever the reluctance we may experience, but to leave the children "in the hands" of men who have "persisted in their principles in contradiction to the laws".[76]

This forbearance (however relative) crumbled in its first contact with reality. To await systematically the restructuring of public education was impossible. Demolition alone seemed urgent. And the Brothers were certain of being sacrificed. And so, they sought "a compensation" for their buildings and furnishings. "Doubtless", they wrote, "when one has shaken off the yoke of slavery and oppression, humanity and gratitude must regain full control".[77].

On the 15th of November their request went from the Commune to the District which, on the 27th, returned it to the city government for its judgment. On the 12th of December the city was of the opinion that: "It is for the nation to come to help the petitioners: the "Ignorantin" Brothers, since they can be likened to the various suppressed Orders, must, like them, receive a subsidy which dispenses them from having recourse to any other means of assistance.[78]

The Departmental administration assumed the responsibility for demonstrating that the "gratitude" of a liberated nation was non-existent. Through its decrees from the 2nd to the 8th of November, it had already adopted a position opposed to even the temporary support of "non-jurors". Defargues had certainly triumphed. The District could only adopt the point of view of the higher authority: "All services rendered by the Brothers of the Christian Schools" were, in its judgment, wiped out "by their resistance to the law". The Brothers had "always rejected the oath: which, in the language of the first article of Title V of the Law of the 18th of August, deprives them of every subsidy". However, as the magistrates in Nantes noted, "article 15 ...granted them the free disposal of all furnishings and objects existing in their cells for their personal use". Such were the bases upon which the Assembly of the Department had, in strict justice, to legislate.[7980] Thus, the Brothers would disappear from Brittany, bearing, honorably, the punishment for their resistance to the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy."

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[74]Municipal Archives of St. Malo, LL 102. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1910, pp. 10-11.

[75]See above, pp. 165-166.

[76]Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, L, 608, Register of the district f-o 41, cited by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 588.

[77]Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, L 608. Register of the district F-o 41. The petition, addressed to the "Commune administrators" and undated, bears the following signatures: Barbier, Philip Brisart, Antony Lelarge, Peter Frenoy, Antony Doliger, J. B. Joseph Wallart, Louis Joseph Bocquillon, L. J. Colin, Leuthier

[78]Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, L 608, Register of the district f-o 41, copy of the Council's advice.

[79]Departmental Archivies of the Lower, L 608, taken from the Registers of the Directory of the District, meeting for Saturday December 15, 1792.

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Another climate surrounded the regions of the middle Loire, Anjou and Orleans. People there were accustomed to broader nuances, and very heavy storm clouds indeed had to gather before the heavens totally closed in.

When Father Emery assumed the double responsibilities of Superior of the Major Seminary and the Vicar-generalate in the diocese of Angers, he filled in the absences, and quite effectively blunted the scandals, of his bishop, the something less than edifying Jacques de Grasse;[81] and he left behind him in that city a successor and disciple in the person of Father Meilloc (another Sulpician), who quite naturally became counsellor to the Brothers at the Rossignolerie. We know that the administrators in Maine-and-Loire, colliding with the firm attitudes of the Brothers, had given up on the idea of administering the "Constitutional" oath to them.[82] The Community, although somewhat reduced and stripped of some of its residence pupils, continued to exist after the 18th of August. The "Liberty-equality oath" was required on the 4th of September. The example provided by St. Sulpice was directly felt here: the 17 Brothers in the Angers school unhesitatingly pronounced the oath as it was understood by Fathers Emery and Meilloc. Like the Brothers in Maréville, they continued to be useful to their fellow-citizens; and they seemed to be irreplaceable. At peace with the law, they carried on their tasks as teachers. However, they were being compelled to perform duties that were increasingly perplexing for their consciences, when the municipality appointed them as guardians over aged or infirm dissident priests, for whom internment would be transformed into deportation. Beginning in December 123 of these "Confessors of the Faith" were received at the Rossignolerie. The entrance of the army of the Vendée into Angers on the 18th of June 1793 liberated what remained of these captives in the former reformatory. The Brothers endured the civil war and the terrorist reprisals, which steeped the countryside in blood, without a serious mishap. They may have seen Pastor Noel Pinot mount the scaffold in surplice and chasuble and heard him pronounce the *Introibo ad altare Dei* before placing his head under the guillotine's blade.[83] We shall follow them later one in the various phases of a difficult and demanding existence.[84] Following the recollection of one of the members of the Community, Brother Montain,[85] the five Brothers in Chartres took the "'Equality Oath' in accordance with "the advice of the most enlightened clerics" in that city and in the capital. But they were quickly withdrawn from the operation of the school. On the 22nd of September 1791, they were forced to give up the Religious habit. On the 7th of October the municipal officers sealed up their residence and made the Sub-Director, Brother Jean Louis (Charles Richard) its custodian. Brothers Montain and Benedict lodged with a M. Menager, a butcher, on Rue Chat-qui-peche; while the Director, Brother Pacific, and Brother Acarius accepted the hospitality of a tailor by the name of Barré. It was there that the former principal of the schools in Chartres died on the 3rd Nivose in the Year II.[86]

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[81] See Sicard, L'ancien Clerge de France, les eveques avant la Revolution, pp. 296-297, 1912 edition.

[82] See above, pp. 150-151.

[83] Goyau, op. cit., pg. 524.

[84] For everything concerning the Rossignolerie we depend for our information upon Canon Uzureau, the well known scholar in Angers. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 34.

[85] See above, pg. 130.

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Since 1740[87] the people in Orleans, who had borne proof of their friendship for the dedicated and unassuming teachers who were so easily satisfied, attempted to shelter them from the vagaries of politics. Under the pressure of the Revolution, District administrators, in Orleans as elsewhere, became bolder than the municipalities and the Departmental Directories in promoting Jacobin initiatives. On the 10th of August they demanded that the "civil oath" be administered as soon as possible "to the members of...unsuppressed Communities that are dedicated to public education".[88] But there was no follow-up to this sudden summons. On the 10th of October Father Charles, pastor of St. Paternus,[89]inquired of the city magistrates whether "the Brothers and Sisters" in his parochial schools might "function as usual" (i.e., "at St. Luke's and later at All Saints') and "what conditions" would be "required of them". Therefore, up to that moment freedom of consciences, so vaunted by the municipal officials in their letter of the 5th of July 1792, had been respected, as well as the *modus vivendi* adopted after the "Civil Constitution" had taken effect. Father Charles also drew the city's attention to a request of "the Brothers, formerly lodged in the Community at St. Euvertus" and who, henceforth, were liable to pay for their own room and board , seeking a much needed increase in salary. "Since all the charity schools in the various parishes...were organized in the same way", the pastor was inclined to believe "that it would be easy" to extend to all of them "the formula" that they might be pleased to "prescribe" for the one in question. Five hundred children attended classes at St. Paternus' alone. The need for a solution was, then, keenly felt.[90]

The Commune Council did not mean to sacrifice the services of excellent teachers.[91] But it couldn't fail to see that they were no longer recruiting anybody; and so, it sought to assemble a list of prospective teachers from among the laymen. On the 25th of October the city sent out an appeal to all citizens of good will.[92] Teachers' salaries were, in principle, fixed at 600 livres.[93] It remained to find the funds, even though the financial difficulties seemed well-nigh insuperable.[94]

Brother Clair, the Director of the Brothers' schools, lamented and not without reason: with no income, his debts continued to mount. Tuition-free education had been practiced scrupulously. After forty-years of activity, he remarked, did he not at least have the right to a retirement pension? And he attested that he and his colleagues had fulfilled their duties as teachers and as citizens.[95]

The enforcement of the Law of the 18th of August in Orleans, did indeed not admit of any opposition. It was what might have been expected in a city in which religion had already accommodated itself to the "Constitutional" oath. Even priests who had not taken the oath in

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[87] (Trans. Note: The fourth month of the Republican Calender: 21st-22nd December-20th-21st January.)

[88]Municipal Archives of Orleans, P 153.

[89]Brother of the physicist, James Alexander Caesar Charles and future brother-in-law of "Elvira" Lamartine. Like most of his confreres he had taken the "Constitutional" oath.

[90]Departmental Archives of Loiret, LT 468. This report, originally addressed to the city, was sent, a week later on December 17, to the Departmental Directory, along with a letter which commented on the report.

[91]A. de Foulques Villaret, L'instruction primaire avant 1789 a Orleans, Orleans, 1882, pg. 146.

[92]Municipal Archives of Orleans, D, Proclimations f-o 120.

[93]District decree, dated November 10, 1792, Departmental Archives of Loiret, LT 468.

[94]Departmental Archives of Loiret, LT 468, correspondence of the City and District, November 1792.

[95]Foulques Villaret, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

1791 did not evade the obligation of defending "liberty and equality": thus, one of the Brothers' benefactors, Father Nicolas Aignan, a former Archdeacon and "Theological" Canon, and so, too, Father Philip Vesque, the former pastor of St. Vincent's.[96] Brother Clair never claimed to have kept company with the best clerics. We find his name (Étienne Benoist) in the "oath register" between Brother Aggeus (Gilbert Raquette) and another Christian Brother, John Baptist Le Moigne.[97] He deserves to be believed when he asserts that the entire personnel of the former Community submitted to the law.

The formality enabled the Brothers in Orleans, for a few months longer, to dispense instruction to the children of the people, according to the methods and the spirit of the Founder. The terrorists would not forgive them for having preserved the teaching of catechism: in spite of families' objections, Stephen Benoist and his associates would have to part company, and, thereafter, to alter their educational procedures.[98]

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A few other schools continued to operate in the Paris region and in Berry under cover of Article 6 of the Law of the 18th of August, which provided for support on an individual basis for former Religious employed in public education. We shall presently discover these survivals in Fontainebleau, Meaux, St. Denis, Noyon and Bourges. The taking of the "Liberty-equality Oath" seems to have gained acceptability generally; and it seems superfluous to dwell any further on this subject. In Paris, the fiery center of political fury, there was nothing but ashes. The house on the Rue Neuve, empty after Brother Solomon's arrest, appeared on the list of national properties: it wasn't sold by the State until the 5th Fructidor in the Year VII;[99] and the Brothers' furnishings were not disposed of until the 14th Ventose in the Year IX[100] The "panelling and other things" from St. Sulpice's primary schools had a purchaser at the end of August 1796 (the 12th Fructidor in the Year IV.[101]

The Bergundian schools, in Dijon and Auxonne, fell into schism; while the Brothers in Moulins prepared for prison and death. As for the institutions in the Southern province, they, more than any others, suffered from the ravages of the outbreak of persecution. Either the Brothers, retained in some places as public school teachers, received a recompense proportioned to their powerlessness, or, as was the case with the huge majority, they shared the fate of any vagrant, exile or person under suspicion. In this connection, there were hardly any half-measures; sides were drawn up, hostilities were violent, decisions inexorable, and always the worst conduct was to be feared. From the Massif Central to the Pyranees, from the Garonne to the Alps, Revolution and Counterrevolution had become convulsive.

Pretty nearly isolated exceptions, Aurillac and Alès experienced some respite until

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[96] Municipal Archives of Orleans, D, Register of civic oaths.

[97] Municipal Archives of Orleans, D, Register of civic oaths. Stephen Benoist took the "Liberty-equality oath" on October 6, 1792; Gilbert Raquette took it on September 20. As to J.B. Le Moigne, he did not come forward until November 2 because, as he said, of a journey that he had to make to his family on the occasion of the illness and death of his mother and the arrangements that followed upon her death. "He had always had the intention of takeing the oath and of making himself useful to the extent that this was in his power."

[98] Foulques Villaret, op. cit., pg. 146. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 34.

[99] Trans. Note: The sixth month of the Republican calender: August 18-19-September 17-18.)

[100] . (Trans. Note: The sixth month of the Republican calender: February 19-21 - March 19-21.)

[101] Departmental Archives of the Seine, Catalogue of the estate's assets. The bas-relief and the paintings in the chapel of the Holy Spirit were sold on the 16th of Prairial (the ninth month of the Republican calender, from the 20th of May to the 18th of June) in the Year IV (1795. In the follow year the entire sanctuary was purchased by a M. Caborat.

1793. In the large population centers of Bordeaux, Toulouse and Marseille there was nothing but silence regarding the Brothers after the disarray of 1791 and 1792. In Avignon, a sort of "Motherhouse" that the Institute operated on Rue Doree became, on the 28th of September, the theatre for a painful spectacle: the city drove out the last of the "Ignorantin Brothers" from their "monastery".[102] Between September and December there were days of leave-taking for the venerable Brother Florence (Jean Boubel) and his faithful friend, Brother Maurillian (Étienne François Bouhelier) on the one hand (for they were not separated) and some twenty members of the Congregation, on the other: Brothers Emery (Jean Baptist Die), Pierre Joseph (Joseph Hormieres), Illuminat (Claude Faure), and Sabas (Jean Rigaud) were among them.[103] The police, and after them a company of soldiers replaced the professed Brothers and novices. In 1798 Catholic priests were interned in the building: these victims of the August Terror were still not free in March of 1800. [104]

Castres, which welcomed the Christian Brothers in 1790,[105] and which still tolerated them after their rejection of the oath, dismissed them on the 30th of September 1792. The Commune Council condescended to grant them a small subsidy of 50 livres each in order to buy civilian clothes or any other immediate need. "Humanity and gratitude demanded it", was recorded in the report of the decision. The mayor (or, perhaps, a simple scribe) thought that the word "gratitude" might offend Jacobin sensibilities; and a convenient erasure extricated the city from further responsibilities![106]The Director, Brother Cherubin of Jesus, retired to his birthplace in Bollene.

When the village of Vans decided to part with the services of Brothers Celsus and Peter Celestine, it made its generosity appear less grudging. The decisions of the municipal magistrates in November 1792 displayed a certain eagerness to provide the discharged Brothers with sufficient supplies, linen and clothing and arrange a subsidy that would help them to live over the next few months. They agreed to look after the aged and infirm Brother Eustachius "in a small room" in the house…"behind the kitchen".[107]

After the abolition of secular Congregations there remained five Christian Brothers at Grenoble: Macedonius, Isaiah, Theodoritus, Thierry and Nicostratus. The first four intended to continue their work as public school teachers, if their salaries were increased and if they did not have to take the oath. They had not, they pointed out, taken the "civil oath" and neither would they take the "Liberty-equality Oath". Brother Nicostratus, on the other hand, said he was quite prepared to comply with the recent prescription of the Legislature. After this complex reaction, the Directory of Isere simply expelled Citizens Couroisier, Marcou, Dufieu and Trouillard, the dissidents, and paid the retirement pension to Andreé Vignard, the one who had taken the oath.[108].

In the Department of Aude, Brother Bernardine's skill and energy were spent in

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[102]Avignon, Calvet Library, Ms. no. 2495.

[103]Departmental Archives of Vaucluse, Series L, Source L-3, Box 136. "List of individuals making up the former Religious house…situated within the limits of the District of Vaucluse."

[104]Departmental Archives of Vaucluse, F 457–61, "M. Arnavon's Diary".

[105]See above, pg. 26

[106]Salabert, op. cit., 42-43.

[107]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1923, pp. 125-127.

[108]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 312-314

prolonging the life of a Brothers' school up to its final moment.[109]But in the end it was necessary to yield to the injunctions of tyranny. The City of Carcassonne had spared Citizen Pierre Blanc, whose eminent value it recognized. Once the Law of the 18th of August had been promulgated, the Departmental administration indicated to the mayor that he must close the school. And so, it was not without regret that the people of the city, with their own hands, undid such a well-organized and prosperous operation. Until this moment the Brothers had not abandoned their Religious garb: most of them returned to their families. For a while, their leader lived in a friendly household, where he functioned as a tutor.[110]

The splendid Charlemagne residence school, which Brother Bernardine did not direct but which was the result of his efforts,[111] knew only a fleeting grandeur. Opened in 1787, it disappeared once for all five years later. The estate was put up for sale at 31,580 livres, a figure well below its purchase price and the fund that the Superior had invested in it. The final auction was held on the 15th of December 1792.[112] Here, no more so than at St. Yon, Angers or at Maréville, did the Institute in its illustrious days to come recover its lost property. It is rare that the Church or monks after a catastrophe, when they strive to rebuild their heritage, return to their primitive residences. Providence seems to be telling them that, in the temporal order, they possess nothing permanently. The most patient efforts are fruitless if they strain only after results in the material order. The spirit, which is eternally unfettered, abandons disinterestedly the expropriated buildings in order to begin over again the works willed by God on the traditional pattern but without servile imitation.

We end this survey at Montpellier, where we come across the tomb of Antony Isnard, the man who inspired Pierre Blanc. A native of Avignon, a novice under the saintly Brother Stanislaus, and the intrepid pioneer in the splendid residence school in Marseille, the Brother who so gallantly bore the name of Benezet, he directed the institution in Montpellier beginning in 1785 or 1786.[113] His old age was saddened by harsh trials: what changes since those far off days when he was schooled in the loftiest virtues by Alban Bouche, compatriot and immediate disciple of Brother Irenée! He had witnessed the defection of his own nephew, Georges Isnard, the Director of Toulon, the "other" Brother Stanislaus;[114]and he experienced the closing of the novitiate in Avignon, which he had directed in 1777. Born on the 12th of October 1715, even in his seventies and on the eve of the Revolution, he still had the vigor to assist Brother Bernardine in the negotiations for the Charlemagne estate. He died in his Community residence on the 3rd of May 1792. It is possible that both the primary and the residence schools were still in existence at that time; since the Brothers in Montpellier were neither dismissed nor did they desert; further, Brother Mommolian succeeded the deceased Brother Benezet in regular order, and the teachers' salaries continued to be payed. It was as late as the 4th of December that the Directory of the District decided that "the former Brothers...seek every possible subterfuge to delay their moving out of a house in which they

[109]See above, pp. 166 and 167.

[110]Lemandus, op. cit., pg. 130.

[111]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 565-569.

[112]Departmental Archives of Aude, Q, 228.

[113]For Brother Benezet see the Index to Vol. II of the present work.

[114]See above, pp. 89-90.

should not have been dwelling from the moment" that the Law of the 18th of August was proclaimed. The administration of Herault accused them of having sold (at the expense of the nation) "silverware" and other "objects". It commissioned its attorney-general to seek the "restitution" of the money realized from these sales. And it dismissed the Brothers without indemnification, without even the power to retain the furnishings in their rooms. The decree was put into effect during the course of the following week.[115]The work that had been begun by Bishop Berger Charency and championed by his successors, François Renaud Villeneuve and Joseph François Malide, was not yet fifty years old.

[115]Motherhouse Archives, Montpellier file and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 228-229.

CHAPTER THREE

Pius VI's Initiatives and Brother Agathon's Last Years

Neither prison nor torture could separate De La Salle's spiritual heirs from the Roman Church. Nevertheless, the splendid structure that had been built up since 1680 appeared to be in ruins. Property and residences were confiscated; institutions were suppressed; and communities. were dissolved. The Brothers who were legally returned to civilian life and canonically dispensed from vows[1] were fragmented. Some, as we have noted and shall do so repeatedly, had accommodated themselves to the new situation. Thrown back into the world, forced to face day-to-day problems and journeying tentatively, as it were, in the dark, they gave up any hope of returning to the Institute. In particular, the young, those who had been scarcely habituated the demands of the Rule, those who had made only temporary vows, or who, even after several years of teaching, had remained simple "novices" -- all of these were by now quite removed from their earlier ideals; they had built new lives for themselves, absorbing occupations, habits of independence and families.

The others, the perpetually professed, mature or approaching old age, persisted staunchly in their vocation. They preserved it either by practicing (at their peril) the trade of the teacher wherever their talents of their zeal were employed, or in careers that skill, opportunity or chance had opened up to them -- public administration, commerce, industry, and, of course (in a time of war, the levying of troops and universal conscription) in military uniform in the service of their country. Some attempted to practice mental prayer and penance - anything from their previous life that seemed compatible with the concerns and the responsibilities of a man who had to gain a livelihood and who was no longer supported by rules, example and monastic obedience. They were absorbed into the mass of the faithful, edifying Christians; today, persecuted; tomorrow, tolerated, until the next round of sectarian violence. They strove to avoid giving grounds for denunciation and to look like "good citizens", without violating their conscience. They avoided the schismatic clergy and, as far as possible, official religious services; and sought, in defiance of Jacobin threats, the consolation of the Sacraments as dispensed by "dissident priests"; and looked, sometimes anxiously, for informed counsel and sure guidance.

Where to turn for direction? Who would give them the pledge of a better life? The foundation upon which De La Salle had built his charitable and religious edifice had been destroyed;and France was living under laws which condemned every association. The French Church, its dioceses and its parishes, within the framework of which stood the educational institutions, was a heap of debris, with gaping arches and alienated, defiled and demolished altars. The Bishops' exile continued. As for the Congregation's own hierarchy, it had been dismembered in the upheaval. Directors, Visitors and Assistants no longer functioned. The Superior-general's three associates were enveloped in silence and solitude: Brothers Pascal and Sylvester lay dying; and in 1791 Brother Lothaire thought of nothing more than arranging for his own retirement. The Superior, to whom all looked since 1777 and whose brilliant mind and vigorous hand had kept the family-members so firmly united and so harmoniously attuned, had been stripped of his right to rule by a tyrannical legislation and

[1] To the extent, i.e., that each of them had sought the opportunity of a dispensation from vows. (See below, pg. 189)

then was violently removed from his residence and separated from his Brothers. He had barely escaped the guillotine. And, at the end of his imprisonment, although he was not much more than sixty years of age, he was already an old man. His body, long afflicted, had undergone the terrible shock of moral and physical suffering, although his soul was indomitable. However, he could not be asked to assume superhuman tasks. The freedom that he had regained had not been immediately total: he felt about him a network of surveillance and malice. He was forced to be secretive and cautious in his letters and in his relationships. To circulate easily from one city to another, especially to cross the frontier, or to convoke a Chapter without the police knowing about it was neither permissible nor possible. Right up to his very last days, which, indeed, were not far off, he was always more or less hindered in his movements.

At the time, the Institute was unable to find any way of surviving within French boundaries France, except in the very fragile person of its Superior and a few elderly Brothers. Its complete rebirth (which many Catholics ardently desired, and which one day political wisdom would demand) would have been curiously compromised, would have risked being effected under rather untimely circumstances, and would have taken an awkward, abnormal turn, or, in any case, one quite different from the integrity and scope of the Lasallian model, had the Pope not intervened.

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The Bull of 1725 guaranteed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools a select place, a special mission, among societies responsible for an auxiliary apostolate in relation to the Church hierarchy. In the eyes of believers, the encroachments of the civil power were without permanent effect and were merely temporary, sacrilegious usurpations as long as the Holy See did not submit to them. In order for the Society of Jesus to disappear, by right and in fact, from Western Europe after the edicts promulgated by the monarchies of the 18th century, Clement XIV's Brief was necessary.

St. John Baptist de La Salle had placed his followers under the care and direct protection of the Sovereign Pontiff. This step, seemingly so bold coming from "Gallican" France and from the founder of such a modest Congregation, bore fruit, since six years after the Founder's death, his disciples were assured of a future, and their Institute was raised to the rank of a Congregation approved by the universal Church. However, the elementary school directed by Gabriel Drolin,[2] had developed very slowly, in spite of the good intentions of his successors, in the midst of many material difficulties and many problems occasioned by the pioneering role of the school, far from the native land of its initiators.[3] The new Pope knew the Brothers when he was treasurer to the Papal Chamberlain; he valued their reserved and devout behavior, the quality of their educational methods and the effectiveness of their instruction.[4] He was soon favoring them with his liberality.

The French teaching community had been established in 1758 on Strada Felice St[5] in the parish of St. Andrea delle Fratte in the neighborhood of *Trinita dei Monti*. In 1799, the Director, appointed five years earlier, was Brother Frumence. With his associates, Brothers

[2]See Vol. I, of the present work, Part Two, chap. viii.

[3]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 181-182 and 394-396.

[4]Motherhouse Archives, Rome file, an old note, without either signature or date.

[5]The building was sold in 1903, and the Community then moved into St. Teresa's parish.

Frobert, Raymond, Aristarchus and Pierre Victor,[67]
he directed three classes that included more than 200 pupils.

The school had benefited from a quite recent addition. Up until recently the Brothers had to be content with two classes. They explained to Pius VI that the lack of space (as well as the small number of teachers) obliged them to refuse many pupils. One of the rooms in the building, previously occupied by a tenant who was a sculptor, had fallen vacant and could easily be remodelled. The Holy Father replied in a *motu proprio* dated the 29th of May 1789: "The Brothers...are very useful to our city of Rome because of the good and Christian education they dispense, not only with a great deal of patience and goodness, but also freely to so many Roman children, without excluding any, not even the poorest and the most wretched, and without receiving from them or their parents the least gift, albeit freely offered." As a result the Pope decided to grant the request for assistance.

Through a will dated the 17th of June 1782,Cardinal Bernardine Giraud left the Holy Father his inheritance, to be put to charitable purposes. The Cardinal was also deeply devoted to the Brothers[8] and he would certainly have been pleased to share in their work. Hence, Pius VI quickly issued as many bonds on the inheritance "as was necessary to bring in an annual income of 100 ecus of Roman money".[9]This would be the sum allotted at first for the remodelling, and thereafter for the support of the teacher who was to be in charge of the third class that was to be initiated.

The Pontifical assistance was subject to a condition that it is important to emphasize clearly: "The Brothers...will continue to give the children the education that they are presently giving...; they will teach them catechism, reading, writing, arithmetic and nothing else (*ne altro*). Because our intention is that if, in the future, the Brothers of the Christian Schools cease to exist in Rome, or...if they change methods, even should such a change appear beneficial, they must immediately...resign the pos−session and use of the bonds... Purposely, the grant[10]. involved educators of the poor only, teachers in tuition- free and exclusively elementary instruction.[11] In this way two essential clauses of the Bull of Approbation were recalled. Legislating for his subjects, Pius VI seemed to have excluded the opening of residence schools (a legitimate, but secondary work, a "means" and not "the end" of the Institute, founded "primarily" for the education of the children of the common people.[12] And further, with his categorical ne altro the Sovereign of the Pontifical State also refused to consider any addition to the extremely elementary instruction given to young people.

Neither the times nor the customs would inspire more liberal ideas. We need not be

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[7]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 338.

[8]His Eminence's name was a sufficient indication of the French origins of his family.

[9] i.e though the *monte de pieta* or Bank of Charity

[10]About 535 gold francs in 1914 values

[11]Collection des Bulles, Brefs et Rescrits accorde par le Saint-Siege a l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes, Rome, Pontifical Printers of the Pius IX Institute, 1907, p. 52-60. "Motu proprio of Our Holy Father Pope Pius VI opening a third class in our school at Trinita dei Monti", Italian text with French translation. -- Since the transfer of capital could not take place immediately, the administrators of Cardinal Giraud's estate were instructed to pay the Brothers seven ecus a month until the time of the final settlement.

[12]It was with the view of achieving this advantage for the children of the poor that the Christian Schools were founded." (Common Rule, chap. i.)

surprised: and, rather than introducing here anachronisms from our own modern notions, we would do well to observe the concern which Pius VI continued to show toward poor children. "We desire (he wrote to the Superior-general on the 28th of January 1789) that your Congregation grow and continue to make progress. We know that the cities of France pay tribute to its knowledge, its experience and its zeal.In this Brief to Brother Agathon, the Pope announced the eventual opening of a "second school" in Rome. "However, since what was being discussed was a building that had to be planned from the ground up", it wasn't a project that could be completed immediately. "The work had been begun and the materials were in readiness", in cooperation with the Institute's Procurator to the Holy See.[13]

Indeed, two weeks earlier, on the 14th of January, a new *motu proprio* was signed. After having recalled the Brief of the 29th of May 1787 and the contract drawn up by the "Capitoline notary", Lorenzini, on the following September 18th, and having recounted the arrival of the fifth Brother from France, the Pope, satisfied as always with the "diligence", the "charity" and the "detachment" of the Brothers, continued: "Since the Brothers have only the one house in Rome, which is far removed from the most populous neighborhoods, we have thought it useful to grant them a similar house in the Bridge neighborhood, on the square of San Salvatore in Lauro."

The beginnings of the arrangement were briefly as follows: the tax lawyer and (along with Count Ferdinand Giraud) executor of Cardinal Bernardine's will, Joseph Benetti, had received permission to purchase some property on which the future school was to be built. But since the Giraud inheritance continued to be burdened by a number of encumbrances, the Pope appropriated for the enterprise funds accruing from a legacy of Palatine Count Joseph Hyltzen, a Pole who died in Rome in 1786. Benetti then purchased, on San Salvatore Square, the Perleoni property and "two other small buildings, until then included in the estate of the Abbey of St. Peter in Chains. A loan was effected to finance the arrangement. Six-hundred ecus annually would be the subsidy for six teachers and the sum was to cover the cost of building repairs. An oratory was to be furnished and lodgings for a Community of eight Brothers, at the most, and four classrooms, each one large enough for 100 pupils.

"In three of these classes only catechism, reading and arithmetic will be taught. The Brothers will admit all children, no matter how poor or badly dressed, with all the charity their Rule prescribes. For the fourth class a proposal was made, in which we must recognize both the thought of the Brother Procurator,[14] (inspired, surely, by his Superior-general) and a happy evolution in the thinking of the Roman Curia: the Pope was deliberating the question whether the children might be taught the elements of "drawing" or "the French language".

Nevertheless, toward the end of the document the restrictive clauses of 1787 reappeared: "In case the Brothers want to introduce into this new school sciences or classes other than those that we have prescribed, however useful or sublime...we require...that they immediately forfeit both the property and the possessions of the school and the funds and capital of the estate intended for them...Our desire is exclusively this: namely, that they devote themselves in Rome to the education of the poor children of the city, that they teach them only what we have ordered, and nothing more (*e niente piu*).[15]

Slowly, with a typically Roman cautiousness and a deeply rooted certainty of the Vatican's support and in the hope of a fruitful future, the tiny Community at *Trinita dei*

[13] Motherhouse Archives, Circulars, copy of the January 28th 1789 Brief on the back of a Ms. circular sent, on February 27, 1789, to Brother Florus, Director of the St. Menehould Community.

[14] Who was none other than Brother Frumence, who (like his predecessor, Brother Louis August) added the functions of Procurator to those of Director of the Community at *Trinita dei Monti.*

[15] Collection cited, pp. 61-83.

Monti consolidated its longstanding position and got ready for a new leap forward. In Ferrara, another city within the Papal States, a Brothers' school had been prospering for half a century.[1617]
It was attended by three-hundred pupils who were taught by six Brothers. Its Director in 1789 was Brother Eulogius of Jesus.[1819]

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One of the repercussions of the Revolution was the greater progress of the Institute beyond the Alps. Rome, the capital of Catholicism, became, understandably and providentially (after the disappearance of the great French institutions in Melun, St. Yon, and Maréville, and after the annexation of Avignon, taken from the Holy See) the refuge of the Brothers who were able to flee the destruction of their Society and the center toward which gravitated those faithful Brothers who expected either to spread throughout Italy or to return to the mother country.

We have been indicating a succession of expatriates occasioned by the persecution.[20]. The Memoir of *Trinita dei Monti*[21]had recorded the following: "During the month of January 1793 we were granted diplomatic immunity for eighteen Brothers, seeing that eight of our dear Brothers from France were forced into exile because of the Revolution going on...for four years." A little further on in the same document we read: "Since we are now twenty Brothers, on the 25th of April 1793, the Holy Father, out of kindness and charity for us, granted us an alms of 343 ecus, 73 bjoccos...which resulted from a fine imposed by the Pope on the Chapter of St. Peters...for having failed to show up for the procession of St. Mark, because the weather was apparently threatening rain.[22] The story is not without a certain flair, and we might well imagine Pius VI joking a little with the ermine-clad Canons as they paid out their ecus to the advantage of the black-robed Brothers. But we should especially note the reference to the expatriates. If the Roman Community had eighteen members in January 1793 and twenty in April, it wasn't just eight or ten Brothers who had crossed the mountains since 1791, but something like twenty, since Brother Frumence and his associates had composed a group of only five Brothers at the outset of the Revolution. Several members of the Communities in Avignon and Marseille must have certainly preceded the eight of whom the author of the Memoir speaks.

In two official documents there appears the names of some of the Brothers who joined their confreres in Italy: on the occasion of an audience on the 22nd of September 1794, His Holiness granted a variety of indulgences to Brothers "Charles Borromeo, Brice of Jesu, Desire, Candide of Jesus, Gontran, Macarius,[23] and Guillaume". Cardinal Zelada cosigned the indulgences.[24] On the 28th of April 1798 Brother Frumence and his secretary, Brother Esprit of Jesus, declared that "dear Brother Léon (better known as Brother Emery) had been sent

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[17] Cardinal Delci had founded it in 1741. (See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 182.)

[18]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 335.

[19] See above, especially pp. 159 and 160

[20]Archives of the school in Albano, Register no. 36. (Citation by Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 128.)

[21]Archives of the school in Albano. Register no. 36. (Citation by Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 128.)

[22]This text proves that the former Director of the residence school in Marseille had a tour of duty in Italy

[23]Archives of the Procurator-general to the Holy See, file no. 1.

[24]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Emery file.

from Avignon to Rome by the Superior-general, to teach".[25] We shall soon meet with other expatriates in the entourage of the superior appointed by Pius VI to direct the Christian Brothers.

This considerable reinforcement eased the way for the start of the new school planned for the Ponte Sant'Angelo quarter. The buildings purchased by Joseph Benetti had been rased in order to make room for a structure of imposing appearance. Over the entrance was engraved the inscription: "Pius VI, father of the poor". Two stories decorated with pediments, over which rose an attic, and the whole framed by columns at either end with the Pontifical coat of arms in the center of the facade, formed a whole which, while not original, was at least sturdy and solemn and in no way unworthy of the city or the period. The structure was appropriate for its purposes. However, one regretted the lack of large yards and a garden, which defects were hardly compensated for by "the pleasure of seeing the display of lights on the dome of St. Peters and the fireworks at Castel Sant'Angelo",[26] on the other side of the Tiber.[27]

Classes began after the Feast of St. Charles in 1793. The first Director was Brother Frobert (or Roberto), a native of Comte, who had made his novitiate in Maréville. His family name was Anatole Bonvalot; and he died on the 31st of July 1794, at the age of forty-one years. His assistant was Brother Emery (John Baptist Die), born near Rheims in 1753, former instructor in mathematics in Rheims and St. Yon, and then Director of Scholastics at Melun, and finally Director of Novices in Avignon. In the words of his necrological notice in 1829,[28] he was 'one of the saintliest Brothers our Congregation has had since its venerable Founder. Three younger Brothers were responsible for the 1st, 3rd and 4th grades: Brothers Raymond (Matthew Varagnon), born in the diocese of Puy on the 19th of December 1768, Esprit (Claude Podevin), born in Paris on the 21st of February 1765 and Vincent de Paul (Jean Étienne Charpentier), also a Parisian and twenty years of age. Brother Raymond was possessed of "a remarkable skill in handling children; he got anything he wanted from them and had them loving and practicing religion with a surprising ease.[29]A serving-Brother and a few supernumeraries completed the house's personnel.[30]

The Brothers would have to summon up their patience and give the broadest scope to their activity. A mob of children flocked to Holy Redeemer Square. It was a seething, malodorous crowd, but intelligent, appealing, sensitive and joyously devout. This was the moment to repeat (with feeling) the *Misereor super turbam*. There was no fear here of straying beyond the narrow limits of De La Salle purposes or the Sovereign Pontiff's orders.

A *motu proprio*, dated the 14th of February, definitively regulated schools life and, in particular, the program for the "fourth class". Pius VI decided that "the elements of drawing"

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[26]Motherhouse Archives, Rome file, (San Salvatoe in Lauro), historical account, dating from the end of the 18th century. In the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 128 there is a copy of an engraving that pictures the "Casa de Religiosi della Scole Xne eretta in Roma a S. Salvatore in Lauro, da N.S.P.P. Pio Vi, per i poveri fanciulli", as it still exists.

[27]The inscription placed in the corridor of the house in 1793 was removed at the time of the Revolution in 1848. It read: "at least six Brothers of the Christian Schools, lay Religious of a French Congregation, subject to ecclesiastical control and to the authority of the pastor of the parish are to rekindle with the ardor of their charity poor and vagrant children, teach them Christian Doctrine, reading, writing, arithmetic and good habits, abstain from teaching them any other science or art and not accept presents", and "if they do not do this, this house and the funds which support it are to pass to the Pious Academy" (i.e., according to the *motu proprio* of the 14th of January 1789, the institution at the foot of San Pietro in Montorio for poor young girls). Archives of the Brother Procurator to the Holy See, File no. 1.

[28]Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pp. 155-157.

[29]Ibid., pg. 101. (Cited by Brother Lemandus in Histoire des Freres de Toulouse, pg. 64.)

[30]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 341.

would be taught. And for this purpose he added a lay-teacher to the Brothers, "an architect, Andrew de Dominicis", whose classes would be given "on all holidays and Feast Days, except the most solemn ones", and during the summer vacation. The lawyer Angelo Benucci, chosen to succeed Joseph Benetti, who had died, was to administer the income and pay the subsidies.[31]

The French Brothers (come since the Revolution or already on site prior to 1789) were from now on integrated into Roman society and enjoyed a a quite justifiable popularity. In a city in which people, under a paternalistic authority, felt somewhat as though they were a single family, where human relations were marked by a certain joviality, and where everybody from the *Pincio* to the *Aventine* and from the *Vatican* to the *Quirinal* knew one another, the Christian Brothers learned not to be surprised by references meant to be nothing other than affectionate. The Brothers in *San Salvatore in Lauro*, dedicated to the education of the poorest and the most unpolished of children, were known as the *ignorantelli*. The title of *maestri* was reserved for the Brothers in the Community of *Trinita dei Monti*, already a century old and enjoying a well-established reputation;[32]
but another name succeeded in gaining acceptance and was extended, throughout the peninsula, to all of the Christian Brothers: "*i carissimi*" -- the "dearest", the "beloved", which came to be a name full of charm and reverence on the lips of both children and parents. Its conciseness gave it clarity: "*il carissimo*" meant "*il fratello*", the "*little Brother*" who came from Provence or from distant Champagne, the successor to Gabriel Drolin.

While the Founder's followers had retained the spirit of their beginnings and the character of their nation, and while they held scrupulously to the educational methods set forth in the *Conduct of Schools* and to the religious practices transmitted to them from their origins, they had, nonetheless, introduced certain inevitable adaptations. Their teaching, of course, was conducted in Italian. The newcomers of 1791-1793 quickly set themselves to the study of that language and, as pupils-become-teachers, they taught Italian grammar to young Romans.

Circumstances also induced them to modify their habit. It would have been dangerous to circulate in the Pontifical City during the French Revolution dressed in a fashion that obviously betrayed French nationality. Everything that Catholics had heard of events in Paris had generated mistrust, bewilderment and indignation - Louis XVI flouted, the Church despoiled, Papal authority disregarded, schism enthroned in rectories and in Bishops' residences and persecution swollen with violence and emboldened to the point of butchery. In Rome His Christian Majesty's stately ambassador, Cardinal Bernis, stripped of his ancient splendor and reduced to the condition of an exile, ended his life as a lofty prelate in poverty. The news of the fallen monarch's trial before the Convention spread like a trail of lighted gunpowder. Passions exploded; and, on the 13th of January 1793, a diplomat and agent of the Revolution, Hugues Bassville, was the victim of the fury of those passions.[33] After that tragedy, the Pope suggested that the Brothers adopt the "Roman collar", which would make them look like clerics.[3435] Over many years thereafter the Brothers in Italy retained this change.

No matter how they dressed, they had no change of heart. In the Community in

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[31] Collection cited, pp. 84-89.

[32] Motherhouse Archives, Rome file.

[33] Motherhouse Archives, HBE file, Historique des etablissements de Rome, notes of the "Casa di San Salvatore in Lauro".

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Ferrara there was a man from the Upper-Alps, Joseph Agnez, a native of Gap and a novice in Avignon in 1779, who was a member of the Italian Community before he had made his first vows. In France he was known as Brother Rieul. In Italy he was renamed Fratel Regolo. This "Dauphinois was gentleness itself, possessed of an angelic piety and a conscientious, tireless attention to long, drawn-out projects: he translated Institute books into Italian, including the dull writings of Canon Blain. he also published two catechism in that language. Later, in connection with Pope Gregory XVI, whom he had known as Abbot of St. Romuald's,[36] he played a major role in the history of the Brothers who lived directly under the protection of the Holy See.

His Director, Brother Eulogius of Jesus, welcomed several expatriates. In order to put them to work in the new schools, which growing numbers made possible, he had them practice their Italian by talking with their future pupils. Expatriate priests took advantage of the same sort of instruction, and Brother Rieul was one of their teachers. On December 2nd 1794 Archbishop Aviau of Vienne in the Dauphine visited the school, where he met fifteen Brothers for whom he celebrated Mass. During the same month Bishops Frejus and Beausset of Roquefort paid visits.[37]

Brothers Guillaume de Jésus and Charles Borromeo, followed by Brother Jean of Mary, former Director of Maréville joined this Community. Because he was so short in stature, Brother Charles Borromeo was nicknamed by the children il maiestrino[38]

In this way strong teaching staffs were built up, and the Christian Brothers were reconstituted in miniature, as it were, far from their place of origin, but far, too, from those who would destroy them. The Pope attempted to provide for the future, which was the purpose of his *motu proprio* of the 16th of February 1794. "He had observed with what advantage for religion and society", the Brothers had busied themselves "in fulfilling his wishes". That advantage would cease to exist when the Brothers, grown old, their Institute would have been extinguished along with them. His Holiness had, therefore, decided to open "a novitiate in his territories" where candidates, and "especially Italians" and subjects of the Pontifical States could be trained -- an enterprise that had already begun with three young Romans who had received the habit. Thus, not only the schools in Rome and Ferrara would be maintained, but others as well, with God's help, would be opened in the territories subject to Papal control and beyond.

Orvieto, in Umbria, was selected for this project. It was a choice suggested by circumstances. A benefactress, the Baroness Virginia Marabottini Valenti, wished in her will "to obtain some especially spiritual assistance" for the city in the region of her birth. The Pope thought that it would be a good use of the income from the legacy to start a novitiate. Father Dominic Salvatori, the Baroness's executor, "assigned the most comfortable house of the estate, the one closest to the church, to the Brothers", furnished it and supplied funds for its maintenance. The Brothers, who were to continue never to aspire to clerical ranks, were to "obey their bishop and their pastor". They would never stray from a line the Rule had laid down from the Founder.[39]The novitiate was ready in December 1795. Pius VI himself had

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[36]Circulur for April 15, 1902 on the "Centenary of the Institute's Restoration", pg. 15.

[37]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 336.

[38] .[38]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 689-690.

[39]Collection cited, pp. 90-89.

named Brother Rieul as Director.[4041]
Temporal affairs fell to Brother Emery. And a Brother Seraphim was put in charge of a class. (Brothers Pius and Contest were joined to the group during the following year.) A few postulants applied.[42]

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In four personal decisions the Sovereign Pontiff indicated the importance he attached to De La Salle's great work. He stabilized, strengthened and broadened the Brothers' situation in Rome; he assisted the refugees from France and then incorporated them into the schools; and, finally, the opening of the novitiate in Orvieto showed that he was quite determined to protect the Congregation's future. In the critical years Pius VI, faithful to his duties as Father, served the lowly and poor and laid the groundwork for Christian education.

It seemed to him that a final gesture had become necessary. It involves a sensitive point -- a matter of undeniable gravity. We shall first of all relate the traditional account in the language in which it was recorded at a date (about 1867)[43] that was already far removed from the event: "One day Brother Raymond was at prayer in the celeb−ated St. Peter's Basilica, when Pius VI entered with a single prelate. The Brother hastened to kneel before the Pope, and, in an emotion-filled voice answered the questions put to him. Pius VI inquired in particular after Brother Agathon's health. "When", he added, "will the Superior-general come himself to Rome?" He then learned how impossible it was for Brother Agathon to come to Italy or to correspond freely with other members of the Institute. It was then that he resolved to entrust the direction of the Brothers in Italy and those in the diocese of Lausanne[44]I

Following, translated from the Latin, is the Brief, *Inter graves*, "given in Rome, at St. Mary Major, under the Ring of the Fisherman, on the 7th of August 1795, in the 21st year of (our) Pontificate", countersigned by Cardinal Braschi; the original is in the Archives of the Secretary for Briefs, in the building overlooking the Court of St. Damascene: "In the midst of heavy responsibilities attached to the ministry imposed from on High upon Our unworthiness, and singularly worsened by the malice of the times, We have thought it necessary to direct the attention of Our paternal care upon the education of children, especially those of the poorest class of people. Their parents, burdened by want, abandon these children who, roaming the squares and public places, are often unaware of the first principles of religion; and vices growing in them with age, lead them to their spiritual ruin, not without causing the State the most serious injury.

"Thus, Our dear sons, called the Brothers of the Institute of the Christian Schools, under the patronage of the Most Holy Child Jesus and St. Joseph, having undertaken this difficult work in a house not far from the church of the Most Holy Trinity on Mount Pincio, welcome in the name of Christian Charity even the poorest children and exactly accomplish the

[40] A passage in the Brief that we shall look at later on informs us that Brother Rieul temporarily assumed the direction of the two Roman institutions while he awaited the opening of the novitiate.

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[42] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 345-349. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 689 and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 144.

[43] Motherhouse Archives, Historique, 24 AGR, notes collected by Brother Anthelm. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 685. The author was misled as we shall see, concerning the date on which the conversation between the Pope and Brother Raymond could have taken place.

[44] .e., the school in Estavayer to Brother Frumence.

mission of their Institute, by assiduity in the classroom and by their consummate competence in teaching reading, writing and arithmetic; these schools are so widely frequented that they are insufficient for all those who apply."

And once again there recurs an enumeration of the successful initiatives over an eight year period: fresh funds guaranteed to the school at Trinita' dei Monti, the opening of the school in San Salvatore in Lauro.[45]

But (continues the Brief) while, thanks to these evidences of our concern, this Institute grows from day to day in our ecclesiastical States, in France, where it was founded in 1680 and where it first spread, it suffers, as do all Regular Orders, calamities and the most distressing trials, as the result of difficulties through which that kingdom is presently passing. And although Our dear son, Brother Agathon, Superior-general, and resident of the said kingdom, had continued for some time to rule and administer the said Institute, he was obliged to abandon it, disappearing without anyone having any word of him; so that we do not know whether he has left the Institute or he is in hiding in order to avoid persecution...Thus, in order to fulfill the responsibility of Our apostolic ministry, we are obliged to watch over and provide for the administration of this Society and the government of the Brothers, who, quite provisionally, will be wearing the habit adopted in Rome."

"Hence, on Our own initiative, with certain knowledge, after mature deliberation, and in virtue of the fullness of apostolic authority, We establish and delegate, as Vicar-general of the said Institute and also as Superior of the school of the Most Holy Redeemer in *Lauro*, in Our beloved City, Brother Frumence; and as Superiors, respectively: Brother Philadelphus, of the other Community near the Most Holy Trinity Church on *Mount Pincio*; Brother Eulogius of Jesus, of the Community in our City of Farrara; and of the Community in Orvieto, Brother Rieul, who shall nevertheless be primarily responsible for the guidance of both institutions in Our beloved City; and finally, as Superior of the Community in Estavayer, in the diocese of Lausanne, in the Canton of Fribourg, Brother Dominique; along with complete jurisdiction, authority and due power for the Vicar-general and the *pro tempore* Superiors of this Institute, conformably with its Statutes and Constitutions, and especially with what was determined quite recently in the General Chapter of 1787;[46]in such a way, however, that these local Superiors, named and delegated by Our present letters, are subject and obedient in all things to the Vicar-general, according to the prescriptions of the said Statutes and are bound to this obedience."

"By Our apostolic authority, We make the said Vicar-general responsible, and We order him to exercize the government and the administration of the said Institute, like any *pro tempore* General, until, the difficulties have been removed, Brother Agathon may resume the said government and administration, or, his death having been proved by indubitable documentation, a new General may be elected by a plenary Assembly called for such purpose."

"Thus, therefore, in virtue of holy obedience, and under pain of incurring displeasure and other punishments reserved to Our imposition, We enjoin all and each of the Brothers of the said Institute, and all others who belong or shall belong in whatever way, to receive and recognize the said Brothers Frumence, Philadelphus, Eulogius, Rieul and Dominique, respectively, as Vicar-general and local superiors in the schools mentioned above; and to be, according to the degree of authority they possess, subject and obedient to them...humbly

[45]Here the Pope mentions "the establishment of two silver medals as prizes" for the best pupils at San Salvatore, "at the end of each school year". and, especially, the drawing class, and the opening of the novitiate in Orvieto.

[46]On this subject see the decisions of the General Chapter in Vol. II of the present work, pp. 618-621.

receptive of their helpful counsel and orders and effectively strive to put them into practice.[47] The ramifications of this decision are obvious. Both in fact and in law Brother Frumence became (by the will of the Pope, acting with the "fullness of apostolic authority") the head of the Congregation. And while, as a result of circumstances, his authority could only be extended to institutions in Italy and Switzerland, in theory it went beyond these narrow limits and effected "each and every Brother". Like a "General", regularly elected and assuming his duties to their fullest, Brother Vicar "administered, governed and directed the Institute". The Revolution and the war which, after the Treaty of Bâle, was waged between France, on the one hand, and Austria along with the various Italian principalities, on the other, seemed to have dug such a chasm on the bordering Alps and so radically separated from the surviving Communities the Brothers who were expelled from the French schools scattered throughout the territory of the Republic and externally stripped of their Religious character that it was thought that Brother Agathon had no way of being heard. By any standard, not only was he unable to "rule", but he lost control of the moral leadership of his former associates.

The profound silence which enfolded him during the Year III and most of the Year IV (i.e., from October 1794 to the end of August 1796) would have been enough to justify the Sovereign Pontiff's decision. Europe was not unaware of Jacobinism's virulent hostility to Christianity -- even among the "moderates" who cooperated in Robespierre's overthrow. The persecution was only temporarily interrupted: it tended to resume its rhythm on the 25th and 26th of October 1795 when the members of the Convention, before completing their all-too-lengthy tenure, declared that the deportation laws were still in force and formally excluded clerics from a general amnesty.[48]. How then to carve out for the Christian Brothers the road to freedom and safety if not through the area cleared out away by Pius VI's action. The Superior-general's prerogatives were, of course, respected: once the problems had been solved, Brother Frumence would be immediately subject to the authority of his leader whose "vicar" he was, and nothing more.

The Pope had stated that it was his will alone, his "own initiative", that had set the exceptional arrangement in motion. The scene that reportedly took place at St. Peter's is not improbable, given the paternal temper of Pius VI and his engaging good will. In the Papal archives we find no petition on the part of the Brothers in Rome suggesting that one of them be granted special powers. A simple rough draft signed by Cardinal Braschi, accompanied the original Brief; and except for a couple of editorial changes, it does not differ from the latter. The tradition may summarize and simplify history, but it obviously does not distort it.[4950]

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The noble and sympathetic profile of the Brother Vicar-general would assume prominence in the years to come. We shall limit ourselves here to viewing Jean Baptist Herbet, long since transplanted from Picardy, taking root in Roman soil and bending, without breaking, in the storm that was gathering on the distant horizon. He had already completely adapted to his surroundings when the Pope appointed him to his new responsibilities. He had directed the school in Ferrara before being called to *Trinita dei Monti*. Upon leaving the latter institution, he took up quarters in the Square of *San Salvatore in Lauro*, where the late Brother Roberto, and after him Brother Rieul, had made ready for him an unobtrusive, but

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[48] La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 76-77

[49] The Brother Archivist at the Motherhouse has followed patiently the research that both of us have undertaken on this subject. This inquiry, for which we express our gratitude to him, authorizes, we believe, the conclusion contained in this section of the present chapter.

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pleasant and smoothly-operating residence. Even today reminders of Brother Frumence still seem to drift among these walls, more than a century old, and on this staircase and in these corridors which retain a somewhat old-fashioned charm, and in these modestly proportioned rooms, which fend off the glare of the day and make work seem less oppressive and prayer more intimate. On the 14th of September 1796 Pius VI gave the new Superior permission to have Mass celebrated in the oratory whenever there was a profession, or when a sick Brother was unable to assist at services in the parish.[51]

During the school year of 1795-1796 classes were fully operative. However, once springtime arrived, the city began to feel uneasy. Bonaparte, the young general whom the Directory had just sent into Italy, in two weeks, had put the Piedmontese out of action and had turned to face the Austrian army. On the 7th of May he was the victor at Lodi; and on the 15th he entered Milan, whose population acclaimed him. The Mincio corridor was breached and Mantua was besieged: Lombardy broke away from Austria. In the southern valley of the Po the entire peninsula lay open to the conqueror. Parma, Placentia and Naples yielded. And suddenly French troops appeared in the Papal States and in the territory of the "Legations". It would have been to misunderstand Bonaparte to believe that he threatened Rome with destruction. He meant to destroy nothing; and, in spite of the Directory's rebuke, he did not wish to set himself up as the enemy of the Catholic Church. On the 23rd of June an armistice was signed in Bologna, the terms of which were harsh, although not unacceptable. Pius VI was obliged to give up his French enclave of Avignon and Comtat Venaissin and agree to the occupation of Bologna and Ferrara.

A brief period of peace was dearly bought. Brother Eulogius of Jesus' institution did not appear to have been damaged by the presence of soldiers. And perhaps the Brothers in Ferrara met former pupils of Christian Brothers' schools among the French occupying forces. But the opportunity of seeing once again one's countrymen was not without its joys for the expatriates.

A fragile hope arose for improved relations. The Brief, *Pastoralis sollicitudo*, on the 5th of July 1796 recommended that French Catholics submit to civil authority. True, the course of events prevented its official publication. But the text became known as far away as Paris and circulated among that portion of the French clergy that was still in communion with the Holy See.[52]

The dazzling conqueror resumed his road to glory: from August to November there came to a waiting and amazed world the echoes of the Castiglione, the Adige and the Brenta campaigns, and the fierce struggles at Caldiero and Arcole. On the 14th of January 1797 the dreadful battle of Rivoli ended in a decisive victory. On the 2nd of February Mantua capitulated. Bonaparte prepared to march on Vienna and bring Austria to its knees. He had overcome every obstacle, and in his wake there followed the tide of Revolution. The Directory demanded an end to "government by priests". But everything depended upon the wishes of the General, and he no longer acknowledged any will superior to his own. He spoke as an exacting, inflexible master: the "Legations" and Romagna were totally wrested from the Pope by the Treaty of Tolentino on the 19th of February 1797. Further, 15 million precious objects and works of art were ceded to the conqueror. It was the sort of plundering that pleased the hearts of the Parisian politicians, and the sort of territorial looting that provided their sectarian hatred at least the appearance of satisfaction: he had despoiled a Head of State, but he respected Pius VI, the Head of the Church. He refused to appear in Rome, where his entrance was to have taken on the character of a revolutionary carnival and a pagan triumph.

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[51] Archives of the Brother Procurator-general to the Holy See, file I.

[52] Goyau, op.cit., pg. 527.

He entrusted one of his adjutants with a deferential letter for the Sovereign Pontiff.[53]

Once again, people began to breathe more easily. The course of daily life in the Eternal City had not been interrupted. There were services in the three-hundred churches, in St. Peter's Basilica, and St. John Lateran; there were Lenten "Stations", processions on the streets and in the fields, Psalms chanted by Canons and monks, popular amusements and jesting, and pontifical ceremonies and receptions for cardinals and diplomats. Even the French Republic sent an ambassador, who was the older brother of the Conqueror of Arcole, the affable, solemn Joseph Bonaparte. While the future remained uncertain and the exiles longed sadly for their very troubled, ever inaccessible homeland, there didn't seem to be any need to give oneself over to worry or to mope over one's work.

It was at this time that the Brothers at Trinita dei Monti, in order, perhaps, to ward off financial difficulties, received permission from Pius VI to start a modest residence school. There exists in the Motherhouse Archives a copy of the "prospectus" of this institution: "The Religious of the Christian Schools, residing at the Queen's Arch, near *Trinita dei Monti*, admit children for education, from about seven years of age to before fourteen. They strive seriously to provide young people with a suitable Christian education...They prepare them, by special lessons, for First Communion...They will be taught reading, arithmetic, money exchange in all foreign places, brokerage, keeping of double-entry books, the demonstrative method for developing an excellent handwriting in all styles...the French language, spelling accompanied by the practice of writing from dictation, and the way of writing all kinds of letters. Tuition is seven Roman ecus a month for pupils whose parents furnish bed, books, paper, pens, ink, toilet articles and a hairdresser...There are also teachers of geography, "the elements of geometry and algebra, navigation, drawing, civil and military architecture. The cost for all as well as for any of these courses, was only two ecus for each school year."

The "prospectus" was signed by "Philadelphus Lefebvre" with the title of "Director of the Residence School".[54] This was Henri Lefebvre, of the diocese of Arras, Brother Philadelphus, a thirty-nine year old Brother, admitted to St. Yon on the 26th of September 1776, professed in 1783,[55] Henri Lefebvre was born on the 4th of May 1758 in "St. Leger du Miraumont". whom Pius VI had selected on the 7th of August 1795 to succeed Brother Frumence at *Trinita dei Monti*. Thus began a work analogous to the ones in Normandy, Lorraine and Anjou, in a section of the city filled with reminders of France and in a neighborhood with a church, founded by the French King Charles VIII on behalf of the Vincentian Fathers, which, at the top of the monumental staircase constructed in the 18th century, raised its beautiful Renaissance facade between two lofty towers. One day the Italian Brothers, on this very attractive multicolored "Piazza de Spagna", would be teaching their own young countrymen and Romans.

This 1797 effort proved indeed to be quite ephemeral. It foundered on a terrible catastrophe. Bonaparte had been recalled to Paris and was absorbed in a sham offensive against England, which became the Egyptian campaign. This was the moment chosen by the Directory to unleash its mad political manoeuvres. It tyrannized over and plundered the Cisalpine and Ligurian "sister-Republics" that were born of the army's Italian victories. After the coup of Fructidor, it openly took aim at the temporal power and person of the Pope. The humpbacked dwarf, Larevelliere-Lepeaux, a devotee of the religion of "theophilanthropy", meant to cross swords with the Papacy.

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[53]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. V, pg. 45.

[54]Motherhouse Archives, HA n. Historique of Rome, prospectus, a contribution of Brother Exuperian, Procurator-general to the Holy See in 1858.

[55]St. Yon Register and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 340.

A tragic skirmish on the 28th of December 1797 was used as a pretext for armed intervention. On that day, a crowd stirred up by the emissaries of Jacobinism and pursued by the Roman police, sought safety in the courtyard of the French Embassy to the Holy See. General Duphot, the fiance of Joseph Bonaparte's sister-in-law, hurried to bring help to the "patriots" and clear the area overrun by the police. In the scuffle he was killed.

Rejecting the apologies of Cardinal Doria Pamphili, Secretary of State, the French Ambassador left Rome the next day. On the 10th of February 1798 the city was under the control of French troops, led by General Berthier. On the 15th the "Roman Republic" replaced the Papal government, and Pius VI took refuge in Tuscany. Over several months he lived in the partial security of Siena, and then was transported to the Charter House in Florence. In May 1789 the Directory declared war on the Grand-Duke, a member of the Habsburg-Lorraine family. Florence was taken and the Pope fell prey to the enemies of Catholicism. Removed from the Charter he was handled from city to city; and Turin and Brianza were the final stopping places on his "way of the cross" before he died in Valenzia on the 29th of August.[56].

Once the shepherd was stricken, the sheep were scattered. In 1798 some of the Brothers in Rome took a chance and returned to France.[57] Henri Lefebvre (Brother Philadelphus) set out for the Ligurian coast, but, unfortunately, to betray and commit an act of treason. His former associates suspected him of having the mind and the greed of a Judas. He had perpetrated some unscrupulous acts to the detriment of the institution in San Salvatore. He entered into business in Genoa, married and then disappeared amidst contempt and neglect.[58]

Brother Frumence, accompanied only by Brother Benjamin, found asylum in Valerano, near Viterbo, on a small piece of property that a certain Pierre Lamour, a Breton immigrant to Italy, had bequeathed to the Institute in 1740.[59] There Brother Vicar-general awaited quieter times;[60]and since the success of the "Second Coalition" brought about the fall of the "Roman Republic", the schools at *Trinita dei Monti* and *San Salvatore* would regain their previous occupants before the end of 1799.The schools in Ferrara and Orvieto had not closed their doors. Ferrara, which was incorporated into the Cisalpine Republic, and Orvieto, tucked away at the foot of the Apennines, had not suffered from the reaction to the panic of February 1798. Several Brothers who were "on-the-run" found a welcome there.[61] On the 20th of October of the same year Brother Eulogius of Jesus died peacefully in his own Community.[62] Brother Jean of Mary, after so much suffering in the prisons of Nancy and on the roads of western Europe came, in September of 1799, to a more painful end: arising during the night, he fell in a hallway and remained prone there without being able to call for

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[56]R. Pinon, Histoire diplomatique de la Nation francaise, pp. 386-7. P. La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 358-61, 364-70

[57]Archives of the Procurator-general to the Holy See, file I, no. 22.

[58]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 340.

[59]Ibid., pg. 343.

[60]Brother Benjamin was not the only one with him. We have seen (above, pg. 334) that Brother Esprit of Jesus joined Brother Vicar-general in April 1798.

[61]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 343

[62]Ibid., pg. 336.

help. The following morning he was found dead on the floor[63]

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This study, devoted to the activities of Pius VI, has taken us rapidly through ten years of the Revolution. We must now retrace our steps in order to rejoin Brother Superior-general in France and to experience his isolation and describe his reaction to Rome's decisions and follow him up to the moment of his death.

We caught a glimpse of Brother Agathon on the 1st Vendemiaire in the Year III as he left the Luxembourg prison. The secretary for the Committee for Public Safety had scrawled the name, "Joseph Goulieu" on the release-papers.[64]. Almost immediately after that Brother Agathon was the topic of another official document, which indicated that he had been exonerated of every accusation and, in short, restored to his rights as a citizen. This was Aubin's affidavit: Aubin was the head of the Office of Public Property, and the document identified by his name is dated from Melun, the 14th Vendemiaire in the Year III. Besides, it recalls that Joseph Gonlieu's "annual pensions (was) 900 livres". After this action, which regularized the former prisoner's situation, the District administrators asked the public paymaster of the Department to pay Citizen Gonlieu, "omitted from the list of pensions falling due on the 1st of Vendemiaire", the sum of 225 livres for the months of Messidor, Thermidor and Fructidor "and for the five festival days" of the Year II.[65]

It is impossible better to demonstrate how the imprisonment endured during this period was the most unjust of penalties. The offices of the Seine-and-Marne gave evidence of complete administrative impartiality. But the next day political considerations would turn out to be less even-handed. A man who had just undergone the throes of the Terror would have been curiously imprudent if he returned to the city where he had been known to have been the Superior-general of a Religious Congregation and where he would have run into enemies of the preceding years. Once he was armed with a little money and some scanty baggage, Brother Agathon had to find a more secure spot but one that was also at a reasonable distance from home.

And this is the time to ask why he chose Chilleurs-aux-Bois, a village in the Orleans area. Whenever the name of Orleans is met with in the history of the Brothers' Institute, it immediately evokes the lofty and somewhat enigmatic figure of Claude François du Lac Montisambert. The beloved disciple of De La Salle (so close to the master in terms of roots and austere holiness) belonged , as we know, to a great family in that region.[66].The Du Lacs had once owned an estate in Chilleurs, a piece of land called "Chamerolles".[67]

The male descendants of the Du Lacs of Chamerolles became extinct at the end of the

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63 .[63]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Fredebert's notes.

64See above, pg. 283. The paper the secretary used bore the printed words "second year", which he inadvertently failed to erase

65Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, L 414, no. 5202.

66For Claude François du Lac (Brother Irenée) see the Indices to Volumes I and II of the present work

67Bertrand du Lac, from whom issued all branches of the genealogical tree, acquired Chilleurs and Chamerolles in 1440 and he was buried in the marshland abbey of Cour-Dieu. His son, Lancelot, Lord of Chamerolles, bailiff and governor of Orleans in 1504, husband of Louise Coligny, numbered one of his grandsons among the leaders of the Huguenot party in the province: and when the Protestants came to sack Cour-Dieu, they were stopped at the height of their pillaging by another Lancelot, seized no doubt by remorse before the tomb of his great-grandfather. La Chesnaye-Desbois' Dictionnaire de la Noblesse, Paris, 1774, Vol. VIII, pp. 350-1. Father Patron, Recherches historiques sur l'Orleanais, Orleans, 1870, Vol. I, pg. 493.

17th century.[68]. Their fiefdom of Chilleurs passed into the hands of the Coetlogons. In 1764 the manor became the property of Claude William Lambert, Counsellor to the king in the Great Chamber of the Court in Paris. For a time this man was at the forefront of the political scene -- Controller-general of finances in the reign of Louis XVI, and, as a colleague of Lomenie Brienne, in 1788 he was swept up in the Cardinal-minister disgrace. "It was useless", said Mirabeau, "to have a controller when there were no longer any finances."[69]

Brother Agathon certainly knew the "Lord of Chilleurs-aux-Bois, Baron de Chamerolles". Doubtless, he had maintained direct contact with him in order to obtain records concerning the Du Lac family.[70]In this way would be explained the steps he took in July 1793 to send "a part of his personal possessions to the Commune of Chilleurs" as well as the inquiry demanded by the Peoples' Representative from the Committee for Orleans.[71]

However, by this time Guillaume Lambert had left the Department of Loiret. We pick up his trail in Lyons where he was arrested, and then, after his release the terrorists got their hands on him once again in Cahors and, this time, did not let him go. Brought to Paris, he was guillotined on the 17th of June 1794.

His younger son, Paul Augustine Joseph, was imprisoned at St. Pelagius in 1793.[72]. It is easy to imagine, during the hours when the prisoners were permitted to fraternize, the young man chatting with the Superior-general of the Brothers. Citizen Gonlieu did not go unnoticed; and the two victims of the Terror had in common not only the anxieties of the moment but also the memory of ancient ties. The name of "Chilleurs" continued to thrust itself upon the consciousness of Brother Agathon.

He might have learned from his comrade-in-bonds that the situation in that small corner of France was not particularly bad. In March 1789, during the very troubled days that preceded the Revolution, "(inhabitants') opinion" was "unanimously favorable to the lord", whose just claims raised neither objection nor criticism.[73] The revolutionary court in 1794 was to declare the Chamerolles manor confiscated.[74].But this "national property" must have had a quick buyer. It was probably inhabited by some faithful domestic servant. Local legend had it that, at some unknown time, it had served as a hideout for counterfeiters.[75] Among these rumors, so widely spread abroad during the period of anarchy induced by the Directory, we need only keep in mind that on the edge of the forest of Orleans investigations by the police and the militia were conducted quite irregularly. Paul Augustine Lambert, released on the 26th of October 1794, became, in the Year VIII, sub-Prefect of Pithiviers and lost no time in buying back the ancestral estate.[76]

In the Year III he might very well have tactfully recommended Brother Agathon to

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[68]La Chesnaye-Desbois, Vol. VIII, pp.350-1, Paris, 1774. Father Patron, Recherches historiques sur l'Orleanais, Orleans, 1870, Vol. I, pg. 493

[69]H. Perchellet, Journal d'un bourgois de Pithiviers pendant la Revolution, Pithiviers, 1923, pg. 81. (This is not a contemp−orary document, but a learned compilation, presented in the form of a fictional diary.)

[70]This quite plausible hypothesis is offered by Brother Agathon's biographer. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1938, pg. 266.) We are constantly reminded of our debt to our predecessors.

[71]See above, pg. 278.

[72]Bulletin cited, pg. 267

[73]Perchellet, op.cit., pg. 123.

[74]Perchellet, op.cit., pg. 123.

[75]Father Patron, op.cit., pg. 263.

[76]Perchellet, pp. 66 and 81.

the attentions of sympathetic people. The country and the people would be gentle with a man who was physically broken by age, illness and by the most serious disappointments. It was a quiet village, on a plain, bordered by a wooded area; and the church which, with its ancient, sturdy belfry and it its twin-windowed apse, dominated the town; and, with its arches and the small columns of its graceful entrances, offered an example of the pure style of the early 13th century. Perhaps it was closed after the extravagances of 1793; and Mass was no longer celebrated under its roof, which was probably partially rebuilt after the wars of religion. But it soon recovered its pastor, Father Bonnemain.[77]

The manor house of the Du Lacs and the Lamberts arose a half-league from the village,in a framework of green, surrounded by moats filled with water from springs; its tower was slitted for firearms and for the chains of a drawbridge, and the huge central building was flanked, at the corners by towers where stone and brick met in harmonious patterns.[78] The old feudal residence imperturbably contemplated the brief careers of violent men.

Of Joseph Gonlieu's stay either at Chamerolles or (which would be more difficult to explain) some other house in Chilleurs, we know nothing except its approximate duration. In August 1796 "Citizen Gaudenne, military employee in the park of Montreuil-sous-Laon" received a letter bearing both a Tours postal mark and an embossement on which by careful scrutiny the seal of the Institute of the Christian Brothers could be made out. This letter was addressed to him marked "to be picked up by the addressee, Laon". Other letters in the same handwriting must have reached him in the course of a previous period; or, at least, he had already been informed indirectly of the former refuge of the author of the letter.

The text, dated simply "the 5th Fructidor in the Year IV",[79] reads as follows: "I just received, dear friend, your letter of June 6th--a rather distant date, as you see. So you are still thinking about me? I am grateful. You see by the postmark on this one that I am as far away from you as ever. I came here in the hope of finding the necessities of life, which, thank God, are not wanting to me at the moment. I am in my sixth month of residence. You seek news about me? I've already given you some. I might add that your friend, into whose welfare you inquire, has been imprisoned successively in four jails, the last of which was Luxembourg, where he was set at liberty on the 22nd of September 1794. His stay at Chilleurs, to which you wrote, endured until last Passion Week."

"I observe with pleasure that you are with Citizen Leufroy, to whom I shall dash off a word which I shall ask you to deliver to him. I would regard myself lucky to be able to practice his profession; my desire is to do so if circumstances cooperate."

"I congratulate you, my good friend, on remaining free. I suppose that your former commitments continue as before. Apparently your position is a good one and provides you with the means of living and supporting yourself. Amen."

"You omitted to mention where Citizen Aubert is and what he is doing. I was unaware that Julien was in your Canton. I knew Aquilas was there. Kindest regards, upon occasion, to all these good comrades."

"There are four of us here, who see each other frequently. Borgia sends his regards, as I do, who am your friend, "Gonlieu".[80]

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[77] Worship, however, does not seem to have quite ceased in Chilleurs. On a farm called "Paradise" a loft had been fitted out as a chapel for a "dissident" priest and his courageous flock.

[78] Patron, op.cit., pp. 262-263.

[79] August 22, 1796.

[80] Motherhouse Archives, File AB j. Autographed letter. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pp. 185-6 and for October 1938, pg. 268.

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We are delighted by these lines (as was François Rene Gaudenne--Brother Vivien)--because we find Brother Agathon completely himself. In their style they preserve the frank, swiftpace, the tone at once paternal, cordial and firm, to which the Superior-general's writings have accustomed us. They betray no trace of moral depression, of intellectual slowdown, after the awful times through which he had lived. Finally, they contain numerous and (under a veil of cautious wariness) quite clear details. He had spent time in four prisons (the first could only have been the one in Melun, from the 23rd to the 27th of July 1793, followed by St. Pelagius, Bicêtre and Luxembourg).[81]. He was released at the gates of the fourth prison on the 1st Vendemiaire in the Year III; and he retired to Chilleurs-aux-Bois on about the 13th of March 1796. He came to Tours as soon as possible (since on the 22nd of August the Superior-general figured he had passed "six months of residence"). All of this is essential information.

Chilleurs did not provide a sufficient livelihood, while Tours offered greater resources: we should attempt to find out why. What raises no difficulty is the Superior's desire to be reunited with some of his Brothers. Three Brothers took him in and assisted him, one of whom was mentioned by name: Brother François Borgia (Jean Jacques Jegadin), a Breton from Rennes, who had made his novitiate at St. Yon in 1775 and who was professed in 1781,[82] and ten years later was teaching in the schools in Rheims; we have seen that on the 21st of June 1791 he refused to take the "Constitutional oath"[83] at the hands of municipal delegates.

A reopening of schools seems to have been contemplated. In the month of Fructidor in the Year IV the persecutors' grasp loosened in a way that was especially perceptible: Catholics, freer in their movements, became more confident, indeed, almost bold. In the course of the following year hope continued to mount, until the crushing disappointment of the 18th of Fructidor in the Year V.

Almost uninterruptedly Brother Leufroy had continued to teach children in Laon; Brother Aubert contrived to carry on an adventuresome apostolate in Noyon. In Belgium Brother Julien headed the St. Hubert School and Brother Aquilas settled down in the same sector of the northwest. The Superior meant to restore fraternal relations between these men and himself. Did these relations assume religious obedience? The allusion to Brother Vivien's "commitments" would lead one to think so. And while Brother Agathon complimented "the military employee" on his "good position", it was the Brother's heart that he sounding out, as he congratulated him upon "remaining free".

Once the substance of the letter has been duly noted, it remains to fill the gaps -- to account for the interval of time between the forest in Orleans and the Touraine region on the Loire. In this final phase we shall meet, as at a crossroads, the benefactor who, in all probability, was to succeed the Lamberts of Chamerolles.

We refer to Pierre Adrien de Gaullier La Celle, former Procurator of the king in the presidium of Tours. For sixteen years (from 1775 to 1791) this magistrate had filled that office. When he was not included in the framework of the new judiciary, he withdrew to Loches, and then turned up in Tours. Although he was a man of the "Ancien Regime", he nevertheless survived the Terror without too much embarrassment. But then in the course of the Year III he was charged with having fled the country; he easily proved that he never left France. On the 15th Thermidor he won his case. His residence certificate shows that at the

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[81] See above, pp. 277-283

[82] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pg. 186

[83] See above, pg. 114.

time he was dwelling in Orleans.[84].

In fact La Celle divided his time between that city and Touraine, since he had property in both places. At Tours he must have met Brother François Borgia and asked him for a tutor for his son Pierre, who was 12 years of age. And made aware of the presence of Brother Agathon at Chilleurs-aux-Bois, he doubtlessly called upon him and opened his home to him. Probably Citizen Gonlieu, during "Passion Week" of 1796 came into the La Celle household in Oreleans, "opposite the cloister of St. Sulpice". Quite probably this was only a brief stay. With the arrival of their guest (or shortly thereafter) the La Celles chose to reside in Tours, on "Rue Liberté in the Chardonnet sector".[85]

Formerly, in his out-of-the-way village, the Superior-general lived as a refugee, solitary and semi-suspect. But now in a big city where, materially, he no longer wanted for anything, where, during these happier days, he did not hide, but formed, with the other three Brothers, a friendly household of prayer, encouraged his companions' projects and carried on his correspondence with Brother Vivien.

He wrote him on the 5th of November 1796: "You are apparently impatient, dear friend, with waiting so long for an answer to your letter of the 13th of September, which I only just now received. I left Chilleurs in order to seek a livelihood in Tours.[86] Borgia found it for me.[87]. There are four of us here who are in the same condition as yourself, and, please God, we shall persevere in it until death.

It would be impossible to state more forcibly that in the Superior-general's intention and in his entourage's disposition the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools had continued to exist. The *Signum fidei*, the star of the Congregation, burned like a vigil lamp deep within the consciousness of these men. "Citizen Vivien Gaudenne, in Rheims" (the address used by Brother Agathon) had taken that light as his guide. Resigning his "good position" in Laon, he set out for Champagne when the political horizon cleared. His purpose? We can guess: but his correspondent informs us clearly enough:

"I hope you do well in Rheims. I long for it. Simple people will welcome you there gladly and you will be useful to the young. May you have all possible success! You cannot give me greater pleasure than to inform me of your disposition, which I pray God preserve in you."

A similar new beginning was finally decided upon for Tours: "Borgia, along with Lysimachus, is going to open a shop here. It's what a great many people want. I expect that they will do well and that they won't want for work.Thus, the name of the third of "the four" was revealed: Brother Lysimachus (Jean Baptist Patin) "of the parish of Dohen, diocese of Boulogne". Born on the 28th of April 1751, like Jean Jacques Jegadin, he belonged to the generation that followed immediately after the companions of the Superior-general's youth; it was a generation whose best members were marked with the recognizable imprint of Brother Agathon. He entered the novitiate at St.Yon at the age of twenty-six, on the 14th of June 1777, two months before the election of the new Superior. He made his perpetual vows in Melun; and he taught in Vannes until 1791. A native of the same region as Brother Solomon, he would bring to the restored Institute, until his death in 1829, the spirit of the great

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[84]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1938, pp. 270-1, following File F-7 of the National Archives, no. 5235

[85]Material supplied by Brother Agathon's death notice. See below.

[86]Brother Vivien's letter of the 13th of September (the contents of which we are informed only by the Superior-general's reply) certainly arrived at Chilleurs after Brother Agathon left. Hence, the considerable delay in its reception. And this is also why the Superior confirmed his change of residence with Brother Vivien by a simple reminder.

[87]There is, then, no doubt concerning the intermediary role played by Brother Francis Borgia between Gaullier and Brother Agathon

Christian Brothers of the 18th century.[88]

It its final sentence, the letter of the 5th of November 1796 mentions another Brother who seems to have retained Brother Agathon's affections. "When the opportunity arises, Damascene, who is in Rethel, would be very pleased to know where I am." Brother Jean Damascene (Jean Louis Martinet, perhaps a relative of the martyred Brother Moniteur) was born on the same day as Joseph Gonlieu: April 4th 1731. The coincidence may have contributed something to the friendship of the two men. On the same day also, the 22nd of September 1756, both of them wrote and signed the formula of perpetual vows[89]in the register at St. Yon. The second coincidence could indeed make mutual confidence easier in the midst of a diversity of fortunes and explain a basic accord in spite of inevitable separations. Jean Louis Martinet, in his native Rethel, was able to save a school that had been founded by De La Salle. The simple, straightforward "Liberty-equality oath" had, of course, initiated that accomplishment.[90] In any case, the persevering and devoted teacher had totally retained the Superior-general's respect.

These are some of the Brothers who, close at hand or far away, formed the guard which had not capitulated, under orders from a captain who still on his feet and under a flag that was still flying. The old fighter assured "Vivien Gaudenne" of his continuing affection. And on this occasion signed himself, not "Gonlieu", but, without the earlier precaution, "Agathon" --the rallying cry, the luminous syllables which sounded the moment for the restoration. The letter-paper bore a stamp on which was inscribed the seal that was reserved for the "Regime" of the Congregation.[91]

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The bit of blue sky glimpsed by Catholics began to expand. After Portalis' speech on the 9th Fructidor in the Year IV (the 26th of August 1796), the Senate rejected a shocking "resolution" voted by the Five Hundred on the 17th Floreal which would have given new life to the persecution of dissidents.[92] Even the other Assembly, siding in favor of a greater justice in its vote of the 16th Brumaire in the Year V (6th of November 1796), abolished Article 10, the most savage of the provisions in the decree which a year earlier the expiring Convention had issued as its ultimate cry of hatred against priests "subject to deportation or imprisonment".[93] And then the Germinal elections changed the make-up of the Counsels to the advantage of the more moderate elements: of 216 former members of the Convention leaving office only 11 were reelected.[94] On the 29th Prairial (the 17th of June 1797) a new, eloquent, Christian voice echoed in the halls of the legislature: Camille Jordan, the young Deputy from Lyons, who submitted a bill "on the general principles of religious liberty...and

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[88]St. Yon catalogue, pg. 163. Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pp. 185-6. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pg. 186.

[89]St. Yon catalogue, pg. 105; Vow Book, pp. 256 -7.

[90]See above, pg. 122, note 4.

[91]Motherhouse Archives, File BE y, autographed letter, bearing the date, the 5th of November 1796. Cf. Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pp. 116-7, and Bulletin des Ecoles chreteiennes for May 1907, pg. 186 and for July 1933, pg. 215, and for October 1938, pg. 269. For reasons that we do not know, this letter has been variously dated in these articles as the 25th of November and in another place as the 9th of October

[92]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 117-124.

[93]Idem., ibid., pg. 137.

[94]Idem., ibid., pg. 166.

the regulation of worship".[95] It was a remarkable change and a ray of sunshine. However, not all the clouds had been swept away: a sudden change of climate or an abrupt increase in the temperature would only bring on more violent storms. Constraints and restrictions in the practice of public worship had to be endured. The Church hierarchy would regain none of its privileges nor its support of former times. The "Constitutional" Church had the use of most of the religious buildings. Finally, the State retained some requirements regarding political loyalty: on the 10th Fructidor Deputy Dubruel proposed a formula of "submission to the laws of the Republic" for priests who would like to take advantage of official recognition. According to one of the articles of the bill, the proposal was a civil declaration and absolutely respectful of dogma and discipline.[96]

More than ever it was important to avoid confusion between personal opinions and the Faith, to abstain from badly timed demonstrations and, by such a cautious attitude, be ready for the favorable development of events. Father Emery had earlier advocated the means for the restoration of religious peace. On the 14th of October 1795 he wrote to the Pope: "If deported priests who had returned to France had been wiser and more reserved in their conduct, if the wisdom and prudence which has characterized the actions of your pontificate had inspired so many of the regulations issued by some prelates, and which we had come to expect, in relation to several matters, from Your Holiness' decisions, I dare say that the Church in France would today enjoy a rather broad peace and that Her ministers, or at least those in lower orders, would have been restored to Her.[97]

This long-sought and necessary restoration was perhaps anticipated by 1797. On the 7th Fructidor (24th of August) a law reopened France to priests who had gone into exile. This was too much for the majority of the Directory, for Barras, Reubell and Larevelliere who, behind their fundamental disagreements, veiled an hypocrisy or a fanaticism that was typical of the tyrants of '93. The army, violently hostile to anything that might appear to be a "reaction" fatal to the Republic, declared itself ready to lend them support. Barras appealed to Lazarus Hoche and then to Bonaparte, who, believing that his hour had not yet come and meaning to keep open the paths of his ambition, placed his lieutenant, Augereau, at the service of the Jacobin Directors. The prospect of a "coup d'Etat against both Assemblies was taking shape before the eyes of all well-informed persons. At this juncture, while for a few days public liberty and partial freedom of Christian conscience endured, Brother Agathon wrote a letter to Brother Vicar-general Frumence, that is extremely significant and of prime importance.

It is dated the 23rd of August 1797.[98]It had been two years since the former Director of the Brothers at *Trinita dei Monti* had been invested by Pius VI with extraordinary powers and had been residing at *San Salvatore in Lauro*. He must have awaited the Treaty of Tolentino, indeed even the declaration of Leoben at the end of April 1797, before thinking of getting in touch with the Superior-general. Even at that time he continued to be unaware of the fate of "the prisoner of the Terror" and, as a consequence, could not keep informed of events happening in Italy a Superior, loved and respected as always, but whose existence remained mysterious, if not uncertain. Brother Agathon learned of the Papal decision in an

[95]Idem., ibid., pg. 178, for an excellent commendation of Camille Jordan; the historian compares him to Charles Montalembert as a youth.

[96]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pg. 214.

[97]Cited by G. Goyau. Histoire religieuse de la Nation francaise, pg. 214.

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indirect way on the 7th of August 1795, probably through correspondence finally re-established between the Brothers in Italy and their confreres scattered throughout the French Republic. The peace which, while it appeared precarious, controlled until further notice the relations between the Holy See and France and the final moments of the religious tolerance that preceded the 18th Fructidor had to be exploited: the letter sent to Brother Frumence from Tours revealed the situation exactly and detailed the attitude and the wishes of his Superior.

"May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with us always!" With this salutation, borrowed from St. Paul, which was the exordium of the Institute's official "Circulars", Brother Agathon was immediately asserting the continuity of his authority. He then went on to assume the upper-hand in relation to an inferior: "If your attachment to me, my very dear Brother, causes you to want to hear from me, you are going to be gratified. The arrival of your last letters at my address[99] was followed by my imprisonment, to which a tyrant's death put an end. Having escaped the threat of death,[100] I went into hiding in the countryside, which I left when I thought I could be safe living in the city. It is the one in which I now reside, in a house belonging to simple people who have welcomed me, and from which I am now writing to you."

"Up to the present, my dear friend, I have been unable to resume my duties; many obstacles still prevent me from resuming them. But I shall hasten to do so, when they are overcome. What I would not do to be where my desires are or where my heart is! - with my Brothers. The affliction and the anxiety caused by the inaction forced upon me by circumstances would be much greater if I did not know, my very dear Brother, that the Sovereign Pontiff, attentive to everything, has provided for the administration of the Society by granting you the authority of vicar-general of the Institute until the Superior-general no longer has the impediments which stand in his way and he shall be able himself to resume the reins of the government for which the body of the Institute has lawfully elected him and which all its members here desire that he retain."

"While awaiting the moment that Providence holds in its keeping, allow me, please, my very dear Brother, to offer you here and to all the Brothers whom the Holy Father has provisionally placed under you, the expression of the tender and sincere friendship of a heart which is always united with you and which wishes to share the merit of your regular and sanctifying life, which you, doubtless, create about you according to the facilities at your disposal. How happy I would be if I could actually take an active and effective part in your holy exercises and be myself in a position to serve you in the way I should, in the way you have a right to expect of me, and from which I shall not believe myself dispensed except by death!"

It would be impossible to expect a more precise clarification. Brother Agathon abandoned none of the prerogatives or responsibilities that he had acquired through his election; he testifies that all the Brothers "here" (i.e., on the French side of the Alps) continued to recognize him as the eventual restorer of the Congregation. With these reservations, he subscribed as an obedient son to Pius VI's Brief, and he stressed the reasons for it. He proclaimed his spiritual and sympathetic union with the Brothers who, led by the Vicar-general, had the good fortune to be able to observe De La Salle's Rule.

In the very language habitual to him before 1792, he went on to explain to the Brothers the greatness of their vocation: "You would be quite wrong, my dear Brothers, if you failed to profit from the advantages of your position. Nothing prevents you from fulfilling the end of your vocation --of forming citizens for heaven and for the nation, by

[99] See above, pg. 280

[100] Brother Agathon did not say "Condemnation to death".

working zealously for the Christian and civic education of youth. You are not impeded in the pursuit of such a purpose; in this way you can effect your own salvation through the means you sought out in the profession you have adopted, and the use of which you fully enjoy in the place in which you live."

"Spare yourselves, at death, the regret of having neglected these means of salvation. Be aware of the difference between your position and that of your unfortunate confreres in France. Carefully avoid novelties; preserve your vocation in its purity, simplicity and fervor. Never forget your obligation to transmit it to your successors as you received it, or better; you would be culpable before God if, through your fault, there were relaxation in the Society. Keep your holy Rule. Live in retirement and put a distance between yourself and the world; do not allow outsiders[101] to visit you, and do not you yourself visit them, except in so far as your duty requires it. Forbid yourself political news; you shall be accountable to God for the time you spend on it; it is good for nothing but to distract, dull and dissipate the soul. Be on your guard against the revolutionary spirit [102] and against the philosophy of the godless, who strive only to confuse minds and nations, destroy religion, if they could, and sew disorders everywhere."

"Let each of you be a model of regularity and virtue for his confreres. Be aware that, during the frenzied times through which we are passing, everyone has his eyes on you; the good, in order to support themselves by your good example; and the wicked, in order to act on the authority of your relaxation, if you are guilty of any."

This is a magnificently energetic statement that encapsulates the work of twenty years without sacrificing either style or clarity or moral energy. Through Brother Frumence, whose uprightness and fidelity were never in question, the Superior-general was looking to, and pleading with, all the members of the Institute and, more especially, with those whom God had destined for its forthcoming reconstruction. He was anxious about them: contact with the world, life in a foreign country and temporal upheavals threatened the "spirit" of the Society. The Founder had desired a great simplicity of heart, of manner and of dress for his followers, as well as a rejection of the most pretentious ecclesiastical honors, the stripping away of all personal marks of preference, and of all purely human opinions in the educational apostolate. "Christian and civic education", the formation of "citizens for heaven and for the nation" was their solitary goal: and the "philosophy" of the age and the erroneous doctrines of the Revolution, as well as an appetite for "politics" could divert them from it. Let them not forget, in the climate of the times, their duties to the Church; and in the atmosphere of exile, let the not ignore their origins, their strict Rule and their duties toward their native land.

The Superior intended that his Brothers in Rome not remain unaware that a glimmer of hope was appearing on the horizon: "Almost everywhere in France the Brothers are missed, not only because of the good they once did there by their teaching, but still more because of the good that resulted from the example of religious virtue that they gave. Their return to where they were is very much longed for; they are being recalled in several places; and in various places they are resuming their functions. A great number of them continue in education to the satisfaction of decent people, and they remain obedient to me."

We find here a new proof of the confident relations and deferential affection with which the French Brothers morally surrounded their Superior. In order to supply this extremely valuable testimony as needed, we should fix in the memory these statements in which the survival of the Christian Brothers is asserted as well as their renascent popularity.

The conclusion of the letter to Brother Frumence contains some further helpful suggestions and some final advice: "If this letter reaches you, I beseech you, my very dear

[101] I.e., persons not belonging to the Institute

[102] Emphasized in the text.

Brother, to show it to all your Brothers and send me Brother Brice's (formal) death certificate.[103]Brother [104]This document is important for Brother Chrysologus, his only brother and heir. "If you do me the kindness to write to me, do not mention matters of State, nor politics, nor current events. Please instruct the Brothers in the same way. On such matters I am amply informed. I shall await, impatiently, your kind response. Do not include my name on the address. You need only write: "Citizen Fondu, at M. Lacroix's, on Rue La Grosse-Tour, no. 774, Tours. Citizen Fondu will deliver it to me without fail. I embrace affectionately all our dear Brothers in Italy. I am sending a note to our friend Philadelphus and one also to Gontran.[105]I should be obliged if you would deliver them. Keep me, I beg you, in your prayers and in those of all our confreres. I am, fondly, Brother Agathon.[106]

The "true" signature here is interesting from two points of view: it tells the recipient that the letter's author continues to identify himself absolutely, body and soul, as the Superior who had been governing the Institute since 1777; and it testifies to a certain confidence: the sender thinks that the French police will respect the privacy of the letter.

Nevertheless, rumors that were circulating at the beginning of Fructidor in the Year V forced him to assume that a reply coming from Rome and carelessly addressed would be the sort of thing that would get him in trouble. That is why he asked that letters be addressed under a pseudonym and sent to the home of a third person. As to his recommendation regarding "matters of State", it seems to be inspired by rather different motives. The brief, categorical,"on such matters I am amply informed" sounds very much like Father Emery's letter: it was meant to cut short every dis−cussion regarding the relations between Catholics and the Republican government.

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Twelve days later came the "coup d'Etat". Its target was the Church, and it did not miss its mark. On the day following, while Barthélemy and Carnot and 42 members of the Five Hundred and 11 members of the Senate were banished and legislative elections in 49 Departments were nullified, Larevelliere, Barras and Reubell "resurrected" the laws against priests and claimed the right to deport, through individual arrests, those who seemed to them to represent a threat to the public safety. The following new oath was mandatory: "I swear hatred for royalty and anarchy, allegiance to the Republic and to the Constitution of the Year III." Could a Christian conscience, which must banish hatred, unhesitatingly and unreservedly and without scandal take this oath? There were clerics who believed that the good of souls and the needs of the apostolate required them to overlook these scruples. Personally, Father Emery abstained: but he left his confreres free to judge in individual cases. A very large number chose to resist. In many places worship was suspended. People were about to experience a "second Terror" -- less openly bloody than the earlier one, (although several priests were guillotined or shot) but nonetheless odious and nonetheless ferocious in its hypocrisy. Thousands of clerics were deported to the murderous climate of Guyana or

[103]Brice, Antoine Rambaud, former "econome" in the residence school at Marseille, had emigrated to Italy, but had returned to France, where he died in 1799; consequently, many months after the letter in which Brother Agathon supposes that he was dead. It remains an obscure detail whether Brother Chrysologus was the Superior-general's third companion in Tours
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[105]Brother Gontran, Louis Barbier, born in Crolles, in the Dauphine, on the 12th of August 1728, would, in spite of his great age, be numbered among the Brother Vicar-general's excellent aides after 1803. We have already met Philadel−phus.

[106]Verified against the original, fortunately discovered by Brother Donatius Charles, Archivist. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 117-8 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1938, pp. 272-3.

confined in the Fortresses of Re and Oleron. The persecution raged with a special intensity in the Belgian Departments, which had been annexed after the 30th of December 1795.[107]

We can quite easily understand how Brother Frumence was unable to answer Brother Agathon's letter, which had arrived in Italy at the very moment the storm broke. It did not even spare Brother Frumence: the 1798 catastrophe scattered the Brothers in Rome. Silence (painful and complete with grievous interrogations) would once again thrust itself between the tiny Transalpine group and the scattered members of the La Sallian family. Contact (accompanied by many precautions) was sustained only by the Superior-general and some of the Brothers (closely associated with one another) living on French soil. This arrangement is revealed in the last of Brother Agathon's surviving letters. For it, we are indebted, as we are for so many other mementos, to the conservatory zeal of the man to whom the letter was sent, Brother Vivien. Like the earlier letters, it bears a Tours postmark; and an almost invisible embossment preserves just the suggestion of the Institute's seal.

The Superior wrote (on "the 13th of September 1797") "to Citizen Gaudenne, La Tirelire Street, 8, Rheims": "Although this is only a brief note, I shall try to tell you everything. I received your letter, my good friend, on the 12th of August. It brought me all the more joy in that I was waiting for it with a sort of impatience. The ones you mentioned nearly three months ago have not reached me. If you forgot to put a cross on the front, Citizen Dubois would not have received them. They may also have gotten lost. I'm not referring to the last of them to which I am replying.

"You were right to have resumed your trade. Success will lead you to continue in it, unless they burden it with conditions you cannot accept. The respect that is shown you is very much of the sort to encourage you, and much more than that, the good that you can do according to the spirit of your profession.[108]

If the new circumstances make no demands upon conscience, there should be f.f. [109]as "Brothers" -- an apparent abbreviation intended to elude the police) who would gladly share your work. Even as it is there are several who would join you; but they do not know whether things would be required of them, by people in your profession, that they could not concede. This uncertainty makes them hesitate.

"You are right to follow the method that you learned in your trade. It is by far the best, given the number of individuals in your shop. I observe with pleasure that you are closely associated with comrades in your neighborhood, and I beseech you to assure them of my friendship."

"To have refused the fortune of which you speak, my good friend, in order to remain what you are is altogether praiseworthy on your part. I did not speak of you to Herve,[110][111]because I was unaware of your stay in Rheims. No, you are not stricken from my memory, nor from my friendship, rest assured. I do not recall that anybody has written me anything against you. There is no reason that I have to lower my regard for you."

"You can only gain by living in seclusion and completely taken up with your work. It is too bad that there aren't a few more workers associated in your enterprise. There would be

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[107]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 229-44; Goyau, op.cit., pg. 528. Dom Leclercq, op.cit., pg. 26. And the entire book by Victor Pierre, La Terreur sous le Directoire, Paris, 1887.

[108]All the word in boldface in this letter are alsoemphasized in the original.

[109] (Trans. note:) (Here and below we render Brother Agathon's "f.f."

[110]Brother Herve, Pierre Nicolas Hibst, one of the teachers present in Rheims on the 21st of June, 1791 and who refused to take the oath on that day. He died in Laon on the 1st of July, 1813.

[111] For an explanation of the term, see Vol.II of the present work, pp. 594-598

companionship, consolation, and, in case of need, help. I do not doubt but what your "repetition"[112]. produced a good effect and inspired regrets over the loss of the young (Brothers)."

"If you write me, do so as a friend and as an equal -- nothing that would call attention to the relation of a "superior" with and "inferior". Your letters should be written in such a way that you expect them to be opened, as, indeed, they might be, in the conditions in which we are living."

:When the opportunity arises, do me the favor of writing to Jean Damascene, who, when he writes to me, is given similar instructions. His address: "Jean Louis Martinet, Teacher, in Rethel", and tell him to suggest the same thing to the comrades in his neighborhood. Greetings, friendship and fraternity.-- F. A.[113]

Thus, this "brief note" (like a fine "old photograph" rescued in the debris of a wreck) revealed to the children's wondering eyes the features of a father at the end of his earthly journey. It was a picture much like the earlier ones; there was the pleasant smile, which the furrows of suffering never quite effaced, the intelligent cast of the head and the clear sighted, direct gaze. He praised the faithful servant, and knowing him to be easily offended, he pacified him gently; he warned him about the difficulties of the moment and about questionable arrangements to which a schoolteacher might be susceptible; and he strengthened him in the purity of his educational and Religious vocation.

The great man's "testament" (and the term belongs to the last "Circular", dated the 23rd of August 1797) corroborates this splendid codicil. After it, a year goes by, and, in the present state of the evidence, there is no word, no gleam of light. It was truly a dark year for the Church, for the Institute and for France in the stifling and fetid night of the Directory.

And, on the first "supplementary day" in the Year VI (17th of September 1798) there appeared the following death notice in the register of the City of Tours: "Today...I, Joseph Franchinet-Villeneuve, the undersigned public official, having been conducted to the residence of Citizen Pierre Adrien Gaullier, situated in this Commune, on Rue Liberté, the Chardonnet section, I found Joseph Coquil, carpenter, residing in this Commune, on Rue Collège, Belle-Fontaine section, and Jean Duperre, hired-hand, at the home of the above-mentioned Gaullier, all of whom declared that Joseph Gonlieu, bachelor, born in the former parish of the Commune of Longueval, Department of the Somme[114] on the 4th of April, one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-thirty-one, had died in the above mentioned residence yesterday at nine o'clock in the evening; and after verifying the death, I drew up the certificate in the presence of the witnesses named below, males of the required age, who have signed with me. J. Cauquil, John Duperrais, Jos. Villenneuve, pub. off.[115]

On the 16th of September, 1798, as Pope Pius VI was in his seventh month of exile in

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[113]Verified against the original (Motherhouse Archives, Brother Agathon File, Cf. text published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pp. 188-9, and October 1938, pp. 275-6.

[114]The writer first wrote "Seine-and-Marne", probably after a lapse on the part of witnesses, who were thinking about Melun and the Infant Jesus House. He crossed out these words and at the bottom of the document he refers to them as in error.

[115]Municipal Archives of Tours. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pp. 189-90, and for October 1938, pg. 278. (Cf. pg. 278 of the number for October 1938, for a facsimile of the death notice.) Peter Adrien de Gaullier La Celle died in 1810 in the same house. His son, Peter, pre−sumed to have been a pupil of Brother Agathon, became the President of the Civil Court in Tours in 1828. Liberty Street was subsequently called "Fosses-St. George Street and, after 1884, Clocheville Street. "No. 34" corresponds to the actual site of the main post office. (Bulletin cited, for October 1938, pg. 270-1. Research regarding the property was done by G. Castric, a teacher in Tours.)

Tuscany, as Bonaparte was locked in his Egyptian campaign with Nelson, the victor of Aboukir, as the Directory became mired in its own degradation, its 'coup d'Etats', its shabby tyranny and as it stirred all of Europe up against itself, an old man, nearly unknown to his casual fellow-citizens, died in a city on the banks of the Loire, in the home of "respectable people" who had "welcomed" him. Doubtless, at his death bed there were his two or three habitual companions, "Brother François Borgia", "Brother Lysimachus"; and surely he caught a glimpse of the God Who did not abandon him. He was a powerful spirit, a remarkable leader and a beautiful soul: he loved justice and opposed iniquity. And that is why he suffered in prisons and wandered from one place to another; and that is why he died in quasi-solitude. In his own earthly body he was not to emerge from the desert: but a Josuah whom he knew well would gather his people and, combining a few veterans with a handful of young people, in their company he would take possession of the promised land.

Nevertheless, in the words of his recent biographer, Brother Agathon seemed to be "above all, the man capable, after the crisis, of binding the contemporary Congregation to its past".[116] While, wrapped in shadows, he disappeared from the earth, it was in order that the law of the Redemption be observed in his regard: his final defeat prepared the way for (indeed, was) victory for his successors and his followers.

The eclipse that Brother Agathon's reputation endured in the years which immediately followed the Revolution and (in spite of the tribute paid him in 1810 by the new Superior-general, Brother Gerbaud) even during the greater part of the 19th century would remain, in a very real sense, one of those fecund self-sacrifices, similar to his obscure and poignant fate after 1792. We believe that we have dealt adequately with the secondary causes of this neglect.[117]. The moment for a legitimate restoration (not to speak of a brilliant rehabilitation) has come, since the direct descendants of Brother Agathon, through a careful study of his file and through the discovery of documents of unassailable authority, have been better able to identify this remarkably vigorous Superior. In the preceding pages we have done nothing more than act as the guarantor of their objectivity.

[116] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for October 1938, pg. 280.

[117] Besides the present chapter, see especially above, pg. 230

CHAPTER FOUR

The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Public and Private Education from 1792 to 1800

In connection with the Superior-general's last written statements, we noted the existence of several schools -reopenings that were due to the obstinate labors of a few Brothers who refused to be stopped by unfavorable circumstances. In the letter to Brother Frumence we underscored the sentences in which Brother Agathon stated that these excellent teachers of former times were "nearly everywhere missed", that here and there they were being recalled, and that, among French schoolteachers, they already made up a considerable group.

The time has come for us to search out, within the broadest possible arena, the names of those who, in countless difficulties and dangers, attempted to continue the educational enterprise. In order thoroughly to define their attitude and their role, it is important to situate the men within the framework of their times, and, in broad strokes, to relate the story of educational legislation during the Convention and the Directory.

We left the Committee for Public Instruction in April 1792 outlining its plans, and the philosopher Condorcet in the process of hammering out a system of education that conformed to Encyclopedist doctrines.[1] It was a system that never went beyond the blueprint stage -- a monument that had nothing but the deceptive splendor of a mirage. Its realization would have required peaceful times. After the period of demolition, there came an educational vacuum; and nobody knew when or how the new foundations were to be laid.

In December 1792 the sovereign Assembly, preoccupied with other matters, determined that the primary schools would be the first educational stage and that children would be given "the knowledge that was strictly necessary for every citizen"; and it confirmed the change of a name: the "schoolmaster" became the "schoolteacher".

Nothing more was forthcoming until May of 1793. At that time the Assembly contemplated the creation of a school in every center having at least 400 individuals. The task of the schoolteacher would be to put his pupils in a position later on to exercise their rights as citizens, to fulfill their obligations and to take care of their domestic affairs. The Committee on Education was challenged to inquire into the question as to how this sort of school would work in Communes of more than 5,000 people.

On June the 26th Lakanal read a report which concluded that the nation should have a school for every 1,000 inhabitants, with a male and a female schoolteacher sharing the work. The State would assume complete financial responsibility for elementary instruction only.
The moment when the passion for de-Christianization would boil over was fast approaching. Leonard Bourdon, in the Committee for Public Instruction, erupted into blasphemy; and the chemist Fourcroy prefaced his work as educational planner with the motto: "The disgrace of Religion must be wiped away".[2] Their colleague, Romme,[3] on the 18th of September, offered

[1] See below, pp. 211-212.

[2] La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 72-3.

[3] Who, at the same time, worked out the Republican calendar as a weapon against the Church.

the important results of their deliberations: no cleric, no minister "of any cult", no "former Religious" were to be selected as teachers by the Commission which, in each District, would nominate school−teachers of both sexes from a list drawn up by the General Council of the Commune. Other candidates would need only a certificate of good conduct and dedication to the Revolution. The curriculum would consist in reading, writing, calculation, the elements of geography, the system of weights and measures, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Teachers would train their pupils in physical exercise and agricultural work. And they would have them learn "the marks of virtue which do most to honor free men", and especially the accomplishments of the Revolution which are "capable of lifting the spirit". Textbooks in morality would be written to replace the catechism.[4]

It was a clamorous manifesto, to which was added the promise of substantial funding. But it came to nothing. There was neither money, nor men, nor genuine ideas. What sort of education, what sort of example, could French youth receive when the Terror was unleashed, when the "goddess of Reason" was enthroned on profaned altars, when so many "Constitutional" priests stampeded toward apostasy and Hugh Pelletier, the Bishop of Maine-and-Loire, claimed the "distinction" of "sacrificing" his clerical titles,[5] or when "Citizen Jarente", Bishop of Loiret, of melancholy memory, proclaimed his deliverance from a servitude that "weighed upon him since childhood" (and that, in his heart) he "had never embraced" the "fanatical religious prejudices which had for so long dislocated France"?[6] Consciences collapsed in midst of excess. Worthy persons were systematically cast aside: the Counsel of the Department of Loiret echoed Jarente Orgeval and in the clearest language expressed the legislator thought; in its meeting of November 22nd 1798 it declared that it was "contrary to nature" to sew the seed "of religious opinion" in the hearts of children.[7]

Nature then took its course and led the way to violent extravagances. Would a generation grow up in this disordered and corrupt atmosphere, without teachers worthy of the name, without belief in God and without hope for the future? Robespierre's reaction was to attempt to decree the cult of the Supreme Being. But that was an empty show, if not, indeed, despicable hypocrisy, since an entire generation of young people, ignorant and idle, had been given a taste of human blood. A whole ghastly period would have to be traversed before the Convention would resolve to raise schools out of the ruins. On the 9th Brumaire in the Year III (the 30th of October 1794) the legislators established a "normal school in Paris, to which, from all over France, were called citizens already accomplished in the useful sciences, in order to learn the art of teaching from competent professors."Students, "trained in this Republican school" would then start up courses in pedagogy - first-stage normal schools -- in the principal localities of Cantons, where they would initiate prospective schoolteachers into appropriate educational methods.[8] On the 27th Brumaire there followed the law concerning the primary schools."[9].

Lakanal, the author of the law, supported the principle of a school for every 1,000

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[4]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. III, pg. 77. Herment, Manuel d'Histoire de la Pedagogie, pp. 300-2, and its sources, especially: Allain, L'OEuvre scolaire de la Revolution, Paris, 1891; Legendre, Lakanal, Paris, 1882; Hippeau, l'Instruction publique en France pendant la Revolution, Paris, 1881-83.

[5]Gabory, op.cit., pg. 116

[6]Lottin, Recherches historiques sur la ville d'Orleans, 1838, Vol. II, pg. 387.

[7]Bulletin des lois, no. 79.

[8]Ibid., no. 90 "law concerning primary schools

[9]3

inhabitants. “Former priests‘ residences, still unsold” were to be placed at the disposal of municipal governments to be used either to house teachers or to be remodelled into classrooms. Only after this would schoolteachers be appointed by the people: “However, during the life of the revolutionary government, teachers would be questioned, selected and supervised by an educational jury”, whose three members, all of them fathers of families, would be selected by the District administration. In any case, the District would approve or reject the jury’s nominations. Salaries were fixed at 1,200 livres for male teachers and 1,000 livres for female teachers.

Teachers in the primary schools were to instruct children with the help of school books “written and published under the guidance of the National Convention”. The program of studies was as follows: reading, writing (be means of “examples that recalled the rights and duties of pupils”); the Declaration of the Rights of man and the Constitution of the French Republic; instruction in “Republican morality”; introduction to the French language; rules of simple calculation and land-surveying; elements of geography and “the history of free peoples”; the explanation of “principal phenomena” and “usual natural events”; “collection of heroic deeds and songs of triumph”; physical exercises; visits to hospitals, factories and shops; agricultural field work and other tasks that introduce people to the knowledge of a trade.

The program hued to the lines set down by Diderot and d’Alembert. And the State, which controlled the system of studies, supervised the publication of books and ruled over the teachers, meant to raise a nation in its own image.

Nevertheless, article 15 of chapter iv opened the door a crack to freedom of education. “The Law may exercise no restrictions on the right of citizens to open private and free schools under the supervision of established authority.” Obviously, the final restrictive clause concealed a danger. But the most worrisome trap was set just prior to the proclamation of the “right”: indeed, article 14 stipulated: “Young people who have not attended (the Commune schools) will be examined on the Feast of Youth in the presence of the people. And if it is agreed that they do not have the knowledge necessary for French citizens they will be disqualified from all public functions until they have acquired such knowledge.” One can imagine the use to which a sectarian government could make of such a convenient law.

Under the cover of article 15, Christian education would nevertheless be reinstituted. Former Brothers, and others like them, took steps to equip their pupils with the officially sanctioned learning, without prejudice to a more fortifying knowledge, laced with the Gospel message, with which, by dint of an ingenious zeal, they were able to arm their pupils.[10]

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In a circular addressed, on the 28th Brumaire, to the District Directories, Garat, Clement de Ris and Ginguene, members of the Executive Commission for Public Instruction, pompously extolled the new era inaugurated by the legislature: “Finally, it has been determined that ignorance and barbarism will not triumph as they threatened to do! Finally, it has been determined that the Republic will have its primary schools! The most extensive system of education that has ever been adopted ...has just been decreed ...and you are called upon to put it into execution. You must appoint the people who will name the teachers and those who will administer the schools ...”

“Today, let no one teaching anything (in these schools) except those truths that have

[10]The law establishing “throughout the Republic ...central schools for teaching the sciences, literature and the arts” was published on the 7th Ventose in the Year III (25th of February 1795). “All former institutions dedicated to public education as “colleges" and salaried by the State were suppressed.” (Bulletin des Lois, no. 127.)

enlightened mankind; today, may people learn (there) what must be known in order to serve the nation; today, may the tutors of our children be placed on the same level as the civil servants of the Republic, and may esteem and fame attend those who bring their talents and knowledge to the schools; may minds that are most discerning in their pride meet there with delight in the very pride."

Fueling their eloquence with humanistic references, Garat and his friends offered tomorrow's schoolteacher "great names and great examples": "Socrates" they said, "ran elementary schools on the streets and squares of Athens".

In their opinion, there was no need to fear that education would produce socially dislocated people: "Through the instruction" which would be dispensed, people "would (not) desert "the plow and the forge"; rather these would be "managed...with greater intelligence. And the Republic (would be) inhabited by brave sailors, ingenious workmen and learned farmers." They were siding with Diderot against La Chalotais and Voltaire.

"French administrators", exclaimed the three panegyrists, "that is the happy picture that must emerge from the cradle of the Republic!"[11]

It would be ungracious not to recognize, behind the incoherence of metaphor and the bombast of the entire piece, the noble thought, the sound ideas and the opinions that would dominate the future. The error consisted in denying the past in the presumption that one can create a world with mouth-filling phrases and that a land that is deprived of God's warmth has a better chance of flourishing.

Disenchantment would come through contact with reality. The Paris Normal School, as conceived in the Law of Brumaire, was devoid of educational validity: famous people, but careless of adapting their teaching to their audience, dealt with the most diverse subjects before students of all ages and stages of development. It was not in this way that education would be spread to the provinces.

Actually, the candidates for teaching posts did not manifest any preparation apart from what accumulated experience and the chance occurences of their lives endowed them. Recruiting them turned out to be difficult, incomplete and uneven. The members of the "educational jury" in Loiret, urging the administration to draw up a list of the Communes that should operate schools, dutifully noted the obstacles with which the execution of the Law would meet: since, they said, we cannot "find immediately a large number of citizens endowed with the necessary qualities" for the role, it would be better to be satisfied with a few teachers for the principal localities. Nevertheless, the District Council decided, in its meeting of the 24th Nivose, in the Year III, to round up sixty-five schoolteachers, thirty of whom were for the City of Orleans alone.[12] It was in this way that the official texts were interpreted. Their spirit suffered more serious damage. And, in order to spare themselves further disappointments, administrators in this region as well as in others, were induced to employ former teaching personnel, without being too particular about the "Republican" credentials of some of the nominees.

Besides, at the beginning of 1795 a relative tolerance in religious matters seemed to be taking hold. The decree of the 3rd Ventose (21st of February) specified that believers must not be made uneasy in the private exercise of their religion.[13].On the 11th Prairial (30th of May) the Convention condescended to return to the disposal of citizens churches that had not

[11]Quoted from the Register of the Committee for Public Education's decisions (Printed copy, Archives, Department of the Aisne, L. 1453.)

[12]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, L. 790.

[13]La Gorce, Vol. IV, pp. 47-8

been sold. Priests who, in the past had not been rigorously bound by the "Constitutional oath" because they had not fulfilled a public function, were authorized to celebrate Mass in these churches.[14]. Actually, this was a limited freedom, circumscribed within narrow boundaries. Orthodox Catholics had to tolerate coexistence and competition with "jurors", who were masters of many churches, including Notre Dame in Paris. After months of persecution, schism once again raised its head: and a "Council", convened in Paris in March, reorganized "the Constitutional Church", and restored a certain vigor to it that endured until the period of the Concordat.

On the other hand, the Law of the 11th Prairial--which completed the Law of the 7th Vendemiaire in the Year IV (29th September 1795) --subordinated the exercise of the priestly ministry to a political commitment. The clergy was obliged to sign an act of "submission to the laws of the Republic" in the presence of the city government and recognize that "the sovereign was the totality of the French citizenry". Several legitimate bishops gave their priests complete latitude with regard to this new oath. Among them was Archbishop Juigne of Paris, Bishop Maille La Tour-Landry of St. Papoul, Bishop Clermont Tonnerre of Chalons and Bishop Beausset of Alais. But most of the emigre Bishops, following Bishop Asseline of Boulogne, interpreted such a step as a serious concession to doctrines tainted with heresy. The Pope, however, avoided issuing a condemnation.[15]

Thereafter, Christian schoolteachers as a rule meant to move cautiously as they preferred the counsels, or sometimes the quite unequivocal guidelines, of pastors who were more concerned with religious peace, to the injunctions that came most often from abroad, and as they adjusted their humble teaching and their unobtrusive and persevering apostolate as scrupulously as they could to the demands of the civil government.

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On the 13th Prairial in the Year III, Barere Vieuzac declared in the Convention: "Four years ago legislators were taxing their ingenuity to establish a national educational system, to open primary schools, to create various levels of instruction, and to revive science and letters. What have they realized, what have they accomplished? As yet, nothing. The colleges are fortunately (sic) closed, but there are no institutions to take their place."[16]

A circular from the administrators of Loiret, dated the month following (8th Messidor) suggests that city governments were behind in complying with educational legislation.[17]Financial difficulties continued to be considerable, especially to guarantee teachers the housing and salary prescribed by law. It was also clear that many Communes were not completely convinced of the primordial importance of education.

The lawmakers were forced to repeat their appeals to persons of good will and then return to the drawing-board with their own proposals. They confirmed "the right" of citizens "to open private schools, as well as of private societies to compete in the advancement of the sciences, letters and arts". This was one of the articles of the Constitution of the Year III. A former Oratorian Father Daunous, wrote the Law of the 3rd Brumaire in the Year IV, which would remain the educational charter until the Napoleonic decrees: "one or several schools" were provided "for each administrative District"; schoolteachers were nominated by city

[14]We have already had occasion to point out that partisan legislation continued in opposition to priests, bureaucrats of the "ancient regime" and dissidents

[15]Goyau, op.cit., pp. 524-6. La Gorce, Vol. IV, pp. 47-8, 63- 6, 75-6. Dom Leclercq, op.cit., pp. 24-5.

[16]Des Cilleuls, op.cit., pg. 69.

[17]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, L. 790.

governments, examined, appointed and removed by “Departmental juries”; curriculum was limited to reading, writing, calculation and the principles of Republican morality". The Republic provided the teachers with a house and a garden, or, where the latter was lacking, a housing supplement. Their salary was henceforth to be secured by a fee to be paid by the pupils, the rate of which would vary according to Departmental estimates. Only a quarter of the pupils received tuition-free education, based upon need.[18].

With the school year already three months old, people were still feeling their way through the legal arrangements. The following letter from the Minister of the Interior, Benezech, sent on the 12th Pluviose in the Year IV (19th of February 1796), and co-signed by the Director-general of Public Instruction, Ginguene, to the administrators in the Department of Loiret testifies to a rather unsatisfactory state of affairs: “For the public good, Citizens, as well as for the good of the unhappy teachers who languish in the most shocking want, it is desirable that the primary schools in your Department be organized...”The Minister stated that “it was impossible (for him) to come to the assistance” of these “unfortunate men”. (He was putting his finger on the melancholy consequences of the despoliation of the Church and the schools over the past six years.) Henceforth, it would be necessary to grant the teachers permission to accept remuneration from the children “either in kind, in cash or in paper money”, which will provide a livelihood for them. And Benezech insisted that the Law of the 3rd Brumaire not remain a dead-letter.[19].

The Departmental administration, commenting on these orders for the city government, sought greater vigilance from the latter regarding the teachers who were to receive the fees and attempted to establish a distinction between permission “to accept” and the right “to demand”, which seemed ambiguous to the Department.

Nevertheless, two weeks of reflection were enough so that, on the 5th Ventose, the same administrators decided simply to substitute tuition from pupils (“which may not exceed the value of a franc a month”) for the subsidy that had previously been fixed by the Law of the 27th Brumaire in the Year III.[20]

In other words, the bombast of a man like Garat had been translated into shabby schemes and pitiful solutions. To reach this result the ancient edifice, to which successive ages had made their contribution, had been destroyed; France, the mother of universities, colleges and primary schools, the France of Jean Gerson, Guillaume Bude, Nicolas Barré, Charles Démia and John Baptist de La Salle would have to see its people returning to a “darkness” that was unknown in the Middle Ages.

On the 30th Ventose, referring to Talleyrand’s description of the situation six years earlier, Barbe-Marbois declared to the Senate: “Since that period, education and instruction have continued to decline. The university and its offspring...and those humbly useful men whom monastic arrogance dubbed “Ignorantins” have all indiscriminately disappeared. The school population, partially in the hands of people who were “not very assiduous,...very poorly paid” and worrysomely insolent, was not half of what it had once been.[21]

The statistics would have been even more melancholy, if, given the shameful condition of the public schools, families had not free access to teachers of their choice. The periodical reports written between the Year IV and the Year VI by administrators in the Department of the Seine contain significant admissions on this connection: The principal obstacles (to the development of schools in the region), it was suggested in the second report

[18] Herment, op.cit., pg. 304

[19] Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 468

[20] Ibid.

[21] Cited by Alfred Des Cilleuls, pp. 76-7.

from the 1st Vendemiaire to the 15th Floreal in the Year V, were: 1) the tuition the pupils had to pay, from which only a fourth were exempt; 2)the large number of primary schools which, since they were not supervised by public authority, by that very fact relied exclusively upon the trust of people who were in no position to appreciate the advantages of Republican schools.[22]

This spontaneous rebirth of religious education obviously coincided with a reawakening of the Faith. The "Constitutional" Church, influenced by the consequences of its schism, was at the time seeking to become reconciled with Roman Catholicism: thirty one of its bishops, and sixty-seven of its priests met solemnly in the Cathedral in Paris on the 15th of August 1797 and worked out (unfortunately, from their own narrow point of view) plans for the "restoration of peace".[23]The leaders of the clergy that had remained faithful, in a long "pastoral letter", energetically rejected every compromise.[24]

The proposals of those who had taken the oath came on the 24th of September: three weeks earlier the Directory had ushered in a new phase of persecution, and its minions had been fanning out in search of "nests of superstition", as they called schools started up by Catholic teachers: -- two thousand of them, by their showing, existed in Paris alone, frequented by the sons of employees, bureaucrats and, indeed, of politicians themselves.[25] On the 27th Brumaire in the Year VI (November 17th 1797) a government decree required all national officials, whether or not they were invested with public power, to send their children to schools directed by the "Departmental juries".[26].

Belgium, which since its annexation had been comparatively coddled, lost its teaching Congregations through a law passed on the 5th Frimaire in the Year VI. The country revolted against Jacobinism: but as resistance grew, the more harshly was it suppressed.[27]The systematic pursuit of priests throughout the region was now extended to teachers.

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However, with respect to those citizens who had fled the grasp of tyranny, the Jacobins of the 18th Fructidor had, immediately after their victory, employed a feigned moderation and a rather tricky policy. Letourneur, the Minister of the Interior, on the 29th Frimaire in the Year VI, wrote to "the central administration of the Departments":[28] In order to reconcile to the Republican schools those people for whom a survival of prejudices arising from their elementary education still binds them to religious ideas, you will point out to them that, while in these schools instruction is independent of whatever religion, since the Constitution does not embrace any one of them to the exclusion of the others, the fundamental morality to which teachers must always recall their pupils, based upon such simple and practically innate notions of the just and the unjust and upon such an evident principle as that of doing nothing

[22]Des Cilleuls, op.cit., pg. 70.

[23]La Gorce, Vol. IV, pp. 302 & 320.

[24]Instruction sur les atteintes portees a la religion (letter from the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops to the faithful of their dioceses), dateless. Printed in-folio, 44 pages, plus 13 pages of references: the Motherhouse Archives possesses a copy.

[25]La Gorce, Vo. IV, pg. 337.

[26]Idem, pg. 338 and A. Des Cilleuls, pg. 73

[27]Idem, pp. 244 & 260.

[28]Copy preserved in the Departmental Archives of the Aisne, L 1454.

to others that we would not have them do to us, cannot be opposed to the precepts that a father of a family, worthy of the name, whatever his beliefs, should teach his children.

Such, it seemed, was the officially proclaimed "neutrality" --to employ the current expression. Education was based upon a foundation of social morality -- the only one acknowledged by 18th century philosophy. The idea was to beguile the good faith of families by showing them that private education was superfluous. When the majority of the pupils were brought docily into the State's fold, Christian educators might easily be prevailed upon, thought the Minister, by means of certain coercive measures. The letter's conclusion left nothing to the imagination: "I recommend to you also that you keep an eye on schools maintained by private interests. Encourage...those that profess a love for the Republic, repress those that are openly its enemies: you are authorized by article 356 of the Constitution which states that "the law especially watches over professions concerned with public morals".

In conclusion, Letrouneur announced that: the Council of Five-hundred was concerned with improving the lot of primary school teachers and with putting them in a position to compete with private schools teachers. Money from the public coffers, an important weapon of war, would help to incline the scales in favor of the starving forces of public school teachers.

This document, dated the 29th Frimaire, was merely a tune-up that gave a glimpse of what the educational policies would be like between 1798 and 1799. The Directory consistently proceeded in the same way against people it detested or wanted to eliminate -- silently, as far as possible, by way of slow, hypocritical persecution, with more or less legalistic arguments, and with a view to encirclement and strangulation. Thus, Letourneur was invoking article 356 of the Constitution to justify the "supervision" of private schools: it was a timely discovery that the partisans of the Revolution would learn to exploit.

On the 17th Pluviose in the Year VI (5th of February 1798) occurred the famous decree that took aim at "private schools, educational establishments and residences schools".

"WHEREAS article 356 of the Constitution imposes upon the Executive Directory the obligation of super−vising (private schools) as forming an important part of those professions which are concerned with public morals:

"WHEREAS the fact that article 18 of the Law of the 21st Fructidor in the Year III continues the central administrations and the city governments in the pre−rogatives granted them by the Laws of the 14th and 22nd December 1789 (old style), among which is the supervision of political and moral education;

"WHEREAS, this supervision becomes more necessary than ever in order to impede the progress of the baneful principles with which a multitude of private teachers attempt to inspire their pupils, and that it must neglect none of the means in its power to cause "Republican" education to grow and prosper,

Resolved:

"ARTICLE ONE: Private schools, educational institutions and residence schools are and remain under the special supervision of the municipal administrations in each Canton;[29]

as a consequence, every municipal administration is responsible, at least once a month, and without prior warning, to visit these institutions in their Districts and be in a position to learn:

1) Whether private teachers are careful to place in the hands of their pupils, as the basis of elementary education, the Rights of Man, the Constitution and the elementary books adopted by the Convention.

2) Whether the "decades" are observed, and whether "Republican holidays" are

[29]The administrative organization in the Year III made the Canton the center of local affairs in place of the old Communes, which were henceforth represented by a mere "city agent".

celebrated, and if the title "Citizen" is in honorable usage;

3) Whether the children's health is being given all the attention required by the tenderness of their years, whether the food is decent and healthful, whether there is anything in the intramural discipline that might tend to debase or degrade character; and, finally, whether practices are so combined as to develop as well as possible the physical and moral faculties.

ARTICLE TWO: Members of the municipal administration, chosen and named from among themselves to undertake these visits in their respective regions will include at least one member of the "Educational jury" and they will always be accompanied by a commissioner of the Executive Directory in each municipal administration of a Canton.

ARTICLE THREE: The municipal administrations will prepare reports of these visits and send copies of them to the central administrations of their Departments. The latter shall acknowledge the receipt of these reports to the Interior Minister. Nevertheless, they shall be empowered provisionally to take measures that they deem necessary to forestall or prevent abuses, even to the extent of suspending or closing these schools."[30]

The solicitude manifest by the government for the children's health, their physical development, for their intellectual growth and for the respect demanded for the dignity of the human person could not disguise its real purpose. The decree, passed in Pluviose, scarcely concealed its political significance: the role granted the commissioner of the Directory, the agent of the central government to the cities in the Cantons, in the supervision of the schools would have been enough to shape the opinion and guide the conduct of the local magistrates. An effort was being made to strip away all real meaning from the term "freedom" as found in the Constitution; in practice, schools would exist only to the extent that they were subject to revolutionary dogma. The threat of closing a school directly hovered over the least impulse toward independence.

Professors and teachers were required to furnish two essential and incontrovertible proofs of their fidelity to "Republicanism": the use of textbooks sanctioned by the State; and the observance of the "tenth day" and the celebration of the official holidays. Woe betide those who, on the occasion of an unannounced "visit", did not possess among their classic texts collections of songs inspired by the "patriotism" that was in vogue in 1793, or La Chabaussiere' *French Catechism* or Francis Neufchateau's *Father's Advice to his Son.* Presently, the author of *A Father's Advice*...became Interior Minister and, surrounded by a court of nine members, he "was responsible for examining elementary textbooks, in print or in manuscript, and teachers' notebooks, an constantly concerned with the progress of Republican education".[31] Since Christian Doctrine was proscribed, every teacher was, willy-nilly, to be enlisted in diffusing the new gospel.

François Neufchateau, the regimes poet and resident hierophant, organized ceremonies in honor of the sovereignty of the people, in honor of youth, of husbands, the elderly, filial piety, agriculture, "industrial products", as well as in commemoration of the death of the "late tyrant". The jurist Merlin Douai set himself up, like Moses, to impose upon the nation a respect for "the tenth day", substituted eighteen times annually in place of the ancient Sabbath and for Sunday. The Directorial decrees of the 14th Germinal, the 17th Thermidor and the 23rd Fructidor in the Year VI punished violators of "the decades" with fines and imprisonment. On this solemn day the government representatives in the cities

[30] A copy of the decree of the 17th Pluviose in the Year VI is preserved in the city Archives of Rheims, File for the Year IV to the Year VIII.

[31] National Archives F-17 1258, founding of the "Council for Public Education".

attended meetings in the Cantons, which usually took place in a church. There people listened to a reading of the law and were supplied with the vital statistics (births, adoptions, deaths), after which they witnessed marriages. Schoolteachers, public as well as private, sacrificed their leisure, and, braving boredom, they submitted to conducting their pupils to these lay services, complete with patriotic homilies -- a curious treat for children. After the 12th Thermidor in the Year VII, teachers would have the further good fortune of being able to take a sixth or seventh oath: "I swear to be faithful to the Republic and to the Constitution of the Year III. I swear to oppose with all my power the restoration of royalty or any sort of tyranny in France."[32]

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The Directory's decree seems, generally speaking, to have met with docile execution and an interpretation inspired by revolutionary ideology. On the 6th Prairial in the Year VI, Robert Helie and Nicolas Le Jeune, municipal administrators, visited the schools in Caen, in the company of Commissioner Le Carpentier from the Directory, and one of the members of the jury; at a residence school, operated by one Trebutien, they had "Citizen Coudray, aged twelve", read governmental prose, and they bestowed the grade of *satisfacit* upon "the young man". "Republican calculation" did not seem foreign to the pupils, although the "title of 'Citizen'" was scarcely ever used in this school. Trebutien would be advised to reject "any other style of address" among his pupils. There was nothing subversive in the textbooks that were used; at the inquiry he presented a copy of a book on Politeness, as well as The Principles of Spelling, and Geography. However, this was all that was needed to cast suspicion upon him. He was told that "only" current textbooks "must be used". Otherwise, the next time, the commissioner would suspend the school, or, indeed, close it.[33]

At Gien, in the Loiret, the first investigation, undertaken on the 8th Fructidor in the Year VI, resulted in the discovery of a school library completely made up of books dating from former times. The teachers were called upon to comply with the rules. They played safe, and, on the occasion of a second visit, on the 17th Frimaire in the Year VII, the visiting team was happy to find "only Republican books, approved by the government".

The municipal representative in Sully-on-the-Loire, the capital of the Canton in the Department of the same name, did not visit Citizen Metais, elementary schoolteacher in that city, until the 1st Nivose in the Year VII. He found the pupils reading only classical works and handwriting notebooks; he approved of "the universal morality" taught in the former and noted "nothing contrary to the view of the authorities" in the latter. He closed his inspection by exhorting Metais to abide by "his good principles".[34]

We can imagine that the administration in Orleans was in no great hurry to execute instructions coming from Paris when, it seems, it was only on the 24th Messidor in the Year VI (five months after their enactment!) that the capital notified the people under its jurisdiction.

Aisne exhibited a very different kind of eagerness. On the 25th Pluviose of the same year the Department invited the municipal government in Laon to assemble teachers and pupils on the 30th Pluviose ("the Decade") at a common meeting place; a procession was organized, which repaired "to the temple", where the authorities submitted the pupils to an

[32]La Gorce, Vol. IV, pp. 284-6. Goyau, pp. 529-30, Dom Leclercq, pg. 26.

[33]Departmental Archives of Calvados, LT-8.

[34]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 474, reports of visitations to teachers.

examination.[35]
This public inquiry probably misled those who undertook it. Eleven months later, the Laon administration was studying "the reasons why the primary school system was so backward"; and even more than the inadequacy of regional finances and the extremely low tuition, it found the explanation in "the implacable fanaticism of the priests and the former "Ignorantin Brothers" (who, it insisted) still found their way into citizens' homes, and, in the name of religion, seized control of the education of the children and snatched from them the seed of Republican virtue.In this view people were running up against "the most dangerous sort of men in the Republic". But the city government was biding its time, and was satisfied that, in the future, "the effect of their machinations" would be frustrated.[36]

A number of teachers in the Department of the Seine were dismissed for having evaded administrative injunctions, especially for having refused the oath of "hatred for royalty". Commissioners from the executive offices, municipal delegates, and members of the "educational jury" attempted "to establish…uniformity of standards…in every school", regardless of the school's legal status. Finally, the report covering the period from the 27th Floreal in the Year VI to the 1st Vendemiaire in the Year VII pointed gleefully to a growth of enrollment in the public schools.[37]However, it was the view of the report itself that it was the compelle intrare handed down by the Directory regarding sons and daughters of its own employees that partially accounted for the increase. Furthermore, in spite of the desire to please the higher-ups, no one dared to speak of anything more than a "beginning of a success". And the report covered only the Paris region where governmental pressure was stronger and more immediate.

Had this constraint been relaxed, the school population been close to falling below standard. To procure a sound, solid education for their children, families eagerly approved of the discrete dissent of private schoolteachers. Pupils in private elementary and residence schools knew their Declaration of the Rights of Man by heart and were able serenely to repeat it when asked to do so by investigators. And once the alarm was over, they slipped the Catholic catechism from their pockets. The more fortunate among them received instruction in their homes from former members of teaching Congregations. It also happened that administrators, unwilling to dispense with the services of good teachers, chose to close their eyes or to conduct casual, rather superficial, inspections. The more dreadful times seem to have passed: and in spite of sanctions, there was a tendency to evade unjust laws, indeed, to ridicule an authority, whose despotism was visibly crumbling and whose vices inspired universal contempt.

Parents were emboldened to protest in favor of older methods and in favor of textbooks dating from earlier times, and to criticize the recruitment of public school teachers, among whom were to be noted too many venal hands, unworthy of trust, ignorant, coarse, lazy, otherwise unemployable, outdated or the debris of businesses that had gone bankrupt.[38]
Even into secondary education there drifted unprepossessing derelicts, monks who had tossed their habits on the dunghill, apostate priests, an occasional bishop, like Jarente, a hat-in-hand job-seeker after the abolition of his post as president of the administration of the Loiret, and

[35]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, L, 1454.

[36].[36]Departmental Archives of the Aisne, L. 1454, Report of the 24th Nivose in the Year VII.

[37]A. Des Cilleuls, op.cit., pp. 72-73.

[38]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. V, pg. 176.

"professor of Liberal Arts" at Agen in the Year V, after he had served as a warehouseman and as an agent in a ministry.[39]

Everything (the destruction of former educational structures, the disruption of social mores, spiritual disorders, private and public penury, open or latent persecution) contributed to the decline of studies. The dearth or the incapacity of teachers increased the indifference of many Frenchmen for the most elementary instruction: illiteracy spread from the rural regions into the cities.

Roger Martin, secretary for the Committee for Public Instruction in the Counsel of Five-hundred, on the 19th Brumaire in the Year VII, admitted: "We are all aware that...for several years an irresistible tendency seems to be at work in the efforts we make to improve national education;...except for a few places in the Republic, primary schools are non-existent." [40]

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Since our purpose is limited to situating the Christian Brothers, their labors and their difficulties within the context of the events of the Revolution and within the context of France's national history, we cannot extend any further our analysis of documents that have only a general bearing on this end. Henceforth, we shall single out various publications and pursue our probes into archival materials in order to make contact with some of those modest men who are the heroes of these volumes. The preceding documents and those that are to follow belong, for the most part, to the same category: we believe that they will complete and throw light upon each other.

All the men about whom we shall speak do not deserve the title of faithful disciple of the Founder. Some of them left the Institute in 1791 or in 1792, at a time when, either the spirit of revolt or a momentary weakness induced them to take the schismatic oath. The pride of a handful of rebels never capitulated; but the guileless, who had been misled, the timid, who had caved in under threats or who had bent under the pressure of "Constitution−al" pastors, drew up their apologies or more or less explicit retractions and made amends for the scandal (if there had been any) by the uprightness of the rest of their lives and its dedication to youth. Renegades or reconciled (and between the two there were many intermediate positions), there were some former Brothers who were among the top ranks of public school teachers; from their educational training, they had retained their successful methods of teaching; they controlled their pupils energetically; and they obtained a success that was fueled by their ambition or that quite naturally resulted from their zeal.

There were others who, in all good conscience, plowed parallel fields -- whether authorized by a local administration, or, at their own risk, in private institutions (a prosperous residence school or a modest primary school conducted in a single room). And it was not always a "monk" in layman's dress:-- not only was it the young men who had entered the Congregation in or about 1789 who married, but also the perpetually professed, including former Directors of important Communities. Papal dispensations had enabled them to marry with the Church's blessing.

They remained on good terms and, indeed, in close friendly relations with those of their former confreres who, in a loftier arena, witnessed the same fidelity to Roman Catholicism and, while observing celibacy, preserved a quasi-monastic life in the world. These were the men who would be prepared for the providential moment of the Institute's

[39] Lottin, op.cit., Vo. II, 4, pp. 200-1.

[40] Cited by A. Des Cilleuls, pp. 75-6.

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restoration. Nevertheless, they did not all return to the newly organized Communities: only the most courageous, the most self-effacing, the most dedicated to divine action, made up the "workers of the first hour". Others would come at the third, the sixth and the ninth hours. There would even be the latecomers of the eleventh hour: the Master of the vineyard would welcome them as generously as their fellows; circumstances beyond their control, responsibilities they could not evade and ties that only death could undo, detained excellent people. Through truly remarkable efforts they made up for lost time, gained their reward and died on the pathways to holiness.

In such fashion, during the years which, if they were not the most bloody, then, perhaps, the most painful and disconcerting of the Revolution, did the dislocated band of the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle live. Overall, they retain their right to our respect. With only a few exceptions, they refused to compromise with evil. A majority of them, while preserving their faith, did not think that it was possible to persevere in their Religious vocation: heroic grace is not granted to ordinary mortals, and never, in the course of the centuries, had humanity known such a dreadful tumult and such profound turmoil. A select few refused every allegiance except the purely political oaths that were necessary for physical survival and for the educational apostolate; these were oaths recognized by exemplary, orthodox priests, authorized by legitimate bishops and tolerated by the Holy See. The moment that dogmatic, moral or disciplinary integrity became endangered they proclaimed their *non possumus*.

And in so acting they busied themselves with the salvation of youth and they contributed mightily to checking the general slide toward ignorance and unbelief. In this connection we dare say that our gratitude must extend to all the Brothers who, from 1791 until the Consulate and the Empire, maintained or restored the schools. Even the lapses (to borrow a term from the antique Christian tongue), whether consciously or otherwise, fulfilled God's plan. Without the competence and devotion of these teachers (De La Salle's indisputable, although unworthy heirs) what would have become of the generation that was the victim of the mad devastation of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies?

That is why, from one end of France to the other, and in Belgium and Switzerland, we must attempt to recover the traces of Brothers' presence.[41] It is enough for us that by reason of their origin and of their primitive commitment, if not always of their final perseverance, the Institute can acknowledge as its own, during a fixed period of time, those schoolteachers whose work fills the ten years of the great "hiatus" between the Law of Suppression on the 18th of August 1792 and the first stirring in Lyons in 1802.

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The facts, inevitably incomplete, that we have been able to collect are more easily organized in a geographical arrangement, by moving from the northern frontier to the Mediterranean than by following a chronological order. We shall pass through the French Departments one after the other where data dealing with the Brothers have been gathered; and we shall attempt an on-site observation of the teachers (or, on occasion follow them in their wanderings) during the entire time of the transitional period that concerns us. What has to do with Belgium and the school in Estavayer in Switzerland will be dealt with at the end of the chapter.[42]

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[41] In the documents of the Revolutionary period former Christian Brothers were nearly always referred to by their civilian names. The Entrance Registers of St. Yon and Avignon enable us (in most cases but not all) to identify their Religious names. As far as possible we will indicate both names. But if in the course of our account we mention only the civilian name, the Index will keep the reader informed as to the Religious status of the better known Brothers.

[42] This survey sums up the research undertaken by our predecessors and ourselves in thirty-five Departments and fifty

Ardres, in the Pas-de-Calais, continued to be a refuge for Brother Aignan (Louis François Barthélemy) and Brother Paulinus (Dominique Simon), both of whom took the "Liberty-equality oath" in September of 1792. They continued to teach, and, in January 1795, Dominique Simon became a public schoolteacher.[43]

In Boulogne, Louis Bleriot, (Brother Aretas) who at one time had incurred Brother Solomon's criticism because he had taken the "Constitutional" oath, married Mlle Suzanne Sauvage. After teaching for a time in the old "Des Carreaux" school, he left its dilapidated premises, to resume his teaching duties across the street. In 1798 we find him in the "Upper Town", near the Gayolle Gate. With the help of his brother, Nicolas, he opened a secondary school in the former mansion of the Dukes of Aumont, where, during the years of the Directory, Mass was celebrated. Bleriot impressed his fellow-citizens; and, on the 1st Fructidor in the Year III, he took his place on the "Departmental jury" for public education. The sons of the middle class of Boulogne attended his school, where Sainte-Beuve began his studies.[44]

This easy and peaceful life contrasted with the ones led by Joseph Hubert Massillon (Brother Cajetan) and Charles Lepine (Brother Berthier) in St. Omer. Brother Solomon's associate on the Rue Neuve escaped the September Massacre, because he had made a timely journey to St. Omer, where he joined Brother Cajetan, who had refused every political commitment. Only Brother Cajetan was imprisoned in 1794.[45] After he was set free, he resumed his duties as a teacher along with Brother Berthier and a third Brother mentioned in the documents as "de Wallart". He dwelt with a relative of the Clercqs of Boulogne, the widow Caron. On the 13th Thermidor in the year VI the city administration in St. Omer denounced the three "former Ignorantin Brothers" to the Department, because (it said) they contrived to visit homes, instructing children, even though they had taken neither the oath of the 14th of August nor the one of the 19th Fructidor in the Year V (the oath that referred to the "hatred of royalty"). They are, continued the official report, "people as fanatical as they are a danger to the public good; they have no concern for any law". Their daring, however, did not seem to entail any serious consequences: and the trio survived this difficult period.[46].

The Brothers in Guise, in the Aisne, got through the entire Revolution without a problem. They owed this remarkable fact to a well founded popularity, which enabled them to make only reasonable concessions to their neighbors. They taught school in a former College, since the "Hospital" had been transformed into a residence for the Community on the 25th of October 1794. Brother Justin (Balthazar Lemaitre) occupied the position of authority with respect to his confreres, Brothers Basil and Antony Bernard (Hugh Porteret and Jean Pierre Decaisne). On the 27th of March and the 17th of April 1795 Lemaitre and Porteret received testimonials from the city government for their patriotism; and on the 30th of the following May an identity certificate declared that Balthazar Lemaitre, schoolteacher for a half-century in Rouen, Calais, Boulogne and Guise, taught the children of the latter city for forty-three years to the satisfaction of all the inhabitants. Age obliged him to yield his position to someone named Jean Baptist Augustine Lothier. Brother Basil, in his seventies, followed Lemaitre into retirement. But Lothier did not show the same zeal and disinterestedness as his predecessor: he relinquished his post as quickly as possible to take a

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localities within the current boundaries of France.

[43]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 6, Brother Victorinus' notes.

[44]Motherhouse Archives, Boulogne File; and Chassagnon, op.cit., pg. 338.

[45]See above, pg. 287.

[46]Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1

teamster's job. The people in Guise were happy to be able to re-employ even the declining forces of Brother Justin until the 5th of June 1797 when he died. It was a fiery, revolutionary Anton Magnier, called "Brutus", who devoted some verses of poetry to the memory of "good old Justin", lines in which the sentiment outstripped the skill of the rhymer: "although an Ignorantin Brother", wrote "Brutus", (Justin) "taught boys extremely well"! And, recalling that, as architect and stonemason, Justin built the schoolhouse in which every young Guisard attended school, the former pupil praised his teacher for his "tireless work, his ardent zeal for youth, his tolerant piety and his genuine charity". The old instructor had taught grandfathers and their grandchildren: but "his austere life was too short". "Alas! Why must such treasures -- even were they to last as long as Nestor -- run and finish the course!" In closing his poem, Magnier hoped that his country would raise the "pious monument that gratitude demands ...to the memory of Brother Justin.[47]

On the 18th of March 1793, at the Departmental headquarters, Brother Leufroy and his colleagues received a no less significant testimony from the city council: "If there is a class of citizen that deserves special mention ...without fear of contradiction, it is the former Brothers of the Christian Schools: sobriety, morality, scrupulous attention to the education of youth -- this from the beginning has been the Broth−ers of this city. Great indeed is the number of citizens who are indebted to them for the principal sciences that it is important for human beings to possess; and it was also in their school that people learned to combine the simple with the active life."[48]. An annual subsidy of six-hundred livres was granted the teachers as a group, over-and-above their pensions as former Religious.

We can understand how Brother Martin of Jesus, after leaving Melun, and Brother Vivien, who had left Rheims, would seek refuge and (while no longer in education) well-paying work or lucrative trades in Laon, which had been so warmly sympathetic to their confreres. Besides, Francis Rene Gaudenne's resourcefulness could only operate in Brother Leufroy's favor with the civil authorities, just as a little later Vivien's letters to the Superior-general would testify to the continuing relationship between the Community in Laon and Brother Agathon.[49]

In November 1793, at the height of the anti-religious agitation, a tiny wind of rebellion stirred in six or seven pupils, delighted with the idea of attracting attention to themselves and playing a trick on their teachers, while at the same time deceiving the revolutionaries: "Citizens administrators", wrote young Burette and Cruchart and the other signatories: "we urge you to write to the Brothers of this city, so that they might teach school to us on Sundays and give us a holiday on the fifth day of the 'Decades' ..." And, like big boys concerned with the well - being of the State, they dated their request "the 18th Brumaire of the 2nd 'Decade' of the 2nd Month of the 2nd Republican Year". The Departmental Directory seems to have taken them seriously; by means of the District, it enjoined the Commune of Laon to put this worthwhile suggestion into practice.[50]

The alarm disturbed the school's peace for a moment only. In March of the following year, the Brothers were concerned with nothing so much as their physical well-being, each day more difficult, because of the increased cost of living and the inflationary currency that followed upon the war. The subsidy paid by the city was not enough to substitute for the aid-

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[47] Matton, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 365-7.

[48] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 672-3 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for September 1908, pg. 306, following the Departmental Archives of the Aisne

[49] See above, pp. 353-354,

[50] Departmental Archives of the Aisne, Laon, 105.

in-kind that had been dispensed to the Brothers by the abbeys, canons and the wealthy middle class. “Some salary! -Six pennies a day for people who work from eight in the morning until five in the evening!”wrote the petitioners. The city government agreed readily enough that it was indeed very little: “The Brothers,” (it wrote to the District on the 14th of April 1794) “deserve much greater consideration...the more so in that, in a position to enjoy their pensions in retirement, they have continued to be useful...It would be unjust to refuse them the reward of their efforts.”[51]

Unfortunately, these were only nice words in a season of distress. Tuition-free education could not be maintained in a very strict way. The Brothers were reduced to leaving an alms-box around for pupils’ free offerings. At the same time, they taught girls as well as boys: however, the classes were not mixed, since the morning was reserved for the former, while the latter were taught in the afternoons.[52]

Politico-religious difficulties arose only after the Terror. A juring priest denounced Claude Bulot (Brother Ferme) who had directed some vivid language in the priest’s direction. And suddenly the Brothers found themselves in jail during the vacation period of the Year III! But it was a passing squall: the mothers took the side of the “Citizen Brothers”. Their vehement objections turned into a riot; and, in order to restore peace, the city government obtained from the District the release of the prisoners, who were returned home in triumph, where the adventure was concluded with a joyful banquet. Brother Vivien, whose account we have been following, places the reopening of the school at about (the Feast of) “St. Remy”, and, therefore, near October 1st.[53]

The Brothers in Laon always had Mass in their chapel. After the Law of the 21st of February 1795, which authorized religious services, they regularized their situation by announcing to the local magistrates that “assemblies” of the faithful were held within their walls every Sunday. Since the reorganization of elementary education,[54] they were officially listed as “school−teachers of the first degree”, under the perfectly explicit designation of “Former Christian Brothers”.[55].

When viewed from close range, the sale of their school on the 28th of Floreal in the Year IV (the 17th of May 1796) was not a vexing matter. The Departmental administration of the Aisne decreed on the 11th Messidor that the taking possession would be suspended until a fresh inquiry into the matter had been completed: if the property did not seem to be suited to its educational purposes, the city administration would select for the teachers a “national building” appropriate for education.[56]

On the 16th Fructidor Pierre Morin (Brother Leufroy), Claude Bulot (Brother Ferme), Dominique Didier (Brother Sebastian) and their associate Jacques Savine were mentioned in a “report on schoolteachers...drawn up in accordance with the Law of the 27th Brumaire in the Year IV”, with information regarding their salary (1,200 livres) and the special stipulation, “Housed by the Commune”.[57] These Brothers began to fall under suspicion after

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[51] Bulletin cited, pp. 306-7.

[52] .Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 674-5, following the recollections of a former strudent, Gertrude Poulet.

[53] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 675-6 and the Bulletin cited, pg. 308-9.

[54] The Laws of the 27th Brumaire in the Year III and the 3rd Brumaire in the Year IV.

[55] Departmental Archives of the Aisne, No. 105

[56] Ibid.

[57] Departmental Archives of the Aisne, L 1453.

the Jacobin coup d'état. The Department decided, on the 19th Vendemiaire in the Year V, to expel them without further delay from their old residence, which, henceforth, would be for the use of the carpenter, Joseph Fournery.[58] Classes, however, were not interrupted. The report of a meeting of the city officials, dated the 29th Prairial in the Year VI, shows that Laon dealt as gently as it could with a group of teachers whose dedication it appreciated. Following the inquiry prescribed by the Directorial decree of the 17th Pluviose, the administration of the Commune declared that in "public and private schools, educational institutions and residence schools…the books are those adopted by the National Convention; the Rights of Man and the Constitution are made available to the pupils; Greek and Roman history were to be the material for thoroughly understood recitations; "Republican slogans" were to decorate the halls, and "the beautiful term of address," 'Citizen' was to be held in honor".

However, it had to be whispered in a hasty aside that "the teachers, referred to as 'the former lay Brothers', had given a holiday to their pupils on the day of the visit, which coincided with a religious feast, according to the old calendar.

But, the report hastens to add, "on 'the Decades' and national holidays teachers shall take their pupils to the temple". And, without exception or reservation it refers to teachers as partisans of the best principles: their virtue, their skills and their patriotism guarantee loving and faithful children to the nation, as well as virtuous citizens and enlightened men.The administration entertained feelings of gratitude for the Brothers. And on the 30th Prairial it distributed awards to seven of their most able pupils. In conclusion, there was a vote of thanks for the teachers "who had deserved so well at the hands of the nation".[59]

This was the last acknowledgement accorded Brother Leufroy and his associates. Intolerance came to be more in evidence in higher places. Even in Laon the city government eventually gave way to partisan influences. Hence, in Vendemiaire, the Brothers had to plead "their age and their infirmities" in order to withdraw from public education. On the 22nd of October 1798 a new teaching personnel was installed, and, among them, along with fathers of families, there was a married priest. To hear the Commune magistrates tell it, these peoples' good morals and competence was as "conspicuous" as their patriotism.[60] Six months later, the Brothers' successors were complaining about being poorly paid; further, they were demanding the support of the public authority "in an effort to stamp out what remained of prejudice and fanaticism".[61]

The Brothers' retirement is obviously explained only by the unfortunate mentality henceforth shared by the bureaucrats of the Aisne.[62] The population retained its trust in the Brothers who had so long a so courageously persevered at their post. The people would once again meet the Brothers at St. Vincent's Abbey, whose owner, Citizen Bosc, offered the Brothers free lodging and the use of a garden. There, a semi-residence school under the aegis of religions was soon opened.[63]

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[58] Ibid., Laon, no. 105.

[59] Ibid., L. 1453.

[60] Bulletin cited, pg. 309.

[61] Departmental Archives of the Aisne, Laon, no. 105, requests of schoolteachers Ganneron, Ligou and Le Comte (3rd Floreal in the Year VIII).

[62] See above, pg. 386.

[63] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 677. Brother Leufroy, exhausted, retired in his last years to Paris. He died there on the 3rd of December 1812, at the age of seventy-nine. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for May 1907, pg. 185)

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Two of Brother Agathon's letters tell us about the existence of a school in Rethel in 1796-1797 and about its Director, Brother Jean Damascene (Jean Louis Martinet),[64] who must have been joined by Brother Maximillian, the former prisoner at the Charterhouse at Mont-Dieu,[65] and destined to succeed him.

For the moment we shall direct our attention to Rheims in order, especially, to renew our dialogue with that outstanding personality, Brother Vivien. Frequently in the past, the shadow cast by Francis Rene Gaudenne has risen along our route. Later on, along the "Imperial" roads we shall have him once again as a travelling companion -- a loquacious, singular and sometimes disconcerting presence, with his rather independent style and behavior, impressed with his own importance, however attractive by reason of his frankness, his towering courage, his incontestable zeal and his filial dedication to the Founder of the Institute.

But we do not have to await that moment to make his closer acquaintance.[66] He was a Parisian, born on the 22nd of October 1755 and baptized in the church of St. Gervais, the old parish associated with Nicholas Barré's "Brothers". He entered the novitiate at St. Yon on the 8th of July 1733 with all the zeal of an eighteen year old. Early, his lively mind and energetic determination were recognized. And thus to complete his pedagogical preparation, he was admitted to the Scholasticate in the Norman institution, directed by Brother Anthereus, a distinguished teacher of whom Brother Vivien, in a few lines, has sketched a strong and reverent commendation.[67] He took perpetual vows in Paris on the 23rd of September 1781. And on the 16th of February 1783 he was in Rheims where he taught continuously for eight and a half years.

We have seen that he refused to take the "Constitutional oath". The special regard that Brother Agathon had for him was revealed in 1792, at the time of the securing of the Melun and St. Yon documents and relics. It is important to return to that crucial event, which has consequences throughout the entire Revolutionary period. Brother Vivien made it his business to tell us about the service he rendered both to the Brothers and to the historians of his Congregation by his vigilance and his clever and intrepid action.

As we know, the file at the Motherhouse that relates to him is a very rich mine indeed. We pause for a moment over a notebook of twelve pages, entitled: "Inventory of objects brought by Brother Vivien to the Holy Child Jesus House", which is accompanied by the following note: Done at the command of Dear Brother Guillaume de Jésus, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who obliged Brother Vivien to do his bidding, saying to him: I have my reasons, and nobody knows what is going to happen. It was done out of sheer obedience.As a consequence, there is no doubt as to the time and the circumstance in which the author wrote. Beginning in 1819, the Mother−house, once again named after the Holy Child Jesus, was gradually set up in Paris, in the Faubourg St. Martin. And Brother Guillaume de Jésus began his generalate in 1822. Brother Vivien's collection

[64] See above, pp. 357 and 367.

[65] Ibid., pg. 287.

[66] On Brother Vivien, see the Index to Vol.I and above, pp. 113-114, 145-146, 215-217, 352-357. He is mentioned on page 149 of the St. Yon Catalogue. And he was the subject of an article in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933.

[67] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 527.

(or, rather, the transfer to Paris of a part of the objects he was about to inventory) is usually placed between these two dates.

In the first place, there were books and manuscripts: among the less interesting or less rare documents, we note "several copies of (circular) letters by Brother Agathon", and "the letters of John Baptist Delasalle (sic) collected" by that superior "and bound by a Brother, for fear of dispersal", "catechisms and books of instruction by Fr. Beuvelet, priest of St. Nicholas of Chardonnet" (Canon Nicolas Roland's uncle) the *Conduct of Christian Schools*", 1742 edition, four copies of the Rule of Government, manuscripts and autographed documents of Brother Agathon", the St. Yon horarium, and the general Regulation for Christian Brothers' residence schools.

Besides this library, making up a total of 108 volumes, whose essential value it is impossible to exaggerate, Brother Vivien states that he gave the house in Paris a reliquary containing a piece of the "true cross". But there were preserved in Lyons "a white satin chasuble that came from M. Delasalle" and the mantle, soutane and the berettas that Vivien had "received from St. Yon",[68] and, finally, a stone "with which" the Holy Founder was reputed to have conducted an exorcism. (It was only in 1853 that Brother Anthelme, Assistant to Brother Philip, brought these priestly vestments to Paris.)[69]

In the following pages of his notebook Brother Vivien supplies the curious details of the way in which he undertook to complete his collection of precious souvenirs. "In 1791, at the time of our dissolution, I did not for an instant doubt that we would make a comeback: that is why that, in the travelling that I did in search of a refuge from revolutionary turmoil, I picked up, as far as possible, objects that related to the Institute...(Passing) through the city of St. Menehould as a total stranger, I asked a lady (who in a very few words gave me to understand that she did not sympathize with the party in power)...whether there remained there any of those who were called "Brothers". She told me: They are no longer here; the Director is still here, but...[70] Do you think, Madame, that in introducing me to view the institution as a curious stranger...?[71]Oh! yes, Sir, he is polite, he will welcome you."

Who was this Director?...A former Brother "on-the-loose"? About his name the account is silent. We do not think that it was Brother Florus, to whom from the 7th of February 1788 to the 5th of March 1790 were addressed a variety of letters and circulars that we have discussed in earlier chapters.[72]On the other hand, a Brother Denis (Charles Aquelle or Aquette), who entered St. Yon on the 23rd of May 1757 and took final vows on the 22nd of September 1763, was a teacher in St. Menehould during the Revolution: on the 10th Thermidor in the Year III (the 28th of July 1795), he appealed to the Department of the Seine-and-Marne to draw his annuity, in a document that certifies that he was a former Christian Brother.[73] It was perhaps to him that the traveler explained what he was looking for.

Brother Vivien continues: "I told him that I took a great deal of interest in buildings that

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[68]This statement confirms what Brother Vivien said in his letter to Brother Thomas. (See above, pg. 216.)

[69]Initially, writes Brother Anthelme, they were "in the attic of Small College (in Lyons)...in a trunk, with a note from Dear Brother Agathon, dated from St. Yon. In 1829 they were removed to the room in which Brother Vicar-(general) died. The Brother Assistant found them in the Caluire House (Note dated Lyons, 9th of August 1868, in the Motherhouse Archives.) These relics of the Founder are today in a room in Casa san Giuseppe, in Rome.

[70]The abscission points are in the text.

[71]Brother Vivien, who certainly knew Brother Florus, could not then have been deceived as to the latter's identity

[72]Motherhouse Archives, Vow Book (1725-1767), pg. 305, and Departmental Archives of the Seine-and-Marne, L 414, no. 5133.

[73]3

had been used for the education of youth, and that I had heard a great deal about the one in that city...Would (he) allow me to inspect it? With pleasure, Sir. He conducted me through the garden and throughout the house and the exercise room. There were the pictures of the Superiors...Inspecting them attentively, I said to him: These were very considerable men. He replied: Sir, if you like them, I will gladly sell them to to you...That depends upon the price you are asking for them...Six francs apiece."

"I knew that the ones in Rheims had cost twenty- four francs apiece. Without another work, I concluded the bargain by giving him thirty-six francs. I had those pictures packaged and sent them to the city where I was living."

Besides the portraits of the five Superior-generals who had presided over the Institute during the 18th century, there was a portrait of Pope Benedict XIII who had signed the Bull of Approbation (1725). Brother Vivien did not send this painting with the others. Rather, he lifted it out of its frame, which was very heavy, and carried the canvas under his arm through the streets of St. Menehould. "I heard", recounts the Brother with humor, "passersby who said: 'There's a good patriot, with his fine red hat'". (The painter of the portrait had placed on the Pope's head the sort of velvet hat that is worn by Julius II in Raphael's painting.) "Their way of understanding things (Vivien meant their knowledge of history.) made me smile".

"Since I had a light carriage...I placed (the painting) carefully on the floor, and we travelled on, in God's care. This is the portrait which is today in the Child Jesus House..."[74].

The "Citizen" who thus criss-crossed Champagne in his carriage of a well-to-do bourgois during the height of "the revolutionary turmoil" could be none other than the "military employee at the Montreuil grounds, the bureaucrat (in Brother Agathon's words) equipped with an excellent job".[75]

He still hesitated to return to Rheims, the city that had a secret hold on him. On the 8th of May 1793 a competition had been announced "for the position of headmaster at the tuition-free school on Rue Telliers".[76] The times were too threatening for a Brother with a record of fidelity to the Roman Church to dare seek the post. On the 20th of the following Brumaire the list of schoolteachers who sought and obtained "certificates for patriotism", issued by the Commune Counsel, included no Brother from the house on the Rue Neuve, but merely two former Christian Brothers, who had long since left the Institute -- Citizens Ferbus and Thival, of whom we shall speak later on.[77]

The first of the recent dissidents who decided to seek reintegration into the structures of public education turned up on the 15th Floreal in the Year III (the 4th of May 1795). It was Louis Joseph Proisy, Brother Maurice. "Having examined both his moral behavior and his patriotism, the jury appointed him school−teacher at Villers-Allerand".[78] He may have given assurances to the Jacobins. Persecution continued to be a threat.[79]

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[74]Motherhouse Archives, File Ha p i. The paintings in question have accompanied the Regime of the Institute in its successive residences. They are now in a room in the Second Novitiate in Rome. Brother Vivien states that he acquired a second collection, given, subsequently, "to the Refuge House in Paris"

[75]See above, pg. 353.

[76]Municipal Archives in Rheims, no. 254, Register of the Commune's correspondence, from the 18th of February, 1788 to the 22nd Brumaire in the Year II.

[77]Municipal Archives of Rheims, report of the meetings of the General Council.

[78]Municipal Archives, Rheims, no. 823, File for the Year IX to 1820, public education.

[79]After the Brumaire Law, which revived persecution against priests, Francis Joseph Sohier, the former Brother Amand, had to turn himself in at "the institution for solitary confinement" in Chalons-sur-Marne. However, in view of his great age, he

At last came a shortlived period of calm. Brother Vivien refused to wait any longer. Prior to November 1796 he drew up his plans -- as one of the Superior-general's letters informs us -- to return to teaching. Scarcely ever, over the years, did he reside anywhere but Rheims. The private school he opened there continued to operate in spite of the coup d'état of Fructidor. On the 19th Pluviose, a "personal report on schoolteachers residing in the neighborhood called "Friends of the Nation" refers to Francis Rene Gaudenne in the following terms: "Teacher for twenty-six years, former Christian Brother; promised to have the 'Decades' observed, to teach his pupils the Constitution, and (that) the title 'Citizen' will be employed honorably, he will comply in everything with the orders of the government. He lived at number 8 Rue Petit-Four.[80]

Brother Agathon had been right, though, in supposing that the "new circumstances" could prove embarrassing to his disciple's conscience.[81] Gaudenne accommodated the demands of the Directory with less ease than did Claude Thival, who, "married" and living at number 7 Rue Grosse Bouteille, proclaimed that he was quite prepared "to use" the textbooks provided by the "Republican establishment";[82]and especially with less ease than Nicolas Ferbus, number 8 Rue Tronchet, also a "former Christian Brother", who, indeed, taught "catechism" and, a few months previously "knew his Sundays and Feasts", but "had always seemed attached to Republican principles, and continues to be so", and so indoctrinates his pupils.[83]

Brother Vivien in the end saw that his convictions and his integrity prevented him from "accommodating himself" to everything that is demanded of "people in his profession"; the list of schoolteachers in Rheims on the 13th Thermidor in the Year VI mentions that "François René Gaudenne, former Christian Brother, bachelor" (against "the morality of one for whom nothing (indeed) is reconsidered") "has completely withdrawn from his school" on Rue Petit Four.[84]However, he had only dropped out of sight. On another day, as the skies cleared, he would be back.

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In Lorraine, after the Maréville disaster, after the deportation of several Brothers from Nancy, King Stanislaus' great institutions were only a memory. However, at Lunéville in the Year VII there were Christian schoolteachers, the survivors or successors of the Christian Brothers. The Commissioner of the executive branch in this Commune wrote to his colleague in the Department of Meurthe, on the 5th Frimaire, that schoolteachers "with apparently ambivalent principles" continue to support children in their ancient prejudices. An investigation had uncovered children reading exclusively "mystical writings intended to impress them with a religious morality totally contrary to government views". Citizen Chevallet, of course, indicated certain books bearing official approval; but he used none of them except as "a blind for his hypocrisy"; these books were "quite new", whereas the "worn

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was allowed to do so in a carriage. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pg. 214.)

[80]Municipal Archives, Rheims, Year IV-Year VIII, testimony of police commissioner Bourlois-Rousseau.

[81]See above, pg. 366.

[82]Municipal Archives, Rheims, Year II-Year VIII, testimony of police commissioner Bourlois-Rousseau. Report on school−teachers residing in the "Mars section", 22nd Pluviose in the Year VI.

[83]Municipal Archives, Rheims, Year II-Year VIII, Report on schoolteachers living in the "Fraternity section", 4th Ventose in the Year VI and Tableau of the following 12th Thermidor.

[84]All of this unpublished documentation suggests the inadequacy of Brother Lucard's information, Vol. II, pg. 706.

appearance" of the "devotional literature" testified to its extensive use.[85]

The former Director of the Community in Nancy, Brother Eunuce, gallant veteran of the educational wars, became a tutor in a family in Gerbeviller. He used his free time gratuitously to teach the sons of poor people. In his seventies at the time of the restoration of the Institute, he cooperated with the new enterprise without departing the region, and, until the age of eighty-nine, was one of the great patriarchs to bridge the gap between the generalates of Brother Agathon and Brother Gerbaud[86]

Before rebuilding in Franche-Comte and in Bourgogne it would be necessary shrewdly to get the lay of the land and gradually, after the constitutional schism, to disengage the ancient foundations upon which structures rested from some of their more dubious materials. At Dole-du-Jura, Brother Adalberon (François Renel), who took the oath, had struck a triumphant pose in 1791.[87] An energetic and resourceful educator, quite popular with pupils and parents alike, he believed that once he was rid of his confreres, he would inaugurate his personal reign. On his own authority, he called himself "Director". He ruffled the Commune Counsel and was soon considered undesirable, and, probably, still too devoted to religious education. On three different occasions between May and June 1792 the city government called upon him to resign his position. To replace him, it named a teacher who, probably to improve his credibility, assumed the name of "Brother Theodore Gabriel". The police in Mont Roland was given the order to expel Renel. Families came to his support; and pupils demonstrated tumultuously with cries of "Long live Alberon"(sic); meanwhile, they cast aspersions upon his successor and his aides. Finally, Renel declared that he "yielded for the sake of peace", and left in July. The house in which the Brothers lived became in 1793 a warehouse for salt. And in 1799 in Dole primary education, more or less restructured, included Peter and Claude Antony Pyot, Stephen Thomas, J.B. Nadrin, and Benignus Chamaillet whom the personnel register identifies as "former Brothers", although their ties with the Institute (especially the last three) are not absolutely beyond dispute.[88]

Those in the Community in Dijon who took the oath[89] were still functioning as public schoolteachers after the dissolution of teaching Orders. Brother Dominique's rejection of the oath and Brother Conrad's "change" to Auxonne determined them, in 1791, to take on a young man named Didier Buvée. Living conditions were difficult; the former revenues of the school became unrecoverable, and furthermore, with the exception of Denis Guibout (Brother Eustachius) the teachers in Dijon were unable to collect the payment of subsidies as former Religious, because they had to produce their claim to admittance into the Institute.[90]

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[86] .[86]Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pp. 15-16.

[87] See above, pg.105.

[88] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1927, pp. 32-8.

[89] See above, pp. 91-93.

[90] Departmental Archives, Cote-d'Or, L 1167, 27. Denis Guibout left the novitiate in Dole, where he had been admitted on the 24th of February 1755. Nicholas Oste, Stephen Chancenotte, Francis George and Joseph Gondrexon, his associates, had, all four of them, made their novitiate in Maréville. Since we are here discussing the novitiate in Dole, we would like to clarify and correct (following documentation supplied by Brother Raphael Victor) certain statements made in Volume one of this General History: the Dole novitiate, which operated between 1747 and 1770 (at the latter date the personnel was transferred to Maréville, as a hygienic precaution) furnish−ed the Institute with at least 128 members. Sixty of them who were professed were still in the Institute on the 1st of January, 1791. If we add to that number the some-twenty Brothers who died before that date, we see that the average perseverance equals, if it does not surpass, the perseverance of members who made their novitiate at St. Yon or at Maréville. Dole also played its part in directing to the novitiate in Lorraine a flow of

In a meeting on the 3rd of June 1793 the "Administrative Bureau of the former Godran College" agreed to advance them their salaries out of funds at its disposal.[91] In the midst of financial disarray and with the Terror approaching, this well-meaning measure was little more than a particularly precarious gesture. We do not know what became of these five deserters. Very likely, as of 1795, they entered into the structures of elementary education in the Cote-d'Or.

It is a quite plausible hypothesis and one which also explains the parallel story of their confreres in Auxonne. This group, directed by Brother Conrad (Antoine Joseph Corette), who took the oath, taught school in that tiny city starting in June 1791.[92] As a group it was totally docile to the powers-that-be -- at least to judge by a letter written by Corette to one of the Administrators: "Several people (he wrote on the 29th of November 1791) appeared surprised to see me in Dijon wearing the habit of a Brother. If, Sir, you think this should not be, would you please say something about it in your reply, and I shall comply with the desires of the gentlemen in the Department.[93]Thus, "The Brothers of the Christian Schools of Auxonne" (as they were called after the dissolution of the Institute) could count on the concern of the Directory of the Cote-d'Or, which, on the 27th of January 1793, was expressed in the form of a gift of 300 livres for their most urgent needs and, primarily, for the payment of their taxes.[94]. On the 4th of the following August Joseph Corette received a certificate for patriotism from the General Counsel of the Commune: "Since his arrival in Auxonne, he has continued to give evidence of his devotion to public affairs."[95].

Throughout the Revolution (and until 1804) Brother Conrad, along with his associate, Louis Saragenet (Brother Vaubert), occupied the schoolhouse given to the Brothers in 1723 by Hugh Monin de la Cour.[96]And then, a few years after the city set up a college there, Brother Conrad retired. Louis Saragenet accumulated a number of jobs -- schoolteacher, choir master and sacristan; Auxonne venerated him. (Others besides Brother Vaubert were able to become reconciled with the Church and were pardoned their wavering in troubled and evil times.) His death seemed almost the death of a saint![97]

Such episodes are sufficient, not indeed to excuse schism, but to moderate the rigors of human judgment concerning persons who were more misguided than guilty. In Langres we shall come across Brothers who remained unrepentant. The inhabitants of the ancient city of the Bishops/Dukes were deeply distressed at having lost the teachers given them by Bishop Luzerne, Canon Diderot and Canon Neret. With special gratitude they recalled the services of

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vocations from Comte, several of whom performed distinguished service in the Institute.

[91]Departmental Archives, Cote d'Or, D-2.

[92]See above, pg. 106

[93]Departmental Archives, Cote d'Or, L 1162, 15.

[94]Ibid., AD

[95]Ibid

[96]Hugh Monin seems to have been the real founder of the the school in Auxonne, under the auspices of the Marquis de Thiard. (Motherhouse Archives, Historique d'Auxonne.)

[97]Historique, cited. Louis Saragenet married twice. After the death of his second wife in 1855, his daughters returned to the Brothers, who had come back to Auxonne, a quantity of books that had belonged to the old Community, an "Obedience" their father had received from Brother Agathon in 1791, his New Testament, letters, a portrait of De La Salle and a portrait of Brother Barthélemy, Superior-general.

the three Brothers, "Rupert, Leclerc and Merre".[98]The latter, whom we must have no hesitancy in identifying as Jean Baptist Mairez (Brother Jonas, of whom we shall have to speak on another occasion) was not on the verge of being returned to his friends in Langres. Brother Rupert, the former Director, became the head of a well run residence school in Puiseaux, in the Pas-de-Calais.[99]As for Leclerc, we find his name on a receipt discovered in the archives of the city's hospitals, in which the Communal treasurer testifies, on the 1st Frimaire in the Year II, that he had received from "Citizen Leclerc" shares in the India Company arising from the Neret donation.[100]But we do not know what became of this fine teacher, who was quite elderly when the Christian Brothers' schools were reinstated. Between 1796 and 1799 there were three tuition-free schools operating in Langres:their teachers were Citizens Trottin, Georges and Mauffre.[101]We are inclined to consider these men as Christian Brothers either as to their origin or their training.[102]

At Troyes, in the Aube, after the Community's dissolution and the departure of Antony Topin (Brother Conteste) for Italy, there remained a Brother Chrysogonus (Claude Antoine Massonnet) who minded the house until August of 1793, and, then in 1795 qualified as a "public letter writer".[103][104]

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Survivors in De La Salle's Institute were rather numerous in the Paris region. In this group we include the Departments of the Seine-and-Marne, the Oise, Seine and Seine-and-Oise, the Loiret and the Eure-and-Loire.

On the 19th of October 1792 the mayor and the city officials of Fontainebleau certified that: "The former Brothers of the Christian Schools...Robert de Parpe (Brother Nicolas), Pierre Joseph Pudie (Brother Sigismond), J. Pierre Charatte (Brother Geoffrey), J. Francis Le Brun (Brother Cyril), Vulfran Alexis Toulet (Brother Maxim), since they have come to the city have accomplished their functions uninterruptedly and with all possible exactitude:...few there are who are in a better position to instruct youth. It is with the greatest satisfaction that (we, the undersigned, see) coming from the hands (of these teachers) young people, who, at eleven years of age, are more learned than a lot of others.

As a result, three months later, the city decided to support their school and to assume the responsibility for its finances until the final organization of public education. Over and above the pension for life paid in conformity with the Law of the 18th of August 1792, an annual salary of 600 livres was granted to each of the three Brothers who taught class. The Director and the serving Brother were to be given a living from general funds.

Dispensed from their Religious commitments, the teachers in Fountainebleau, except for Robert de Parpe, married. The various households occupied the Congregation's former residence; and, the remarkable thing was that good feeling prevailed. Apart from young boys,

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[99]National Archives F-17 12453, Inquiry in the Year XIII.

[100]Document copied in the Historique de Langres.

[101]Historique cited.

[102]There is, perhaps, the possibility of identifying "George" with the "Francis George" who was a member of the Community in Dijon.

[103]Father Prevost, Histoire du diocese de Troyes pendant la Revolution.

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little girls were also admitted to a classroom on the ground floor. The wives of the schoolteachers taught reading and sewing to the girls, whom the former Brothers introduced to fine handwriting and arithmetic. Organized along these novel lines, the institution discovered its strength. Not even the Revolution could unsettle it. Napoleon I witnessed its operation not far from his imperial palace.[105]

At Meaux, Louis Thery and Pierre Joseph Peigne, Christian Brothers who had rejected the Civil Constitution, took the "Liberty-equality oath". Their confreres, J. B. Huguet, Firmin Lefevre and Jacques Lepouce, preferred to retire purely and simply. Pierre Joseph Peigne seemed to be the only one who, in 1793, was confirmed in his post as schoolteacher in the Commune.[106]

In the Seine-and-Marne these were the inheritors of the work of Cardinal Bissy and Cardinal Fleury. The situation was very little different in the Department of the Oise. In 1792, the school that had opened in 1772 near the Compiegne Castle had as its Director Brother Cassian, who thought it was his duty to resign his educational post after the Law of the 18th of August. But from the city in which he was respected he did not leave, shaking its dust from his shoes. He introduced his successors, Louis Nicolas and Pierre Boniface Hignon (who were blood brothers who shared the same vocation) and commended them to the city. In the Year II the Citizens Hignon, whom Compiègne supported, brought two-hundred children into their "Minimes school". Louis Nicolas, perhaps exhausted, withdrew the following year to Paris, where he soon died. Pierre Boniface, who was married, left public education in 1796; however, he did not leave his good friends in Compiègne; he continued to teach their sons in a private school.[107].

At Noyon we again come across Brother Aubert (Armand Pammiers) who, in spite of his opposition to the schism, had long been able to retain the city's confidence. His manner recalled that of his confrere, Cassian: he merged into the background and pushed ahead his younger associates who were better adapted to the circumstances, Francis Monnet (Brother Antoine) and Claude Cliquet (Brother François de Sales). On the 11th of June 1793 these two teachers obtained a subsidy from the city, levied upon a former royal estate. Brother Aubert counselled them and guided them without being unreasonably secretive; and on the 7th of October the people of Noyon awarded him a certificate of patriotism into the bargain. But the climate turned sour; the former Brothers refused to take their pupils to a celebration of the feast of the goddess of reason. Armand Pammiers, especially threatened, took refuge outside the city. At night he returned to the school and encouraged Cliquet and Monnet. In this way they were nearing the time when the persecution began to abate. The school was still functioning in August 1794. However, it was to have a change of teachers. Brother Antoine fell ill: his retirement was not final, since he did not die until the 17th of March 1831, when he was in his nineties, and after sixty years of profession in the Institute. Brother François de Sales was also destined for a more peaceful future. To replace those who had resigned, Brother Aubert gave his fellow-citizens, Brothers Gervais and Protais (Louis and Elias Francis Lucas), aided by a cantor from St. Elias' parish, Theodore Guillaume. The Lucases were paid by the city and lodged in the Brothers' residence. They would remain there until the order destroyed by the Revolution was restored. But the intrepid "promoter" took his leave: and after a stay in the Cambrai region, he settle down in Laon where he lived out a

[105]Departmental Archives, Seine-et-Marne, L 414. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 666.

[106]Ibid., L 285 and Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 665.

[107]Motherhouse Archives, Compiègne File

painful old age and died about 1810. [108]

[108] Ibid., Noyon File, HA n. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 43,

In Paris we lose all trace of Brother Amaranthe, the staunch "M. Le Coeur" whom we met in the company of Brother Solomon. Brother Boniface (M. Dubois), the former Director of St. Roch, resurfaced after the 9th Thermidor,[109]but he cannot be followed with certainty until the Consulate and the Empire.

The school of St. Denis of France, secularized early on, had, according to tradition, retained Brother Paul (Vincent Thibaut) as its Director at the time when the Basilica was plundered. He exercised a great deal of influence over the townspeople in the parish, and he used it to protect the most venerable relics from profanation. "Take all the bones you want", the leader of a sacrilegious band is supposed to have told him, "but leave the gold and the silver to us". And the Benedictine Father, Dom Warenflot, pastor of the parish, in the presence of witnesses, received from the Brother's hands some of the remains of the illustrious martyrs Denis, Eleuthereus and Rusticus. Brothers Paul, Zeno and Sabinian went into hiding during the Terror. They had refused to substitute the Rights of Man for the catechism and revolutionary songs for religious hymns. Later on, the Brother Director alone returned to teaching.[110]

At Versailles it was said that three former Brothers were named as public school teachers as the result of a competition.[111]. The school in St. Germain-en-laye, which had been revived by Brother Gerbaud, we shall deal with when we come to speak of the man who restored it.

Between 1792 and 1798 there was, so to speak, no break in the continuity of the schools in Orleans, taught by the Brothers of the St. Euvertus Community and those who replaced them after the decrees of the Legislative Assembly, the Convention and the Directory. But while the personnel scarcely altered, and the children found the surroundings familiar and the lessons (in introductory grammar and arithmetic) traditional, still, the period of the Terror marked the end of the Brothers' participation and an interruption (of a rather brief duration, be it said) of Christian education.

A report dated the 7th of January 1793 shows that Brother Clair (Étienne Benoist) and his colleague, Jean Baptist Le Moigne, continued to teach on Rue St. Euvertus; while at St. Marceau, St. Laurence, Holy Cross and St. Patern, the eight teachers in the parochial schools seem indeed only to have resumed their civilian names and put on a new suit of clothes.[112] St. Paul's kept the lay-teachers they had over the years.[113]

In the following June, after Montagne's victory, the Deputy Attorney-general for the Commune was scandalized to learn that "the Brothers with the big hats" had continued to teach, although they had never taken the "constitutional oath". Since their lack of patriotism was a matter of public record, it was necessary for vestry boards and the Committee for Public Instruction to take appropriate measures.[114]

After all, it was only a question of invoking the final dissolution of all Religious corporations, as proclaimed by the Law of the 18th of August 1792 and of excluding teachers who were under suspicion, if there were any. In short, this is what the District administrators suggested in their letter of the 27th of July to the Departmental Directory: The Law (referred to above) has been in force throughout our District...A portion of the members of the Communities of both men and women have, as individuals, continued to work in public

[109]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 667-8.

[110]Idem., pg. 667; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 108; Motherhouse Archives, St. Denis File.

[111]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 666

[112]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT 468

[113]Ibid., District Administration note, 27th of July 1793.

[114]Lottin, op.cit., Vol. II, 2, pg. 142.

education.[115] And as these clarifications sufficed, on the 3rd of October these same administrators authorized the paying, for the previous three months, of all the teachers mentioned in the report of the 7th of January, including Stephen Benoist and J. B. Le Moigne.[116]

These Brothers must have adopted a policy of silence during the storm of de-Christianization and the attack upon priests. But the "Fructidor" tyranny was endured less passively. The oath of hatred for royalty sparked resistance; and private schoolteachers preferred to suspend their teaching rather than risk the annoyances of administrative investigations. In a meeting on the 13th Frimaire in the Year VII the city government moved on the dissidents: Jean Baptist Le Moigne was given an order to close his school, because he had refused to obey the Law of the 19th Fructidor in the Year V. Among the teachers who lost their right to teach we note Citizen Cendre, who had previously taught school at 2 Rue Anget.[117] He was a Christian Brother, called in the Institute "Brother Liberius". Presently, it would fall to him to restore Lasallian traditions to the city of Orleans.

They would also be reborn in Chartres, in a soil where they had left tenacious roots. De La Salle's work and that of his friend Paul Godet des Marets had, in a sense, clung to the stones of the Cathedral of Notre Dame: in this place that was sacred to French history, the schools enjoyed a special protection, and shared the enduring quality of the monument of stone, light and Marian devotion. Desolation reigned in the temple, and vandalism assaulted the marvel of national and Christian art, and the antique statue of the Virgin Mary had been consumed in a diabolical "bonfire". But, "underground", faith and confidence continued to survive, and soon they began to rise once more toward the skies, like "the world's only spire", "the blameless spire", celebrated by our contemporary compatriot, Charles Peguy.

The Sub-director, Brother Jean Louis (Charles Richard) who, in 1793, was the last to leave the residence reserved for the Institute by the bishops, almost immediately opened a primary school near Porte Guillaume. His colleague, Brother Montain, wrote in an invaluable memoir that he himself continued to "teach his class" throughout 1794. The city government for some months paid them a salary. But, then, under pressure from extremists, it designated other schoolteachers. "There was only a single vote in the Counsel", writes Brother Montain, "for my dismissal for reasons of want of patriotism".

The intolerance was shortlived. Having bid goodbye to Citizen Menager, his guest, the Brother, henceforth called by his civilian name, Claude Francis Laglet, took up quarters in the former convent of the "Union"; there he occupied "a small room that gave on to a terrace"; and in June 1795 he gathered his pupils together and taught them in the convent's deconsecrated chapel. Charles Richard was emboldened, successfully, to make the same sort of beginnings, as was a third teacher, André Fossey (Brother Acarius). Once again, the city provided them with a subsidy. "Dear Brother Jean Louis obtained...600 livres" a year; and I, 525", adds Langlet. Unfortunately, they had to contend with the adversities of the municipal budget: the teachers succeeded in getting only a third of the promised sum. They were obliged to charge tuition, as the Law of the 3rd Brumaire authorized them in the circumstances. We know what the average payment was (24 sous per pupil, per month), according to the "expense book of Claude Francis Langlet, teacher at Chartres from the 5th of September 1789, born in La Fere in Picardy, on the 29th of July 1737". The total number of

[115] Departmental Archives of the Loiret, LT. 468.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., LT 462, quoted from the Decisions Register of theMunicipal Administration.

children taught by Brother Montain was not more than fifty.[118] Around this select few there would one day accumulate a whole troop of the youth of Chartres.

The Brothers in Nogent-le-Rotrou had to yield up their posts at the end of 1791 to teachers who had taken the oath. At the beginning of the following year Brother Thery, expelled from Versailles for refusing the oath, settled at Nogent and taught reading and writing to about a dozen boys. The Attorney-general of the Commune denounced him to the justice of the peace: on the 14th of February, Thery appealed the case to the District: "Assuming that it is well know that he does not teach publicly...that no law forbids (private instruction), and...that he has made the prescribed declaration to the city officials,...he asks...for the freedom guaranteed him by the constitutional code."

The Directory of the District allowed the petition: since Thery was no longer a functionary, he was dispensed from taking the oath; let him provide himself with a simple licence and no one would bother him any further. But that position did not win support with the administrators of the Eure-and-Loire, who, however, were to close their eyes to the situation of the Brothers in Chartres. "No one may take part in education", they claimed on the 18th of February, "without having previously sworn the required oath."[119]Was this one of those passing outbursts of "ill-temper" of which Brother Montain wrote?[120] Or did the magistrates reserve their favors for individuals in the region, or did they fear to enter into conflict with their colleagues in the Seine-and-Oise over a teacher from Versailles? Thery was resigned to leave the Department: and it is doubtless he with whom we shall meet presently in the city of Meaux.[121]He would have successors at Nogent before the revolutionary period was over.

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It goes without saying that the influence of many former members of the Community at St. Yon was felt throughout Normandy. According to Lucard, about fifteen of them chose to remain in Rouen and its environs. He cites first of all the example of François Pierre Sylvestre (Brother Alberic, the mathematician) and Pierre Jean Guillon (Brother Helier) as having opened secondary schools, where their pupils of the day before and the sons of former pupils were brought together.[122] He also informs us that the elder of the two Thomas' brothers entered one of the large commercial establishments as a bookkeeper, while the younger one made his living as a tutor. With respect to these two men authentic documentation informs us as follows: On the 21st Brumaire in the Year II (the 11th of November 1793) seals were placed on Citizen Francis Thomas' (Brother Hermas) room –"dead this day, dwelling, for about six months, with Aimable Charles le Danois, a business man in Rouen, St. Arnoult Hall, 38 Rue St. Laurent. The dead man had been employed as a "clerk in a counting house", and it was because of matters entrusted to his initiative that Le Danois, his employer, insisted

[118]Motherhouse Archives, FG j, Chartres File, and HA q, Brother Montain's papers. In the "Expense Book" there is a beautiful sentence: "I have never kept track of my charities, since I do not wish to play numbers with God, on Whose Providence I rely". Beginning in July 1799 the payment of Mass stipends are mentioned. See also Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 665-66.

[119]Departmental Archives of the Eure-et-Loir, L 49.

[120]See above, pg. 130.

[121]See pg. 408.

[122]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 652. He also mentions a Claude Billard, called Brother David.

on these security measures. The heirs, who were two brothers and two sisters, acted through Sebastian Thomas (Brother Gerbaud), a "bookkeeper" with the same business man, who lived at 6 Rue École. The inventory that was begun on the 27th Nivose resulted in the evaluation of furniture and personal property at only 120 livres. "A three-cornered hat" (a carefully preserved relic) was found in a desk. Brother Gerbaud assumed the settlement of accounts with Le Danois; in particular he planned, with the approval of the other heirs, to sacrifice his elder brother's rights to certain "sugar futures at the maximum price". The contract bore the date of the 12th Pluviose in the Year II. In January 1797 Sebastian Thomas was present in Rouen to settle a debt, which was perhaps a commercial one: a gentleman by the name of Calou had lent 49,000 livres in paper money; the creditor was willing to be repaid in 100 livres cash and ..."forty seven silk handkerchiefs", which gives a pretty good idea of the devaluation of paper money! We tend to believe that the future Superior-general did not leave the Lower-Seine until about this time, with the view of dedicating himself, once again and totally, to his vocation of teaching.[123]

At the same time, Nicholas Bienaimé (Brother Philippe Joseph) departed from under the hospitable roof that sheltered him in 1795,[124] and began a small school in Elbeuf. Threatened, after the 8th Fructidor, by the enforcement of harassing decrees, he wrote "the citizens that compose the Canton's jurisdiction" a letter in the same spirit and style as the marvelous letters that were once addressed to him by his brother, the pastor of Gigney. The original manuscript of this document belongs to the Mother−house Archives,[125] and it deserves to occupy a large place in the present chapter.

"Citizen-administrators, I have introduced into my classroom the books that you have required, and I mean to make a good use of them; I have even gone so far as to have Lhomond's short grammar learned by heart, so far as that can be done, in order to have an easier time teaching spelling, which is so difficult to instill into young people, following the principles of the language. I teach calculation with francs, tenths and hundredths, as far as it is required. I am prepared to teach the new system of weights and measures, when that shall become necessary.[126] Your wishes, as well as those of the government are, therefore, in this respect, satisfied.

"I know of no Divine Law that obliges people to observe the days called the "Decades" and the "national holidays". And yet it is only this sort of law that could bind them seriously to such an obligation. But, since that is now a political law, I can give a holiday on days indicated by it.

"Regarding the privilege you accord me by inviting me to your ceremonies, I am annoyed by the trouble you go to in writing me to this end. I am unable to accept your invitation. I beg you to consider that no law obliges me to comply."[127] I am not a public servant, and I have never received a salary from the Republic. I am not a primary schoolteacher. Furthermore, I am a practicing Catholic. And such ceremonies seem an affront to that Divine and thrice holy religion. May it please God that I never authorize by my

[123] Motherhouse Archives, Brother Gerbaud's file

[124] See above, pg. 316.

[125] File HA p 4. Cf. the text provided by Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 653-6. The minutes are undated: they could not have been written until after the Directory's decree on the 17th Pluviose in the Year VI.

[126] The teaching of the metric system ran into a lot of opposition. But Nicholas Bienaimé demonstrates that he did not belong to the tribe of those who have minds bound by custom.

[127] Obviously the legal validity of the Pluviose decree was open to question.

presence, as a schoolteacher, ceremonies which I believe disgrace His sacred religion!

"I am prepared to suffer persecution, prison and death itself, if necessary, rather than offend the presence of the Lord God and be a stumbling block for many. Of course, Citizens, you are going to cry "Fanaticism", "Aristocracy", since such is your language, however ill-suited. Well, you might just as well denounce the "theophilanthropy" which you have nonetheless espoused; since a practicing Catholic is at once a genuine friend of God and of men, going so far as to return good for the evil he has received from men, a thing that your innovating "theophilanthropists" never do in a like spirit.

"Regarding my pupils, I have already told you that I have no right over them outside of my classroom; most of them, if not all, go along with you, and several of them are in your service.

"Whatever a man's religious beliefs, Citizens, it is always good politics for a government, whether Republican or not, to use that man's talents when he cooperates for the good of society; short of looking after him to see that he does the good he can do and that people approve of, and prevent him from doing the so-called evil that people fear.

At this point Brother Philippe Joseph explains his teaching program, which is a careful copy of the St. Yon model. And then he continues:

"It is for you, Citizen-administrators, through my puny person, to use this educational system and through it procure inestimable advantage for our fellow-citizens in this Commune, since Divine Providence has brought me here for this purpose; if you reject this good for frivolous reasons, it might very well inspire me to offer it to others, who will receive it kindly, and many even with gratitude.

I speak boldly: fear nothing from my religious beliefs: I shall use them in such a way that they will redound to the benefit of all my fellow-citizens.

Furthermore, all the sciences mentioned above can be taught quite well without exhibiting any of the religious beliefs that people claim are prejudicial to the Republic."

These timely reflections and common sense truths, encapsulating the strongest sort of profession of faith, were concluded with a skillful reminder of "maxims", as old as the world, but which had been rejuvenated by the Declaration of the Rights of Man: "Do not do to other what you would not have them do to you...Always do to others the good that you would have them do to you."

But would the administrators in Elbeuf be convinced? In any case, they did not long worry the courageous teacher, who persevered in his views, his beliefs and in his work until the day came when, in a no less deserving gesture, he broke the bonds of friendship that bound him to Elbeuf and renounced both his independence and his modest fortune in order to resume the Religious habit of his Congregation.

We can expect such lofty example only from "very uncommon people". We shall have to be satisfied with something less from Citizen François Claude Victor, "former teacher at the residence school at St.Yon", "... a schoolteacher, a good husband and a good father", according to the witness of several certificates given him in 1794. On the 23rd Messidor in the Year IX he "informed his fellow citizens" in Louviers that he taught "the principles of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, bookkeeping...foreign exchange, and, in a word, anything that can figure in any kind of business". "Good morals", he hastened to add, "...is the first object of (his) concern".[128]

Dropping further south, we return to Bayeux where the entire Community embraced the schism in 1791. The municipal officials remained the outspoken supporters of Dominique Mamel: replacing, as far as they could, Bishop Cheylus, who "had taken the precaution of

[128]National Archives, F-17 1363.

making himself master of the uses his money served", they contrived to create a suitable situation for the teachers. Poor children continued to be admitted to the school, but a "contribution" was demanded of families "in a condition to pay".[129]

The former Brother Damian, however, complained in May of 1793 of his financial disappointments. He was to know others: and in July the Commune Counsel admitted that the schools were nearly empty as the result of teacher disagreements and desertions. First Renaux, and then Quillet, quit their posts. And the former Director sank more deeply into his fatal error. On the 10th of September 1793, with a change in city government, he was elected a delegate and took his seat with the Jacobins alongside Mayor Le Tual. At about the same time, he married a Mlle Visquesnay; in the Year II he became the father of a daughter, Algae. On the 26th Germinal the family took up quarters in the College of Bayeux, since the former Brothers' school had become a military barracks. A few days earlier Dominique Mamel had "deposited in the (city) offices" fourteen merit-crosses decorated with "outlawed insignia", such as the *fleurs-de-lys.* His wife and himself, with the cooperation of Citizens Duvivier and Delongues, ran a school and on the 24th Germinal in the Year III were awarded a certificate for patriotism conferred upon married couples. In the course of the following Fructidor they were planning to open a residence school.[130] The apostate's career henceforth gave evidence of becoming easier and more peaceful. But in a short while, his conscience, more troublesome than ever, would disturb the peace that the world had given him.

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Too much hatred and too much blood covered Brittany for the Brothers to be able, anywhere from St. Malo to Nantes, to arrange for a refuge for themselves. In this western region, for seven years torn by civil war, conspiracy, insurgency and atrocious reprisals by armed parties, some quiet could be found only by moving up toward the capital of the Maine-and-Loire, Angers where some Brothers attempted to maintain the residence school at the Rossignolerie. On the 27th of October 1792 they announced that the institution would admit residence pupils as in the past and under the same conditions. In the month of Germinal in the Year II, they were forced to limit their activities: children were accepted only as day-pupils and the school seemed to have returned to the category of a public primary school. The former Brothers were still ten in number in Frimaire of the following year. But then, a separation took place: Citizens Matthew and Payen were left alone in the institution where they watched over the insane and where about a dozen residence pupils lived, while attending school with the children in the city. Brother Agathon's major accomplishment disappeared completely in 1803 to make room, three years later, for an Imperial secondary school.

However, there were some fine teachers who set about to save the essentials: Charles Antoinellemot (Brother Romain) and A. Godefroy (Brother Symphorian) who had left the dilapidated buildings in 1795, taught school and admitted residence pupils on Rue Electors. Success was almost instant. The founders had taken up quarters in Rue Figuier, when they were surprised by the events of September 1797. Rather than take the "oath of Fructidor", they resumed their travels after the 18th Brumaire.[131]

A similar enterprise occurred at La Fleche, where former Brothers (perhaps from

[129]Municipal Archives, Bayeux, 1 D-3, 16-17, Counsel decisions from the 28th of October to the 1st of December 1791.

[130]Notes supplied by Canon Le Male, following the Municipal Archives of Bayeux.

[131]Archives, Maine-et-Loire, L 929-943. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 658. B. Bois, La Vie scolaire et les productions intellectuelles en Anjou pendant la Revolution; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 34.

Angers) taught nearly 200 children.[132]

We would like to be better informed concerning the attempt planned for Tours by JeaBaptist Patin and Jean Jacques Jégardin, Brothers Lysimachus and François Borgia. Were they able "to open a store", to use Brother Agathon's cautious metaphor when he wrote to Brother Vivien about the project? Here, again, the coup by Larevelliere and Barras must have destroyed a magnificent plan. At the time of the administrative inquiry in 1805 (the results of which we shall describe) the Prefect for the Indre-and-Loire assured the Director of Public Education, Fourcroy, that he "knew of no school maintained by the Brothers in this Department", and that he had never heard tell of a school of that nature.[133]

On the other hand, in the center of France there were three Christian Brothers whose work did not go unnoticed. On the 12th of October 1792 "Jean Marie Parmentier, a native of Paris, and a former Christian Brother[134] residing in Bourges for thirteen years", told the mayor and the magistrates of that city that he intended to found a school to which he hoped they would grant their protection, provided that he pay for a licence...Writer and arithmetician by profession, he wished to dedicate his talents to the needs of his...fellow-citizens"[135]In the months of Nivose and Ventose in the Year III, the Counsel of public education in Cher admitted to the list of schoolteachers Jean Parmentier, Jacques Lepouce and Jean Baptist Delvainquier, the last of whom was Brother Lucain, the prisoner who, in 1794, wanted to return to Belgium, if he were not allowed to live in the French Republic. His native land had since been conquered by Jourdan's troops. He was adopted by Berry, a region he never thereafter left. James Lepouce (Brother Austregesile) -- born on the 24th of July 1767 in Chateau-les-Bourges, and entered St. Yon on the 19th of March 1783 -- had asked the city officials in Meaux for a passport to return to his native Department. In Bourges he dwelt in the neighborhood called "Château-lès-Bourges" and he married Madeleine Bernard, but, according to his friends, he did not believe that he had been dispensed from the vow of chastity. He taught young Berryites for an entire half-century. The former Brother Parmentier, fifty-two years of age and residing in the "Fraternity section", married Therese Jarry, who was in her forties: she also taught class, with the approval of the local authorities.[136].

In Allier, devastated by terrorism (with the exception of a former Brother Osee -- Jean Baptist Barillot, who left the Institute in May 1791, a printer's assistant while he awaited ordination to the priesthood after the Concordat[137] there was only the former associate of Brothers Roger and Leon, Jean Clement Proisy (Brother Bertauld).[138] He had made his novitiate in Lorraine and his final vows dated from 1778. But in June 1793 he was a tutor in the family of Citizen Regnier des Epigeards in Moulins. Immediately threatened by the deportation laws, he was overcome by fear: to believe the petition he addressed to the city

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[132]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 667, according to the Annuaire de l'Instruction publique de l'an II.

[133]National Archives, F-17 1364.

[134]In Religion, Brother Jacques.

[135]Municipal Archives, Bourges, Series L. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 4.

[136]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 4. St. Yon Register, pg. 188. J. B. Delvainquier died on the 17th of June 1823 (Register for St. Pierre's parish) and Jacques Lepouce died on the 22n of November 1843. (Cathedral register

[137]Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pg. 95.

[138]Not the same as the "Proisy" mentioned above on page 402.

administration, he had only been "temporarily" with the Christian Brothers; he made no vows; he left the Congregation in February 1792; he took the oath along with the entire Commune of St. Germain-des-Fosses; and he even volunteered to go off and fight the Vendéens. Setting aside the oath, which, made on the 15th of November 1792, was not the "Civil Constitution" oath, the betrayal remains. Having followed Peter's bad example and so having escaped the convict ships, John Clement Proisy, as old age approached, also imitated the Apostle's repentance.[139]

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We turn now to the provinces in the South from which would spring up the flame destined to rekindle in the hearts of the Brothers, the sons of De La Salle, not only the desire for a Christian apostolate, but for a Religious vocation. The spark lay hid under the ashes of a very humble hearth : the former Sub- director of the residence school in Marseille, Brother François de Jésus, after a career of fifty years in the Institute, retired to Lyons; to the pension granted him by the Department of the Drome, he added the salary from a small job at a "stagecoach works". This man, who was in his seventies, had, in the course of the century, directed successively schools in Condrieu, Montauban, Ales, Lunéville, Puy, Aix-en-Provence and Nimes, and did not think that he had done enough in the service of God; he awaited the hour when he might open a school, and, in 1799, he was about to hear that hour strike.[140]

Not so far away, his fellow-native of the Dauphine and elder by four years, Brother Evarist (Alexandre Boyer), born in Grenoble on the 12th of December 1724, former Director of Mirepoix and Charlemagne residence schools, never interrupted his teaching career. When his associates, Brothers Dominator, Julien of Mary and Celestine, left their posts, he replaced them with lay teachers. On the 20th of March 1794, the Commune of Valence, satisfied with the "attention" the schoolteachers lavished on the children of the common people, granted each of them 330 livres "to be paid" by the city's "wealthiest taxpayers". The salaries would then be maintained by voting "extra money" that would be charged against the taxrolls. In the eyes of the people of Valence, Alexander Boyer continued to be their good and venerable "Evarist" in secular dress. In 1795 the Department administrators reduced taxes. The following year the city government entrusted the inspection of all the primary schools subject to its jurisdiction to Evarist.[141]

The Bollene school in Vaucluse was maintained until the 29th of April 1794, with Brothers Bernard of Mary (Jean Amedee Grimond) and Pancratius (Antoine Silmain). The Commune Counsel in November 1792 hoped that "with their zeal and patriotism, (the

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[139] Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pg. 96, according to the Register of the General Council of Allier, June 15, 1793. Returned to the Institute in 1808, Brother Bertauld died on April 16, 1819, at Lisieux, aged sixty-eight years. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pg. 152.)

[140] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 699. Circular by the Superior-general *Centenaire de la restauration de l'Institut*, 15th of April, 1902. Another Christian Brother, and not the least either, seems to have preceded Brother François of Jesus as a schoolteacher in Lyons. The educational jury's inquiry on the 11th of May 1798 contains the following piece of important information: Thevenin, former Christian Brother, 84 Rue St. George , he stated that up to now he has educated his pupils in the principles of the "ancien regime", while urging them, nevertheless, to be subject to established authority; but that he intended to leave teaching at the end of this month for reasons of health. A personnel list, dated the 6th of November 1797, mentions this teacher as being sixty-nine years old. There is the possibility that we are dealing here with one of Brother Agathon's Assistants, Bartholomew Thevenin, Brother Sylvester, born in Grenoble in 1729. For the rest, it was indeed "Barthélemy Thevenin" to whom the Commune Counsel in Lyons granted a certificate of patriotism on the 28th Fructidor in the Year II. (Motherhouse Archives, notes by Brothers Odobert, Joseph and Maurice) We shall see that Brother Sylvester died toward the end of 1800 or the beginning of 1801.

[141] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 317-19. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 668-72.

teachers) would comply with the regulations", observed up to then, and that over and above they would not fail to teach their pupils the Rights of Man. But this hope faded in the face of the Jacobin fury. Nevertheless, one Religious from Bollene found shelter in his native region: he was Joseph Ducord (Brother Cherubin of Jesus, former Director of Castres). He lived quietly, without drawing attention to himself. In spite of the fact that he was nearing sixty, a fruitful task was being reserved for him in the period of the reconstruction.[142]

The Institute could not look forward to the return of Brother Benezet's nephew, Georges Isnard, who took the oath and who, in Toulon, followed paths similar to those of Dominique Mamel, his melancholy rival, in Bayeux. The elementary education of youngsters in Toulon continued to devolve upon the former Brother Stanislaus Koska, who dispensed the same services well into the period of the Empire. And without appearing to alter his behavior, he proclaimed that he was prepared in 1806 to supply the local authorities with the information they were seeking concerning his former Religious Family.[143].

On the 21st Thermidor in the Year V, Marseille witnessed the restoration of its celebrated residence school by Antoine Radier (Brother Patrick) whose character and activities everywhere inspired admiration. Born in Vendargues, in the diocese of Montpel−lier on the 25th of November 1760, Antony, son of Jean Radier and Marguerite Pages, was a pupil of the Brothers in the capital of Lower-Languedoc. He was a member of the Marian Congregation, which concentrated its efforts on the most pious children; and, before the end of his seventeenth year, he entered the novitiate in Avignon. With the name of Brother Patrick, he left the novitiate to teach in Uzès; and then, successively, he became Sub-director of novices in the City of the Popes, teacher in Belley, Grenoble and Cahors. In the latter city he made his final vows on the 8th of October 1786. A teacher in Marseille from the 17th of October 1788 until the school was confiscated, he returned to Montpellier in August of 1791 to assist his father, who was dying. On the 13th of May 1792 he was thrown into prison, but the circumstances of his imprisonment and its duration are not known. He may have been imprisoned several times between 1792 and 1794; he was only finally set at liberty after the 9th Thermidor.

He needed three years before he was in a position to offer successful competition to Citizen Guinot in a building annex constructed many years before on Boulevard Corderie by Brother Benezet. He was joined in this work by his former confreres, Matthew Faure (Brother Thomas) and Jean Renaud (Brother Candide of Jesus).

Intelligent, quite learned and a master of the methods of Lasallian pedagogy, Radier attracted his predecessors' clientele to his school.[144] The zeal and faith of his youth remained intact. Those who knew him praised "his patriarchal faith and his affectionate piety". They also spoke of his "good character" and of "that simplicity of soul that he had so skillfully combined with an acuteness of intellect and the scope of his learning". A marriage that joined him to a devoutly Christian partner was, however, the only insurmountable obstacle that had long prevented him from resuming his place in the Brothers' Institute. They thought of him almost as one of their own, and, not satisfied to be friendly with him, they invited him to share their annual "Retreats". "Finally", (the expression found its way into the letters addressed to him), he was allowed to reenter the novitiate in Avignon on the 25th of November 1834, at the age of seventy-four years; he had turned his residence school over to

[142] Idem., pp. 173-78.

[143] Idem., pg. 204

[144] "Twelve, or at the most fifteen, months are all I need to enable pupils from foreign countries to write French quite correctly," he wrote later on to the founder of the residence school in Passy, Brother Teoticus. (Letter quoted by Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 660.)

M. Bousquet in 1808. Once again he took triennial and then final vows. He died on the 5th of February 1847, "the First Friday of the month", according to his wish. In concluding his curriculum vitae, Brother Firmilian notes that his was a "very painful but precious career".[145] The old man, who had known Brother Sixtus, an immediate disciple of De La Salle,[146]In virtue of this relationship, he was called upon to testify before the ecclesiastical court in Paris during its fact-finding inquiry for De La Salle's "Cause"and was the last survivor of the revolutionary period, handed on memories of the Institute's beginnings to the Brothers of modern times. The entire history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools seems summed up in his person.

For this reason the reader will pardon us for having so far encroached upon our chronology. It would have been regrettable not to have placed before the reader immediately a life in which is so exactly reflected the image of a time which is so full of surprises, and not to have paused leisurely in the presence of a man of the highest rank and in every way worthy of our respectful attention, because he was ever the same in his various apotheoses.

We have already glanced at one of his very modest, although less faithful, confreres, Brother Francis Regis, a teacher who took the oath at Pont-St. Esprit.[147]

And we know that in another city of the Gard, in Alès, Religious schoolteachers (who hadn't taken the oath) were still teaching classes in 1793. The city government admitted on the 9th of March that it had not been "able to obtain competent teachers to replace them". Children "deprived of education" gathered together "in the river bed" (the River Gardon was frequently dry), "opposite the new town, to engage is slingshot wars". As a consequence the magistrates thought it was simpler, at least temporarily, to reinstate the former Brothers in their posts. They could be dismissed again when they were no longer needed. And, with partisan passion playing a part, this is precisely what happened on the 4th of October.[148]This region of the Rhone, where the Revolution pressed forward, hesitated, resumed and swirled with the violence and capriciousness of a torrent, was strewn, so to speak, with the debris of schools to which clung a few former Brothers from Avignon. In Bourg-St. Andeol, in the Arceche, there was Barthélemy Pons (Brother Castor) whose stayed on until his death in 1818; at Annonay, there was Jean Baptist Faure (Brother Servulus), recently imprisoned in the neighboring Department, who settled on the banks of the Cance while, with a holy impatience, he waited to rally his Institute; at Thueyts, there was his companion in captivity, Étienne Borie (Brother Paul of Jesus) who, presently, would be arrested a second time, because he was confused with a priest (who happened to have the same name as his own), and, by a hair's breath, escaped deportation to the Ile of Re.[149]

The Upper Loire, once merciless to Brothers Servulus and Paul of Jesus, were, on the contrary, quite friendly to Brother Laurus, the cellarer from Marseille, who, at Chaturange, would teach Matthew Bransiet,[150] and for Brother Corentine of Mary (Jean Pierre Martel) who, born in the diocese of Puy, was, at twenty years of age on the 13th of April 1760, a

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[145]The curriculum, written in longhand by Brother Patrick, was recopied, with corrected dates and final additions, by Brother Firmilian. (Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4). We have also consulted Relations mortuaires, Vol. II, pg. 13, and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I, pg. 271 and Vol. II, pg. 188.

[146]See above, pg. 122.

[147]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 214-5.

[148]Idem., passim. Brother Paul of Jesus' second arrest occurred on the 23rd of August 1798. He wasn't finally released until the 9th of January 1800.

[149]See above, pg. 160,

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novice in Avignon. Professed on the 2nd of October 1768, it was he (unless we are mistaken) whom we met once again at Carcassonne with Brother Bernardine in 1791. After the diaspora, he returned to his own Department and settled in Vergezac. In May 1793 he is thought to have suffered a brief detention in the local prison. But everything turned out well and the 3rd Messidor in the Year V, John Peter Martel, having "submitted to the civil laws of the Republic", was assigned an "ecclesiastical pension" of 486 livres, 19 sols and 2 deniers, in accordance with the Law of the 18th of August 1792. Living on very little, he determined to supply tuition-free instruction to the sons of his fellow-citizens. However, he was forced to accept "alms-in-kind"; and he also collected the small coins that the pupils slipped into a poor-box that stood at the school's entrance and that bore the inscription: "For the poor schoolteacher". Being alone did not prevent him from following the letter of his Institute's daily regulation: the inhabitants of Vergezac heard the small bell which not only announced the beginning of the school day, but also the hours that the recluse devoted to religious exercises. Brother Corentine was quietly readying himself to return to the Brothers' Community.[151]

Although Vergezac had for a long time exercised a hold on him, others (upon whom the bonds of marriage did not weigh, as they had on Brother Patrick) were much slower to return. One of these was Jean Rouzaud (Brother Florentine of Jesus). In Cantal he had taken advantage of the patronage of Alexis Joseph Delsons, the future general of the Republic and the future Baron under the Empire. Snatched from the clutches of the Jacobins, he received board and room under Delsons' roof, and, as tutor of the son while the father fought in Italy and Egypt, he wrote with a calligrapher's hand the 894 pages of his treatise on arithmetic for his pupil.[152]. Once this tutorial task was completed, he left Aurillac for the city of his birth, Carcassonne.[153]

On the borders of the Massif Central, Lozere remained a bastian of Catholicism. Sequestered priests, notes Pierre La Gorce, were house in Mende's most beautiful house, from where they continued to exercise their influence.[154]

Hence, Brother Edward of Mary (Pierre Rocher) and his confrere (called "Hermit") were not reluctant to teach school in the city. It was not until 1796, after they had refused to conduct their pupils to a memorial celebration on the 10th of August, that they were suspended from their duties as public schoolteachers. They made use of the freedom to teach by gathering together a small group of the faithful in their own home. But Directorial politics penetrated even into this region. On the 11th Ventose in the Year VI the commissioners Tarteron and Beaujean caught children reading a book written by De La Salle: *The Duties of a Christian* and "The Short Psalmody, containing the Church's Office for use in Christian Schools". Six days later the local authorities ordered the school closed.

Pierre Rocher, more or less clandestinely, proceeded to reopen the school. During the following autumn, on the 24th Vendemiaire in the Year III, a municipal official showed up, escorted by a squad of soldiers. Once again copies of *The Duties of a Christian* and the Psalter were found and, additionally, "*Ecclesiastical Conferences of the Diocese of Angers*", along with copies of the diocesan catechism of Mende! The schoolteacher was hailed before the jury for public instruction, where he asserted that his pupils read the Rights of Man and

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[151]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p-1, quote from the decisions of the City of Puy, meeting for the 3rd Messidor in the Year V. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennesfor January 1912, pp. 41-2. See also Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 662, and Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 134.

[152]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 531

[153]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 298 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1922, pp. 264-6.

[154]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. III, pp. 429-30.

the Constitution of the Year III assiduously. And he said that he used the other books because "the morality they taught was pure": furthermore, the children, in his view, did not grasp their philosophical implications, and he thought of them as nothing more than excellent text for the practice of reading. There was little doubt but what the defense experienced some embarrassment. And, besides, there had been the breech of the order which closed the school. Obviously, replied Rocher, but he was only trying to be helpful to fathers of families.

The whole matter seemed to warrant a report to the Minister of Justice. The offices in Paris decided that the case belonged to the jurisdiction of the justice of the peace. And so, the former Brother Edward of Mary was condemned to pay a fine to the value of two days' pay.[155]

But he was a man who was not easily discouraged. A few years later we shall meet with him once again among the best of Brother Bernardine's colleagues in Toulouse.

It was a fate that matched his dedication. Pierre Blanc,[156]whom Brother Edward would soon join, was a leader with whom one associated enthusiastically. Having left Carcassonnne at an unknown date, he did not immediately go to Toulouse, but to Castres, where his talents as an educator had been earlier deployed. His arrival on the banks of the Tarn went back to the year 1794. After the 9th Thermidor he reopened a zealous apostolate. Assembling children in a sanctuary devoid of priests (the church of Notre Dame), he taught them Christian Doctrine. Even Catholic parents gathered about the Brother who, since the clergy did not dare show themselves in broad daylight, supplied, so far as he could, for the suspended divine worship. Brother Bernardine presided at daily morning and evening prayer. On Sundays he conducted services, tried his hand at homilies on the Gospel or on the feasts prescribed in the Roman calender; he organized a choir for the singing of hymns and the Magnificat. He also knew how to have recourse, more or less secretly, to priests; and the sick, whom he visited, did not die without "Viaticum" or "Extreme Unction".

Finally, on the 15th of January 1797 "freedom of conscience" appeared to have been realized; and Castres was informed of the reopening of the old school called the "Jeu de Paume". People thought that the good old days of Bishop Barral had returned. Hundreds of pupils were being taught by Pierre Blanc and his three colleagues. And soon a residence school enabled the enterprising Director to expand his influence and his resources. It was the same program, the same education and the same discipline as in the past. The soldiers at the garrison marvelled at the order and the behavior of the pupils, led back to their homes by a young monitor; and handful of pennies flung out on the Agout Bridge failed to break their ranks!

The affection of the people of Castres had been quite won over by the distinguished teacher. The faith had remained alive in the city that had been presided over, during Louis XV's last years, by a wise and charitable bishop, and where Jacobinism had encountered many adversaries. There the "tyranny of Fructidor" would be all the more grievously felt: Castres lost its title as the capital of the Department of Albi.

It might be thought that the Christian school had become indispensable. By a decision of the 14th Ventose in the Year VII (March 5th, 1798) the new city administration, having noticed the absence of teachers Blanc, Durand and Marcel and their pupils from the Feast of Youth, and believing that it was its duty "to use whatever means necessary ...to root out from the upcoming generation the odious empire of prejudice under which servile minds still attempted to curb the thrust toward freedom, proclaimed the immediate closing of the private

[155]Father J.B. Delon, *La Revolution en Lozere.*

[156]This was Brother Bernardine' civilian name.

school maintained by these citizens.[157]

These were the last gasps of a sectarianism whose strength had been spent, whose venom had lost its malignity, and which, in a short while, France would kick aside like some loathsome detritus.

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The Revolution's victories and conquests involved cruel consequences for Catholicism in countries that had been overrun. St. John Baptist de La Salle's followers who sought refuge outside their native land were not the last to experience the reaction to these military triumphs, quite glorious of course for French arms, but immediately exploited to the advantage of the doctrines, methods and passions of those awful times.

We have discussed how the Brothers in Rome suffered, as did the Sovereign Pontiff. The events in Belgium were no less painful and ill-starred for those of their confreres who, at first, better received than Brother Amaranthe in Brussels, found themselves hounded when, after Jemmapes and again after Fleurus, the Republic had set foot in the Austrian Low-Countries.

A tiny city in the Belgian Ardenne, St. Hubert, had invited Christian Brothers from Mareville. The initial conversations -- as we have already reported[158]- went back rather far in the Institute's history. In 1774 one of the pastors of St. Hubert had asked Brother Florence for two Brothers. And then, for the want of an exact agreement or for the want of personnel, eighteen years passed by without anything happening. The "Vicar-churchwarden" of the parish continued to teach school to the poor children. However, prominent people in the parish, led by the abbot of the local monastery, were concerned to insure better instruction for their people. One of their fellow-citizens, a M. Buck who was living in Nancy, took it upon himself to sound out Brother Jean of Mary at a time when the Superior of the Lorraine institution was maintaining his Community with great difficulty in the turmoil of 1792.[159]It is quite likely that Brothers Julien (J.L. Joly) and Michael (John Nicholas Bourgeois) left for Belgium prior to the law which suppressed the Institute. Upon asking for pensions for his colleagues, the Brother Director of Maréville included on his list the names of Brothers sent "of late" to St. Hubert.[160]

Jean Louis Joly (Brother Julien) and François Joly (Brother Agapet) who must have joined the former very early on, were both sons of a worthy man in Landousy-la-Ville, in the Diocese of Laon, who himself had entered the Brothers of the Christian Schools in his old age and died in the Institute:[161]the sons had inspired the father's late vocation. Jean Louis belonged to the Community of St. Yon in 1765, and François, the elder of the two, joined his younger brother there in 1770.[162] They were both excellent teachers: Brother Julien directed the novices of the "eastern province". The Belgians, as a result, were being offered a select pair, well qualified to dissipate the mistrust of the authorities in Brussels. The Commune

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[157]Brother Lemandus, op.cit., pp. 131-35. Father Salabert, Histoire des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de Castres. Lu−card, Vol. II p. 663-5.

[158]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 522. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 124.

[159]Felix Hutin, L'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretienne en Belgique, Namur, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 34-5.

[160]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 136. Brother Lucard's assertion, then, concerning the imprisonment of the brothers Joly in the "Conciergerie" appears to be without foundation.

[161]Francis Joy, the father, died at St. Yon in 1774. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for March 1907, pg. 109.

[162]St. Yon Register.

assumed the cost of furnishing the school on Rue St. Giles, known later on as a "College".[163] The salaries were guaranteed by the abbey, by the charity bureau and by a foundation that traced its origin to the generosity of St. Hubert's Father Antoine.

In November of 1792 the first French invasion brought alarm to Belgium Luxembourg, without, however, affecting the Brothers and their patrons. After five months, Dumouriez's defeat at Neerwiden brought about the withdrawal of the conquering army. Peace returned to St. Hubert. But it was only a truce: the day after the battle of Fleurus (26th of June 1794) a revolutionary wave quickly overran the entire country. Of the eight administrative districts set up in Belgium by the commissioners of the National Convention, one of them had its headquarters in St. Hubert, until the occupation of the city of Luxembourg, which ultimately became the capital. On the 1st of October 1795 the former Austrian Low-Countries were "reunited" to the Republic.

Brothers Julien, Agapet and Michael fell under the thumb of the Jacobins. They were regarded as fugitives, which made them liable to execution. While in Brussels they were being subject to preventive detention, in Nancy Buck, alerted by his fellow-citizens, took action with the city government with the view of obtaining an acquittal. Actually, the people in Nancy would state that the brothers Joly and their colleague had left France equipped with regular passports in reply to the invitation of distinguished citizens in the small city in the Ardenne. This quite successful overture saved the lives of three Brothers.[164]

But upon returning to their school, the Brothers found themselves in a most embarrassing situation. The abbey, that had aided them, was a near-desert; and there was no need to expect any assistance from its new administration. In these woeful circumstances the only solution appeared to be the opening of a residence school. In 1796, in St. Hubert, a small number of pupils, besides elementary instruction, received lessons in history, geography and music[165] It was at this time that the Brother Superior-general was informed by Brother Vivien of the presence of "Julien" in the northwest "Cantons". The Joly brothers, as a consequence, were preserving their contacts with the teachers in the regions of Champagne and Laon. Their external "secularization" at least sheltered them from the harassment of the laws which were enforced in Belgium between 1796 and 1799. The abbey became the property of the banker Lecoulteulx Canteleu, following the Law of the 1st of September 1796. As heads of an educational institution, the Brothers were spared the fate of the monks. The residence school in St.Hubert, maintained in spite of wind and high tide, did not founder until 1818, under the weight of financial difficulties.[166]

The heaviest blow and the strangest adventure was the lot of Brother Jonas, a former teacher in Langres and former Director in Soissons. He had, as much as the by the vicissitudes of his life as by a kind of obstinacy and rather prolonged resistance to God's will, abundantly fulfilled the promise of his biblically inspired name.

Jean Baptist Mariez was nearing fifty when he left for the region of Liege. He had

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[163]Hutin, op.cit., pp. 35-6. The former Brothers' house was demolished in 1869. The artist Redoute's monument arose in its place.

[164]Hutin, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 39-40.

[165].Hutin, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 40-2. Pupils from poor families seem to have continued to take advantage of tuition-free education. Resident pupils formed only a small group; at most, thirty-five children, each of whom paid 400 francs room-and-board annually. (Ibid., pg. 55)

[166]A Christian Brother, Brother Alexis (Nicholas Colombeau-Vaillant) was appointed, according to Ernest Mathieu (Histoire de l'Enseignement primaire en Hainaut) on the 13th Thermidor in the Year V as the elementary school teacher in Tournai. His school was located in the former Campeux Con−vent. In 1806 he returned to private education. (Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 662 and Hutin, Vol. I, pp. 497-8.) In the interval he, as well as his confreres Gondebert and Theonas, are referred to by Brother Gerbaud.

been born in Froideconche, near Luxeuil, in Franche-Comte on the 30th of August 1744, of Richard Mairez and Anne Marguerite Brady.[167] Orphaned at a very young age, he entered the Institute and became known as Brother Jonas on the 18th of October 1763. "By the time of the Revolution", he wrote, "I had been a Superior in various schools for fifteen years." "On the 1st of April 1791, I was turned out of (the one) I had just built" in Soissons.

Toward the end of that year I had been selected by... Brother Agathon...who had pledged me to go into the Liège region of Belgium to establish schools, so as to bring our organization into that part of the world...Thus, the mission entrusted to Brother Jonas in the beginning did not differ from the pioneer role that had fallen to Brother Amaranthe's lot: it was a question of "preserving" the Institute for "better days" in France. J.B. Mairez insists that, "ever attached to his holy vocation and docile to the will of his Superior", he would have "had the pleasure of fulfilling (Brother Agathon's) expectations...beyond his hopes...if the French army had not penetrated" into the peaceful regions of the Meuse and the Ourthe.[168]In reality, his labors, starting in August of 1792, tended to nothing but to preserve his own vocation, or, under the most favorable interpretation, to inspire the Belgians with the desire of restoring on their own soil the Institute that had been destroyed by their neighbors.

He acquitted himself of this task with a conscientiousness and a power that must be respected. The certificate awarded him on the 2nd of Messidor in the Year VI by the city government of Verviers attests that he dwelt in that city beginning in "Nivose in the Year I", i.e., December 1792-January 1793.[169] The Carmelite Fathers took him in, as well as his confrere Laurence. Almost immediately, the arrival of the Republican troops forced the two Brothers to flee across the Rhine.[170] The reaction following Neerwinden brought the two refugees back to Verviers. On the 15th of April 1793 J. B. Mairez sought assistance from the Commune Counsel, which was granted.

To pick up the thread of events we must move on to the 12th Thermidor in the Year III (the 30th of July 1795) -- the date of a petition directed to the representative of the French government by Henri Joseph Dauchapt, the pastor of Verviers, and several citizens of the locality that was being annexed: "Maires (sic), former Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools...in Soissons, and Laurence, born in the Duchy of Luxembourg, his confrere, having both left France before 1793, because of the civil oath, have been refugees in this city, where they have dedicated themselves to the education of youth; their morals, behavior and talents...have assured them the consideration and gratitude of all fair minds. Once again, they withdrew into Germany after victories by the Republican army. By means of petitioners, they asked "the favor of being allowed to return" to Verviers in order to resume their duties as teachers. The city government gave its unqualified approval to their

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[167]Departmental Archives, Haute-Saone, parochial Registers of Holy Redeemer (copy in the Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 1, where there exists copies of all the documents referred to below.) It was, indeed, in the church of the Holy Redeemer, upon which Froideconche depended, that John Baptist was baptized. Richard Mairez (who died in 1749) and Anne Brady (died in 1760) were buried in this church.

[168]National Archives f-17 12,453, Brother Jonas' letter to the Prefect of Haute-Marne, May 29th 1809. (Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1938, pg. 125)

[169].Verviers Archives, Register 24, pg. 546. As a result, we do not know all the stages of Brother Jonas' itinerary in 1792. His residence in Froideconche during October 1791 is suggest-ed by certificate dated the 20th of that month (a copy of which was made on the 19th Floreal in the Year V. Verviers Archives, Register no. 22, pg. 269.)

[170]Verviers Archives, F 38, no. 200.

request.[171][172]

With the approval of the Republic, Brother Jonas was then restored to his job. For three years, as an exemplary teacher, he instructed the children of his adopted city.[173] On the 13th Nivose in the Year IV he received from the city government of Verviers the first of several highly complimentary certific−ate.[174] However, his Belgian friends were unable, unfortunately, to protect him against another outburst of persecution. On the 29th Brumaire in the Year VII, he was arrested: he was believed to be a dissident priest.[175]The police of the Directory had contrived the report; Mairez, brought first to a prison in Liege, was removed from there on the 11th Nivose, in order to make his defense in his native Department, the Upper Saone.

"I arrived in Vesuol", he tells us, "after forty-eight hours of extreme cold, fatigue and distress. Several times, I nearly died". The letter containing these lines was addressed by the prisoner on the 12th of August of 1799 to Citizen Quirot, commissioner with the central administration of Doubs.[176] Brother Jonas, indeed was about to be arraigned, after numerous vicissi−tudes, before the military tribunal in Besancon. And, on the 25th Floreal in the Year III (the 14th of May 1799) his judges handed down the following decision, in which the desire to save the life of the accused is transparent:

WHEREAS much testimony proves that the accused has pursued behavior as irreproachable as to morality as it has been exempt from unpatriotic activity, and that by having been placed under the supervision of the authorities in the Commune of Verviers he might have considered himself exempt from the Laws of the 19th Fructidor in the Year V and of the 25th Brumaire in the Year III; and

1. WHEREAS it is for the Directory to judge whether the administrators in the Department of Ourthe have or have not made a legitimate use of their authority, and in view of paragraph #2 of the letter of the Minister of the General Police to the central administrators, dated the 18th Brumaire in the Year VII...

2. RESOLVED that J.B. Mairez be detained in the prison of this Commune (Besancon) while the Minister...examines the validity of the motives that decided the administration of the Department of the Ourthe to place the said Mairez under surveillance and declares how far these motives speak in his favor.[177] Thus, a man, of whose innocence there could be no doubt, was kept in prison. It is understandable that on several occasions he appealed for justice. The day following the decision of the 25th Floreal, he told Quirot's predecessor about his arbitrary arrest and his wretched exodus on foot from Liège to Vesoul; and he also sought that his name be stricken from the list of refugees and that he be allowed to live with his family in Froideconche.[178] His letter in Thermidor repeated his complaints: Besancon was his

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[172]Ibid.

[173]We wonder where Brother Lucard could have gotten the information that J.B. Mairez was "Secretary-general of the Prefecture"(??) and the "elementary schoolteacher at Holy Redeemer in Luxeuil in 1797". (Annales, Vol. II, pg. 650)

[174]Verviers Archives, Register 20, pg. 151.

[175]Departmental Archives, Doubs, S1. no. 276, Brother Jonas' letter to Citizen Rambout (written between May and August 1799).

[176]Departmental Archives, Doubs, L, 264.

[177]Departmental Archives, Haute-Saone, L 12, no. 10.

[178]Letter referred to, Archives, Doubs, S1, no. 276.

"twenty-seventh prison"; "the severity of the cold, the dampness and the foul air of the cells had given him the scurvy." His legs were swollen and his teeth had fallen out. Would he be left to die without pity?

He was to experience seven months more of suffering. Even the downfall of the Directory did not bring it to an end. It wasn't until the 25th Ventose in the Year VIII (the 15th of March 1800) that Fouche condescended to undertake on Brother Jonas' behalf one of those acts of clemency that was part of his political game since the coup d'etat in Brumaire.[179]

Illness and anxiety had made deep inroads upon the mind and body of the victim. Nevertheless, God had preserved Jean Baptist Mairez for great things. Another native of Comte (whose family name was the same as the name of the capital of his province) Claude François Besancon (Brother Casimir) did not get out of the Republican prison alive. He had also found hospitality in Belgium: we have already met him at Gyzeghem, after he had left the Community in St. Omer, on a passport issued to him at Dunkerque. The French invasion forced him to retreat as far as Geldersheim, in Bavaria, where he was certainly present from the 18th of January 1795 until the 18th of July 1796. He then fled before the armies of Jourdan and Moreau, who were about to throw themselves upon the Archduke Charles. He was offered shelter in Lichtenstein. But in January 1787, trusting in the optimistic reports reaching him from France, he decided to draw nearer gradually to his native soil. His passport was checked at Soleure on the 16th of February. And on the 20th of March, having finally crossed the frontier, he took up quarters in Branne, in the Doubs, his native Department. Everything went well, even after the 18th Fructidor: Claude François Besancon, five days later, thought he could ask that his rights as a citizen be restored.[180]He produced a flattering certificate which suggested a continuous residence in Montlebon, in the Canton of Morteau, from the 8th of October 1792 until the 13 Ventose in the Year V. This deception quickly backfired. The work of an informer perhaps, but probably a house-search, led to the discovery of his real identification papers: passports, testimonial from the pastor of Geldersheim and a letter from Gyzeghem addressed to his sister, Anne Besancon. The suspect was arrested at his residence on the 13th Thermidor in the Year VI (14th of July 1798). He died on the 19th of the same month in the prison of Baume-les-Dames.[181]

On the other side of the Jura mountains, Switzerland continued to be the land of exile for several Christian Brothers. Some of them came from Maréville to Estavayer in 1792.[182] Brother Contest seems also to have stayed on the shores of Lake Neuchatel before he went to Italy.[183] And Charles Turpin (Brother Dominique) we believe did not have to seek any other refuge until, once crossed off the list of emigrés, he returned to Dijon to become the deputy-bursar in the hospital of that city.[184]

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[179]Departmental Archives, Doubs, L, 264; Motherhouse Archives, File HA, p 1.

[180]Departmental Archives, Doubs, L, 272.

[181]Letter from the commissioner of the executive committee in the Canton of Clerval, 7th Vendemiaire in the Year VII. Certified copies of all documents used exist in the Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 1.

[182]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 136.

[183]Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pp. 329-30.

[184]Departmental Archives, Cote-d'Or, Police department, and the Archives of the Civilian Hospital of Dijon, Register E-1, 42, (Copies in the Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 4).

The institution in Estavayer protected its Religious personnel as long as Switzerland was able to enjoy complete independence. The situation remained the same until 1798, the eve of the French occupation and the birth of the "Helvetic Republic", created on orders from Paris. The Brothers, terrified, do not seem to have awaited the climactic events before abandoning the school.[185] One Brother, however, remained, accompanied by two laymen, Gardian and Chevressy: he was Jean Claude Lacroix (or Delacroix), who was called Brother Anatole in the Institute. The city government of Pontarlier, in September 1792,[186] had issued him the required passport to leave the country. Under cover of a "certificate of cancellation", obtained in June or July 1797, Jean Claude Lacroix returned to the Department of the Daub. The Law of the 19th Fructidor in the Year V forced him back into exile. On the 7th of the following Frimaire, he attempted unsuccessfully to penetrate the frontier once again: He had (he wrote to the administrators in the Daub) "worked for thirty years in the service of the nation, teaching the art of handwriting, arithmetic and reading to more than 3,000 citizens...At Brest, Marseille, in Calvados, the Dauphine, Languedoc and Bordeaux. He was never under any obligation to take the oath as a public functionary." And it was "by a false interpretation of the Law of the 26th of August 1792" that he was judged subject to deporta−tion. He asked that "his art and his talents" be put to use.

Referred by the Departmental administration to the Ministry of Police, he repeated his request on the 6th Floreal in the Year VII; if France refused to accept him, he would modify his request to the issuance of a passport to live in Switzerland. "The French Commandant of the region and of the Canton of Fribourg, who had favored him with his kindness, had counseled him to take this step." In this way Jean Claude Lacroix would enjoy the indispensable tranquility of being employed among "a friendly people who were related" to his own country.[187]

An affidavit, signed by Henry Endriou, "Deputy-Prefect of the city and District of Estavayer-le-Lac", was joined to Brother Anatole's petition: "Citizen Lacroix is not only estimable by his life, morals and patriotism (since 1792), but further I know him as a talented man, distinguished for the education of youth...For these reasons, and wishing to keep...this good and loyal citizen...with us, I have given him...the present document as conforming with the unqualified truth."[188]

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Thus, over the map of western Europe, on both sides of the "natural frontiers" touched and traversed by the Revolution, we have disclosed the laborious, and, for the most part, unexceptionable lives of some one hundred Brothers. The sap was once again running in the roots and the branches of a tree that at first glance seemed to have been dead. But when a ray of sunshine fell upon it, it budded once again. It was a hesitant vegetation that did not bring with it the promise of certain blossoming, nor of new and inevitable growth. Cold snaps would come, which would arrest the first shoots and destroy precocious expectations. But it was not a time for pessimism; for the light was already spreading and one could feel the heat of the approaching summer.

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[185] Motherhouse Archives, Estavayer File.

[186] See above, pg. 274.

[187] Departmental Archives, Doubs, L 274.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Confessors of the Faith

We must now pass through a rather grim plateau which yielded nothing but a harvest of sorrow and meek resignation. However, this step takes us gradually toward loftier heights. From now on we can draw near to the summit. Above the world's distress, in the full light of the supernatural, suffering for their faith (some of them dying the death of martyrs and entering into glory) are a huge number of men who calmly refused to conspire with error, and who, modest, simple and sincere, resisted the civil power only because their conscience demanded it. At this height, the clouds dissipate and the horizon stretches toward infinity; and even the earth, where we breathe with difficulty and meet with a thousand obstacles, takes on a new look and is disclosed as purified by the sun and by gentle, quasi-divine breezes. Patterns and harmonies emerge, contrasts merge and events are laid bare. History, seen from this perspective takes on its real meaning -- gesta Dei per sanctos. Everything happens for the well-being of upright and courageous souls who believe in the triumph of Providence and the efficacity of the Redemption.

Legalistic persecutors, jailers, executioners, tyrants of all sizes, monsters of the Terror and the agents of Hell exist and act only to fulfill the eternal plan and to help the elect fill up, in St. Paul's words, "what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ"; and, in spite of the weakness of flesh and blood, to conduct the predestined to the end along ways that lead toward the City that knows no night. Apart from the witness of the prophets and the cries of the oppressed, Israel is nothing; and neither is Rome anything without the Apostles' preaching and the Christians' tortures; France learned its vocation in the heroism of the Crusades, in its love for unfortunate people and for pagans and in its many holocausts. Without the Cross the world remains uncrown−ed, disoriented.

It seems to us, then, that in these moments we are reaching out toward the culminating point in the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The holiness of St. John Baptist de La Salle, his life totally dedicated to the service of God and to the salvation of children, prepared for, demanded and deserved the sacrifices of Brothers Solomon, Raphael and Monitor, and the four Brothers in Orleans, Champagne and Lorraine (whose bones rest in the Charent Islands) along with their companions and associates, who were men afflicted in prisons or along the roads to exile. We can imagine the Founder-Priest, surrounded by some hundred dis−ciples who, throughout the 18th century, guaranteed the survival of his inspired work; and right next to him stand "the Confessors of the Faith", whether or not they are beatified, or whether or not they died a martyr's death. And among the latter there is his successor, Brother Agathon. De La Salle, garbed in priestly vestments, makes his way through "the black robes" and "the white rabats"; and, like Noel Pinot (whom we have mentioned) he is about to utter the Introibo ad altare Dei before an altar that is shaped like a scaffold; he is about to celebrate, elsewhere than here below, a Mass, at which will assist all those of his sons "marked with the seal of the living God". And the unfolding mystery produces its immediate effects: an immense atonement takes place: countless persons materialized "from every nation and tribe, from every people and tongue": -- the newborn are baptized, promise fidelity to the Church, pronounce their Religious vows, continue the work interrupted in 1792, and hear and spread the doctrine of the truth. The Institute, the seed of which was saved both by obscure dedication and the concern of the Sovereign Pontiff, was reborn, first of all as a tiny and fragile seedling in the soil that had originally given it life, and then as a more hardy plant, and finally as a huge oak with branches that became a refuge for

"the birds of the air".

In this picture we get a glimpse both of the symbol and the synthesis of our story of the past and of our anticipation of things to come. With all perspectives clearly defined, we stand before the central panel where, with the angels, martyrs and virgins standing around Van Eyck's Mystical Lamb, all the victims are assembled.

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Leaving to one side the group whose thoughts, reactions and trials we have examined in a previous chapter, we direct our attention to Nicolas Le Clercq's physical appearances. We would give a great deal to be as familiar with his physical features as with his magnificent soul. But unfortunately we have no picture of Brother Solomon. His Norman forbearers,[1] certain dominant characteristics in the profiles of relatives who are known to us,[2] and allusions scattered throughout his letters.[3]His father, M. François Le Clercq was himself tall and of a commanding presence. In 1788, Brother Solomon wrote to his family that "he was well" and "had more to fear from overweight than from being too thin[4] enable us to picture a sturdy man, tall, and with an inclination to corpulence; the head and body were solidly built, while the nose, mouth and chin were energetic, and in the eyes, which were wide open under markedly arched eyebrows, there was seriousness, openness, and they were more serene than meditative. He was the son of the French middle-class that had breathed deeply of the salt air and was accustomed to crossings to England, to trading along the Channel and the Atlantic Coast, and even to the gravest dangers of "privateer wars",[5] as well as long journeys by coach and circuits on horseback.[6] The fourth son of M. François Le Clercq, Nicolas brought to the Religious life that intrepidity, that balance and vigorous endurance of the best instances of his ancestry. After several attacks,[7] his health finally triumphed over the exhaustion of the classroom, the discomforts of a sedentary life, and the physical strain that work and Religious exercises sometimes imposed upon De La Salle's disciples in the exact observance of their Rule. Physically and morally he was an athlete prepared for an austere combat.[8]The pious metaphors which attempt to convey a sense of Brother Solomon mean nothing more (need it be said?) than to represent the qualities of the martyr.

We have followed him during his stay on the Rue Neuve. These were days of great activity, of initiative, letter-writing and of delicate and skillful manoeuvres to throw light on the paths his Superior should take; it was the role of the officer of the watch, ever alert to sound and movement in the storm. Never did peace or profound joy abandon him. In the din of calamity as well as in the hours of silence at the rear of chapels in which schism had not yet penetrated, he found consolation in God.

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[1]The Le Clercq family, established for nearly two centuries in Boulogne-sur-Mer, originated in Treport. (See Chassagnon, pg. 2.)

[2]Especially in the sketch of Achilles Le Clercq. (Chassagnon, pg. 45.)

[3] "What do you see in me", wrote Brother Solomon to his sister, "a big brother...dressed in a huge, homespun robe". (Chassagnon, pg. 206.)

[4] (See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 618.)

[5]Chassagnon, pp. 17, 35-36, 40-43.

[6]See especially Vol. II of the present work, pp. 617-618 and above, pg. 37.

[7]See above, pg. 84 and Chassagnon, pp. 86, 88, 263.

[8]7

Nevertheless, he was well aware of the dangers that threatened him: he was the agent for a Congregation that was particularly suspect; he avoided fugitive contacts with dissident clergy in his parish, but, on the other hand, he visited "refractory" prelates, such as the Archbishop of Arles.[9] Personally, he had become one of the most ardent propagandists for Papal Briefs and "anticonstitutional" pamphlets which, without doubt, were "seditious" and circulated clandestinely. Such activities were his equivalent of the rejection of the oath, which was the position of the vast majority of the Brothers, and which he himself would have adopted against the magistrates if, as a schoolteacher or a professor, he could have been included in the category of "public functionary".

How could he possibly have been blind to his possible future? On the 29th of November 1791 the Legislative Assembly had entrusted the supervision of priests' activities to Departmental Directories, and, in case of difficulty, had set in motion the banishment of any cleric suspected of hostility to the Jacobin cause.[10] True, the king had not approved this decree that was tainted with the most obvious sort of tyranny. But in forty-two Departments the veto was ignored.[11] And one of Louis XVI's ministers, the pliable husband of Madame Roland, while he declared that arrests that drove dissidents from their homes and interned them in provincial capitals were unconstitutional, hypocritically he was satisfied to submit such cases to "the judgment of the Assembly",[12] which had no other thought than to insist upon its own decisions. On the 27th of May, 1792, it issued the second edict of the persecution: --the deportation of dissidents who had been denounced by their enemies.[13] Once again, Louis XVI threw up a roadblock, and not even the riot of June 20th broke his firm resolve.

But seven weeks later he was confused and crushed by the violence that broke out in the Faubourg St. Antoine and at the City Hall. The unleashed fury became irresistible. On the 11th of August the so-called Law of General Order handed over the investigation of "crimes against State security" to the city governments, encouraged citizens to reveal conspirators and suspects to the public authority, and gave municipal officials a judicial power over the evaluation of criminal acts and over the arrest of suspects.[14]

These were extraordinary weapons in the hands both of the Parisian Commune and the "precincts" of "citizen-activists", i.e., groups of electors organized in the capital and ready, under the command of ringleaders, to undertake the worst kind of violence against the liberty of individuals. The Luxembourg 'precinct' rushed to imprison about fifty priests in the Carmelite monastery. On the 14th of August, at 7 o'clock in the morning, it detained another victim. Someone "by the name of Jean Baptist Isteve" appeared before it. He was a "former Brother of the Christian Schools, 37 years old, who lived on Rue Princesse", with a M. Cornet. According to the St. Yon Register, his official vital statistics read as follows: Jean Baptist Estève was born in Auvillers, diocese of Amiens, on the 29th of August 1755; entered

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[9] See above, pg. 188.

[10] La Gorce op.cit., Vol. II, pg. 61.

[11] Idem., ibid., pg. 79.

[12] Idem., ibid., pg. 145.

[13] Idem., ibid., pp. 155-156 and pg. 178.

[14] Duvergier, op.cit., Vol. IV, pg. 348.

the novitiate in Normandy on the 5th of June 1782, where he received the name of Brother Abraham. We have seen that in 1791, along with his confreres, Perseverance and Principe, he was expelled from the school of the Madeleine.[15]His hiding place had been discovered; and "public opinion" denounced him for teaching "unconstitutional" principles to "young people in public" and for "inspiring them with an aversion for the religious services in their parishes", and, finally, for being a "non-juror". A search was immediately undertaken of M. Cornet's house, but no evidence was found. However, since the individual who was detained "was more than suspect", the court decided to confine Cornet also in the monastery on the Rue Vaugirard.[16]

This arrest only whetted the appetite of the people in the Luxembourg sector. It would be impossible to allow to escape the other Christian Brother who lived alone on the Rue Neuve, in the former residence of the teachers at St. Sulpice and whose looks, connections and, indeed, silence, betrayed him, even if the secret of his correspondence had not yet been revealed. Brother Solomon had been ready for several months to make the offering of his life:

"We await events, trust in Providence, pray, and, if God permits, suffer and think ourselves fortunate if we are found worthy to testify to the faith for Christ,"he wrote to Mlle Le Clercq on the 22nd of January 1792.[17]When his sister was roughed up and bullied one day as she emerged from the chapel at the hospital in Boulogne, he congratulated her, in a letter dated the 22nd of March, on the persecution she suffered for a good cause: "With you..., I thank Our Lord for the grace he granted you of enduring difficulties and insults for His name." Humbly, he wondered if he would be as "constant" as Rosalie "had been on that occasion". With all his brotherly heart, he pitied the courageous girl her ill-treatment; but he also "envied" her such a fate. "I do not deserve", he added, "to suffer for Christ. I am too slack in His service to win such a distinction".[18] He was merely refusing to sin through presumption. A genuine candidate for martyrdom is on his guard against his own weaknesses, and does not rashly go out to meet challenges; and he acknowledges, indeed exaggerates his deficiencies, not in order to hide, but in order to constrain God, as it were, to come to his assistance. But when the Master offers him the cup, he drinks it to the last drop.

On the 15th of August, 1792, as the prisons were beginning to fill, the solitary devoutly observed the Feast of the Assumption. He used some of the time to write to his elder sister, Mary Barbara, for three years the widow of Gabriel Ricart and the mother of eight children:

"I bid you good-day and a happy feast. I pray God that you spend it in good health, along with your dear family and in peace and tranquility, which is so difficult to find these days; in any case, may our perfect submission to the will of the Lord take the place of every other consolation. May we suffer whatever pleases Him and remain faithful to Him; the tribulations we experience here below are passing, the reward for which we hope is eternal. Let good reading, prayer and meditation do duty for the religious services which circumstances no longer allow us to share. I am rather anxious at not receiving any word from may sister (Rosalie); has something unpleasant happened to her? Write me about her as soon as you can. Tell her that if she has any anti-revolutionary writings, she should carefully hide them, since, seeing that searches have been made in Religious communities and priests' residences, they can also be undertaken in private homes. But don't let any of this upset you; unceasingly ask

[15]See above, pp. 139-141.

[16]Arrest report, published by Alexander Sorel in his book, Le Couvent des Carmes, Paris, 1864. Sorel was able to use the documents in the Archives of the Prefecture of Police, which were destroyed by fire in May 1871. (Chassagnon, pg. 440)

[17]Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 106.

[18]Ibid., no. 108; cf. Chassagnon, pp. 363-366

for God's help and encourage your children to practice prudence and a severe reserve in their speech; let them take care to apply themselves to reading and prayer; and you would do well daily to recite the prayers of the Holy Mass, if you are unable to attend Catholic Masses. Stay home at this time, and the more you can do so the better. Work in the presence of God, and watch over your thoughts, words and actions, so as to say nothing nor do anything that would offend God or your neighbor; to persevere in the condition in which we would prefer to appear before our Sovereign Judge -- such must be the life of a Christian who has faith. He must look upon earthly things, wealth, pleasure, and high living, as mere vanities, suited to divert men of flesh and blood, but powerless to satisfy a soul that knows that it is made to enjoy God and to enjoy Him eternally. Attempt to support these sentiments and dispositions in your children, whom I embrace fondly. If God wills, I shall join you so that we might weep together. But, no, what am I saying? Why weep, since the Gospel instructs us to rejoice when we have something to suffer in its name? Let us suffer, then, joyfully and gratefully the crosses and afflictions that God shall send us. As for myself, I am not worthy to suffer for Him, since I have still experienced nothing unpleasant,where there are so many confessors in trouble for Christ's sake.[19]

These lines concluded Brother Solomon's correspondence, the value of which it is impossible to exaggerate. It is the spiritual testament of a Brother whose generous sacrifice, continuous progress in the way of perfection and marvelous understanding of Christianity lead him to the summit. This holy man with the attentive glace and the pure heart had, nevertheless, rejected none of his human affections: for one last time there appeared that concern and "fondness" for his family that twenty-five years of Religious profession had only succeeded in strengthening and deep−ening. His anxiety was for his youngest sister: to Mlle Le Clercq, first of all, and then to his nephews he recommended prudence, which was thoroughly justified in the days after the 10th of August. But he rose above merely earthly considerations: what was essential in times of persecution, along with the closest union with the Catholic faith, was a total and joyful submission to the designs of Providence. In spite of his own self-deprecation, the humble Brother merited to suffer with his Savior. Soon, he would be joining those "Confessors of Christ" who, only a few steps from where he was living, were beginning a captivity similar to that of the early Christians.

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Toward the end of August there arrived in Boulogne a letter from "M. Le Coeur", Brother Amaranthe, whose activities a year earlier in Brussels we have followed.[20] We know that he was friendly with the members of the Le Clercq family. Settled in Paris after his unavailing sojourn in Belgium, in January 1792 he confided his disappointment to Brother Solomon. On the 1st of March he was once again at the Rue Neuve: "I was just speaking to Brother Amaranthe; he sends you his regards", Brother Solomon wrote that day in a letter meant for his younger sister. Nicolas François Le Coeur, returned to lay-life, had just found a situation as a "tutor" in "an institution for the deaf", with "room-and-board" and a salary of 300 livres. "He would prefer to teach", Solomon added, "and, if our business closes up, he would be able to open a residence school".[21] The work and the plans did not put him into conflict with his past: the former Director of the school in Boulogne, no longer a public functionary, could preserve his conscience against the "Constitutional" oath. His visits to the Brother Secretary-

[19] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 115 (original text). The letter is dated from "Paris", August 15. In its every sentence it bears evidence of having been written on August 15, 1792. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 435-438.

[20] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 115 (original text). The letter is dated from "Paris", August 15. In its every sentence it bears evidence of having been written on August 15, 1792. Cf. Chassagnon, pp. 435-438.

[21] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 107.

general showed that he continued to be devoted to the Institute and continued to be among those faithful servants upon whom rested Brother Agathon's hopes.

He did not want for courage, as the account of his activities proves. On the 22nd of August 1792 he wrote "to Mlle Le Clercq, opposite the Capuchin monastery, in Boulogne-sur-Mer".[22]

"May God be blessed, Mlle..." Thus, with a phrase dear to John Baptist de La Salle, one which the Founder used more spontaneously in painful moments, or at the onset of official ordeals. The opening lines of the letter anticipate a sequel heavy with anguish: "Dear Brother Solomon once complained to you that he thought he was unworthy to suffer for Christ; but God was not satisfied with just his good will. On the Feast of the Assumption at 8 o'clock in the evening the District authorities, with fifty National Guardsmen, entered his home. They sealed everything, and left at midnight, taking Dear Brother Solomon with them, who, at the time, was alone in the house, since Brother Berthier[23] had left two weeks before to visit St. Omer, his birthplace, and, fortunately for him, was conveniently absent.

"These gentlemen left their innocent victim at the Carmelite Church, where all the aristocrats that can be found are assembled, especially the "non-juring" priests, the Archbishop of Arles and several important members of the non-constitutional clergy among others;[24] there are about a hundred in this church,[25]aside from several other lockups in Paris.

"You can imagine my surprise when, two days later, I went to visit my good friend and learned from the neighbors of this sad event. Hurriedly, I did everything I could to find out where they put him, and, once I found out, I decided to visit him, at all costs. I took the occasion to bring linen to him and to inquire after his needs. He considered himself fortunate to be in the ranks of the persecuted. Yesterday I was to see him for the second time, and bring him stockings, powder and various little necessities; he asked me if I had written to you; and I told him I hadn't dared, for fear of afflicting you. I couldn't go into any details with him, because one has to speak very loud in the presence of four or five guards who are listening to what one says. You have no idea, Mlle, of what has happened in Paris over the past two weeks; we have sinned gravely, but our misfortunes are overwhelming us: may it please the Lord to send us an early peace, for our life is so filled with sorrow.

"I suppose you have seen the news about August 10th, a day of horror and bloodshed, during which it is thought that perhaps 8,000 persons lost their lives;[26] indeed, the figure is so great that we shall never know exactly what it was. The king and queen have indeed drunk a very bitter cup since that dark day".

"Paris seems full of Neros and Caligulas; everybody gets arrested; and at every moment somebody loses his head. Several of the queen's ladies-in-waiting were thrown into La Force prison, the very appearance of which is enough to freeze one with fear. Today, the

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[22]Motherhouse Archives, R-2, no. 109. The Motherhouse has only a single copy of this letter, the original of which remains in the possession of Brother Solomon's family. Bishop Chassagnon quotes parts of it on pages 438, 449, 450, 452 and 453 of his book on Brother Solomon.

[23]We know that Brother Berthier (Charles Lepine), attached to the Procurator-general, came to the house on Rue Neuve Notre-Dame-des-Champs only for work and for meals; beginning in March 1792 Brother Solomon had been dwelling alone in the residence.

[24]To be sure, a single layman, Count Valfons, shared the captivity of the clerics and Religious imprisoned in the Carmelite Church right up to the end. He is included on the list of beatified martyrs.

[25]The Luxembourg Precinct, prior to the 2nd of September, sent more than 150 persons to the Carmelite monastery. (Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 144)

[26]This figure, of course, is unverified; it's the sort of thing a crowd would spread about after a terrifying series of events. The number of deaths that day has been estimated at between 1,200 and 1,300

Faubourg St. Antoine still wishes to bestir itself to cut off three or four distinguished heads, or so it is reported, but we don't know yet whose".

After these harrowing details Brother Amaranthe returned to the subject of the Carmelite prisoners. He mentioned the presence of Brother Abraham along with Brother Solomon, whom, he wrote," ...has as a companion one of our confreres, named Abraham, who had withdrawn to St. Sulpice's parish with another (Brother) ...to teach under the protection of the former pastor.[27]. While the younger of the two went out to tutor in town after classes, they came intending to take both of them; but finding only this poor, infirm Brother,[28]they imprisoned him; and upon his return, his companion found the door locked."

The conclusion of this letter is much less alarming than its opening. Nicolas Le Clercq's "laughter" certainly testifies to his courage and to the joy he felt felt at suffering persecution for justice. However, there were some illusions mixed in with his serenity. The prisoners thought that they would be quickly released, either to be sent out to the provinces, or, at the worst, to be exiled.

"I am not, as they are not,' (Brother Amaranthe continues) "disquieted as to what will happen to them; but it is always unpleasant to be detained, for, perhaps, two or three weeks without being able to attend to one's affairs, and to be spending one's own money, since they are obliged to feed themselves during their detention."

While attempting to reassure the Le Clercq family, Brother Amaranthe could not help but mute the optimism with which he described the gloominess of the frightful scene. "Still, do not grieve (he writes) that our dear friend accumulates an abundant harvest for Heaven. Do not worry overmuch; and as soon as there is a change in the situation, I will send you word, or he himself will do so, when he shall be free, since he is at present not allowed to do so. "

And since the refined good manners of the period knew no holiday, a paragraph of the letter was filled with "compliments" addressed to Mme. Ricart, M. Victor Le Clercq, a notary and Nicolas' youngest brothers, Mme.Victor Le Clercq, as well as "remembrances" for several other people in Boulogne.

"Dear Brother Solomon embraces you and bids me say all sorts of nice things", he adds. And, then, as though prodded by prudence and fearing that his letter might be intercepted by the police, he attempted to conceal his identity: if Mlle Le Clercq "thinks it useful" to reply, she should send her mail "to M. Le Coeur, writing teacher at the institution for the deaf, near the arsenal, in Paris". "This gentleman" will act as intermediary.

Finally, there is a postscript: "Friday[29] I shall pay another visit to my two prisoners; we shall speak of you, but not for long, since the day-before-yesterday, after speaking about five or six minutes, one of the revolutionaries told me in quite harsh tones: 'Sir, you cannot stay any longer'. Oh, how dreadful! -- I've just had some good news. If it turns out well, you will be informed, since the effect it must produce is not far off."

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What was this all about? Probably, the discussion begun on the 9th of August and taken up again on the 23rd by the Legislative Assembly concerning priests and monks. Cambon had demanded "a permanent law of deportation". It meant exile, but it also meant, as the oppressed in their obstinate hope believed, that they would be free and that their lives

[27]Father Pancemont

[28]Eventually it will be made clear that while Brother Abraham was still a young man, he did not steadily enjoy good health.

[29]As a consequence, the 24th of August, since the Feast of the Assumption in 1792 fell on a Wednesday, and Brother Amaranthe must have finished his letter on the 23rd.

would be spared.

The Law was passed on the 26th. Its preamble should have aroused the most violent apprehension: "The Assembly, considering that the difficulties raised in the kingdom by "non-juring" churchmen is one of the principal causes of the dangers to the nation, and that, at a time when all Frenchmen need unity as well as all their energies to repel the external enemy, must be concerned with every means that might assure and guarantee internal peace, and it decrees the urgency of coercive measures.

The terrifying text followed, the effects of which were not long in appearing, and went well beyond what excessively trusting and excessively credulous minds imagined, and would extend on into the last days of the Revolution.

All "non-juring" Church officials were: "obliged, within the week, to leave the District and Department of their residence, and, within two weeks, leave the kingdom." Each of them was to appear before the Directory of his District or before the city government where he resided in order to state the foreign country into which intended to retire: he would be immediately issued a passport.

After the two weeks grace-period dissidents would be shipped to Guyana.

"All other "non-juring" churchmen, secular, regular, priests, simple clerics in minor orders. lay-brothers, without exception or distinction, even though not subject to the oath by the decrees of the 27th of November, and the 26th of December 1790 or the 17th of April 1791 (would be) subject to all the previous decisions when, through any overt acts (they should have) occasioned difficulties (or) when their banishment (should be) required by six citizens (in their Department).[30]

Thus, not only were men who had rejected the "Constitutional" oath singled out for public persecution, but also those who by their words or attitudes had appeared to be hostile to schism.

Such was indeed Brother Solomon's situation. He had heaped up coals upon his head; he had satisfied all the conditions for a martyr's palm. His cousin, Brissot, would not save him, since he was howling with the wolves "against the incorrigible priests" - "the scum of society, with whom we must not saddle the colonies", as he wrote is the French Patriot;[31] he was not unaware that the insurrectionary Commune was attempting to injure the Girondist Party, which was accused (in spite of its objections and its mean-spirited docility) of trying to appropriate for its own gain the victories associated with the riot. At the time of the massacre a warrant was issued (without effect, as it turned out) for the arrest of Brissot, Roland and several of their friends among the Deputies.

Robespierre, Danton, Manuel, and even Marat and Tallien, who were well-situated to know what was in store for the victims, intervened effectively to protect several clerics, including Father Berardier, head of the College of St. Louis Le Grand, and Father Lhomond. The other prisoners, deluded by the hopes inspired by the hypocritical statements of the Attorney-general of the Commune, were handed over to the executioners.

Unfortunately, with Le Coeur's letter all the documentation directly concerned with Brother Solomon's martyrdom comes to an end. Even the events surrounding his imprisonment would have been unknown to us without the Providential preservation of Brother Amaranthe's letter. The report covering Brother Solomon's interrogation must have been destroyed either by the Septembrists or by the fire of 1871 in the Prefecture of Police. However, his name (spelled "Leclerc") is included on the list of persons imprisoned in the Carmelite monastery; and his title is added, which allows us to identify him: "Secretary-

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[30] Duvergier, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 423. Cf. La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 241-242 and Chassagnon, pp. 457-459.

[31] Cited by Chassagnon, pg. 461, note #1,

general of the Christian Brothers".[32]His death on the 2nd of September has never raised the shadow of a doubt.[3334] His contemporary, Brother Vivien, in his small "notebook", in which he wrote the name of the Brothers he had "known since June 1773",[35]calls him a martyr. In 1821 Father Aime Guillon, writing the "Lives" of the "Martyrs for the Faith", devoted several lines to Brother Solomon.[36] In 1885 Brother Philip, Superior-general, recalled that "Brother Agathon's secretary" had "the distinction of shedding his blood with three illustrious prelates of the Church of France and of being included with them and with a multitude of priests" in the September massacre.[37]

On the 17th of October 1926, at St. Peter's in Rome, Brother Solomon, along with 190 of his companions in suffering, who had fallen either at the Carmelite monastery or at St. Firmian's seminary, or in the La Force prison, was beatified. Except for letters in his own hand (a precious treasure for his Institute, his grand-nephews and for all Christians) he left no other relics. Whether in the cloister with its straight paths, its pools of stagnant water where the prisoners were attacked and hunted down like wild animals by their butchers or near the small stairway where the last survivors, at first herded into the church and then marching two-by-two through the corridor that joined the sacristy to the cloister, consummated the sacrifice, it is impossible to evoke his memory without emotion and piety. *Hic ceciderunt*, reads the inscription on the balustrade of the stone stairway with its five steps. In this sacred space a son of De La Salle was worthy of his Father and gave God the proof of his great love.[38]

We do not know whether he was struck down at the same time as the Archbishop of Arles, or whether he died in the "hunt" that was conducted all over the cloister, or whether he stood his turn in front of the executioner at the end of the hallway. As for his body, perhaps it was thrown on one of those great wagons which, on the 3rd of September, entered the monastery and then, loaded down with the bloody remains, took off for Vaugirard cemetery. Perhaps, like many others, it was buried in the cloister or in the drainage ditches, from which many bones were exhumed in 1867, and since then have been venerated in the crypt of the Carmelite chapel.[39]

Brother Abraham shared in neither the death nor the triumph of his confrere. Along with two priests, he managed to hide in passageway leading to the pulpit in the church. One of the National Guardsmen found them there, took them under his protection, and led them to the Luxembourg headquarters. The fever for slaughter abated, and John Baptist Estève was "set free" on the 3rd of September "before six o'clock in the morning" without any further interrogation. The scenes of horror which he shared haunted the poor man's imagination: already in a precarious state of health, he little-by-little lapsed into madness. It was reported

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[32]National Archives, F-7 4386 DXLII, 50. Document published by Sorel, op. cit., pg. 139. Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 441.

[33]There was supposed to have been a letter from Le Coeur announcing this tragic end to the family. Unfortunately, it was never located. (Chassagnon, pg. 479)

[34] For Brother Vivien's notebook, see Vol. II of the present work, pg. 444.

[35]Martyrs de la foi, pg. 193.

[36]Relation mortuaires, Vol. I, pg. 9; cited by Chassagnon, pg. 483.

[37]Chassagnon, pp. 462-476.

[38]Dom Leclercq, op. cit., pp. 84-87 and 121-130.

[39]5

of him that he died without ever regaining his reason.[40]

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The law of the 26th of August 1792, by reason of its language and its circumstances, hastened the crisis in the colossal tragedy that was the prisons; but eventually it found its "normal" application, if we dare so describe it. Among the "non-jurors" who were issued passports to go into exile there were some Christian Brothers. On the 6th of September 1792 the city government of Pontarlier issued papers, in due form, to Jean Claude Lacroix (Brother Anatole) "of the Christian Brothers' Community in Bordeaux", 48 years of age, "brown eyes, sharp nose, large mouth, round chin, and oval face; his forehead is concealed and he is five feet, two inches tall". Brother Anatole, from Arcon in the Comte, had not far to travel to the frontier: he went to Estavayer where, in the institution founded in 1750, he was welcomed by Swiss hospitality.[41]It is nearly certain that Charles Turpin (Brother Dominique), from Dijon, "deported in virtue of the Law of the 26th of August 1792 for having refused to take the oath demanded of a public servant"[42]directed his steps toward the same region at the time of his enforced emigration.

While this was going on in the on the eastern frontier, in the west it was by and large, and in spite of the accumulated prejudices against Protestantism, the generosity of Great Britain that was being tapped by the French clergy, as well as by some of the Christian Brothers.[43]Confining ourselves to the indisputable facts, we note that a Brother Germain (Antoine Joseph Laporte), born in Ebouleau in Picardy, set sail from a point near Avranche on the 14th of September, and arrived the same day on the Isle of Jersey where he settled in St. Helier at the home of Jean Herault. On the 12th of October, Bishop Cheylus of Bayeux, sent him a stipend of nine livres, supplied by the "London Committee". In May of 1793 La Porte was furnished with an identity card, which described him as fifty-three years old, five-feet-one-inch tall, with a pale complexion, blue eyes and grey hair; and he was paid stipends regularly until November of 1793.[44] We pick up his trail once again in Jersey in 1803, where, during that period, he was teaching French. Another Brother, Omer Samson Lafresnee, seems to have preceded La Porte on the Anglo-Norman island and had also been cared for by the Committee's charity.[45].

It would be a mistake to conclude that the Austrian Low-Countries were sealed off to misfortune because of the obstacles met with by Brother Amaranthe in Brussels. The "non-jurers" in the north and the northwest sought and obtained refuge in Belgium. Brother Casimir (Claude François Besancon) from the school in St. Omer received a passport at Dunkerque on the 29th of September "to go (he said) to Holland". But he stopped at Gyzeghem where he formed trustworthy relationships and for a while studied Flemish with

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[40]Concerning Brother Abraham's release see Father Bardet's report in Leclercq, op. cit., pg. 103. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 631 and Chassagnon, pg. 441. Lucard (pg. 632) asserts, on the authority of Father Guillon, that Guilain Dubois (Brother Boniface, Director of the St. Roch school in 1791) "was imprisoned in La Force" and then "set free". We shall meet with Dubois, married but still on friendly terms with his former confreres, under the First Empire. As for Brothers Julien (John Louis Joly) and Agapet (Francis Joly), whom the author of the Annales suggests were "imprisoned in the Conciergerie" (Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 632) they were certainly not in Paris in 1792.

[41]Departmental Archives of Doubs, L. 274.

[42]Departmental Archives of the Cote d'Or, Police Department

[43]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 43.

[44]Information gathered by Canon Le Male of Bayeux.

[45]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Fredebert of Mary's notes

the intention (we must believe) of using his skills as a teacher.[46]Brother Jonas at Verviers, Brothers Julien, Michel and Agapet at St. Hubert, experienced the consolations and successes that we shall have to describe later on. These were the most remarkable of the senior members of the Congregation residing on Belgium soil. Others would join them or venture on their own. An instance was Jacques Couronne, "Brother of the Christian Schools from the St. Yon school", to whom Cardinal Dominique La Rochefoucauld, Archbishop of Rouen, on the 27th of March 1794, sent a testimonial of "good life, morals and doctrine, to his residence in Brussels". This Brother, the exiled prelate declared, "because of his adherence to the true principles of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, and the French monarchy, deserves the help and protection of sincere people.[47]The two invasions by revolutionary armies, in November and again in June of 1794, destroyed, or at least interrupted, the educational work begun by the humble, tenacious successors of St. John Baptist de La Salle. We shall pursue Brothers Casimir and Jonas in the vicissitudes of their adventurous lives; and we shall also describe the work of the Brothers who settled in Italy.

These accounts will take their places in the chapter that deals with Lasallian "survivors" between 1793 and 1803. Meanwhile, it seems appropriate to continue our considerations of the "Confessors of the Faith". We have been taking a look at those who bore their crosses on the highroads into exile. We shall now turn to the best known of them, the Brother Superior-general.

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We left Brother Agathon at Melun shortly after the establishment of the revolutionary courts and the "Vigilance Committees", which, responsible in the first instance for controlling the movement and the sojourn of strangers in the Communes, thereafter they prepared lists of suspects and initiated investigations, searches, seizures of letters and arbitrary arrests.[48]

For a long time the account of Brother Superior-general's imprisonment had rested on unverifiable traditions, mixed, perhaps, with a variety of legends. We do not know the date on which he was put into jail. He was brought to the Conciergerie, and, it is said that he escaped the guillotine only through the intervention of Leonard Bourdon Crosniere, a former teacher in the residence school in Gobelins and founding-principal (in the Priory of St. Martin-in-the-Fields) of the "Children-of-the-Nation" School. It was a strange association of two such dissimilar people: the noble, serene countenance of the Brothers' Superior and the ghastly features of the man who pursued Louis XVI with a diabolical hatred and whose conscience was weighted down with so many crimes, from the assassination of General Gailliot Mandat on the morning of the 10th of August and the slaughter of the forty prisoners of the High Court to the vengeance practiced upon the citizens of Orleans in 1793. In the city of Orleans, where Bourdon spread terror and bloodshed he was called "the Leopard".[49]

However, the documents of the Revolutionary Court have been consulted concerning Joseph Gonlieu without effect. Henry Wallon does not include him in the lists of the accused arraigned before the notorious Court. The National Archives reveal nothing either of the

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[46]Ibid., file HA p 1, Brother Casimir packet.

[47]Archives of the school in Albano, Attestati vari, no. 26.

[48]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 280-281.

[49]See Armand Le Corbeiller's book Le Leopard de la Revolution, l'Affaire d'Orleans, 1793 , Paris, 1938. Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pp. 632-634) and the author of the Essai sur la Maison Mere (pp. 109 and 115) have generally perpetuated ancient rumor regarding Brother Agathon's "prisons".

interrogations that the former Superior of the Institute would have undergone, nor of his supposed acquittal nor his release that was obtained through a favor.[50]

We must go back to other sources. Thirty years ago patient investigators proposed this task, and the most recent one, the most methodical and intelligent (seconded by technicians in the public archives and enthusiastic volunteers) has witnessed his zeal rewarded by the most fortunate discoveries. Here, as in the earlier stages of Brother Agathon's career, we adopt Brother Fredebert of Mary as our guide.

The first document is contained in the Departmental Archives of the Seine-and-Marne--the prison register of Melun. "In the year 1793, the Year II of the French Republic,[51] on the 23rd of July, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, I, Roziere, and Boutet, both National(?) policemen in Melun, authorized by a complaint given to us by members of the Vigilance Committee, established in Melun at the above date, to the effect that we enter the residence of the former School Brothers, in order to arrest there and bring to the prison of this city Citizen Suflet (sic), former Superior-general of the Brothers, the Vigilance Committee being obliged to inform the Committee of Public Safety to await further orders, we ordered that he be "booked" in the register of the jailer of the above-mentioned prison. On the margin, Boutet recorded the sequel to the affair: "On the 27th of July 1793, brought the person named opposite to Paris, to be remanded to the members of the Committee of Public Safety in virtue of a complaint from the members of the Vigilance Committee of Melun.[52]

Why was the name "Suflet" substituted for "Gonlieu", without explanation? Another document throws some light on this question. It was discovered in the Departmental Archives of Loiret:[53]. "From Melun, on the 24th of July 1793, in the Year II of the Republic, the representatives of the people in the Departments of the Seine-and-Marne and of Loiret (wrote) to the members of the Committee of Public Safety in Orleans:

"The Committee of Public Safety in Melun, Citizens, has arrested someone named Sufflet, General of the former Brothers of Christian Doctrine; this man is thoroughly suspect, and it is important to secure all his documents, for which we invite you to send immediately into the Commune of Chieure (sic) commissioners who will seal up and inspect Sufflet's papers, since he has over the past two weeks transferred a part of his possessions to that place. You would do very well to send the suspicious papers to the Committee of Public Safety of the Convention. Signed: Mauze (Sr.), Dubouchet.

It becomes obvious that Brother Agathon, perceiving that, as head of a dissolved Congregation, he was being carefully watched, adopted the pseudonym "Sufflet" in his correspondence.[54] Letters had been seized, other would be, as we shall see momentarily. And just as in 1791 and 1792 he had taken measures to hide the archives and relics belonging to the Holy Child Jesus House and to St. Yon from search and seizure, so in 1793 he sent his papers and personal effects to the homes of friends. The recurrence of religious persecution, inevitable after the fall of the Girondists and the triumph of the "Leftists", had effectively

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[50] H. Wallon, Histoire de Tribunal revolutionnaire, Vol. VI, pg. 156 and pp. 251-451. National Archives, W, pp. 269-434 and 503. The negative results of these inquiries are explained in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1907, pg. 184.

[51] Note that after the final adoption of the "Republican Calender" (the law of the 24th of November 1793) the first year (and not the second) of the new era began (retroactively) on the 22nd of September, 1792 and ended on the 21st of September, 1793.

[52] Document published by the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pg. 195. We preserve the style but not the (ultra-whimsical) spelling of the policeman.

[53] L v 519. Credit for this discovery goes to M. Verdeill, teacher in the residence schoo of St. Euvertus in Orleans. See Bulletin cited pp. 194-196. We have verified the copy against the original

[54] A letter written by Brother Luke (Alexis Ville), below, will provide us with the confirmation of this hypothesis, which has never been questioned.

eliminated Paris from consideration. And thus the plan to establish a refuge in the Department adjacent to the Seine-and-Marne, and the selection of a village in the Loiret, six to seven leagues from Orleans, on the road that leads from that city to Pithiviers, beyond the great forest: Chilleurs-aux-Bois, which the peoples' representatives called "Chieure". Later on we shall learn how he was able to make contacts in this rural region withdrawn and sheltered from the most passionate currents of the period.

The Jacobins in Melun sniffed out the trail, and they fired the detective's zeal in their rivals in Orleans. One or more boxes deposited in Chilleurs was then (as everything would lead one to believe) opened and itemized. But what became of the contents? At this point we begin to meet with the silence that surrounds the archives.

On the other hand, we are exactly informed concerning the sequel to these events: the very day that Officer Boutet brought Brother Agathon to Paris (the 27th of July) "the members of the Committee for Public Safety and Vigilance of the National Convention, Laignelot, Guffroy and Ingrand", drew up the following order: "The Committee, having heard Citizen Joseph Gonlieu, former Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Melun, and having read his interrogation, orders that this Citizen shall be temporarily brought to the prison called St.Pelagius, under the Committee shall otherwise determine concerning him.[55]

Brother Agathon was placed in preventative custody, which did not include closed detention. The Committee of Public Safety, in its meeting of the 11th of August, authorized the jailer of St. Pelagius "to allow Citizen Joseph Gouliers (sic) to be visited by "the Citizens Duroisel, three at a time, but only twice".[56]

The Duroisels were a family in Longueval which had given five of its members to the Christian Brothers: Brothers Hilary, Aaron, Zenas, Dacian and Flore. These, then, were three neighbors and three of his former subordinates, who had hurried to the side of their leader in prison during the first weeks of his captivity. Perhaps it was their memories, orally transmitted from one generation to another, that inspired Brother Lucard when he described the Superior-general as "obtaining a great influence over his companions" in misfortune, by his "cheerful attitude, his skill and especially his virtue", while contriving "to distract them" with "cosmological or mathematical problems" or discussing religious questions with them.[57]

Meanwhile, due to the industry of the Committee in Melun, the indictment was complete. On the 25th of August that Committee wrote to the General Committee of Public Safety: "I am sending you...the enclosed letter addressed to the man named Goineux (sic), also called Sufflet. This letter seems quite suspicious to us, because of the large number of abbreviations which seem to contain a secret message.A postscript indicates the existence of a second letter, which had also been intercepted or discovered among the addressee's papers. It was "numbered #2 on the address".[58]

A persistent effort, then, was made to find grounds in the Superior-general's letters for a conviction. According to Brother Lucard, the inquiry focused on certain matters having to do with the schools in Italy: the Brothers in Rome were supposed to have asked the head of the Congregation for his advise and direction.[59]

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[55]Archives of the Prefecture of Police, 120 CIV A a/13. This document was published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1913, pg. 169. The Bulletin for July 1938 reprinted it and also published it in facsimile. (pp. 200-201)

[56]National Archives, AF II* 286. Bulletin cited for April 1913, pg. 169 and for July 1938, pg. 202.

[57]Lucard, Vol. II, pg 633.

[58]3 Departmental Archives of Seine-and-Marne, L, 829. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pg. 196.)

[59]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 633.

A passage in a letter sent a few years later by Brother Agathon to Brother Frumence (a letter we shall deal with below)[60]seems to confirm this hypothesis. On the 23rd of August, 1797, the Superior wrote: "The arrival of your last letters at my address was followed by my arrest." The mail from Italy might have either precipitated the arrest on the 23rd of July, or, (if the letter had been discovered only with the boxes in Chilleurs-aux-Bois) a few weeks after its "arrival", and established the formal grounds for complaint against the defendant, who, as the victim of unfounded accusations, had been previously arrested on simple suspicion. Henceforth, charged with maintaining secret relations with "emigrés", "Citizen Gonlieu" was risking his life.

St. Pelagius housed distinguished prisoners destined for the scaffold, such as the poet, John Antony Roucher and Mme. Roland. Situated on Rue Puits-de-L'ermite, in a shelter for penitents founded in 1665 by Mme. Miramion, it was conspicuously lacking in comfort and hygiene. A report, dated the 16th Fructidor in the Year II and signed by Citizen Rufin, chief health-officer for jails and prisons, supplies the following sketch: "...The air there circulates sluggishly. The building occupied by the prisoners...is extremely crowded, the atmosphere is noxious, not only because the ceilings are low, but also because of the latrines and the lamps in the passageways, which are without smoke ducts."Rufin goes on to note the filth in the corridors: there is not enough water. Without water and air, "cleanliness is impossible". "It is easy to understand (the physician concluded) how men who enter these prisons quite healthy must soon fall ill, and those who dwell there must view their situation as increasingly dangerous.[61]

Heavy with premature old age, with afflicted vision and painful infirmities, Brother Agathon could not have long withstood such conditions. Doubtless, he occupied one of those "six-foot square" cells, provided with iron bars, and furnished was "a wretched straw mattress", described in an Almanac dating from the Year III. If we can trust the same source, he received a "normally tolerable soup", wine and "stews" prepared "by an avaricious cook" and intended to devastate weak stomachs.[62] And when the prisoners fraternized, he suffered from "smoke filled rooms", and the vile odors and the promiscuity, about which Roucher writes in his letters to his daughter.[63]

Admitted ill, Brother Agathon was moved to the infirmary in Bicetre. The transfer order, involving several prisoners in his category, survives in the Archives of the Prefecture of Police. It is dated "the 5th of the 2nd month of the 2nd year of the Republic", i.e., the 26th of October 1793,[64] and signed by the administrator, Mennessier. It enjoins the jailor of St. Pelagius "to hand over to the policeman" Joseph Gonlieu, who is to be "treated" at Bicetre (the name of the illness is left blank) and be "brought back after his convalescence".[65]

Sanitary conditions in this vast institution, where at one time the insane, beggars, prostitutes and foundlings were thrown together, continued to be deplorable since Bicetre had

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[60]See below, pg. 360.

[61]National Archives, F-16 581 (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1913, pg. 170 and for July 1938, pg. 200.)

[62]Archives of the Prefecture of Police, Prison Almanac, no. 7930. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pp. 201-202.)

[63]Roucher, Consolations de ma captivite, Vol. I, pp. 53, 67, 111. (Bulletin cited, pg. 202.)

[64]The law establishing the names of the "Republican" months had not yet been voted it.

[65]Archives of the Prefecture of Police, CXVII A a/27 n-os 54. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1913, pg. 170 and for July 1938, pg. 203.)

been transformed into a prison for every type of individual. Three hundred patients were "distributed over five rooms". Light and fresh air were in painfully short supply, since no thought was given to anything but to make escape impossible. Because confinement was total and the food inadequate, "the ravages of scurvy" were everywhere.[66]

However, it is probable that Brother Agathon owed the postponement of his appearance before the revolutionary court to his long confinement in this prison. He did not leave Bicetre until the 13th of June 1794. On "the 25th Prairial in the Year II of the Republic", the jailor of the Luxembourg prison received "Gonlieu, Joseph, former Superior of the Christian Brothers", who was "sent" to him "from Bicetre", and who "he was to guard until further orders".[67]

It was the height of the Terror. The awful "Prairial Law" would "empower the Court to despatch without debate 1,376 victims to the scaffold in 49 days".[68] The prisoners in the former Luxembourg palace had few illusions to cherish; they were the dying standing vigil at their own deaths. And, reduced to "a single meal" a day and often fed on meat and rotten vegetables,[69] they were wasting away. They bore on their faces both the fatigue of their fasting and the anguish of their torture.

Nevertheless, mid-July had come and gone before Brother Agathon's situation changed. Brother Lucard assures us that "he divided his time between prayer, meditation and some devout reading".[70] Finally, the 9th Thermidor arrived. Robespierre was the embodiment of the Terror: and his downfall and execution produced a relaxation scarcely anticipated by persons who were no less bloodthirsty than he and even more vicious whose victim he had become.

Leonard Bourdon and his namesake Bordon de l'Oise were listed among the "Thermidorians". One of the two, on the 1st Vendemiaire (i.e., the 22nd of September 1794) along with ten other members of the Committee for Public Safety, signed an order releasing 43 prisoners, among whom appeared (the 37th of the list) "Joseph Goulieu, schoolteacher". The release was to be effected immediately; and the seals "affixed to the papers and the effects of the accused (now exonerated) were to be removed.[71] In a letter written in 1796 the Superior of the Institute said that he left the Luxembourg prison[72]on the 22nd of September. We can conclude therefore that he was never incarcerated in the Conciergerie and that at no time did he come close to the deadly tumbril. We also see how the legend of his relations with Bourdon arose, and in what consisted the special (and surprising) act of kindness that "the Leopard" extended to him.

Brother Agathon immediately left Paris. He had nearly been martyred. He retained the

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[66]Rufin report, dated the 22nd Vendemiaire, in the Year II, National Archives F-16, 581. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for the months cited, pp. 171 and 204.)

[67]Archives of the Prefecture of Police CXVII, A a/28, order signed by Wilcheritz and Dumontier, in the Police Department, Mayor's palace. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April 1913, pg. 171 and for July 1938, pg. 205.)

[68]Louis Madelin, Histoire politique de la Nation francaise, pg. 543.

[69]Archives of the Prefectur of Police, no. 7930, Almanac des prison. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1938, pg. 205.)

[70]Annales, Vol. II, pp. 633 and 634, following Notes receuillies par les Freres Philippe et Calixte.

[71]Archives of the Prefecture of Police, C 2/xxv, aa/39 (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1913, pg. 172 and for July 1938, pg. 206.)

[72]See below, pg. 353.

merit of his courage and his suffering. He had four years to live: we shall describe these years in the next chapter, and we shall discover once again the evidence of his strength of soul and of his unshakable conviction.

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To attempt to draw up a complete list of every Christian Brother who, at one time on another during the Revolution, was deprived of his freedom and then released after a few days or months of prison would be a thankless task, the results of which would be only of minimal interest and out of all reasonable proportion to the vast effort required. "Juring" or "non-Juring", schoolteachers who persevered at their own risk and peril in their educational vocation, or former Brothers, returned willingly or unwillingly "to the world" and who gained their livelihood in a hundred different ways -- none of these in 1793 or 1794, or indeed during the years that followed, fancied themselves to be proof against denunciation. The many laws and decrees legislated against priests, "emigrés" secretly returned to France, all "suspicious persons", or against those who, for a welcoming gesture or a sympathetic word were treated as criminals were like a steel curtain, the strands of which were straight and strong, and could fall at any moment on the most peaceful citizen. The silhouette of the guillotine's blade was always on the horizon; for a great number of persons it continued to be in a posture of terrifying readiness. Many were imprisoned, liberated and then rearrested only to be returned once again to the job from which they had been snatched. People got lost in the maze of espionage, accusation, more or less severe condemnation, pure and simple acquittals or amicable dismissals. These were scarcely more than obscure, minor dramas, where, however, painful situations and sufferings of body and soul were not lacking, nor were they wanting in heroism. Tragedy or bloody climaxes (which do not exhaust the list) more easily engage our attention. But before returning to them, we shall offer the reader a number of individuals (attractive, we think) who, in context and under diverse circumstances, play, honorably and simply, roles that are worthy of our remembrance.

We begin with the Brothers in the school at Maréville. Starting in 1793 their existence became singularly agitated. Brother Jean of Mary and several of his associates were accused of having issued false passports to clerics who had been the beneficiaries of the Brothers' courageous hospitality. For this reason André Toye-Collegue, Blaise Benetin, Jean Vasserot and Claude Martin were imprisoned on the 16th and 17th of February 1731.[73]Other members of the Community, no doubt considered as accomplices, at the same time were included among the prisoners in Nancy, either at "the Refuge" or at "the Lady Preachers" or at "the Franciscan".[74].

A few months later, Brother Jean of Mary was able to free himself, and we find him once again back on familiar ground, at the center of his faithful circle.[75] However, it proved to be only a brief respite. Although these Brothers had been laicized, they generated misgivings. After all, their chaplains were Fathers Collet and Mangin, and their confessor was Father Rosselange, all three of whom were "dissidents" and presently destined for the guillotine.[76] In the end it was decided to expel the Brothers. By a strange coincidence, on the evening following their departure (the 3rd Ventose in the Year II, the 21st of February 1794),

[73]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, Prison Register, no. 3.

[74]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L 3305, 3310, 3318, 3319

[75]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 138.

[76]Ibid., pg. 139, note #2.

at the stroke of midnight, a huge fire broke out. The entire building, constructed by Duke Leopold, was destroyed; and, for all practical purposes, the entire Maréville archives disappeared in the flames. There were several victims, helplessly insane, who burned to death in the cells. Some thirty were saved and given shelter in the church of St. Sebastian. It wasn't until 2 o'clock the next afternoon that the fire was brought under control.[77]

The Vigilance Committee in Nancy, reporting the disaster to the peoples' representatives, Lacoste and Baudot, and the Committee of Public Safety, asserted that "it represented a loss to the nation of at least two million..." And it referred freely to the "abominable conspiracy, the destruction of liberty, that had been conceived by traitors"--terms, of course, intended to describe the Brothers.[78]

The national representative of the District[79]was only slightly less positive. His suspicions "inclined toward the relatives of someone called "Jean of Mary", the former Director (of Maréville), a secretive man, crafty, despotic, scheming and a counter-revolutionary, who, last June escaped death because, with the help of money, he corrupted the witnesses...While awaiting the identification of the guilty parties, the District thought it wise to arrest the institution's administrators and employees.[80]

This time Brother Jean of Mary would not experience the jails in Nancy. During the preceding January, with the youngest members of his Community, he had crossed over the frontier into Liege. And in 1795 he was reunited with Brothers Guillaume of Jesus and Charles Borromeo in Ferrara.[81]

Among the prisoners taken in Ventose in the Year II was Brother Antide (Philip Quertant), the "Econome" at Maréville. His imprisonment lasted no more than three or four days. On the 8th Ventose the District Council made the following decision regarding him. "... Considering that up to now there exists no accusation which gives rise to the least suspicion concerning the behavior or the patriotism of this Citizen, and that no one knows better than he the operation of the Institution at Marevlle, and that it is of interest to the Republic to return him to his work with appropriate guarantees, let it be decreed that, with Citizen Brandon standing security, Citizen Quertant be returned to his post...The jailor at "the Refuge", where Quertant is being detained, is called upon to set him free.[82]

The Econome's confreres remained in the lockup. They owed their lives to the (perhaps calculated) delays in the investigation. In March 1794 many of them endured the threat of deportation; and they were about to leave for Rochefort when the District's national representatives pointed out that the law had to come to a decision concerning the responsibility for the fire that had been deliberately set. In this way the Brothers were preserved from the torture of the convict ships.[83]

Months of agony followed. And then, for the Brothers in Nancy, as well as for the

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[77]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L 1512, f-o 14. Cf. Pfister, Histoire de Nancy, Vol. III.

[78]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L 1512, f-o 14. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pp. 138-139.

[79]The Law of the 14th Frimaire in the Year II (4th of December 1793) created a representative of the central government in the headquarters of each District. He was called a "National Agent". (La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. III, pg. 276.)

[80] Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L, 1512, National Agent's report.

[81]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 138.

[82]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L, 3325.

[83]Brother Gustave, op.cit., pg. 151.

Superior-general, in Thermidor there broke the dawn of a better day. But they were not liberated until the beginning of winter. On the 10th of November 1794 there was no other thought than to transfer them from "the Franciscan" and "the Preachers" to the city prison. But in January 1759 the case was dismissed. On the order of Judge Grignon, Jean Baptist Honore Crepeaux, Dominique Millot, François Vellemin, Nicolas Schneider, Pierre Legrand, Pierre Arnaud, Jacques Paulian Naple, Giles Pillieres, Antoine Cauroy, Blaise Benetin, Claude Joseph Geanne, and François Genaule were set free on the 25th Nivose in the Year II (Jan. 16, 1794).[84] On the 13th Ventose (March 3, 1794) they were restored the personal effects and the linen that had been taken from them after "the fire at Maréville". The authorities were satisfied to deprive the Brothers of their retirement benefits, because the "petitioners" in question had previously not conformed to the Law of the 14th of August, 1792.[85]

Brother Antide, perennially situated at Maréville, handed each of them a small package for their journey; while he himself continued to stand guard over the institution and supervise the insane that had been committed there. In 1796 he took charge of the administrative and financial reorganization of the asylum which, in 1802, was definitively reserved for the care of the mentally ill.[86]

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Archival documentation in the neighboring Departments enables us to verify the imprisonment of former members of the Institute: there were, at Chartreuse du Mont-Deiu, near Chesne (Ardennes), Brothers Maximilian (J.B. Marchand), and Gaspar (François Gernier); the former was "a young Brother from Rethel", and the latter had been the Director at Sedan.[87]At the former major seminary in Rheims there were Brothers Louis of Mary (Pierre Chieffin) and Amand (Joseph Sohier), aged, respectively, 61 and 75; and they were still imprisoned there as late as November 1794.[88]

When we leave Champagne and enter Artois, we can point to the interrogation of Brother Cajetan (Joseph Hubert Massillon) at St. Omer, who was a southerner transplanted to the north. This Brother had been summoned, on the 18th Fructidor in the Year II (4th of September 1794) before a revolutionary commission in the Pas-de-Calais. He was thirty-seven years old, and he was a draughtsman by profession. He had been living at St.Omer for five-and-a-half years, and he had refused to take the civil oath because, he said, "of God, his conscience and his religion". He had not been present in his precinct when the 1793 Constitution was presented to the French people for a vote. He even refused to speak about the "Liberty-equality Oath". Nevertheless, he had the advantage of a lenient judge. Not that the "Terror Laws" had been repealed by that time (we shall see that they were still the basis for capital punishment); but, after the fall of Robespierre, cautious or weary revolutionaries tended to regard them as dead letters. Hypocrites might very well demand that Citizen

[84]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L, 3305, 3310, 3318. Register of Arrests, no. 7; Cf. Bulletin des Ecole chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 46

[85]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, Q 961.

[86]Pfister, op.cit., and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 139.

[87]Letter of Father Hanesse, Secretary-Archivist in Archbishop's office in Rheims, to Brother Lucard. (Note preserved in the Motherhouse Archives.)

[88] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1907, pg. 12 and for July 1933, pg. 214.

Massillon return to prison; but he continued his educational apostolate in St. Omer.[89]

Simply mentioning the long imprisonment of Brother Aventine within the walls of St. Yon, which he had at one time directed, we now turn our attention to Bourges. Jean Baptist Delwincker (or Delvainquier), a Belgian, from the diocese of Tournai, taught the young citizens of Bourges conscientiously and with a great deal of success. Born in 1751, he was a member of the Institute since 1776, under the name of Brother Lucan.[90] On the 9th Pluviose in the Year II (the 28th of January 1794) he sent the following request, dated from the prison of St. Clare to a representative of the people: "Citizen Delvainquier, schoolteacher with a permit from the city, imprisoned for a month in the residence of the former Clairettes, even though he has taken the "Liberty-equality Oath" and has always obeyed the law, asks you, Representative, for his freedom and hopes that you will do justice to a foreigner who is contemplating returning to his own Republic, if he is not allowed to remain in the French...
It was a quaint way of calling attention to himself; and perhaps it even brought a smile to the lips of some bureaucrat. In any case, Brother Lucan's sense of humor or his artlessness disarmed some hostile people. The City Council declared that it "had never received any complaints" against this excellent teacher; and there was no evidence that he was "dangerous". As a consequence, he was sent back to his pupils[91]

Moving in the direction of the Massif Central, the Community in Aurillac had long enjoyed political favor.[92] But this security finally evaporated. On the 15th of June 1793, after numerous postponements, an inventory of the institution was conducted.[93] The four Brothers then left their residence and schools. Two of them, however, took the chance of settling in the city. This daring earned them a denunciation to the Department as "dissidents". On the 16th of November Brother Wulfran (Jean Paulhan) was called before the Council. Born on the 12th of April 1725, near Mende, this near-octogenarian, who, because of his great age, could not be sent to the convict ships, was interned in the monastery of Buis; and his property was confiscated, although he had been guaranteed a pension of 400 livres.[94] His confrere and Director, Brother Florentius of Jesus (Jean Rouzaud), who was not yet fifty years of age,[95] had to fear a more wretched fate. The Departmental Council decided on the 17th of November that the defendant "was to be, forthwith, sent to the west coast of Africa". Until his departure he was shut up in the Aurillac jail.[96] Fortunately, Brother Florentius had friends who were able to save him from deportation.

There were two Christian Brothers interned in Puy. One of them, Brother Paul of Jesus (Étienne Borie) was a native of that city, and returned there with a passport issued in Montpellier on the 26th of September, 1792. A "non-Juror",[97] he spent eight months in jail. The other, Brother Servulus (Jean Baptist Faure), was one of Georges Isnard's associates in

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[89] Municipal Archives of Saint Omer, Box Q.M.

[90] St. Yon Register.

[91] . Departmental Archives of Cher, L 1005, no. 327.

[92] See above, pg. 129.

[93] Departmental Archives of Cantal, L 25 f-o 488.

[94] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 293 et sq.

[95] Born in Carcassone on May 17 1746, John Rouzand entered the Institute on March 12, 1761.

[96] Departmental Archives of Cantal, L 25, f-o 489.

[97] Motherhouse Archieves, HB x.

Toulon. He seems to have been in complete agreement with his Director when he took the oath at the beginning of 1791.[98] An excellent, indeed a thoroughly edifying Religious,[99] according to all probability, he must not have had any difficulty making a retraction. We find him a prisoner in St. Privas in Allier, in the Upper Loire, and immediately thereafter in Puy, in the institution for solitary confinement at St. Maurice.[100]In the period after their confession of faith, Brothers Paul of Jesus and Servulus worked with an equal zeal for the restoration of the Institute.

In 1792 Brother Victorinus of Jesus (Maurice Richard) directed the Montreal school in Aude. Expelled, he was taken in by one of the residents of the village, by the name of Jean Negre, and he undertook the education of his benefactor's grandsons. Persecution sought him out once again in his refuge and carried him off to a prison in Carcassonne. Jean Negre provided for the needs of the prisoner and once again became his host when freedom was restored to Maurice Richard, who, until his death, never left his adopted family.[101]

Among the Brothers in Avignon in September 1792 there was a Claude Faure, called Brother Illuminat. He is no doubt the same one we meet with in Grenoble, in the Year II and the Year V, although in one of the documents in the file, he bears the Christian name of Jerome. He was imprisoned for the first time from the 12th Messidor in the Year II to the 18th Vendemiaire in the Year III. Prior to his incarceration, he stated in an interrogation that he sought counsel "from the martyr Revenaz".[102] He refused "to bear arms" because "his religion forbad it". Along with the signature that he appended to the report, he proudly added the title, "By His Grace Confessor of Jesus Christ". Arrested once again on the 12th Brumaire in the Year V for having "preached", he won his freedom exactly a month later through the decision of a jury in Grenoble.[103]

Brother Illuminat, like many another, did nothing more than walk across history's stage -- a fitful shadow, in spite of what his name might have presaged. We must pause somewhat longer as we deal with several Brothers who were his confreres or Superiors in the City of the Popes. On the 3rd of March 1794 the Directory of the Department of Vaucluse asked the Directory of the District of Avignon for "the list of all the individuals subject to deportation and imprisonment in the jails of this administrative region. The Clerk of the Court, Laruelle, pointed out, among the suspects, Étienne François Bouhelier, 72 years of age, Sub-Director of the Christian Brothers, a native of Neufchatel in Switzerland, residing in Avignon since the 5th of January 1785 and Jean Boubel resident of this city since 1777. Neither one had taken the "Liberty-equality Oath". They were imprisoned by a decision taken on the 29th Pluviose in the Year II (the 17th of April, 1794).[104]

We know them better as Brothers Maurillian and Florence. The former Brother Superior-general of the Institute and his beloved coadjutor in the Community in Avignon

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[98] See above, pg. 89.

[99] In his necrological notice of 1843 he is referred to as "the holy Brother Servulus".

[100] Motherhouse Archives. HB x.

[101] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 237.

[102] Probably a Dauphine or Savoyard priest.

[103] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg 316 and Archives of the Procurator-general to the Holy See, file no. 1, no. 19.

[104] Departmental Archives of Vaucluse. Note received by the Motherhouse Archives, "Oaths" file.

continued to be examples of marvelous steadfastness. These two old men (Brother Florence was beginning his seventieth year) were not to wander upon the roads toward those hideous floating prisons on the Charente. Rather, they were to endure their Calvary on the banks of the Rhone. A legend has it that Jean Boubel had been taken out on the streets of Avignon and seated backwards on a "lank" horse.[105] Believing that Brothers Florence and Maurillian had been guillotined, Father Guillon included them in the list of "Martyrs for the Faith". [106] Unassailable documentary evidence has proved him in error. We find the names of Jean Boubel and Étienne François Bouhelier on the prisoners' register in Avignon jail for the 8th Prairial in the Year II (May 20, 1794).[107] On that day they entered that institution, and this fact gave rise to the assumption that they had earlier shared the imprisonment of aged and infirm priests who were exempt from deportation. Perhaps at that moment they did get a glimpse of the scaffold. But, a few months later, they were free and living in the city with a baker named Citizen Cure, who had harbored them once before, after they had been expelled from Doree, and who, at the time of their imprisonment, sent them food by way of his young son. (According to tradition, the boy was nicknamed "Elias' raven" by a jailer who had a taste for Old Testament allusions.)[108]

The courageous Curé in his home on Rue Galante finally became the Brothers' "guardian angels". He set up a quiet, peaceful nook for his guests, where they resumed their religious exercises. The Motherhouse owns a small bell which the Brothers used to regulate their monastic day, and which Brother Maurillian brought back with him to "Petit-Collège" in Lyons after Brother Florence's death.[109] Later on we shall recount this epilogue that is bathed in a twilight serenity against a cloud-washed sky.

It remains for us to mention the name of a companion in the sufferings of these two Brothers: Brother Fidelis (Joseph Ricou), who was also in his seventies. Since the documents that have to do with this modest man are, fortunately, quite explicit, they supply information concerning the charges levelled against the members of the entire Community in Avignon. The register cited above mentions, for the 8th Prairial in the Year II (May 28, 1794) that "Joseph Rigue (sic) former Ignorantin Brother" was "accused of being constantly the enemy of the Revolution...and of having been unwilling to submit to the laws of the Republic". A "catalogue of activities which informed the People's Commission of Orange" concerning Ricou sounded the same note, and further, charged this very simple man "with having desired to hamper the progress of the revolutionary government", of "perverting the public mind through fanaticism", and of being "for this reason, denounced as a partisan of despotism and of the tyrants who have united in a coalition against liberty."[110] This might have been brushed aside as a "tall tale", if, in the Year II of the Republic, exaggerations were not the coin of the realm from Artois to Provence, and if they hadn't become the grounds for charges that ended up in capital punishment.

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[105] Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pg. 437) has borrowed this acount from the Annali del nostre Instituto which, as we have seen, is a source that is more than suspect.

[106] Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 638.

[107] Municipal Archives of Avignon, Arrest Register, 1794, no. 143.) Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pp. 46-47.

[108] Motherhouse Archives, Brother Florence file

[109] The bell, 35mm. at the base and 25mm. high, is contained in a small cardboard box. The seal that was once placed on the ribbon has been broken.

[110] Archives of the Bailiff of Carpentras, Revolutionary Period.

Brother Fidelis, "imprisoned in an institution for solitary confinement" in Avignon beginning on the 29th Prairial (June 10, 1794) in the Year II,[111] only escaped torture by dying on the 25th Nivose in the Year III (14th of January 1795) in the military hospital in that city.[112]

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The foregoing pages perhaps give the impression of an interlude. Shadows march rapidly across the screen and then vanish without fixing the spectator's attention for more than a moment or two. The scenes are blurred and the words are few; and the series of anecdotes cannot be brought together into a story in which interest grows and the incidents develop orderly and set the stage for minds breathless with impatience and imaginations intensely involved for the dreaded, although anticipated, end which shatters by the magnitude of its horror. What is missing for these victims, who arose here and there out of the anonymous mass, victims who were generally noble and innocent and ready to make the total sacrifice, was the glory of martyrdom. We must take our leave of them as destiny returned them, at least apparently, to the ways of common humanity. After Brother Solomon, who stands out so powerfully and whose holiness is so unique, we look for other figures robed in light, other stars to set upon our altars, and we look for them everywhere eagerly.

On the Charente estuary, after the ferryboat has brought over its load of travellers and vehicles to the village called Soubise, there appears a landscape of very special intensity. The river, broad and deep, bears its burden of silt and scum, carries down to the ocean the brown ooze from its banks. The contours of the land slip by, silently as it were, into the waves, and the sky and the sea come together. When the clouds gather, and the sea takes on a checkered or dull silver hue, the atmosphere becomes thick with melancholy, but composed and pacifying. In his novel, Dominic, Eugene Fromentin describes the Charente region which neighbors upon La Rochelle, his native city.[113]. To the north of the well- named Fort Vaseux, the low shore line recedes until it reappears near Fouras, whose towers stand out on the horizon. Toward the south, Port-des-Barques adds a lively, nearly joyful touch to the picture, with its fishing boats riding perpendicular to the river and its white cottages which, today, rub shoulders with luxurious summer homes. Beyond there is a cliff covered with handsome foliage and strewn with tamarack. We make our way down to the beach, overgrown with rushes.

A path of pebble-stones and seashells, barely missed by the waters at low-tide, leads to a small island of luminous meadows and dark pines and dominated by a fortress. The island is the barely perceptible point identified by the maps as "Ile Madame". The path, which now unites the island to the mainland, is called the "Passe-aux-Boeufs". Beyond it rises the ramparts of Aix Island, from where Napoleon set out for England and for St. Helena. Finally, on the west, Oleron throws up its barrier to the Atlantic Ocean.

Since 1911 there has been a monument at the entrance to "Passe-aux-Boeufs" -- a commemorative cross on top of a rampart. On the stone pedestal a palm branch stands out in relief, and a star shines out from the midst of the gibbet. Two statues, repre−senting the Apostles Peter and Paul, face a central column. A modest chapel was built on the periphery of a small, former fort, where we can read the names of the 275 persons who died there. On the island itself, on the edge of the wood that looks toward the estuary, stones arranged flush with the ground trace out the shape of another cross.

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[111] Ibid., same file.

[112] Municipal Archives of Avignon, Register of deaths for the Year III (1794-1795).

[113] See also Jacques Herissay, *Les Pontons de Rochefort* (1792-1795), Paris, 1925, pg. 187. We depend upon his description of the place

That's all there is. But, in the solitude, close to the surging sea, it is enough to inspire prayer. On this river, on this coast and on these tiny islands, priests and Religious, martyred by the Revolution, suffered atrociously. For twenty-eight years, in the diocese of La Rochelle and at the Vatican, the cause of beatification has been introduced for a great number of them. The commemorative monument was the result of the efforts of the pastor of St. Nazarius-on-the-Charente and located on the only site that could be purchased. Every August a procession of pilgrims, led by the clergy, comes here. An Altar is built at the foot of the monument and a Bishop celebrates Mass. And then the procession winds along the thousand yards of trail that skirts the sea toward Ile Madame; and the wind bears fragments of the Credo out to sea or toward the Charente beaches.

Of those who survived deportation between 1793 and 1794 about twenty have left accounts of their tortures. Several of these writings have been published. Many historians have found in these texts (printed or unpublished) and in the official documents of the period an abundant evidence to facilitate the rescue of the names of 104 victims, with the view of a judgment sought in Rome by the postulators for the Cause. It is not our task to repeat the work of competent authorities that awaits only the final judgment of the Church. Concerning these tragic events, these almost unimaginable sufferings and these sublime sacrifices we wish only to highlight the essential features, the landmarks that are indispensable to the purposes of our research, which is the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools linked, by persecutors and executioners on the "convict ships of Rochefort" with priests from 34 Departments.[114]

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The weapons forged by the Legislative Assembly against the French clergy appeared inadequate in the eyes of the members of the Convention who, on the 18th of March and on the 24th of April 1793, passed edicts complementary to the Law of the 18th of August 1792. Priests subject to deportation but fraudulently continuing to live within the limits of the Republic would be immediately brought to Districts prisons, judged by a military jury and punished with death in twenty-four hours. Citizens who knew of a priest's hideaway were obliged to inform against him. Non-functioning clerics who had not taken the civil oath were to be put on boats and transported to Guyana. Even the "juring" clergy were not to be protected from vengeance: if they were accused of a lack of patriotism by any six individuals in their canton, they, too, became fair game for prosecution: they joined their former

[114]For verification the reader might consult the following principal ones: L. Audiat, Les Pontons de Rochefort, 1793, Paris, 1872. Dom Leclercq, Les Martyrs, Vol. XI, La Revolution, Paris, 1911 (pp. 312-322). The author reedited (pp. 318-332) Father Antony Lequin's translation of the Latin Poem by Dumonet, Principal of the College of Macon, describing the sufferings that he and his friends endured (Dumonet died on January 20 in intense pain). Canon Lemonnier, La Deportation Ecclesiastique a Rochefort (1794-1795) d'apres les documents officiels, Rochefort, 1916 and Martyrologe de la deportation ecclesiastique a Rochefort-sur-Mer, Rochefort, 1917. James Herissay, Les pretres pendant la Terreur, les Pontons de Rochefort, 1792-1795, Paris, 1925. Canon Lemasson, Les acts des pretres insermente du diocese de Saint-Brieuc mis a mort de 1794 a 1800, suivis de las Captivite de Mgr de La Romagere sur les Pontons de Rochefort, Saint-Brieuc, 1927. Canon L. Poivert, Les Martyrs des Pontons (1794-1795), Paris, 1928. Same author, La Deportation ecclesiastique de l'an II sur les Pontons de Rochefort (listes completes soigneusement revisees, recensement et critique des documents), La Rochelle, 1934. The author of the overall work dealing with the Brothers of the Christian schools (Les Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de Moulins deportes aux iles de las Charente-Inferieure, avec des notes sur leurs confreres lorrains et leurs compagnon bourbonnais de deportation, Moulis, 1929) is Brother Gustave of Mary. The present Postulator of the Cause is Father Poivert, the younger, to who we are indebted for his generous information. The most important Accounts by survivors are the following: 1) Canon Peter Gregory Labiche of Reignefort, published in 1796. 2) Father John Michel (Priest of the diocese of Nancy), published in the same year. 3) Mgr. Legroing la Romagere (see above Lemasson). Later on we shall discuss Father Bienaime's letter that is preserved in the Archives of the Motherhouse of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

adversaries on the ships; and if they showed up again in France, they would be executed.[115] We have already seen that the rejection of the "Liberty-equality Oath" also involved exile to Guyana.[116]

Allier was one of those Departments that showed the greatest zeal in urging the application of the law. And for this reason the Brothers in Moulins were quickly included in the proscription.

Of the five Brothers who made up the Community in 1792, one, Brother Nabord, seems to have left Bourbon immediately after the suppression of the Institute. In September of the same year, someone called "Najote" and described as a Christian Brother was issued a passport in Moulins to go to Lorraine. In all probability it is indeed Brother Nabord who is referred to in this document.[117]

Another, Brother Savinius (Jean Baptist Billy) who had only been in the Congregation since the 16th of April 1788 and who had not taken vows, withdrew to the Commune of Yzeure and occupied the office of steward on the Panloup estate. Nobody bothered about him until November 1793. An "inventory of clerics" residing in that locality indicates that a Jean Baptist Billy, on the 20th Brumaire in the Year II (Nov. 11, 1793) "asked for a passport", which was refused; because he had not taken "the oath required by law" and seemed then "to be liable to deportation".[118]He was imprisoned on the 20th Germinal (9th of April 1794) and in the presence of the peoples' representative, Vernerey, he cited (without effect) the testimony of city officials who saw him attend Commune meetings like a good citizen and a Republican: he died on the 22nd of the following Prairial (June 10th) at "the hall of justice".[119]

There remained Brothers Roger, Leon and Bertauld. On the 3rd of April 1793 the City of Moulins mentioned them among the "fanatics" subject to transportation to America. The District was of the opinion that the three former teachers in the Christian Brothers' schools "should be deported", (since) "they had been dismissed because of their want of patriotism".[120] Brother Bertauld (Jean Clement Proisy) succeeded in escaping: later on we shall examine his conduct which was, during these days, something less than courageous, if not suspect; and we shall later on see him returning to the Institute.

Brothers Roger and Leon were of another stamp. They deserve all possible attention. Brother Roger was a credit to his native city of Orleans.

"...On the 26th day of July, one-thousand-seven-hundred-and- forty", under the direction of a canon-regular in the Abbey of St. Euvertus, "the ceremonies of Baptism were conducted for Pierre Sulpicius Christopher, the son of Pierre Sulpicius Faverge, blacksmith, and Catherine Legout. The child, born during the night and "in danger of dying", had been baptized privately by Alexis Dejan, "surgeon in the parish of St. Vincent".[121]

He was not to figure among "the tiny people who usurp heaven". Without overly embellishing history, it can be assumed that the future Brother Roger was a pupil of the

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[115]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 324-325. We should recall that the aged and the infirm were, in principle, not to be deported, but only confined to special prisons.

[116]See above, pg. 230, note footnote "c".

[117]Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pg. 68, following the Muncipal Archives of Moulins, no. 540

[118]Departmental Archives of Allier, L 612, provisional. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 173). Departmental Archives of Allier, L. 113 (Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 173-174.)

[119]Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 32-33

[120]Departmentl Archives of Allier, L. 178 (Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pg. 85-87.)

[121]Parochial Register of Orleans. (Pointed out by Brother Gustave of Mary, op.cit., pg. 34, note #1.)

Brothers on Rue St. Euvertus, entered upon the ways of his teachers, and received his religious and pedagogical training at Maréville in 1767. He proved to be an excellent Director of the school in Moulins: "Pious and zealous for the education of youth", according to Father Reignefort, "he possessed to a high degree a skill in directing others and enjoyed a vast reputation" in the city.[122] "A fine person...and virtuous", declared Father Guillon.[123]
Brother Léon (Jean Mopinot) was twenty years older than his Director. he came from a respected family in Rheims. We have observed that a "Mopinot" was President of the District in 1791.[124]There was another "Mopinot", Guillaume, who sided not with the beneficiaries, but, like Brother Léon, with the victims of the Revolution. As a monk and a Canon-Regular in the Order of St. Genevieve, in the Abbey of St. Euvertus in Orleans (where Pierre Faverge had been baptized), Guillaume had rejected the oath of 1791 and suffered a harsh imprisonment in Bordeaux in 1793.[125] The Brother whose martyrdom we shall recount was the uncle of this "Guillaume Mopinot".

Son of Jean Baptist Claude Mopinot and Marie Goulart, the future Brother Léon was baptized on the 12th of December 1724 in St. James in Rheims, by Hubert Vuyart, Chaplain of the parish.[126]He was admitted to St. Yon on the 14th of January, 1744, and he made his perpetual vows in the same institution on November the 1st of 1749. Thus, when the schools were closed in Moulins, he was already an old man. Nevertheless, he preserved a remarkable vigor. Indeed, the terrorists treated him as though he were Brother Roger's contemporary.

However, it should be noted that, at first, it was the Brother Director alone who was imprisoned. A "list of 'freelance' priests and of serving- and lay-Brothers who had not taken the civil oath of the 15th of August 1792[127] indicates that prior to the 18th of May 1793 "Roger, Brother of the charity schools" had already "been confined to prison" -- that ancient quadrangular tower that the people in Moulins had dubbed "The Sloven". On the 11th of the following month he was transferred to the house of the "former Sisters of St. Clare", selected on the 21st of September 1792 as the place of confinement for aged and infirm priests.[128][129]
There, on the same June day, Brother Leon rejoined Brother Roger.

The older of the two prisoners might well have expected that his adventure would be confined to that place. But Brother Roger, no doubt, entertained no such illusions: the Departmental decree of the 11th of June 1793 described him as "deportable". Alliers was boiling over with Jacobin fervor. Brissot, who had fled Paris after the 2nd of June, had just been arrested in Moulins and turned over to his implacable enemies. Joseph Fouche was quick to get himself appointed by the Convention to travel to the Departments in the

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[122]Relation by Labiche Reignefort, 1855 ed., pg. 33 (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 33.)

[123]Les Martyrs de la foi, Vol. III, pg. 84 (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 33.)

[124]See above, pg. 112.

[125]Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 36. After Guillaume Mopinot returned to the diocese of Orleans, he occupied various ecclesiastical posts, notably pastor of Fleury-aux-Choix. He died on April 28, 1828. (According to A. Foulques Villaret, les Pretres orleanais dans les prisons de la Gironde.)

[126]Parochial Registers in Rheims (Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 37-38.) The Register at St. Yon states that Brother Leon was born on April 18 1723, in St. Stephen's parish. But this parish's register contains no baptismal certificate that could refer to John Mopinot. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pg. 151.)

[127] Departmental Archives of Allier, L 178 (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 89.)

[128]Ibid., L 54 and 55 (Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 75-76 and 94.)
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midlands; as its proconsul he was to sound the triumphant note of anti-religious hatred. The "Central Committee for Revolutionary Supervision", organized on the 1st of October by a sinister individual, got control of the levers of power.[130]And thus impelled, the people of Bourbonnais outstripped the rest of the French provinces in its career of violence.

On the 21st of October (30th Vendemiaire) a decree of the sovereign Assembly ordered all clerics, including serving-Brothers, who had not taken, or who had retracted, the many oaths required by legislation between 1790 and 1793, and even "jurors" whose "lack of patriotism" was obvious were to be immediately put on board boats and sent to "between 23 and 28 degrees (on) the west coast of Africa (instead of Guyana).[131]

Before exact instructions came from Paris, indeed before the name of "Rochefort" had been mentioned, the Department of Allier sent its prisoners to the Lower Charente.[132]On the 18th of November (28th Brumaire) the "Committee of Supervision" decreed that "all priests were to be deported, excepting those only who, with the approval of the health officers, were recognized to be ill to the point of being unable to support deportation without exposing their lives to immanent danger".[133]Eleven days earlier physicians had certified that, of the forty-two prisoners presented for examination, none were ill enough to elude the law's sanctions.[134]

As a result, on the 24th of November (4th Frumaire) the Departmental Directory took the inexorable decision: "In view of the fact that the failure of the decree of the 6th of August 1792 had emboldened some priests to propagate the errors of fanaticism...; that the want of patriotism on the part of clerics detained in Moulins is sufficiently demonstrated, as much by the refusal of many of them to take the prescribed oath, as by its retraction by many others, and as by their irresolute and fickle behavior depending upon the success or otherwise of the armies of the Republic," the administrators decided to put the Decree of Vendemiaire into execution in twenty-four hours. Fifty-one prisoners would be on their way: 27 would leave "on the fifth day, and 24 on the eighth day of the current ("Revolutionary") week" [135]

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"Pierre Faverge, former charity (Brother)" was on the 4th of Frimaire list. He left Moulins on the 8th, in the second convoy. Gilbert Boudant, pastor of Chantelle, has left an account of the beginning of this emotional exodus.[136]The entire revolutionary guard was under arms; between two rows of bayonets, (the deported prisoners) arrived on the square at Allier, where the guillotine stood permanently. At the sight of the red structure, these good and worthy clerics thought that they were going to be put to death immediately. "We are not afraid", declared many of these generous martyrs. And they rushed forward to be first to mount the scaffold. "Patience, patience", replied the cannibals; "you're not going to be shown the 'machine' here". And three times the tumbrils were lead around the guillotine, while people sung the well-known "*Ca ira*". After this routine, the cortege set out once more. A procession

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[130]Herissay, op.cit., pp. 127-128

[131]Duvergier, Vol. VI, pp. 298-299.

[132]Herissay, op.cit., pg. 127.

[133]Departmental Archives of Allier, L 779 provisional. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 107.)

[134]Medical report dated 17 Brumaire in the Year II (Nov. 8, 1793). (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 102.)

[135] (Trans. Note: The fifth and tenth days respectively of the ten-day week in the Republican calender.) Both groups "would be led by brigade after brigade (of police) to the port of Rochefort".[135]Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 112-116.

[136] :[136]Unpublished Ms., cited by Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 119-120.

of prostitutes and rogues dressed up in chasubles and birettas skipped about in front of the carts, screaming in irony the *Libera* from the liturgy of the dead. The leader of the group, wearing a mitre and carrying a croizer, paraded solemnly and presided over the moving convoy. At the entrance to the bridge, he concluded his wild parody, while, with a mocking sign of the cross, he murmured: *Requiescant in pace!* "Thank you, my dear friends", one of the condemned men (Pierre Lucas, pastor of Rocles) replied wittily, "we don't owe you anything else, do we? After all, collections have been abolished."

The scene was repeated at Limoges, where it was still more offensive and, for that occasion, enlivened by a bloody spectacle. Priests and Religious were obliged to come forward into the middle of a group of donkeys and goats wearing priestly vestments: a pig with a mitre on its head jogged along at the rear of the procession. There was a pause in front of a guillotine, and a deacon, named Rempnoux, who had just been condemned by a local court, was led out between policemen and handed over to the executioner, who, having cut off the man's head, offered it to the circle of prisoners, who were stricken with horror.[137]

Attempting to get a glimpse of Brother Roger on this dismal journey at the beginning of the winter, we see him, like his friends in misfortune, exposed to the winds and the rain and the snow, riding in a jolting, uncovered wagon. An anonymous memoir, *Le légendaire d'Autun,* describes him as "the servant of all, caring for the sick and, with a few words, raising the hopes of those who were suffering for the faith...an object of wonder for his simple joyfulness..."[138]

At Angouleme the victims were treated with some compassion. And, finally, after three days more, they arrived at Saintes. By now there were only 49 of them: they had left one dead on the way and another dying. The ancient city of Saintes, so gentle, so reserved, sitting on the banks of its river, opened its generous heart: its people were reminded of its own martyrs of the first centuries, and doubtless of its Bishop Pierre Louis La Rochefoucauld, cut down the previous year at "the Carmelites", along with his brother, the Bishop of Beauvais. The prisoners deported from Moulins arrived on the 14th of December and were provided hospitality in one of the buildings of the huge Convent des Dames which, standing on the outskirts of the city and alongside its magnificent church, opened its gates and spread wide its courts, its cloisters, its cells and its reception halls. These were hours of relative relaxation: help was provided and letters were permitted. A former Jesuit, Father Joseph Imbert, whom Pierre Faverge had known in the prison in Moulins, entertained (and restored energies) by composing a hymn to the tune of the Marseillaise.[139]

For reasons that we shall now relate, the stay at Saintes lasted for more than three months. There were those who thought that France's masters had not lost all human feeling. On the 14th Ventose in the Year II (the 4th of March 1794) twelve prisoners, among them Brother Roger, sent a petition to the Convention: they asked to be returned to Moulins because of their age and the state of their health: "To deport them after fifteen months of confinement was a second sentence...The decree which allowed them the choice of punishments would then be a trap to their good faith.[140] The behavior of other Departments regarding their priests who continued to be confined in common institutions in their

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[137]Father Bottin, Recit abrege des souffrances de res de 800 ecclesiastiques, etc. Account published in 1796. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 121.)

[138]Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 164-165.

[139]Idem., pg. 124. The author corrects several of Jacques Herissey's errors.

[140]The Law of the 26th of September 1792 seemed to have offered the choice between voluntary exile, immigration to the colonies, or, for the old and infirm, confinement.

respective principle cities contrasts with the behavior of Allier which, by sending its priests into the Department of the Lower Charente is making an assault upon human rights (and) upon the legislative authority.[141]

This was an understandable gesture, but completely without effect. The same punishment, with its unparalleled cruelty, was being readied for everybody. On the 25th of January the Committee for Public Safety provided that vessels should be chartered to transport the prisoners. Chevillard, appointed on the 27th of December the commanding officer at Rochefort,[142]strove to fulfill that injunction. He ran up against a double obstacle: the lamentable condition of the French Navy and the English Navy's control of the sea-routes during wartime.[143] It was impossible to think either of assembling enough ships for transport or to sail very far from the coast. Hence, there was nothing further to do but to leave a few ships loaded with priests at anchor in the port or on the estuary.,[144] On the 2nd Germinal (the 22nd of March) Jean Baptist René La was named to serve as its captain: he was an Ensign, 29 years of age, at one time the master of a coasting vessel, who was born on Re Island. Of him Chevillard wrote: he was "an officer with a vigorous constitution". Actually, he was a brute, with a ferocious look under very thick eyebrows,[145] and a most frightening jailer for such a diabolic mission.

The jail was in need of general repairs. The prisoners were to experience a temporary arrangement on a dilapidated three-master with a worm-eaten keel, which had served as a barracks/hospital for syphylitics and patients with scurvy. It was called the *Borée,* whose captain was a man named Marquiseau, an old officer, who did not cultivate sectarian hatreds.[146147]

On the 6th Germinal (March 26, 1794) the Directory of the Lower Charente decided to rid Saintes of all deportable persons, whether priests belonging to its own constituency or from other Departments. For several days these unfortunate people were gathered together in the Carmelite Convent. On the 8th Germinal they were put on a barge which, with enervating sluggishness, descended the river which meandered through orchard-lands, meadows and villages smiling in the sun. For many of the passengers this was their final spring on earth. On the 14th they arrived at the military port, whose castle, ramparts and square buildings retained the austere and chilly look that Colbert and Vauban had stamped upon them. The Borée was anchored at the far end of the arsenal. Priests and Religious climbed aboard the convict ship, where they were subjected to a regulation body-search. But they had not yet touched the bottom of their wretchedness.

They got a glimpse of the horror as, on the 22nd of Germinal (April 12, 1794), they passed between decks on *Les Deux Associés*. Suffering accompanied them and, amidst insult and ill-treatment, death would take many of them in the darkness and in the stinking atmosphere of their floating prison. The vessel was filled up with its human cargo, like a

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[141]National Archives, D III, 8. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 126.)

[142]Herissay, op.cit., pg. 119.

[143]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. III, pg. 400.

[144]An armed vessel. Actually, it had been transformed from a commercial vessel into a gunboat with a battery of canons. *Les Deux Associés*, was the first one available.

[145]Herissay, op.cit., pg. 168 and Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 128-129.

[146]Idem., pg. 123.

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slave-trader into which blacks were flung. But blacks were cattle to be sold, merchandise that had a price and that could rely upon a minimum of care, edible food and a bit of space in which to breathe. Captain Laly knew very well that regarding his deportees neither mercenary calculations nor simple pity had to guide his behavior. The Republic had abandoned them to his good pleasure.

Under the beams, between rolls of rope, straw mattresses, hammocks, planks and buckets that served as latrines, 288 prisoners[148]were jammed together, nearly crushing and stifling one another. Soon there would be 400[149] and there were more to come. They sailed downstream toward the harbor on Ile d'Aix. On the 4th Floreal (April 24, 1794), opposite Fort Vergeroux, two more prisoners died. On the 7th Father François Normand, the former chaplain of the Brothers at St. Yon died.[150]On the following day *Les Deux Associés*[151]lay at anchor facing the mid-point of the Ile d'Aix.

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At the end of April Brother Léon joined Brother Roger on board ship. A third convoy comprising 25 prisoners had left Moulins on the very day the first two groups entered Rochefort. The Directory of Allier resolved, on the 31st of March, to clear out its jail of several of its guests whom, in its fetching language, it called "contagious vermin".[152] The seventy-year old Jean Mopinot was among them. After having spent some time probably on the *Bonhomme-Richard* in Rochefort waters, he was introduced into Captain Laly's hell. On the 3rd of May he witnessed the shooting of Canon Roulhac, who had been turned over to the firing squad "as an example".[153]

At the same time the hellish maw opened up for new victims: the clerics in Meurthe. Fifty-nine selected for deportation from the prisons in Nancy left for Charente on the 12th Germinal. Four Christian Brothers had the distinction of being associated with these priests: Brothers Jugon, Donat Joseph, Avertine and Uldaric. Their names have already appeared in these pages when we discussed the personnel list at Maréville for October 1792.[154] However, these Brothers did not belong to the great institution in Lorraine. Three of them had come from the Community in Nancy; and Brother Avertine taught at Luneville. Their legal status was different from that of the teachers and supervisors at the reform school. They were treated as obstinate dissenters. Confined to the Carmelite monastery in May 1793, they had not been restored to freedom at the time of the fire in the "Leopold building". And they could not take advantage of the circumstances that assured safety to the Brothers accused of that

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[148]The figure is given by Chevillard in his letter of the 23rd Germinal in the Year II (April 12, 1794) in his letter to the Ministry of the Navy. (Brother Gustave of Mary. pg. 133.)

[149] Chevillard's letter of Floreal 12(May 1, 1794). (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 133.)

[150]See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pp. 172-177 for valuable information concerning the Chaplain of St. Yon, especially on his interrogation and the series of prisons in which he was held.

[151]Herissay, pg. 188.

[152]Decree of 11 Germinal in the Year II (April 1, 1794). Departmental Archives of Allier, L 81 and 695. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 140-141.)

[153]Lemonnier, La Deportation ecclesiastique, pg 82.

[154]See above, pp. 242-243.

calamity.[155]

We possess the baptismal certificate of Brother Uldaric, who alone of the four perished in the torture: "John Baptist Guillaume, son of the wedded Nicolas Guillaume and Antoinette Mignot, born and baptized the 1st of February 1755. Godfather: Jean Baptist Quiney, Godmother: Frances Ymones.[156]His native village, Fraisans, was a dependency of the parish in Dampiere-les-Dole in the diocese of Besancon.[157]

There exists also the beautiful profession of faith that the future martyr pronounced at Nancy on the 21st of January 1791: "I, the undersigned, native of the parish of Dampierre, in the diocese of Besancon, in Franche-Comte, entered the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on the 16th of October 1785 under the name of Brother Uldaric, declare that I love my vocation and, with the help of God's grace, desire to persevere in it until death."[158]

Indeed, this lofty soul could only correspond with the Grace he so earnestly sought. We can imagine the heroism with which he, as well as other victims, supported the weariness and the humiliation of the long journey from Nancy to Rochefort, the *tolle, tolle crucifige* with which the populace, like the one in Jerusalem, welcomed these witnesses for Christ, at Toul, Troyes, Sens and Orleans and the theft that wiped out the greater part of their personal belongings and their modest supply of money during a stopover in Poitiers.

"An eighth of a league" from Rochefort, they were made "to alight from the coach onto the banks of the Charente"; and they were immediately placed on board the *Bonhomme-Richard.* At that point a second search took place and six days later they were transferred to *Les Deux Associés*.[159]

In June the convict ships[160] received a seventh disciple of St. John Baptist de La Salle: wretched and lonely, it seems he did not even have the consolation of being reunited with his confreres and he was to die in obscurity. The inquiry undertaken with a view to a canonical process, in his case, produced results that were too inconclusive for the Postulator to include this Brother's name on the list presented to the Holy See. Barring further discoveries, Brother Pierre Christopher (Christopher Sheck[161] will remain (for us, who do not penetrate God's mysteries) tucked away in a corner of the Father's heavenly mansion.

He was born in Hoste (or Oberhost), Canton of Forbach, on the 6th of September 1737, of Pierre Scheck and Eve Jacque. He entered the Institute in 1766, at the novitiate in

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[155]See above, pg.286. For their curricula vitae, given in the text we have consulted Bulletin des Ecoles chretienne for April 1912, pp. 142-146 and Brother Gustave of Mary's book, pp. 147-148 which, for some details, completes the Etat des ci-devant Freres des Ecoles chretiennes domicilies dans le district de Nancy en Octobre 1792, a report preserved in the Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, Series H, no. 2355. The documents concerning their imprisonment belong to this same source, Series L, nos. 3302, 2211 and 463. A fifth Christian Brother, Brother Beat (Jean Adolphe Rollet), who had belonged to the Community in Morhange and was sixty-five years of age, is included with the others on the list of suspects held in the Carmelite Monastery. He, too, had refused to take the oath. He was arrested at the home of someone named Peter Ferme, a furniture merchant in Nancy, on St. Charles St., in whose house Brother Beat, along with Brother Donat Joseph resided. Beat was imprisoned at the same time as Brothers Uldaric, Jugon, Donat and Avertine; but he was not deported.

[156]Translation of the original Latin text.

[157]Fraisans, today a parish, belongs to the diocese of Saint Claude. (Bulletin cited, pg. 127.)

[158]Municipal Archives of Nancy, P 1791

[159]Father Jean Michel's Journal. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 152-154.)

[160]We use the term as sanctioned by usage. However, applied to the ships riding in the harbor at Aix Island, with the usual armament, the terms seems inappropriate.

[161] "Scheck", "Schaeck", "Cheque", the spelling varies according to documents.

Maréville, and was perpetually professed in 1776. A "Report of priests imprisoned in the institution called 'Daughters of Christian Doctrine' in Metz" describes him as "the former Brother-cook and -gardener of the former 'Christian Doctrines'"[162] and notes that he had not taken the oath of the 14th of August 1792 and that his arrest took place in the region where he was born.

It is nearly certain that it occurred at a date prior to the 15th of September 1793. For on that day the city officials in Hoste wrote a certificate the purpose of which could only be to grant the Brother the funds which needy clerics enjoyed while confined to jail. The Lorraine villagers declared, in writing that showed they were not very familiar with the spelling nor the structure of the French language: "...The individual named Christopher Schaeck has nothing in our region, neither land, nor garden, neither grazing land, nor house, nor furniture;...he has given his property to the convent in return for life and living...(He) serves now as a poor man...The former serving-Brother had become a day-laborer.

Among dissident "clerics", he had been separated from his spade and his wheelbarrow and restored to his dignity as a Brother. The Directory of the Department of the Moselle condemned him, along with the priests, to deportation at a meeting held on the 28th Germin in the Year II (April 18, 1794).[163]

For several weeks the prisoners from Moselle were placed under bond aboard the Bonhomme-Richard. Then they were confined, not in the hold of *Les Deux Associés*, but on board a vessel of the same kind, the Washington, lent to the country by Citizen Demisy, a rich merchant in La Rochelle. Citizen Gibert had taken command of it at the end of Floreal:[164]for coarseness and ferocity he, perhaps, surpassed John Baptist Laly. On the 22nd of Prairial (the 10th of June) 200 victims[165] were handed over to him.

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After boarding *Les Deux Associés* the "Confessors of the Faith" committed to writing a remarkable set of "resolutions" which one of them, Gregory Laviche of Reignefort, has preserved for us. They resolved "never to give way to useless concern about their release", but to attempt "to take advantage of their time of confinement by meditating on the years gone by", by preparing for the future, "in order to discover their souls' freedom through their physical imprisonment". Having learned that among them there were "jurors" who, in spite of the promises made to them by the Revolution, had not been spared, they bound themselves not "to show aversion for any of their brothers". They would not become involved "with political news, being satisfied to pray for the success or their country" and to prepare themselves, if God should permit them to see their homes again, to "become sources of edification and models of virtue for the people".[166].

It is hardly necessary to recall the conditions under which this priestly "retreat" was conducted. At the human level the life of the deported prisoners seems like a frightful nightmare. Vermin and fleas covered them like a filthy hairshirt; mange, scurvy, dysentery,

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[162]We know that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were, frequently. however imprecisely, called "Brothers of Christian Doctrine".

[163]Documents cited or analyzed by Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 154-157.

[164]He had been named to the post on the 27th Floreal (May 16.).

[165]Herissay, pp. 245-248.

[166]Reedited by Peponnet in Temoignages des pretres deporte pendant la Revolution, 1914, pg. 175. Herissay op.cit., pp. 222-224

typhus and gangrene afflicted them and confined them to their wretched beds. Those afflicted with the fever shivered in the darkness between decks; and, sometimes, sudden insanity would be revealed in a shriek.

Under the pretext of disinfecting them, the prisoners were asphyxiated by fumigations of pitch while the hatches were closed. Wet with perspiration, and standing on a bridge that was divided by a barrier bristling with iron spikes, the prisoners were exposed to rain, and wind and blasts of cold air. They were fed on a disgusting daily allowance of food in which weevils swam and which they were often forced to eat without spoons. Their linen had run out, and they were clothed in rags. Reading, and indeed even vocal prayer, was forbidden. There wasn't an instant of peaceful solitude, but only the perpetual discomfort of bodies touching and, of course, contaminating, one another. There were insults and threats and, for a word or a gesture, condemnation to irons. They were surrounded by a circle of demons in a pit of adversity that not even Dante had imagined.

Ignorant and indifferent quacks omitted to prescribe the necessary medical care and to dispense the proper remedies. Only among their companions, hardly more healthy than themselves, did the sick find infirmarians, who, heedless of their own peril, devoted themselves to the point of exhaustion. And priests proved to be those good Samaritans who, while caring for wounds, also comforted souls. They were able to shield from searches the consecrated hosts which they divided into tiny particles for the last Sacrament;[167]and a small box contained the "holy oils" for Extreme Unction. Absolution was performed guardedly in order to quiet consciences and to reconcile to the Church schismatics called to appear before God.

Death paid its daily visitation, delivering and crowning martyrs. And on the 21st of May 1794 it came to the bedside of Brother Léon, who was among the edifying prisoners to whom the survivors paid tribute. And this is why we may hope to see him one day, along with Brothers Roger and Uldaric (in the company of Brother Solomon) among the Blessed in the Institute. Labiche Reignefort wrote: "In praise of him I can do no better that to say that he was a saint; among us he had that reputation, and he deserved it. His death only confirmed that favorable opinion. This holy man had preserved at his very advanced age all the candor and joy of youth.[168]And perhaps he pressed to his lips the crucifix that Father Reignefort had carved from wood and which now attracts our reverent attention in the memento room of the Bishop's headquarters in La Rochelle.

He was buried on Ile d'Aix where, during the first months, it was decided to bury the dead. Several priests took turns as gravediggers. They set out with the bodies in a launch under a marine guard. And they made their way from the wharf to the village, crossed a broad esplanade, and then, by way of a path, dropped down to Tridoux Cove. There, later on were to be discovered a quantity of bones, a part of which today rest in the church's crypt.[169]

June and July went by. Summer that year was torrid. The death rate became appalling, and even the crew of *Les Deux Associés* was beginning to fear contagion. A reputable physician was commissioned to make an investigation: "If four-hundred dogs", he concluded, "spent a night in the priests' place, the next day they would be either dead or mad".[170] The Terror, weakened by the fall of Robespierre, loosened its grip. The bureaucrats in the Lower

[167]See Canon Lemonnier, Les pretres deporte et l'Eucharistie, Paris, 1928, pp. 27-30.

[168]Labiche Reignefort, op.cit., pg. 96. Cf. Lemonnier, Martyrologe, pg. 119 and Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 162.

[169]Herissay, pp. 301-302.

[170]According to L. Audiat, op.cit., pg. 21.

Charente grew bold enough to put together a sort of hospital on L'Ile Madame.[171]There, beginning on August the 18th were brought the sick and the convalescing, who thrilled with joy as they approached the beach and saw the greenery, the flowers, the butterflies and the birds.

But the arrangement proved primitive - mere tents, without beds. Meanwhile, the landing had taken the last ounce of strength of the sick, who were scarcely able to stand on their feet. It was not long before they were filling up the cemetery that had been set up in the middle of the dunes.[172] Brother Uldaric died during the night of August 17th-18th.[173]

Brother Christopher quickly followed. He had probably remained the only member of the Congregation on board the *Washington*, where the sanitary conditions appeared less noxious than on *Les Deux Associés*. He died on the 6th of September, and, if we are to accept Father Aime Guillon's testimony,[174] he was buried on L'Ile d'Aix.

Laly's ship, venting pestilence, had been totally evacuated on the 20th of August. It was washed down, scraped and disinfected before its human cargo was reloaded. The healthy (or those thought to be so) went aboard the *Indian*. It is assumed that Brother Roger was among them. Guillon relates that Brother Roger, a former Director of the schools in Moulins, used the hands once skilled in the art of calligraphy to repair shoes. The ship's captain was Antoine Boivin, a simple man who chatted freely with the prisoners and wept when he had to part with them.[175]His second in command, Ensign Pierre Bonnau, "young and generous...was immensely pleased to obtain for all of them any help that might depend upon him".[176] Brother Roger may have experienced these reawakenings of kindness; and perhaps they softened the gallant Brother's final moments. Pierre Faverge, having filled with good works and suffering the life given him in Baptism in the Church of St. Euvertus, died on the 12th of September 1794 at the age of fifty. "He came", writes Labiche Reignefort "from a Department that had supplied many worthwhile men for deportation;[177]and he wasn't the least of them."

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With this sacrifice the martyrdom of the deported Brothers in Rochefort came to an end. Pierre Vaillant, Claude François Trimaille and Jean Pierre Melnotte were included in the number of the survivors. However, releases were slow in coming. Well after Thermidor, while political prisoners were being set free, priests and Religious continued to be persecuted. All during the autumn and at the beginning of the winter they were still on the convict ships: "The hospital opened on Citizens' Island will be disbanded", the authorities at the Port of Rochefort announced in Vendemiaire: "...the wind has blown down the tents, and the season of the year no longer permits the maintenance of this facility. On the advice of the Committee, the order has been given to evacuate the sick to...the *Indian*...The convalescents

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[171]Called at the time "Citizens Island"; but renamed "St. Mary's" or "Our Lady's Island" by the priests.

[172]A pebblestone cross marks the place where four skeletons were found; 275 victims were buried on Madame Island: M. L. Poivert suggests 254 (Le deportation ecclesiastique, etc. pg. 40.)

[173]Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 165.

[174]Les Martyrs de la foi, Vol. IV, pg. 598.

[175]Herissay, pg. 309.

[176]According to the account of Father Besson, deported prisoner from Cotes-du-Nord, and of Labiche Reignefort. (Herissay, pg. 309.)

[177]This must be understood of deportation in Gironde, which was less shocking that the Hell that was the convict ships; no priest or Religious of the existing diocese of Orleans (Department of Loiret) is included on the list as revised by Canon Poivert.

will be placed on board *Les Deux Associés* and the able-bodied on the *Washington*.[178]The official document estimated that the number of prisoners had been reduced to 280, of whom 114 were in more or less precarious health, and a few more died during the final months of captivity.

The three vessels were moored off the coast, opposite Port-des-Barques. Life on board had become less dreadful. And while Gibert, the commander of the *Washington*, clung to his churlish Jacobin manner, Laly was attempting to disguise his "mad-dog" character with "small-town" amiability. He was beginning to fear public opinion. A report sent to the Legislative Committee in Paris had earlier indicated that "enforcement measures" taken with regard to clerics had been "excessive" in some Departments.[179]In December Father Grégoire, who had recovered his influence with the Convention, received letters, first from a naval officer, Philip Sequin, and then from a distinguished business man in Rochefort, Elias Thomas (a Protestant), demanding "justice" and "humanity" for the victims.[180] The "Constitutional" Bishop of Loire-and-Cher, stubborn in his schism but whose faith, courage and generosity were beyond discussion, listened to these appeals. Among his colleagues in the Convention, he was to meet with those whose history had not prepared them for clemency. Among them was the butcher, Legendre, who, on the 15th of May 1792, had been heard proposing that priests be loaded on garbage skows and, like filth, be sunk at sea.[181] In his reply of the 1st Nivose in the Year III (21st of November, 1794) to Grégoire's speech on the free exercise of religion,[182]Legendre continued to declare his total opposition to religion. Nevertheless, his earlier fury came to be transformed into mere verbal hostility and (cleverly shaded) statements of disdainful indifference. He was getting ready to play a role in the liberation of the victims.

On the 30th of January, 1795, the Committee for Public Safety passed a number of release orders. On the 4th of February about 200 prisoners, healthy or convalescent, returned up the Charente on *Les Deux Associés* as far as Rochefort. First on schooners, and then on carts, they were brought to Saintes. Claude Alexander Brigeat, pastor of Lagny, one of the deportees, announced on the 24th Pluviose (the 18th of February) to the administrators of Meurthe that ten persons subject to the jurisdiction of that Department had arrived four or five days earlier in the city which, during the previous year, had left its guests with such consoling memories. Among them were Melnotte, Trimaille and Vaillant.[183] Once again the *Couvent des Dames* was opened; and once again the citizens of Saintes extended their compassion. There was rest and relaxation for the emaciated, feverish and weary group, as it passed from misery and physical and moral torture to this marvelous peace in the so aptly named city of Saintes. For them the river here was nothing more than something cool and smiling between the monastery's bell-tower and the belfry of St. Eutropus, over against terraces and gardens closed off by picket fences, and over against the white facades that

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[178]Archives of the Port of Rochefort, D, 144. Cited by Herissay, pp. 322-323.

[179]National Archives, D III, 361. Cited by Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 127.

[180]Seguin's letter of the 15th Frimaire in the year III (Dec. 6, 1794), and Elias Thomas' of the the 29th Frimaire (Dec. 20).

[181]La Gorce, op.cit., pg. 153.

[182]Idem., ibid., Vol. IV, pg. 24.

[183]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L, 463.

sheltered all the courtesy of antique France. The breath of spring caressed their faces; and charity silenced hunger, bound up wounds and cheered souls. Hell seemed to have been abolished; monuments of Roman antiquity, pediments, columns, triumphal arches could only conjure up the perennial glory of Christianity in the eyes of the "Confessors of the Faith".
On the 25th of March (the 5th Germinal) Legendre's signature appeared for the first time at the bottom of a decree. His father-in-law had been corresponding with a Catholic in Rochefort, a M. La Meriliere, who, learning that Legendre had just been elected to preside over the Committee for Public Safety, and assured of his sympathetic feelings, seized the occasion to obtain as many collective favors as possible. Haste was of the essence, since presidential duties did not endure more than two weeks.[184]. And haste explains a number of curious blunders: thus, a decree of the 8th Germinal freed Father Imbert and Brother Roger (both of whom had been long since dead).[185] But many other prisoners were in a position to take advantage of the assistance of their friends. On the 15th Germinal (the 4th of April), Legendre and his colleagues ordered Father Michael and Brothers Donat Joseph, Jugon, Avertine and their companions from La Meurthe to be set free.[186] During the final days of the month the *Couvent des Dames* housed none but the sick, who were being cared for in the infirmary. By the 30th of April the Brothers from Lorraine had returned to Nancy. No doubt but what, before they left Saintes, they joined in the expression of gratitude addressed to the people of the city and written by Father Feletz.[187]

None of the surviving Brothers has left his Institute an account of the awesome and splendid agony of the Year II. On the other hand, among the documents of first importance preserved at the Motherhouse is a letter from a priest who had been bound to the Brothers of the Christian Schools both by the ties of blood as well by the most steadfast affection. Once again, we refer to Father Bienaimé, who, in 1789 and 1791, wrote to his brother, Brother Philippe Joseph.[188] we[189] recognize the handwriting in the text that follows as that of the pastor of Gigney. After refusing to take the oath, Father Bienaimé retired to Chalaines, near Vaucoulerus, as he said he would in his letter of March the 15th 1791. It was there that in 1793 he was arrested by revolutionaries from Meuse, and, along with clerics from that Department, during the following year, was dragged along the roads to a life of suffering in the convict ships. At the same time as several prisoners confined to the *Washington,* he was set free in February of 1795 and, as consequence, earlier than his confreres from Meurthe, who had been aboard *Les Deux Associés*. His sufferings were no less than theirs. Surely, he shared them with Brother Christopher, although he makes absolutely no reference to him. In

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[184]Herissay, pp. 409-412

[185]National Archives, F-7 4551. (Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 167.)

[186] Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 166-167.

[187]Herissay, pp. 415-421. One-hundred-and-fifty priests left the Convent in Saintes on the 23rd Germinal (the 12th of April). Canon Poivert, in his 1934 pamphlet, gives the following statistics: 829 clerics and Religious deported; 547 died (8 before arriving at Rochefort, 28 at the Maritime Hospital, 505 on the convict ships or on Madam Island, and 6 on the return to Saintes); 282 were set free. At no. 321 on his "general list" (op.cit., pg. 19) he includes a Franc Nicholas Gerard, whom he describes as a "Brother of the Christian Schools, from the Department of Vosges, deported on the Washington, and liberated at Saintes. This individual is quite unknown to us. On the other hand, Brother Aventine, whose existence many documents prove, is unkown to Father Poivert, who (at no. 810) mentions only a Francis Alexis Vaillant-Pressant, priest from the Department of the Moselle, deported on the Two Partners, and set free as well at Saintes. (Those who were liberated are not considered candidates for martyrdom.)

[188]See above, pp. 11, 12 and 65-67.

[189] Canon Poivert, "general list", no. 64 (pg 10 of his 1934 pamphlet). Father Bienaime is there said to have been thirty years old. "Mansuy" may perhpas not be a Christian name, but a second patronymic.

order to listen to a quite stirring echo of our own martyrs, and to imagine what might have been the feelings of the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle upon reading the letter received by Brother Philippe Joseph, who no doubt shared it with them, it is well to close out this story of the deportation during the period of the National Convention with the following extraordinary document.

The letter is dated from Chalaines, "the 28th of May or the 8th Germinal". The context permits us to add without difficulty (as we shall immediately see), "1795 or the Year III". "After an absence of nearly two years, my dear and worthy brother and friend, I've just landed in the middle of our family...Next month it shall have been two years since I was shamefully arrested and brought...to the capital of my Department. Soon thereafter came the order for the exportation (sic) of all dissident clerics".[190]Throughout the summer they awaited the consequences of this threat, which would make more specific the order of Vendemiaire.[191]The order from Mallarmé, the peoples' representative, demanding that the priests depart for Rochefort, arrived "in April".

Immediately the convoy left Bar-le-Duc. There was talk of exile "to Madagascar". The "two-hundred leagues" across France took twenty-eight days. At Poitiers the victims were searched under obscene conditions and with ignominious brutality. Before they could enter Rochefort they were piled onto the *Bonhomme-Richard* and had "to sleep down in the hold" or "on deck", or on "the staves of an old cask". But the sailors were willing to run errands; and it was possible to have one's laundry done, receive help from "friends who had not been sent by way of Poitiers", procure medicines and send letters.

At the end of five weeks the moment came to be transferred to the *Washington* and sail down the channel. Bienaimé writes: "It was then that we suffered pretty nearly everything that it is possible to suffer at the hands of men. Bedded down on the planking, squeezed in and crowded one upon the other, we could scarcely breathe, and even then, what we had to breathe! Confined to a single spot, we each had a space of about 14 inches[192] wide by five feet and a few inches. long;[193]and we were required to remain for sixteen whole hours, without being able to go out for air, and always in irons. Buckets were supplied to take care of the needs of nature; also, there were a number of old men, weak and ill, who spread the most serious and unbearable contagion. Noxious air, the sick, bad breath, a heat concentrated and so intense that we seemed to be living in a furnace, over-crowding, and overall, to fill up the measure of our misery, we were all covered with vermin, and a sweat so profuse that it soaked not only everything around us, but it did so in such a way that it could be collected by the spoonfuls on our bodies -- that, my good friend, was how we spent the whole of this final phase.

This picture, sketched in haste and in sentences which jostle one another and some of which are incomplete, is the terror-stricken cry of a man miraculously snatched from the rack. As we read the document after 143 years, we relive the drama of Charente more intensely than when reading a published account of whatever origin. At the risk of being repetitious, we would like to share something of this horror with the reader.

The writer goes on to point out the harshness of the officers and of "nearly the entire

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[190]The reference is certainly to the Order of the 23rd of April 1793.

[191]Father Bienaimé writes that the Convention repeated its decree "during the winter" – a slight lapse of memory.

[192]I.e., 378. m.

[193]I. e., about 1.65 or 1m.70

crew", the uninterrupted blasphemy, the loaded canons and the prohibition (under the worst sort of threats) of "the most insignificant religious practice".

Three-quarters of those deported, he writes, died: "If only those who are alive today were free! But no, they all, some more than others, feel the effects of their former condition. I am one of the better off...God grant that it be for His greater glory, for my own salvation and that of others!"

Father Bienaimé was freed under the following circumstance: "We were about to disembark at Xaintes (sic) when a maritime officer was seen approaching the commander of our ship to notify him" of the order given in favor of those who had been deported from Meuse. They immediately disembarked onto a launch which had just delivered the representative of the place; and conducted to Rochefort for the final formalities, they met "some simple people" who were happy to be of help to them. The "eagerness" of the people in Rochefort, who welcomed them presently was at least as warm; the wealthy and generous capital of Aunis, where from then on Catholic and Protestant no longer rivaled one another, except in their charities, and distributed clothes, money and food to the priests. With this, the beginning of 1795, a new spirit prevailed in French hearts, like a spring of water that has been deepened and cleared of mud. The stages on the return-trip became, for yesterday's victims, the reverse of the resting places on their road into exile: Niort, Poitiers, Tour and Paris "were conspicuous" (the phrase is Bienaimé's) for the deferential refinement of peoples' conduct and attentiveness.

Nevertheless, the position of those who were liberated remained "critical". The antireligious laws were still in force. "Dissidents", and, as a consequence, suspects since 1791, and "non-juring" priests were in no way assured of their future. The threat of persecution continued to hang over their heads. Bienaimé continued in his letter to his brother: "Pray God to come increasingly to my aid and to enlighten and direct my steps along the road I must travel."He figured that he was "alone of his opinion in the Canton" of Chalaines. As we shall see, Brother Philippe Joseph was quite isolated, although he enjoyed the hospitality of a "courageous and generous citizen".[194]

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Indeed, it was at this point that the bloodiest period of the Revolution came to an end. But we must go back to single out and pay tribute to other martyrs. It was in October 1793, according to the chroniclers,[195]that Brother Raphael fell under the blows of fanatics in Uzès. Born in Bouhans, in the diocese of Besancon, on the 22nd of January 1720, and entered into the novitiate in Avignon on the 10th of April 1750, perpetually professed in 1757, schoolteacher in Uzès between 1771 and 1782, Jacques Pataillot, in February 1789 had obtained from Brother Florence permission to leave the school on Rue Doree in Avignon in order to spend his old age in a Community where the dearest memories of his apostolate continued to abide.[196] The death of this servant of God, as well as his childhood has been described by a Brother Jean Louis, who states that he got his information "from persons worthy of belief". While we may very well consider the facts of this account as exact enough, we must recognize, however, that the generally acknowledged date is very much subject to

[194]Motherhouse Archives, file HA p 4. Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol.II, pp. 641-642) paraphrased Father Bienaime's letter. Also, some (more authentic) parts of the text have been published in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pp. 141-142.

[195]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 639, following l'Histoire des Revolutions de Nimes et d'Uzes by Ad. Pontecoulant. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April 1912, pg. 171.

[196]Historique de la province Meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 221.

suspicion. The killing to which Brother John Louis alludes goes back to June 1790:[197] but the presence of the Brothers in their residence, which he mentions, cannot be verified after 1791, since in that year they rejected the oath both at Nimes and Uzès, which more or less immediately occasioned their dismissal. In this context, we transcribe the following testimony. While the Capuchins were being killed in Nimes, similar monsters came to the Brothers' residence ("in Uzès" has to be understood here: it has to be added when we know certainly where Brother Raphael was living and in order to span the five leagues that separate the two cities to make contact with the other killers) Although they had come unexpectedly, two Brothers were lucky enough to escape by going over the roof which, in that house, was easy. Only for Brother Raphael was every sort of escape impossible, since, because of his great age and many infirmities, he was bedridden; and perhaps he thought that his sufferings would strike compassion in these bloodthirsty men. In any case, they were no sooner inside than, like fiends, they threw themselves upon him and covered him with blows. While they were treating him thus cruelly, the fine old gentleman said to them: "My children, what have I done to deserve this?" All of them, Catholics as well as Protestants, had been his pupils. But they were deaf to his moving words and continued to strike him and finally threw him out of a window...Although he fell from a height of two stories, he was not killed. One of them cut off one of his ears and bore it away as a trophy...(Brother Raphael) was taken to the city hospital...But in spite of the care taken of him, he lived only three days more.[198]We have been observing horror-filled outbursts of collective madness, like so many others that erupted in southern France between 1790 and 1800 and that were reawakened in 1815 during the "White Terror". The execution that we are about to describe, while no less iniquitous, preserved the appearance of legality, as perfectly authentic documents testify.

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Among the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the Brother who whose death we shall now relate was the last to shed his blood during the Revolution. Up to now, we have only had a glimpse of him: he was Brother Moniteur, one of the teachers at St. Malo. [199] The time has come to get to know him better and to tell the story of the last days of his life.

His death is associated with Brittany, although his baptismal certificate reveals that he was a native of Ardenne. The document, taken from the parish register in Miziere reads: "In the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-fifty, the twenty-sixth of the month of April, I, Jean François Etienne, priest and first cantor of this parish, baptized the son of Guillaume Martinet and Jeanne Michel, his married father and mother, to whom, born this day, I gave the name, Maurice..."[200]

It was a modest family of the ancient city washed by the Meuse: the father was a master butcher, who died in 1758, leaving his widow to care for their many children. Their three boys and five girls were listed in the register mentioned above. Jeanne Michel, who survived her son Maurice by four years, was, it appears, a valliant woman of the Eastern Marches, lavish in her concerns and skillful in the management of her home. She maintained

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[197]See above, pg. 37.

[198]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Jean Louis' account, file communicated by Brother Fredebert. The author of the account declares that the man who cut off Brother Raphael's ear was known to the latter personally.

[199]See above, pp. 118-119 and 249.

[200]Document published in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1910, pg. 21.

contact with her son through her letters, and we shall look at some of the things she wrote.
Good blood tells. Maurice Martinet, admitted to Maréville on the 15th of November 1772, made his final vows on the 20th of September 1778. He was one of those unflinching characters for whom neither threat nor danger can force to deviate. Like his confreres, Brother Augustus (Jean François Dravenel) and Brother Luke (Alexis Ville) in St. Malo where they taught since 1787,[201] he refused to take the oath. At the end of September 1792, the city decided to remove all three men from the operation of the schools. On the 19th of January 1793, after an inventory of the property, they were expelled from their residence. They were told "to clear out of the jurisdiction of the Commune within forty-eight hours".[202] However, Brother Moniteur was not given his passport until the 25th of January: "Permit Maurice Martinet to go to the interior of the Republic. By profession a teacher of writing, forty-three years of age, five-feet, three inches tall, black hair and eyebrows, grey eyes, long nose, average mouth, round chin, low forehead and thin face.[203]

Brother Luke, a southerner (born near St. Paul-Trois-Chateaux in 1758), was quick to return to his native region. But the other two were still dedicated to the people of St. Malo, and, three times, between October 1792 and January 1793, Brother Augustus asked the city officials to grant him and his associates the freedom to teach. It is difficult to know whether he ended up tutoring pupils privately, since his situation as a dissident placed him under a cloud. But Brother Moniteur never did manage to get out of difficulties. His mother wrote him: "My dear son, painfully aware of your letter; and the realization that you are not earning a livelihood troubles me a great deal."

This letter is dated the 23rd Nivose in the Year II (the 12th of January 1794). Thus it was nearly a year during which Moniteur had been extending his precarious existence in Brittany. He wandered along the coast and adjacent regions, sometimes in Parame, sometimes in Dol. He finally got back to his starting point and went into hiding behind the walls of St. Malo. He was not totally without funds. Once again his mother writes: "I see that your friends have not forgotten you, which consoles me. (And she addressed this letter) To Citizen Maurice Martinet, living at Citizen du Bois', near the Cross of Fief, in St.Malo.[204]

A fine woman had taken pity on the outlaw Brother, who was still living in her house when, on the 18th of January, Brother Luke mailed from La Palud (Vaucluse) the following lines the importance of which is inescapable: "Brother, friend and fellow citizen, I do not know what to think of your gloomy silence. Has something unpleasant happened to you? Have you died? Or has your hand become incapable of writing me a wretched word of response? Brother Moniteur's fate certainly seemed something very painful in the eyes of his former colleague.

What is curious, however, is that Brother Luke was expecting money or the "material" wherewith to clothe himself from this man who had been holed up in his refuge in St. Malo and was just hours away from being even more fiercely hunted down. Perhaps Maurice Martinet controlled the purse-strings in a friendly group. But let us continue to read the letter, which will make some suggestions on points of fact: "I do not know whether the

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[201] Brother Gustave of Mary, Le Frere Moniteur (supplement to Les Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de Moulins), pp. 185-186.

[202] Municipal Archives of St. Malo, LL, 102. (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1910, pg. 13.)

[203] File 271 of the Criminial Court of Ille-and-Vilaine. (Bulletin cited, pg. 14 and Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 188.)

[204] File 271 of the Criminal Court of ILLe-and-Vilaine. (Letter found in Brother Monitor's possession when he was arrested.) Bulletin cited, pg. 15.

honorable Sufflet is still at home; this is why I haven't written to him. If you have any news of him, send it to me; if you write him, assure him of my profound respect. It's been a long time since I've heard from Citizen Florence, but I hope to go to see him shortly and embrace him; I shall be careful to present your assurances of respect, as well as to his dear friend Morille (sic), and I believe that such is your intention. I have not wished you a Happy New Year, since I did that in my last of the 24th of December...I wish you, as well as our August friend, good health, without neglecting our good friends, the Dubois and her son.[205]

We remark here evidence of the relations which the dispersed Brothers maintained with the Superior-general of whom they speak through the pseudonym that he himself adopted. But Brother Luke seems to have been unaware of the imprisonment which, at the time he wrote, had occurred six months earlier. From his small corner in Vaucluse, he was in a better position to follow the destinies of Brothers Florence and Maurillion, who were soon to bow under the yoke of the Terror. The person he refers to as "our August friend", in a play on words prompted by a legitimate caution, can be no other than the Director of the Community at St. Malo, Brother Augustus, who, then, until the first weeks of 1794, was living not very far from Brother Moniteur.

From that time on he shunned all inquiries. Draconian legislation, applied rigorously by the Jacobins in Brittany, made the Brothers' presence in St. Malo extremely perilous for them. According to Father Guillotin Corson, author of the book *Confessors of the Faith*, Maurice Martinet's sister pleaded with the intrepid Brother to flee the city. His reply, couched (apparently) in terms of familial love and Christian hope, had also come to Father Corson's knowledge.[206] But neither of the documents have survived.

We shall observe their results in the events: Brother Moniteur was arrested, not at St. Malo, but at Parame, on the 8th of March 1794. The policeman who, on orders from the national agent of the District, made the arrest wrote a very detailed report: "On the 18th Ventose in the Year II of the Republic, One, Indivisible and Everlasting, at 10 o'clock in the evening, I, the undersigned, Pierre Gilbert, national police officer residing in Port Solidor, [207] on the strength of an order from Citizen Mahe, national and revolutionary agent for the District of Port-Malo, Commissioner named by Citizens (Representatives of the people) Ruamps, Billaud Varennes and Le Carpentier, as a measure of public safety, in order to arrest a former Ignorantin Brother secluded at Grande-Riviere, in the Commune of Parame, repaired, accompanied by eight troopers of the 24th Regiment, to the City's common meeting place, where I met Citizen Delotte, Mayor, Francis Quetel, father and city official, and Citizen Duval, Clerk of the Court; informed them concerning my mission and asked them to give me directions in order to effect it; they suggested that they accompany us. And, having come to the aforementioned house and it having been opened to us, we met Citizen Pierre Michel, farmer in the above mentioned house, whom we called up to state whether the individual mentioned above was living in his house, and called upon to produce him for us, he told us that he was upstairs in bed and that, if we wished to go up, we would find him. But having gotten to the room and checked the beds, we found nothing. Ascending to the attic, on the stairway we met a half-dressed man who was unknown to us; we urged him to come down, which he did at once; we searched him and found two small wallets on him, in which there was a passport and two letters, which we are including with the present report.[208]

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[205] File 271 of the Criminal Court of Ille-and-Vilaine. Second letter found on Brother Moniteur. (Bulletin cited, pp. 15-16.)

[206] Father Guillotin Corson, Les Confesseurs de la foi pendant la grande Revolution, Rennes, 1900, pg. 70.

[207] "Port Solidor" was the revolutionary name for Saint Servan; St. Malo had become "Port Malo".

[208] The passport and letters to which we have already alluded.

Having called upon him to tell us his name, situation, and profession; he replied that he was called Maurice Martinet, that he was a former Brother of the Christian Schools in Port-Malo and that this was the second night he slept in this house. We called upon him to state where he previously resided: he replied that he had been roving and that he lived exclusively on the charity of others...There follow the signatures of the policeman, the city officials, the Clerk of the Court, a secretary and the two accused persons, Martinet and Michel.[209]

Anybody who concealed a dissident risked deportation. A cleric (or the equivalent) discovered on French soil after the fixed time allowed to go into exile or to immigrate to the colonies had, according to the decrees of March-April 1793, to be put to death within twenty-four hours. We do not know what doubts, whose influence or what oversight caused Brother Moniteur to be "forgotten", first, in the Solidor Tower in St. Servan and, then, at St. Malo itself at the prison situated on the ramparts. Had Pierre Michel, the farmer in Grande-Riviere and a former mayor of Parame made a deal with raw revolutionaries? He was detained three months in closed custody; and, then, imprisoned under less severe conditions until Thermidor, he was set free, probably on bail, by Le Carpentier, who had returned to Paris.[210]

The guillotine seemed to have spared De La Salle's faithful disciples. The Superior-general, his predecessor, Brother Florence and a good number of their former associates had found partial safety and a rather quiet shelter in the days following the Terror. The survivors of the convict ships saw the dawning light of a less dreadful day. But still one more victim was demanded. Two years after Brother Solomon was killed, the beheading of Brother Monitor came as a triumphant testimony in favor of orthodoxy. Both martyrs framed with their lives, as it were, the Superiors and the Society as they walked in the ways of God. More light has been shed on the "loner" who brought up the rear of the column: documentation for his cause of canonization exists, indisputable witness of the sort required by the Church and history[211]We shall now accompany the victim to the foot of the scaffold.

Pierre La Gorce has clearly underscored the persistance of religious persecution beyond the 9th Thermidor. Six weeks after Robespierre's death, the Convention besought the Committee for Public Safety and the Committee on Legislation not to abate their pursuit of priests. The cautious and conscientious author indicates that, during the period with which we are concerned, executions took place in the Upper Loire, Doubs, Dordogne, Maine-and-Loire, the Lower, the Cotes-du-Nord, Morbihan, Var, Nord, and in Paris.[212]

To this list we add Ille-and-Villaine. In October 1794 heads rolled in Rennes. Pierre Michel's protectors (and, as a consequence, Brother Moniteur's) were far away, or else they had fallen from power. Citizen Pointel, the public prosecutor in the criminal court of the Department, was unopposed in his sectarian zeal. In the first week of the Year III, he ordered Blanchandin, bailiff in Port-Malo, "to bring from the hall of justice or prison of that Commune to the court's jailhouse in Rennes, called the Montagne Tower, Maurice Martinais (sic), former Ignorantin Brother, refractory to the law of the oath, found concealed in France,

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[209]In this document we have corrected Pierre Gilbert's spelling. (Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1910, pp. 18-19 and Brother Gustave of Mary, pp. 192-193.)

[210]Brother Gustave of Mary, pg. 193. The relative leniency exercized in Michael's case is all the more obvlious in the light of the decree of the 22nd Germinal in the Year II (April 12, 1794), which declared that those who concealed priests were liable to capital punishment. (La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. III, pg. 548.)

[211].A fact-finding process was initiated in the diocese of Rennes in connection with the cause of the beatification of several victims executed out of hatred for the Faith: Brother Moniteur's name is on the list.

\[212]La Gorce, op.cit., Vol. IV, pp. 10 and 14-16. The maryrdom of the Ursulines of Valenciennes is especially highlighted.

and Pierre Michel, farmer in Grand Riviere and former mayor of Parame, accused of concealing this fanatic.The bailiff brought the two prisoners to the jailor in Rennes on the 8th Vendemiaire (the 29th of September).

On the 14th Vendemiaire Brother Moniteur appeared before Judge Beziel to be questioned as to his identity. He stated his name, his title as Brother of the Christian Schools, his age, his birthplace and indicated the year he came to St. Malo. He said he left that city on the 24th of January 1793. So as not to compromise "the widow Dubois", his hostess, whose charitable activity stood out all too obviously in the letters seized on the 18th Ventose, he was silent concerning his "comings-and-going" to the house at "the Cross of Fief". He had to admit that his passport had never been verified except at Dol-de-Bretagne: but, he maintained, he could easily prove that he had "avoided the places frequented by 'Brigands'" (i.e., by Royalist insurgents who conducted their war from ambush). On the main point of the accusation, he replied with the most disarming candor: he had "taken none of the oaths required by the law...He had availed himself of freedom of conscience only to abstain from taking the oath". It was an open and shut case: and the criminal court, in its session on the same day, could only pronounce a sentence of condemnation to death.

A fifteen year old boy, Simon Gabriel Brute Remur Vauhello, whose father was a lawyer in the courts in Brittany, entered at that moment into the precincts of the judiciary (one of the rooms in the famous palace built by de Brosse). The boy was present when Maurice Martinet was sentenced. Forty years later Gabriel Brute, become Bishop of Vincennes in the United States, gathered together his boyhood recollections. "The details", he confessed, "are rather confused in my mind". He called the man who was condemned on the 14th Vendemiaire "Brother Matien or Martineau".[213]However, the appearance and the words of the witness for Christ had struck him so vividly that he wrote: "I can still see the slight but noble figure of the Brother...I hear (him)...vainly pleading his cause with the prosecutor...The Presiding Judge...was a sort of philosopher who had exalted ideas about his own wisdom... Brother Martien urged that he was neither priest nor cleric and that, while associated with others in a Religious society, he was only a schoolteacher, devoted to the education of poor children; he wished to prove (to his judges) that, if they were sincere in their principles of fraternity with the poor, his profession should be a claim upon their recognition..."[214]

It was a forceful defense, which reflected De La Salle's teachings and the doctrines he laid down in his Rule, recalling the Christian idea underlying the principles of 1789. It was fitting that the Palace of Rennes rang out, in the midst of Revolution, with this profession of faith. Brother Moniteur knew, of course, that, humanly speaking, it would be ineffectual. "Convicted of having been subject to deportation", and discovered in the territory of the Republic, within the scope of the law of the 29th-30th Vendemiaire in the Year II, he had to be "handed over to the executioner".

And such was, indeed, the decision, signed by President Bouaissier and his associates, Hunault and Nouaill. As for the man who "concealed" Brother Moniteur, Peter Michel, the judges sentenced him to deportation, which, at least, spared his life.

The prison record's entry for the "Marat Gate" prison reads as follows: "Maurice Martinet, condemned to death by order of the criminal Court on this day, entered into the

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[213]Bishop Brute Remur's unimportant error (and quite understandable, since in court Brother Moniteur had been charged under his civilian name of Marinet) lead Brother Lucard to believe that the martyr in Rennes was a Brother Martinian (August Doligez, a teacher in the residence school in Nantes in 1792. (Annales, Vol. II, pp. 630-640.)

214Memoirs of the Right Rev. Simon Gabriel Brute de Remur, first Bishop of Vincennes The French translation appeared in 1860, over the signature of C. De Laroch Heron, in the Revue de Bretagne et de Vendee.

prison record by order of Pointel, public prosecutor."
Three priests, Father Jean Marin Gortains, Barthélemy Robert and Marc Le Roux were to suffer the same punishment. Evidently, one of them performed the last rites of the Church for Brother Moniteur.

The following day (the 15th Vendemiaire, the 6th of October) the four martyrs were lead to the Beaumont Meadow, which had been transformed into a "Parade Ground". According to Father Caron, Father Gortais sung a "ballad" on the happiness he felt as he shed his blood for Christ. And Father Corson reports that the Holy Name was also on the lips of Brother Moniteur.[215]

At 2:30 in the afternoon, G. Jamet, the senior public official, in conformity with the declaration of the "head jailor at the Marat Gate prison, wrote in his register the death certificate for the "dissident priests" and the "former Ignorantin Brother, dead, this day, on the Parade Grounds near Rennes".[216].

Three clerics and three women, one of whom was a Carmelite nun, were still to die in this city. Father Sourdin climbed the scaffold on the 10th of October uttering the words: "Please God, may I be the last victim!" His prayer was heard. The beheadings stopped in Rennes. And for the Institute Brother Moniteur's death closed out its most tragic period of the Revolution.

[215]Caron, *Les Confesseurs de la foi,* Vol. III, pg. 147. Guillotin Corson, op.cit., pg. 71.

[216]The texts used in this account were published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes (no. cited) and by Brother Gustave of Mary

PART THREE

New Beginnings

CHAPTER ONE

The Christian Brothers Schools Under the Consulate

The Directory caved in miserably to Bonaparte. A new era was beginning -- without a whole lot of noise at first and without conspicuous changes in legislation or in political personnel, but heralded early on by a spirit of moderation, a desire for gradual reconciliation and a generosity which, if it was not exactly self-effacing and silent, was at least determined to promote harmony among Frenchmen.

From the beginning of 1800 the religious situation improved. The Law of the 21 Nivose in the Year VIII, preceded by the decree of the Consuls on the 7th Nivose, tended to restore people's confidence. The numerous oaths, which caused Christians to recoil or hesitate, were replaced, for "public functionaries, ministers of religion, schoolteachers and others" by the brief "declaration": "I promise fidelity to the Constitution".

The fourth constitutional document of the revolutionary period perhaps still included, it is true, principles and expressions that were difficult to reconcile with theology. And that is why Rome was quick to hope that loyalty oaths of whatever kind should be understood in relation to a "government" rather than to some legislative formula. And it was precisely fidelity and obedience to the head of State that religious leaders, like Fathers Emery, Barruel and Boulogne and Bishop Luzerne were recommending. They examined the facts: and the facts corresponded to their expectations. Three thousand "dissident" priests returned to their country, resumed their ministry of preaching, reconciliation and dedication. The bells rang and Mass was celebrated. Everywhere Catholic initiatives blossomed: Father Fraysinous' conferences to the Carmelites, the restoration of the Daughters of Charity, the reopening of the Seminary of St. Sulpice; and founders of new Religious Congregations, Father Varin, Father Coudrin, Guillaume Chaminade, Mother Thouret, Mother Julie Billiart, Mother Sophie Barat, were outlining the principal features of their organizations; and the former Jesuit, Father Delpuits, was assembling candidates into the celebrated "Society".[1]

These significant symptoms of revival followed more or less closely upon the 18th Brumaire. Deep down, France was Christian, with a Christianity that was thoroughly orthodox. Of course, the schismatic Church attempted to show a rebirth of vitality; its pastors hastened to embrace the Constitution of the Year VIII;[2] its churches echoed with liturgical ceremonies; longingly it dreamed of becoming the center of a believing nation, but its inspiration was a "Gallicanism" that would be bound to the Holy See by nothing but relations of convenience. Neither the masses nor the elite among the faithful were tempted. "Nobody in Valence would accept me", admitted Marbos, the Bishop of Drome, who obstinately refused to resume his duties.[3]

It was more than six months since the Pope had died in exile and practically neglected in a city in the Dauphine, and his remains buried without the honors of the Church. "Pius the last", his persecutors had called him, with a sneer. The victim's sufferings had sanctified French soil and prepared a triumphant future for the Church. God did not want for a Vicar: on the 14th of March 1800 Cardinal Chiaramonti was elected and, like his predecessor, chose the

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[1] Dom Leclercq, op. cit., pp. 26-7. G.Goyau, op. cit., pp. 530-533. P. La Gorce, op. cit., pg. 141[1.1]

[2] Thus, in Orleans, at the making of promises of fidelity on the 28th Nivose in the Year VIII, the signatures of the Constitutional pastors, although mixed up with the names of non-jurors, are numerous. (Lottin, op. cit., Vol. II, 4, pp. 284-5.)

[3] La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 306.

name “Pius”.

Immediately after the Battle of Marengo that had projected Napoleon to the pinnacle of power, he looked to the Pope with the view of negotiating religious peace. He was aware that the temporal order is precarious in a prevailing spiritual chaos. He saw the ultimate failure of the Revolution - the destruction of national unity, compromising the future of modern government and the tide of excessive violence -- in its break with the Catholic Church. The bloody “lesson” of the Vendée had long since given the “realist” in Napoleon something to think about; and, in his view, that lesson was reinforced by the surprising renewal of religion in a large number of Departments. And while he himself could scarcely be any longer considered a believer, he continued to be sensitive to childhood influences.

Above and beyond every other consideration, self-interest was the determining factor: since the Church was still strong, Napoleon wanted it on his side, to use it for his political ends, and, for the huge task of national reconstruction, to be certain of the cooperation of a docile clergy.

The price of the alliance, as well as of the submission, was an *entente* with the Holy See. Only an order from the Supreme Pontiff himself could dispel scruples and restrain insurgents. Napoleon brushed aside the objections of people who surrounded him and the great number of difficulties raised both by the “Philosophers”, the partisans, the apostate and juring priests, as well as by the emigré bishops, royalists and Catholics with divergent opinions. Henceforth, he enjoyed an unchallenged prestige, an unrivaled authority, and he was confident in the gratitude and the hope of a nation.

This is not the place to rehearse the labored, anguished conversations whence issued the Concordat of 1801. After Count Boulay La Meurthe, Cardinal Mathieu and Pierre La Gorce, Canon Leflon has repeated them in the balanced and subtle pages of his Étienne-Alexandre Bernier. We shall borrow some of the insights of this book, because they will throw light on an associate of Napoleon, who played a secondary role in the negotiations that led up to the Concordat, but moved to stage-center when it came to consolidating its results, especially in the area of Christian education.

We are referring, of course, to Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, the future Imperial Minister, who had been designated Director of Religion in October of 1801. Born in Beausset, in Provence, on the 1st of April 1746, to a family of lawyers, and himself, earlier on, a lawyer in the courts of Aix, Portalis, between 1795 and 1797, had represented the Department of the Seine in the Senate. We have already referred to his speech on the 9th Fructidor in the Year IV, which was so effectively directed against the stubborn adversaries of religious peace. This “liberalism” earned him the Directory’s disapproval. He was obliged to find refuge in Switzerland; and then Napoleon brought him back from exile and introduced him into the Council of State; he put him to work, along with Tronchet, Bigot Preameneu and Malleville, on the task of drawing up a Code in which would be consolidated the customs of ancient France, Roman Law and the principles of the Constituent Assembly.

It was that combination that went to shape the mind and personality of Portalis. Canon Leflon describes him as “brought up on Gallican principles, the faithful and literal disciple of royal jurists; ...but still a reasonable man (who sought) the good, because it is good; ...preserving, in the midst of universal scepticism, a religious sense which he inherited from “the mysticism of Provence”; “a conscientious servant of the State”, in the tradition of the great administrators of the “Ancien Regime”; but also, inspired by a respect and sympathy for the Church; clearly, not a very sure-footed theologian, “occasionally smelling of heresy”; but in every under−taking, possessed of an “extreme moderation”, struggling to express “the burning preoccupations of his contemporaries”.[4]

[4] 1

Such appeared to be the senior officer who, enthusiastic for Napoleon and won over to the views of the "genius", bore the defence of the Concordat in the legislature on the 15th of Ap−ril, 1802[5]15th Germinal in the Year X two weeks before the *Te Deum* was sung at Notre Dame. He proclaimed the need for religion, and stated that Christianity was marvelously "suited to the habits and the philosophy" of France. Of course, he did not ignore political considerations: it would be impossible to leave religious institutions to themselves; "public security" would suffer, and, while persecution proved reprehensible as well as ineffectual, regulation and tutelage continued to be indispensable. Under the cover of these principles the unrepentant Gallican surreptitiously bridged the gap between the "convention" signed by the Holy See and the "organic articles" unilaterally worked out by the French Government.

Along the same lines, he insisted upon the ultimate suppression of Religious Orders: In them (he explained) The Pope in the past possessed a militia that swore obedience to him, crushed the real pastors, and were ever ready to propagate ultra−montanist doctrines. Our laws have disbanded that militia, and they were right to do so; since no one has ever contested the right of public authority to remove or dissolve arbitrary institutions which do not belong to the essence of religion and that are thought to be suspect by, or inconvenient to, the State…In accordance with fundamental discipline, we shall have only a secular clergy.

These harsh and dogmatic assertions seem to put the finishing touches on the work of the Courts of 1762 and the Constituent Assembly of 1790. Would the Law of the 18th of August 1792 be among those vague laws that would persist in reducing the old "secular Congregations" to the same category as the Jesuits and the great monastic Orders? As a rule, the same sort of ostracism had to be feared. But, in fact, another part of Portalis' speech opened up less sombre prospects.

In order to justify fundamentally his leader's policies, Napoleon's representative showed that France was unshakable in its faith. The reports from Municipal Counsels and letters from the Prefects "clearly displayed the national will". And in a very special way that will dealt with an educational renewal based upon Christianity.

In a note dated the 15th of November 1800, Bishop Spina, prefacing the talks in which he would engage with Father Bernier, had called Bonaparte's attention to the "Institutes" dedicated to the cause of popular education.[6] Not only the delegate of the Holy See, but all past beneficiaries remembered the services that had been rendered. There is no doubt but what Portalis was thinking of De La Salle's Brothers when he invited the lawmakers to "listen to the voices of simple citizens", detailing, "in the Departmental Assemblies", the results of the last ten years. The speaker summarized the complaints and the demands that he had listened to in the following terms:

It is time for theories to be silent before the facts. There is no teaching without education, and there is no education without morality and religion. Teachers have been teaching in a wasteland, because it has been unwisely assumed that they must never speak of religion in schools. For ten years teaching has been nonexistent; religion must be adopted as the basis of education. Children are abandoned to the most dangerous sort of idleness and the most disturbing vagrancy. They have no idea of Divinity, no notion of the just and the unjust. Hence, a savage, barbarous morality, and hence a rapacious people! If we compare our teaching with what it should be, it is impossible not to lament the fate that threatens future generations. And so it is that the whole of France calls upon religion to aid morality and

[5]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. V, pg. 79.

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society.[7]

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There was certainly nothing more suggestive than the case put forth in the Year IX by the Director of Religion. General and sectional Councils, municipal Councils, all the administrative bodies that had been reorganized or created by the famous Law of the 28th Pluviose in the Year VIII, had, whether spontaneously or in response to ministerial inquiries, expressed their honest opinions.[8]

In their meeting of the 23rd Pluviose in the Year IX the officials in St. Omer "were under no illusions": -their Commune, once proud of its institutions of every sort of education, was now painfully deprived of them, although it was in a position to offer "the most attractive situations".[9] And long before the city determined to write to the Mayor of Rheims to get information concerning "the worthy association" that his city had known so intimately for seventy years,[10]the General Council of the Pas-de-Calais unanimously sought the return of the "Ignorantins Brothers".

The Aisne and the Somme asked for the reestablishment of the former teaching Congregations. The "Counsel of the 6th District of Calvados, meeting at Vire" explained to the Minister of the Interior on the 9th Germinal in the Year IX that: "There were two Brothers here put in charge of the Christian schools, where more than 200 children obtained elementary instruction." Youths are "now left to themselves". About the time of the Revolution the last Bishop of Bayeux planned to add two more Brothers: one of them was to teach ..."drawing" and the other "practical geometry". By such means we would have obtained good workers...Mulling over their disappointments, the people in Vire added:
Today, these youngsters, who in other times would have become valuable men, can't read...Then, too, it seems that the moral aspect of the district is no longer the same. However, they took consolation in the idea of a change in the near future: All is not lost; there remains a taste for study, a desire for knowledge...Since redress is the purpose of government, the opinion of the Counsel is that no (jurisdiction) requires earlier or more special attention to public instruction...Everybody longs for the restoration of the former ways (of learning).[11]

The Gironde supplied Portalis with the text of a theme that he was to develop: "No teaching without education and no education without morality and religion". The Cote d'Or "missed the Brothers of Christian Doctrine". Since the teaching of morality and religion had been suppressed, "schools were deserted" in the Upper Saone. And in the Jura the Mayor of Dole was eager to select two former Christian Brothers, Vuillaume and Gregoire, to conduct the new tuition-free classes.[12]

Plans were made, needs and grievances were stated in pretty much the same way in the Cher, Sarthe, Ille-et-Vilaine, Deux Sevres, Haute-Viene, Lot and the Dordogne. The South, in appeals coming from the Aude, Ariege and the Lower Pyranees, was no less explicit: "Recall", they were saying in Carcassonne, "the Brothers of the Christian Schools as

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[7]Moniteur, no. 196, sextidi 16th Germinal in the Year X (April 7, 1802), meeting of the legislative body of the 15th Germinal, pp. 783-90; Cf. La Gorce, Vol. V, pp. 368-9 and Canon Adrian Garnier, L'Eglise et l'education du peuple, Paris, 1933, pp. 5-56.

[8]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 177-8, Decrees of the General Councils in the Year IX (1801-1802).

[9]Motherhouse Archives, File HA q 20

[10]Municipal Archives of Rheims, no. 361, letter of the Mayor of St. Omer. Brus-Lebaubert, to the Mayor of Rheims, 6th Frimaire in the Year XII (November 29, 1803).

[11]Municipal Archives of Calvados, T, Inquiry of the Year IX (1800-1801).

[12]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1927, pg. 38.

'the Brothers of Public Education' and give them the responsibility for the primary schools".[13]

Thus, a tour through the ruins evoked the prosperous past. Everybody agreed that it was the experienced workers who seemed best suited for the task of a sound reconstruction. However, prejudices were too deep-rooted to contemplate, in a single stroke, the only system that would permit people to construct for future generations or to dare mention the word "Community", much less "Congregation". The revolutionary State continued to refuse to tolerate the existence of free and autonomous societies among its citizens. Until further notice, it thought to get out of difficulties by relying on individuals; it needed time and the gradual return to common sense in order to realize that mortal man does not inherit the traditions of his fathers and does not trans−mit them intact to his successors unless he belongs to an "organism" that is more enduring than himself, unless his thoughts and his actions are contained within the permanence of an "institution".

Unreconstructed Jacobins kicked against the goad. It was a harsh fate for a Fourcory to proclaim his own failure. An enemy of religion, who in 1793 had aspired to "crush squalor", had finally to admit, in his report of 1801 that "the children of less fortunate people...were without any means of instruction, or nearly so", that "two generations of children are very close to being threatened by ignorance of reading and writing and of performing the elementary operations of calculation". However, he renounced only half of his hatred, and the spectre of "fanaticism" continued to haunt him. It had not, he thought, been exorcised at the right time. Since "education", he declared (fetching a sigh) "is too little shared to have dispelled religious prejudice", and since we have not, unfortunately, succeeded in dissociating morality from all forms of religious belief, the Constituent Assembly would have done well to have substituted the more tractable Protestant Credo for the Catholic version. "Now it is too late, and the opportunity will never return." And, in spite of the Devil, whom God uses to glorify His saints, the celebrated chemist, after an inquiry in Poitou, Charent and Normandy, was resigned to save the nation temporarily by entrusting the pastors with the task of elevating the minds of the peasantry: "It is an inevitable inconvenience."[14]

This was Antoine-François Fourcroy's final word. His colleague in the Academy of Sciences, Jean-Antoine Chaptal, Minister of the Interior, was no less hostile to dogma, nor less suspicious of priestly and monastic influences. But he, too, yielded in the face of necessity. And because he was very high-minded, and because he thought and acted as a genuine statesman, he was more sincerely open to liberal points of view. The situation (as Chaptal recognized in his draft of the Law of Brumaire in the Year IX) required that every latitude be accorded the private school−teacher, or the "simple citizen" who, in agreement with heads of families, was dedicated to teaching. "The government has no power over his person or in his own home, except either with respect to public morals or the peace and security of the State. Apart from this, anything else is vexation and tyranny...The nature of instruction is completely at the option of the teacher."[15]Along this straightforward path, Chaptal travelled very far indeed. Studying the work of De La Salle objectively, he ended up by asserting in 1803 that it was a "marvelous system whose members constantly combined the art of teaching with the severest morality."[16]. Hence, in spite of the heavy handicap of anti-religious passion and totalitarian theory,under the impetus of the providential personality

[13]La Gorce, loc. cit., and Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 717.

[14] . La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. V, pp. 196-7; Garnier, op. cit., pg. 5; Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 147.

[15]Chevalier, op. cit., pg. xiv; Hutin, op. cit., pp. 46-7.

[16]Quoted in Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 125

who had restored France and who had not yet been corrupted by the possession of absolute power, ministers, jurists and administrators worked for future; and that was how, gradually, the thicket cleared and the highway along which the great educators would make their way was disencumbered.

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We should point out once again that, with the opening of the new century, the nation was at the starting-gate. New beginnings could be nothing if not hesitant and the leaders of the enterprise proceeded tentatively and on the strength of mutual consultation. Regarding elementary schooling, the program that became the Law of the 11th Floreal in the Year X (May 1st 1802) could be accused neither of great vision nor of lofty daring.

Fourcroy, as Counsellor of State (who would succeed Roederer as Director of Public Instruction on the 27th Fructidor) spoke to the Legislature on the 30th Germinal[17]in the following terms: "The government, frightened by the near total absence of primary schools and the consequences that must bring on a state of affairs which leaves a great part of the generation stripped of the elements of knowledge...has felt that the reformation of these schools was one of the most urgent needs."

What, then, were the measures proposed that would snatch an entire people from ignorance? Nothing more than to return the responsibility to the Communes and to divide the costs between the city budgets and family expenses. "A school (the author the Law emphasized) may belong to several Communes. Mayors and Counsels...will choose the schoolteachers, supply them with housing at the expense (of the collectivity and determine the wage, which will be paid by the parents."The vain "efforts of several Assemblies", and the ineffective "arrangements of the Law of the 3rd Brumaire in the Year IV" had demonstrated that it is "impossible" to provide salaries for schoolteachers "out of the public funds"! After ten years of total upheaval and huge disappointment, they were reverting to the system of the "Ancien Regime", to the royal "Declarations" of 1798 and 1724.[18]But there were also great differences in the two situations -- to the disadvantage of contemporary society. The Church, which had once been the guarantor and the fosterer of schooling, had been stripped of its property; the educational foundations had been nearly totally destroyed; the Congregations dedicated to teaching boys and girls had, since their dispersal in 1791-1792, stopped recruiting; and they were still awaiting a new law that would permit their revival.

Fourcroy appealed, and rightly so, to "the experience of the past", to "the direct interest" of local organisms and their character as familial communities. He wanted to believe that "the kindness, so natural to French hearts", would be reawakened in favor of institutions designed to civilize the masses and, assured of the government's "religious respect" for future "endowments", would be eager to resume the task of our ancestors (whom yesterday's revolutionary did not dare to name): --the bishops, the canons, the abbots of monasteries, the pastors of parishes, the pious lay-men and women, and those who provided income and property out of a sense of Christian charity and a concern for their eternal salvation.

In the absence of such assistance (which is so frequently lacking in the "temporal" order, which is also inexact and unstable tuition-free education, introduced by the Church in the early centuries of the Middle Ages, had to be scrapped. City Councils, as stipulated in the second section of the draft, would determine the tuition rate to be paid by the pupils' parents.

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[17]Moniteur for the 1st Floreal in the Year X (April 21, 1802), pp. 851-4.

[18] .[18]See Vol. I of the present work pp. 33-35; and Vol. II, pp. 139-144.

However, “those who were in no position” to pay it were exempt. It was agreed to make room -- but strictly limited room -- for the poor: the number of children admitted tuition-free was not to go beyond a “fifth” of the pupil-population. It would be up to the Deputy-Prefects to supervise, within the limits of the preceding rules, the organization and functioning of primary schools.

There is no need to delay over the other articles of the Law of the 11th Floreal, which, without forbidding private secondary education (although it subjected it to the authority of the civil powers) anticipated the opening of “colleges” supported by the principal Communes and the creation of thirty “Lycees” that would be financed by the State. Section V had to do with “special schools” and section VI provided for the opening of a special military school.[19]

Elementary schooling remained the worst part of the plan. Ultimately it would depend upon the good will and intelligent zeal of the administrators in the Communes and the financial resources they controlled. There was reason to believe that some of them had a rather feeble grasp of what was expected of them. On the other hand, the broad area that opened up to local initiative would allow interesting experiments. The author of the Law respected private schools: cities which, at this period, liberated themselves from partisan prejudices, were led to recognize the success of such institutions and to give their principals the title, prerogatives and salaries of city schoolteachers. Imitating this example, other cities, hoping for a revival of their schools, made appeals and offered board and lodging to teachers with that sort of background. There is much archival material that tells the story of a brisk correspondence between mayors of the Consular and Imperial periods, as they exchanged information on the qualities of candidates, their financial demands and their religious affiliations.

Religion was not a reason for exclusion: quite the contrary. There were no complaints concerning people who had rejected the oath; indeed, there was Napoleon’s decree, on the 3rd Prairial in the Year X, ordering that dissidents be paid the pensions owed to former Religious, on condition (solely) that they be in good standing with their bishops.[20]Hence, on the 16th Prairial, one of the survivors of Rochefort, Claude Francis Trimaille (Brother Donat Joseph), “returned without authorization from the Minister of National Police”, and dwelling in Nancy, submitted the following note to the Prefect of Meurthe: “I declare that I am in communion with the Bishops of France, appointed as a consequence of the convention arranged between the government and His Holiness Pius VII. I shall be faithful to the government established by the Constitution, and I shall neither directly nor indirectly maintain either relations nor correspondence with the enemies of the State.[21]

Under the umbrella of identical declarations, a number of Brothers were readying themselves to resume the role that they, or their predecessors, had valiantly filled in the service of the Communes throughout the 18th century. They would teach catechism, take their pupils to the parochial Masses, and, as well as they could, follow the Rule of their Institute. Nevertheless, an obstacle persisted: the legally established school tuition. In the past

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[19]Moniteur for the 2nd Floreal in the Year X. Text of a bill concerning the public school system. Cf. A. Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pg. 289 and Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pp. 122 & 131.

[20]Brother Lemandus, op. cit., pg. 63.

[21]Departmental Archives of Meurthe-and-Moselle, L 471. Cardinal Stephen Hubert Cambaceres, Archbishop of Rouen, on the 20th Nivose in the Year XIII (10th of January 1805) wrote the following recommendation for the former Brother Aventine: “Peter Vaillant, Brother and Superior of the former institution of St. Yon in Rouen is in communion with us and with the bishops of France, named and consecrated in virtue of the Concordat signed between His Holiness Pius VII and the French government. (Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, L 1201)

Brother Agathon had threatened to withdraw several Brothers from the school in Boulogne rather than allow an exception to the principle of tuition-free instruction.[22]During the 19th century his successors would carry on a more bitter struggle against cities determined upon being at least partially reimbursed by families for the elementary education of their children. They, too, would cite the Bull of 1725 which, complying with the wishes of De La Salle, forbad the Brothers of the Christian Schools to accept any kind of salary or compensation from their pupils.

But, during the period of the Consulate, how could former Brothers, in all the weakness of their isolation, elude the injunctions of the legislature and the municipalities? Did not their essential duty consist in cooperating with the civil power in the restoration of religion and morality and in combatting the most frightful sort of ignorance and the already triumphant barbarism? Were they not, by reason of their circumstances, and, doubtless, conformably with the authorization of the Holy See, released from their vows? Besides, the vow of "teaching the poor gratuitously" seemed to them to imply an interpretation that was compatible with the system in practice, since the poor were dispensed from all tuition by the Law of the 11th Floreal -- up to a "fifth" of the pupil-population, in the language of article 4, section 2. But this clause continued to raise difficulties for delicate consciences. Once the Congregation was re-established and once its statutes were approved by the French government, not only did the obligation of the vow appear once again imperative, but the Superiors set as their goal everywhere to restore the practice of the fundamental rule of gratuity, as applied to all pupils, "without distinction of rich and poor", according to the spirit and the letter of the Brothers' Constitutions. And they reached the point of more or less formally removing from office all those Brothers who, inspired by self-interest or excessively docile to the directives of local administrations, continued to charge tuition.

Provisional arrangements which, even for the schools in Rome the Sovereign Pontiff considered indispensable, were necessary in the France of 1802. No official would return to Christian educators the property or even the use of the property confiscated by the Revolution. While the Consular decree of the 27th Prairial in the Year IX was designed to preserve the remnants of charitable foundations that had at one time been dedicated to the relief of the poor and the diffusion of education, the Charity Bureaus received all the benefits from them. All these agencies did was to determine the use of these slim funds and the circumstances that they thought suitable.[23]The patrimony, set up by De La Salle and his 18th century disciples had finally eluded their legal heirs, who were reduced to the absolute poverty of the pioneering years; but, henceforth, the lack of income, much more seriously than in the past, would endanger their freedom of action. In the past the Brothers were exposed to the abuse of power on the part of some pastors and of some bishops; they suffered from the ill-will of certain political figures, Courts and City Counsels. But legal autonomy and financial independence came to their rescue to enable them to preserve intact their Founder's Rule and his methods. In the modern State, and for as long as it took the Brothers to regain the look of an organized Society of incomparable teachers, equipped and numerous, they had to fear that if Providence did not come to their assistance, they would be at the mercy of questionable purposes, more or less despotic whims, unfair economies, and, frequently, of distressing indifference to their Religious character.

Fortunately, the highest level of civil authority which felt the need for what are today called "spiritual influences" to uplift the nation dealt with the Brothers with consideration and

[22]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 492-499.

[23]Chevalier, op. cit., pp. xii, 29, 185 and 191.

supported them. For over fourteen years Bonaparte authorized the opening of eight hundred communities of women dedicated to teaching. He agreed that these groups were free to direct and shift, as they saw fit, the members whose services were reserved for the working classes.[24]Markedly less hospitable to male Congregations, he nevertheless eagerly showed the Christian Brothers the most sincere and efficacious cooperation.

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Without for the moment repeating the journey through the provinces in search of schoolteachers scattered over the French Republic, we shall travel directly to those schools where "the spirit of the Institute", first of all as a faint breath, was being more or less efficaciously preserved or was being revived, and which was gradually restoring age-old customs, renewing fraternal ties, and, recognizing interdependencies, would shortly be the "nuclei" around which perseverance, homecomings and rejuvenated hopes would adhere.

We shall, therefore, leave aside schools like the one in Ardres, where Brother Paulinus pursued his task alone until extreme old aged;[25] and like the schools in Versailles, conducted by former Brothers who had married,[26]in buildings once owned by the Congregation; and like the far-off College of St. Victor, occupied by the survivors of the Institute over the eight years during which Martinique remained under English domination, and which the colony, after the signing of the ephemeral Treaty of Amien, wished to operate under its own control.[27]

Even Angers had no part in the foreseeable future of the Congregation. Of course, when the accession of Bonaparte appeared to provide the Catholic Church with some pledge of security, Godefroy and Villemot resumed a life that had a quasi-monastic appearance in the former Benedictine Abbey of St. Nicholas. There they opened a college which, in the words of their former pupil, Father Rigagnon,[28]"enjoyed a great reputation for studies, morality and piety", There were two-hundred children and young people there "under kindly but firm direction". Most of the teachers, however, were clerics, among whom the reporter mentions Father Chretien, who taught Rhetoric and Father Gaillard, the future titular Canon of St. Gatian of Tours. A third of the pupils received a classical education, based on Latin. The school's leaders clung to a sort of nostalgia for bygone times: they liked to take their resident pupils on walks to the Rossignolerie and tell them the story of that magnificent institution. St. Nicholas seemed to have been in a position to compete brilliantly with the "Lycee" that was being readied to replace the Brothers' school. Its fame had succeeded in casting a shadow over the fine colleges in Loir-and-Cher, Vendome and Pontlevoy. Indeed, it must have extend much farther than that, since Father Rigagnon was native of Bordeaux. However, it was eclipsed as soon as it arose above the horizon. Godefroy and Villemot, driven to the to the wall, in 1806 sought assistance from the Prefect of Maine-and-Loire.[29].They were never again seen among their confreres of 1792.

Very different, indeed, was the direction of most of the teachers of whom we are now

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[24]Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pp. 113 & 123.

[25]He died in 1810 at the age of 86, and was given a solemn burial at the expense of the Commune. Motherhouse Archives, Ardres File.

[26]Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1924, pg. 225.

[27]Sydney Daney, op. cit., Vol. VI, pg. 29.

[28]Letter from Father Rigagnon, pastor of St. Michael's in Bordeaux, to Brother Lucard (2nd of June 1864); Annales, Vol. II, pp. 658-9.

[29]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Fredebert's notes

going to speak. They were distributed over nine centers. (Here and there, their area of influence reached out to certain satellite communities, which would emerge from obscurity when De La Salle's Institute had once again spread throughout the whole of France. The list of the principal cities where we shall have to pause is as follows: first, the area in which the work of the Holy Founder first began: Laon, Rheims, Chartres, Orleans, St. Germain-en-Laye and Paris; and then in the South, there is the Bordeaux, Toulouse and Lyons triangle.
Lyons, because of its unique educational arrangements, had remained outside the Brothers' sphere of influence until the end of the 18th century; but it was suddenly to play a central role in their history; in this connection, it will occupy our attention extensively in the following account. Paris, however, with Broth−er Gerbaud, will presently be hardly less important. And nearly all the cities we shall be writing about fulfilled during the course of the Consulate and the Empire an essential mission.

Concerning the Brothers in Laon, whom we have been following step by step from the beginning of the Revolution, there is very little left to say. The City Council decided to recall the Brothers to operate its primary schools on the 7th of October 1802. In doing so, it was following the wishes of the families and affording the tenacious teachers of the youth of Laon a just requital for their persecution under the Directory. On the 23rd of December of the same year, an overall salary of 1,600 francs was allotted to them. And, as a signal bit of courage and a generous gesture of fidelity to the tradition the Brothers represented, tuition-free education was maintained, in spite of the Law! This meant that Pierre Morin and his associates, once again public schoolteachers, were continuing in Laon to be the successors to Adrian Nyel. They opened a second school in the Cathedral parish on the 21st of February 1804. And then the entire Community, composed of four teaching Brothers, a serving Brother and two retired Brothers, moved into a residence the rent for which was payed by the City. In 1810 Brother Leufroy was replaced by Brother Arnold.[30]

For the capital of the Aisne, continuity between the past and the new age had been firmly established. In the neighboring Marne, Brother Vivien and the civil administration worked out a plan which, as can be clearly seen, was wanting neither in understanding nor in practicality. All that it lacked was a thoroughly supernatural inspiration.

The career of François René Gaudenne, whose movements between 1791 and 1798 are clearly discernible, is rather badly obscured during the following four years. We find it improbable that, after the closing of his school on Rue du Perit-Four, the former schoolteacher could find employment in the offices of the military.[31] According to a better hypothesis, he lived, more or less covertly, in Rheims until the end of the Directory's mischief-making, and then quickly resumed his teaching out in the open, beginning in the early months of 1800. Everything supports the belief that, at the beginning of this period he recruited his first associates and stationed members of his team in various neighborhoods of the city.[3233]

No official mandate had been conferred upon him. It was on his own initiative that he started courses to which payment of tuition was attached. On the 10th of February 1802 the Municipal Counsel was busy looking for schoolteachers "whose morals and learning" were

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[30] Motherhouse Archives, Historique du district de Reims. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 707-8 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for September 1908, pg. 310.

[31] For the contrary view, cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 706.

[32] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pp. 217-8.

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fully assured for “the children of the poor”, who had been completely abandoned. For this purpose, it planned to open six schools -- two for each “justice of the peace precinct”, one for boys and the other for girls; and the salaries provided -- 800 francs for the male and 600 for the female schoolteachers-- excluded all tuition.[34]

At the time, only a single “former Brother” turned up to seek a position in the organization that was being planned: Louis Joseph Proisy, whom we have already met with in Villers-Allerand. On the 26th Thermidor in the Year X he wrote to the magistrates of the Rheims Commune that he had “taught class for eleven years at St. Timothy’s and that his former pupils wanted to see him in the neighborhood once again “for the good of their children". For six years he had been teaching at Trois-Puits -- “with honesty and sincerity”, wrote the mayor of that village in a letter of recommendation dated the 14th Fructidor.[35].

However, the passage of the Law in Floreal induced the people in Rheims to change their plans. There was no longer question of purely tuition-free schools. And at this point Brother Vivien came upon the scene. On the 23rd of September he had obtained from Louis Matthias Barral, Bishop of Meaux (under whose jurisdiction Rheims, stripped of its Archbishop by the Concordat, now functioned) an affidavit of orthodoxy. “François René Gaudenne ...resident of Rheims, has declared that he recognizes (this prelate) as his bishop, in conformity with the Law of the 18th Germinal in the Year X.”As a consequence, Bishop Barral “incorporated him into his diocese”.[36].

The able and persuasive schoolteacher had already explained his views to the municipal authorities. He won the confidence of the commission “appointed in virtue of the Prefectural decree of the 28th Brumaire in the Year XI” finally to establish a system of elementary education. The famous report of the 8th Nivose following was certainly the product of this understanding:[37]

“The government,” (wrote the Commissioners to their colleagues on the Council) “seems convinced that for the past ten or twelve years, young people have been without education, and you yourselves have been surprised at what has taken place under your eyes, and at what unbelievable damage such a prolonged interruption has done.”

This preamble introduced a beautiful evocation of the work accomplished by the distinguished natives of Rheims, Nicholas Roland and John Baptist de La Salle. The biased and shabby treatment of past times and the recent persecution were quite forgotten: the only thought was to gather together what was left after the shipwreck, and to look for help from the survivors among the crew. Close at hand there was a good captain, who was going to earn exactly what people expected of him.

“The city ...possesses ...the most important institutions for the education of youth; from the youngest age, children are provided the elements of reading, writing, arithmetic and religion, by schoolteachers who dedicate their whole time and care to this difficult but honorable task. United to their Congregations, there is a unity of principles, uniformity of teaching and that necessary subordination of individuals to the same rule which directs all partial activities to the same end.”

“Rheims had the distinction of being the birthplace of these beneficent institutions and of having disseminated groups of them into the principal cities of France. They no longer exist; and while it is not in our power to bring them back, we can at least profit from the

[34]Meeting for the 21st Pluviose in the Year X (Feb. 11, 1802); Arnould, Notes et documents sur les etablissements d’instruction primaire de la ville de Reims, Rheims, 1848, pp. 158-9.

[35]Municipal Archives of Rheims, public education, the Year IX--1820

[36]Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1 File

[37]The 29th of December 1802. Municipal Archives of Rheims, File 361; Arnould, op. cit., pp. 160-7

lessons they taught us and organize on their model private societies that grasp the same principles, and, as far as possible follow the same principles, the same deportment in the schools, and the same order, so as to restore youth (now so dissipated and abandoned) to the yoke of subordination."

The report here emphasizes the sad results of the isolation that confine schoolteachers. Each of them sets up his own system of instruction; neither programs nor schedules concurred; and in this anarchy only the whims of the pupils were satisfied.

The remedy was not far to seek. We can be sure that it was suggested by Brother Vivien. The schoolteachers were to live "in common", and, from their residence, they would move, morning and evening, to and from the various neighborhoods. In this way, they would be "liberated from every concern other than that of performing their duty honorably, and of satisfying...what they owed to religion and to the nation. Children might change from a school without ever being "disconcerted" by new methods. Eight men would be lodged at St. Pat−rick's and share in the work of the four schools planned for small boys on Rue Perdue , Rue Thillois, near St. Denis or St. Marcoul, and in the neighborhood of the Temple.[38]

For food and clothing the teachers were to receive the sum of 4,000 livres annually. It was in this connection that, contrary to the Rule of the Institute of the Brothers, the arrangements of Floreal intervened. The only compromise the City Counsel was able to allow concerned the number of pupils dispensed from tuition. While in the countryside it was impossible to find a fifth of the pupil population poor, in "a manufacturing center such as Rheims, which included a considerable number of workmen and laborers...unable to meet school costs", the figure was closer to two-thirds who were poor. Assuming a population of fourteen-to fifteen-hundred children of both sexes in the primary classes, there had to be at the most four hundred pupils who were charged the twenty sous a month tuition. A portion of the schoolteachers' salary came from these funds.

It was useless for the commission to have insisted that collecting tuition was not one of the teachers' duties, that three citizens, appointed by the Deputy-prefect, would evaluate the incomes, the morality and the intellectual promise of the candidates for tuition-free instruction, and that "admission forms" would be identical for paying and nonpaying pupils. These apparent solutions did not deal with the heart of the problem: the Superior-general had already rejected them.

François René Gaudenne raised no objection. For him the Rheims project was meat and drink, the realization of his dreams, and the lifeline of the Community he headed. The Institute would be resurrected -- and on the very spot in which it was born! Of course, it would only be a local society, narrowly tied to the civil authority and preserving practically nothing of its primitive appearance, except a grouping of colleagues under the same roof. Nevertheless, the attempt grabbed at the fancy of an enterprising man, who also had an easy confidence in his own ability. He threw himself into the work with his whole soul, at the risk of extricating himself later on, painfully and anxiously, from the bonds that bound his religious freedom.

Since the city gave its immediate approval to the plans of its promoters, as being very "wise" and as quite "beneficial for the children", the group directed by Brother Vivien took possession of the public schools. In the Rheims archives we have found the Deputy-prefectural decision regarding the man who organized this Community: "Whereas the decision of the City Counsel, on the 23rd Pluviose in the year XI, bearing on the appointment of Citizen François René Gaudenne to the position of headmaster of this Community...in conformity with the Law of 11th Floreal in the Year X; and Whereas, our confirming decree

[38] "Experience", the commissioners added at the end of the report, "proves that it is indispensable to have twelve teachers".

of this, the 17th day Ventose ...declaring that Citizen François René Gaudenne ...will be recognized in this capacity on condition of making, before the Mayor, a promise of fidelity to the Constitution, in terms of the Law of the 7th Nivose in the Year VIII." [39]

This teacher, lucid and brilliant in day-to-day operations, and outstanding for his worth as an educator, would assure the success of the schools in Rheims and get the ear of the authorities.[40]He liked to administer affairs. And he accepted without reluctance, if, indeed, he did not inspire, the quite symptomatic change in the stipulations concerning the collection of tuition: after the 27th Messidor in the Year XI, parents of pupils might, as they chose, pay their monthly installments to the city treasurer or the teachers who would be made responsible for updating the bookkeeping.[41].

On the 20th Fructidor (the 7th of September 1803) Brother Vivien set out to obtain better lodgings from the city. The house designated for the "former Brothers of the Christian Schools" use near the City Hall, was "too small"; the rooms, "without partitions or privacy", did not make for "propriety". The two "main parts of the building" were "uninhabitable". And the "distance from the classrooms ...exposed the teachers" to falling ill "during the rigors of bad weather".

Now it happened that the owner of the house once occupied by the Christian Brothers and ever dear to their hearts was prepared to do business. He would agree to at least a partial lease for a rent of 900 francs. It was an attractive bargain. Brother Vivien had been thinking about putting up a residence school, "which would have been of the greatest utility". The city would assume as much as 700 francs of the annual expense, and the teachers were to supply the rest. Assured of the population's goodwill, the Brothers "would omit nothing in order to provide poor young people with all the services their ministry and the spirit of their vocation enjoined."[42]

The Councill agreed to only half of what Citizen Gaudenne sought. He removed the teachers, not to the Rue Neuve, but to buildings in the former College. There was no word about the residence school. The eager petitioner expressed his disenchantment: Rheims did not keep its promises, paid its bills fractionally reduced, tardily after the trimester had expired and refused its teachers their vacations.

The complaining letter, dated the 27th Brumaire in the Year XII, bears the signatures of J. B. Perny, called Brother Mark; J. B. Boursin, called Brother Narcissus; J. A. Mignot, called Brother Pierre Martyr; J. B. Poirson, called Brother Gonsales; "Nottelet", called Brother Oliver; "Chamelot", called Brother Dizier; "Roger", called Brother Corentine; and François René Gaudenne, called Brother Vivien.[43]

Of the personnel, consisting of eleven teachers in the preceding month of Fructidor,[44]

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[39]Municipal Archives of Rheims, File 361.

[40]The report of the 8th Nivose in the Year XI (Jan. 29, 1803) provided that "prizes and awards" would be distributed at the end of the year, by the city, "to deserving pupils". (Arnould, pg. 168). The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933 (pg. 219) carries a photostatic copy of the text of one of these commendations; "Prize for ...We have given this book to... in order to reward his assiduity in class, his application to work and to encourage him steadily to provide his parents with every satisfaction. Rheims ...(Signed): Bro. Vivien Gaudenne.

[41]Municipal Archives of Rheims, File 361

[42]Petition "to the Gentlemen, members composing the general Counsel of the Rheims Commune" (Signed) "Gaudenne, called Brother Vivien". Motherhouse Archives, Historique de Reims. Arnould, op. cit., pp. 156-7; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pg. 221.

[43]Municipal Archives of Rheims, File 361.

[44]Petition cited.

we possess only an incomplete list for the beginning of the Year XII. An appeal to the Sovereign Pontiff in the first trimester of 1803 (a document that we shall reserve for comment at its time and place) contains the same names, except that of Brother Corentine, and it adds the names of Brothers Herve and Florent. On the 30th of May 1804, in relation to a "painting of the Sacred Heart", acquired by "Francis Augustine Monet, baker in the Hospital in Rheims, professed Religious of the Christian Schools under the name of Brother Sylvester", an agreement had been drawn up, which decided the fate of the picture in the case of Brother Sylvester's death or in the case of the dissolution of the Community: on this occasion there were eleven signers, Brothers Mark, Vivien, Martin of Jesus, Herve, Gordien of Mary; Narcissus, Pierre Martyr, Corentine, Dizier, Nicholas and Sylvester.[45].J. B. Poirson, "Nottelet" and Brother Florent had at the moment either temporarily or permanently withdrawn.

Complete agreement did not reign among the teachers,for the want, it appears, of religious direction on the part of the leader and of obedience on the part of his associates. The Brothers in Rheims remained midway between the lay-life and the obligations of a Rule and had no intention of sacrificing too much of their comfort or of their independence. The proof (and the effects) of this deplorable behavior accumulated in a few years time. It is part of our duty now to produce the evidence -- certainly partial and written *ab irato*, but nevertheless unexceptionable in its details -- for this failure. We have just indicated the departure of J. B. Poirson (Brother Gonsales), who was a faithful Religious; he had rejected the "Constitutional oath" in 1791, at a time when he was a member of the Community in Auxonne;[46] he was to return to the regular structures of the Congregation, where he died in 1808, a teacher in the Christian Brothers school in Ornans.[47]

Brother Vivien dismissed him in the course of 1803 or 1804 under rather obscure circumstances. The leader of the Rheims group had asked his subordinate for the accounts of the previous day, and perhaps he did so with some harshness. J. B. Poirson shot back that he had left his receipts in good order: "If I had made an error, I certainly wouldn't have been forgiven." And taking this occasion to get a load off his chest, he let fly at the man whom he thought was victimizing him: "I don't need any enlightenment on the crooked and, because of the hard times, (he is referring to the uncertain future) I might add, cruel methods you and Brother Pierre Martyr have used with the city to seek my dismissal from the Society of schoolteachers.His Christian conscience demanded that he forgive: he therefore set aside all bitterness and merely pleaded with Brother Vivien to stop persecuting him. However, in his own defense, he sketches the following argument:

"Since, according to the last lines of your letter, the people in Rheims can think and that they attribute more self-interest to me than zeal -- on what is that based? Have they observed that I have greatly enriched myself, or that I have neglected my class−room duties?"

"Have they seen me with a furnished room like the one the headmaster has, with his own private fireplace? Have they seen in my clothes closet only the most fastidious items, and that I am discontented with the common and ordinary fare of the Society, but rather, have recourse to foreign cooks? Have they seen me use public or special carriages to visit my

[45]Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1. Brothers Herve and Sylvester were both former confreres of Brother R. Gaudenne in the Community on the Rue Neuve in 1791. We also know that Brother Martin of Jesus, the engineer/clock-maker, at least for a while, rallied Brother Vivien's troops

[46]See above, pg. 105.

[47]Motherhouse Archives, Register no. 1 (rough draft of letters) of Brother Frumence, Vicar-general. Brother Gonzales was born in Rambervillers on the 8th of May 1749. He was a novice at Maréville in 1771 and pronounced his perpetual vows on the 20th of September 1778.

friends (of both sexes), or to conduct my business...? Occasionally at the Society's expense? Under the pretext that I was on my way to do great and important things? Have they witnessed that I have frequently absented myself from class, thus overworking a confrere, under the pretext of serving the Society? Have they seen me moving heaven and earth, "the green and the dry", to get myself named Superior of the Society?[48]

While we may not be able to credit the whole of this bitter diatribe, it is clear that François René Gaudenne had, for the past ten years, adopted the habits of an easy life, uncontrolled expenses and rather worldly relationships. He found it difficult to handle opposition, enjoyed the role of leader and enjoyed getting his own way. We might have suspected it earlier, and the immediate future will confirm this impression. We should be reluctant to bring judgment: the era in which the lofty personage had a role to fill should suggest indulgence. The highest intellectual and moral qualities have their reverse sides: gradually, and now without resistance from the "old man", the spirit of the Holy Founder would reconquer the disciple from the "nature" whose bridle the Revolution had let slip. Brother Agathon's teachings would not be lost, and humility, obedience and detachment from earthly possessions would once again find their place in the sun.

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These virtues continued to flourish in Chartres, at least as far as the prevailing climate allowed them to thrive. A genuine Community was about to be reborn in the city of Our Lady. It started on the 17th Vendemiaire in the Year XI (the 11th of October, 1802). On that day the City Counsel met to deliberate concerning the restoration of the schools: The Prefect of Eure-and-Loir, Citizen Delaitre, made known his desire to have them entrusted to the three Brothers who had never left the city, Charles Richard, Claude François Langlet and André Fossey. The Mayor had already sounded them out and had no worries concerning their willingness to serve.

His proposal was unanimously approved: Brothers Jean-Louis, Montain and Acarius were restored to their former residence, and they devoted themselves to their religious exercises without hindrance. However, as schoolteachers in the Commune, they were obliged to restrict gratuity to one-fifth of the pupil population. The decision was approved on the 26th Vendemiaire by the Prefect. Classes opened two weeks later: the private pupils of Citizens Richard and Langlet formed the nucleus of the new school. On the 4th Brumaire there occurred the solemn installation, with music and drums; and with it the Revolutionary cycle came to a close, and the bridge flung across the gulf by these three teachers united the heroic age of De La Salle with the no less difficult and the no less constructive modern age of the school in Chartres.

In 1803 Brother Jean-Louis, Director, admitted two novices to his small monastic Community: Brother Gabriel, who did not persevere, and Brother Joseph (Jean-Michel Philibert Brière) who was to continue the work of the old campaigners -- after the death of Brother Acarius in 1805, the transfer of Brother Richard to Nogent-le-Rotrou in 1806 and the disappearance of the last survivor, Claude François Langlet, who died on the 11th of May 1809, "in the school's residence."[49]

The Loiret might have envied Eure-and-Loir for these teachers. Minds seemed equally well disposed in both parts of the former province of Orleans. In the Year VIII Orleans

[48] Motherhouse Archives, file established by Brother Fredebert. Copy (dateless) sent by Brother Gonzales to one of his confreres.

[49] Motherhouse Archives, Files FJ p and HA p 6. Cf. Chevalier, op. cit., pg. 67. Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 137, and the Circular, Centenaire, pp. 67-8.

declared in favor of political reconciliation. Mayor Crignon-Desormeaux, "a manager and administrator of almshouses", who took office on the 20th Floreal (the 10th of May 1800), had dealings with the "Ancien Regime", and, as he boasted in 1814, he may even have had covert connections with the Count of Provence; but prudently, and, we believe sincerely, he praised Napoleon as "a respectable Citizen, enlightened public servant, a hero dear to France".[50]For the most part his Counsel was composed of the wealthy middle class; indeed, it included some aristocratic names -- all of whom contributed to the influence of the "new order of things."[51]Among them there was an Armand Septier, former pastor of Bucy-le-Roi, Attorney-trustee during the time of the Terror, who apostatized at the same time as Jarente, and was now nothing more than a "librarian", serene in the midst of his books and accommodating to scholars in his locality.[52]

Bonaparte had sent to the Prefecture of the Loiret a devoted servant and the brother of his secretary, Hugh Maret. This representative of the central government, while executing his orders from Paris to the letter, made contacts with "rightist" circles and curried favor with former exiles. In particular, he set his mind and energy to work to effect an agreement between the Church and the State. The "grafitti" which recalled the era of Robespierre disappeared from the buildings. And when the man who negotiated the Concordat, Étienne-Alexandre Bernier, was named to the episcopal See of Orleans, Maret took "meticulous pains" to prepare for the installation.[53]

While Chartres, like Rheims, for the entire duration of the Napoleonic period, had lost its immemorial title as ecclesiastical headquarters, the cities of St. Euvert and St. Aignan became the compensation for the Vendéen priest who rallied to the cause of Caesar. It was a qualified distinction, since Bernier's reputation was not without its disquieting associations. And yet, there was a piece of good fortune not to be despised -- provided the Bishop could remain in the good graces of the Consul for another few months, and, what was more important, provided he would take to heart both the pacification and the religious progress of his diocese.

Formally welcomed into Orleans on the 4th of July 1802, Bernier found a people that on the whole had remained Christian, in spite of the melancholy defection of Jarente,[54]but a clergy split by schism. Priests who had taken the "Constitutional oath" occupied the highest offices; they had exercised their influence in favor of the restoration of religion, and the principal parishes were under their supervision.[55]Pastoral, rather than political, after thoughts had inspired their unhappy downfall. We have seen how concerned for Christian education was the pastor of St. Paterne, Father Charles. Another of them, Father Barbazan, fully reconciled with Rome and even selected by Bishop Bernier as his Vicar-general, went to work for the good of souls, along with those of their colleagues who never bent the knee. Among these "non-jurors", wise as they were courageous, there was the Vicar-penitentiary, Father Blain, henceforth, along with Barbazan, Vicar-general, and Athanasius Louis Merault

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[50]Speech on the 20th Floreal in the Year VIII (May 10, 1800); Lottin, op. cit., Vol. II, 4, pp. 313-4.

[51]Lottin, op. cit., Vol. II, 4, pp. 331-2, list of Counselors

[52]E. Bimbenet, Histoire d'Orleans, Vol. V, pg. 872 and pp. 1000 and 1001.

[53]Leflon, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 9.

[54]Bishop Champion obtained a pardon for Jarente Orgeval from Pius VII. In June 1802 the Archbishop of Aix brought the misguided penitent to the Legate Capara. Jarente was pensioned by the Empire. And he succeeded in dying in the Church.

[55]Leflon, Vol. II, pp. 5-6.

Bizy, first auxiliary Bishop, and once a distinguished member of the Oratory (and, in this connection, on excellent terms with Fouché, his former student, secretary and confrere); he was to become the Superior of the Major Seminary; heroic during the Revolution, throughout his marvelous career, he proved to be a most virtuous, selfless and charitable priest, the best spiritual director and the most effective worker for reconciliation among the Orleans clergy.[56].Catholics could rely upon Blain and Merault, not only for the orthodoxy and the serious education of priests, but also for the renewal of studies.

In Orleans the Bishop, complex and bordering on the elusive, wanted nothing more than to be a man of God. One of his most unambiguous activities was practiced in favor of the teaching Congregations. In March 1803 he introduced the Daughters of Grignion de Montfort into Father Charles' parish. His kindness was also extended to the Prioresses of St. Augustine, the Visitandines, the Carmelites and the Ursulines. He effectively came to the assistance of these Communities when the Decree of Messidor in the Year XII (which we shall examine presently) struck down Religious Societies. In 1805 and 1806 he provided the Ursulines of Beaugency every reassurance regarding their Constitutions: those that the Emperor had recently approved had involved, said the Bishop, nothing more "than external relations...with the government, the Bishop and (civil) society". "Religious provisions" remained outside this description, this administrative control, and, as in the past, would continue to enjoy complete freedom in matters of conscience.[57]
This was a skillful and felicitous interpretation which in the midst of the procrastination and hesitation of upper-level imperial bureaucrats, might well be applied to the situation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The cooperation of people of good will seemed to promise an easy restoration of the Institute which, over fifty-three years, had won the gratitude of the citizens of Orleans. But, unfortunately, there was a lack of personnel. Brother Clair, hid away in some far-off retreat, or, perhaps, dead, was no longer mentioned. Raquette and Bernard, as well as a certain M. Mallon, who had, perhaps, come from St. Omer, had married. Touchard had settled into his profession as a teacher of writing. And the others had for a long time since been serving in the armed forces of the Republic.[58]

However, there was still one Christian Brother...and it was to him that people began to turn. We saw him, in the Year VI, teaching in a school on Rue Ange. Nicolas Cendre (Brother Liberius), born on the 29th of January 1749 at Grand-Mercey, in the diocese of Besancon, entered the Institute at Maréville on the 7th of January 1775, and professed on the 22nd of September 1780, found his way to Orleans at a time and under circumstances that are unknown to us. His attitude during the Directory showed that he was cautious regarding any sort of compromising with his conscience for political reasons.

On the 10th Frimaire in the Year XI (December 1 1802) the Mayor's decree[59]determined the constituencies for six communal schools; the second constituency was to admit pupils who lived in the eastern part of the city: "Starting from the middle of Martroi, and, by way of Rues Bannier, Cerche, Malte, Vaslin and Huguenot, including the mall and the ramparts, as far as the river, to the bottom of the "Motte-sans-gain," (and then going down the Loire) by way of the ports, as far as the bridge, (and then going up) Rue Égalité (the

[56]Idem., ibid., pp. 7, 66-7, 302
[57]Idem., ibid., pp. 313, 314-6, 323.

[58]Municipal Archives of Orleans, Decrees of the mayor, in the Year XI(1802-1803), F-os 198-9.

[59]Municipal Archives of Orleans, no. 200, letter of the Prefect of the Loiret to the Minister of the Interior, 20th Nivose in the Year XIII (Jan. 11, 1805). Decrees of the mayor, in the Year XI, f-os 198-9.

former Rue Royale)...What was being described were the boundaries within which the St. Euvertus' Community once assembled the children from the parishes of the old city, henceforth divided into Holy Cross, St. Aignan and St. Donation.[60]

Nicholas Cendre was appointed the teacher. He had become the heir of the Brothers who were the contemporaries of Bishop Paris and Claude François du Lac. But at the last moment he balked. What stood in his way? The municipal register mentions that he had come forward to promise fidelity to the Constitution. It was a bizarre scruple, several months after the promulgation of the Concordat and after the restoration of the episcopal See. But the fact was that Citizen Pierre Chevaucher immediately replaced Citizen Cendre and took possession of the school on Rue St. Euvertus.[61]

On the 14th of following Prairial, Crignon-Desormeaux, writing to the Mayor of Chateaudun who had inquired about the former lamented "school Brothers", asserted that he had been unable to entrust any of the city's schools to the former Brothers of the Christian Schools. He would not fail to alert his colleague if any change occurred in this matter. And, the better to reveal his own interest in the question, he was anxious to point out that two schools for girls would, as of that moment, be directed by the Sisters of Wisdom.[62]

As a result, Brother Liberius was not unaware that the city looked for his return, unless he proved intransigent. At the time, he was popularly known as "Brother Cendre". While awaiting to conclude his arrangements with the civil authorities, he decided to reopen his "private school" on Rue Ange. He chose M. Bernard as his assistant. Suffice it to say that this casual partnership had nothing in common with a Community. The only "rules" that were observed were the disciplinary and educational prescriptions from which no school could be dispensed.[63]However, Brother Cendre had in no way abandoned his vocation: with religious concern, he preserved the writings of De La Salle and the "laws" of the Congregation. The moment was approaching when, in spite of "endless" difficulties,[64]he was about to consecrate his energies and the small fortune he had accumulated in private education to the essential task of uniting a few young men under genuine Religious direction and of earning fully the reputation of being the man who "restored" the Brothers to Orleans.

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Up to now we have been listening to nothing but the distant preludes. Even this term is inexact in the case of Orleans, as indeed it is in the case of Rheims. The players were hesitant and the instruments were out of tune. People were pained and troubled by false starts and false notes, the embarrassing "silences" and the dissonances, as in the rehearsal of a concert. Finally, the "maestro" appeared, fit to conduct the orchestra and give the right tone and the true phrasing to the symphony. In humility, obedience and with an exact appreciation of the goals to be achieved, Brother Gerbaud would presently appeal to the Brother Vicar-general. And having moved into a position of second in command, Brother Gerbaud, for

[60]Etrennes orleanaises, Year XII (1803-1804), Condition of the Church.

[61]Municipal Archives of Orleans, Register of the Decrees of the mayor, f-o 200; Etrennes orleanaises, Year XII (1803-1804), the primary schools in Orleans.

[62]Municipal Archives of Orleans, I R 19-1.

[63]Ibid., Letter of the mayor of Orleans to the Prefect of the Loiret, 9th Ventose in the Year XII (March 1, 1804).

[64]Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 123.

about a period of six years, would cooperate magnificently to re-establish unity of mind and action in the Institute. And, once Brother Frumence had passed from the scene the conductor's baton fell to none but his principal and indispensable associate.

Nothing in the physical appearance of Sebastian Thomas revealed his powerful intelligence and his indomitable will. From the Meuse region of Lorraine (where he was born on the 21st of December 1760 at Breheville in the diocese of Verdun), he had a thin face and was small of stature. His portraits present him pretty much as his contemporaries describe him: his features were rather undistinguished, although he was ugly in a rather quiet sort of way, without anything distinctive; he had a deeply reced−ing hairline and furrows of wrinkles around thick, heavy lips; his eyes were circled with deep shadows and marked by a grave candor. He was a Frenchman of the Napoleonic era, typical of the thousands of modest bureaucrats or professors of the First Empire. His humble demeanor (apparently he always kept his head tilted slight−ly for−ward), his clothes, which he preferred as poor as possible, and the shyness that he struggled to overcome inspired contempt: Brother Calixtus, who was one of Brother Philip Assistants, told the story of a Canon and a Vicar-general of Dinant who, upon meeting Gerbaud (when he was Superior-general) at the entrance to one of the houses of the Institute in Belgium, mistook him for the cook. They soon recognized their error when, during a catechism lesson, they heard the man who had welcomed them speaking as a theologian.

It is probable that once the ice was broken, and especially with his Brothers, this silent, hesitant man recovered his facil−ity with words. Having entered the novitiate in his eighteenth year, he received a sound education, which enabled him to teach science in the residence school in Rouen. He wrote quite well, in a strong, lively style that was capable of finding the striking phrase; his "beautiful handwriting" was especially admired among teachers who did not regard elegant capital letters and intricately designed flourishes as things to be despised. When we turn to his collected correspondence, we are struck by his intellectual and moral power as a letter writer. That greatness of soul, rare wisdom, ardent conviction and persuasive force certainly filter through his writings, however poorly equipped he may have been in voice, gesture and in impromptu speech. For more than twenty years he had to deal with ministers, bishops and magistrates; his success at the time of the restoration of the Institute, and then in the extremely delicate affairs of his own generalate, prove that, while a good diplomat in his day, although inflexible in matters of principle, he did not fear discussion and possessed the resources of natural eloquence. Besides, the sincerity of his faith and the austerity of his life commanded respect. In civilian clothes, he remained a Christian Brother, faithful, since 1786, to his perpetual vows and exempt from all suspicious complicity. He continued to fortify himself with the reading of Scripture. He observed the Rule austerely. Although he moderated the demands he made upon others out of an affectionate charity, he was "severe with himself."[65]

Such was the exemplary Brother whom we meet once again in 1800. After leaving Normandy at a date that remains uncertain, he came to St. Germain-en-Laye, where he taught primary school during the early years of the Consulate. In a letter addressed on the 18th of February 1807 to Cardinal Fesch, Father Dieulouard, pastor of St. Germain,[66] explained briefly the early stages of this revival of the school. "The recollection", he wrote, "of the good" effected by the Brothers "gave rise to the hope of the reestablishment" of the former

[65]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Gerbaud File, Brother Calixtus' notes; Relation mortuaires, Vol. I, pg. 24. (Circular of Brothers Assistants Emery and Guillaume de Jesus, 14th of August 1822, regarding the death of the Brother Superior-general.)

[66]Motherhouse Archives, KG x 1, St. Germain File.

foundation "at a time when the need for morality among indigent youth had been recognized". The priest, named to the pastorship in October of 1802, found four teachers at work. The City Council had only recently set aside a salary of 600 francs for each of them; and Dieudoulard was positive that "children were admitted tuition-free". On the 17th Fructidor in the Year X (September 4th 1802)[67]the Mayor simply obtained from the Council the tuition-free admission of pupils (up to the number specified by the Law of Floreal) whose parents paid fifty francs a year or less in house rent; the tuition demanded of the rest of the pupils was fixed at the very modest sum of three francs for the eleven months of the school year. The legislative prescription, both in its content and on paper, was respected; in practice, this integral gratuity in favor of the pupils (to which the Mayor had agreed) was observed since Brother Gerbaud's arrival.

In this administrative decision there is mention of only "two former Brothers" restored to the former school. However, funds were in fact voted for the support of four. And the pastor named them: apart from the "talented and virtuous" Director, there were Brothers Constantian, Aaron and Zenas. Constantian (Medard Gouge), born in the diocese of Noyon on the 20th of November 1755, was Brother Agathon's nephew; Zenas and Aaron, both from Longueval, had once visited the Superior when he was imprisoned at St. Pelagius.[68] Aaron alone gave proof of some stability; for we find him still at St. Germain at the beginning of October 1805; and the Mayor acknowledged that he was "quite competent at teaching the second class".[69] Constantian, in spite of his name, was the type of man who was ever restless -- a vagabond whom we shall meet in Orleans and later on in Rouen. As for Zenas, he was a poor, indeed a melancholy specimen who moved from St. Germain to Soissons and from there to Guise, where, later on Brother Gerbaud would refuse to readmit him to the vows in the Institute.

The "good Brother Director", Dieulouard continued in his report, "has left us to move on to 'Gros-Caillou' in Paris". Later on Brother Gerbaud himself would explain the reasons for his change. He had arranged for Brother Constantian to succeed him as Director of St. Germain-en-Laye: "The distinguished piety" and "the purity of the zeal"[70]of his associate inspired Gerbaud with confidence; he could not have foreseen that, left to himself, Medard Gouge would follow the bent of his own immoderate and impulsive nature. The school went into crisis: it was "reduced to two Brothers", wrote the Mayor of St. Germain to Brother Frumence on the 10th Vendemiaire in the Year XIV;[71]and he asked that a Brother be sent, who had leadership qualities. In the end he received full satisfaction in the person of the excellent Brother Tiburcius, who was seconded by Brother Blimond and by a novice who went by the name of Brother François. The classes were well taught and the Rule was integrally observed the these three teachers. They taught "a large number of children" zealously and won the respect and the support "of the authorities". The pastor, delighted with their "edifying behavior", had only one last wish: to see the Community quickly achieve its full complement of Brothers.[72]

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[67]L'ecole des Freres de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, anonymous brochure of sixteen pages. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 1904

[68]See above, pp. 279-280.

[69]Motherhouse Archives, St. Germain File

[70]Ibid., Paris-Gros-Caillous File, Brother Frumence's letter, June 1, 1803.

[71]Motherhouse Archives, St. Germain File, letter cited above. Brother Aaron's associate was a Brother Aignan, "an elderly man whose health allowed him to do nothing but cook".

[72]1

St. Germain was nearly sacrificed to the advantage of Paris. The education of Parisian youth immediately following the excesses of the Revolution and the sectarian manoeuvres of the Directory was the object of very serious concern: in 1803 Father Pierre, pastor of St. Sulpice, reopened a Catholic school on Rue Ferou, but without the participation of De La Salle's disciples; the same thing happened at a school opened on Rue Saints-Pères by a group of charitable people with the goal of "obtaining primary education for two-hundred poor children" and training this throng "in the arts of weaving and hosiery making".[73]

A more successful initiative in inducing the return of the Brothers came from Anne Magdeleine Chamillard, widow of the Marquis Henry de Trans and the aunt of Sosthenes La Rochfoucauld-Doudeauville. At the time, Madame de Trans was lodging a small group of "Fathers of the Faith" along with their Superior, Father Joseph Varin Ainvelle in her residence in the Gros-Caillou neighborhood. Father Ainvelle, a former Hussar in Conde's army, had been admitted into the "Society of the Sacred Heart" in 1794 by Father Tournely, a former pupil of Father Emery. After Father Tournely's death in Hagenbruun, in Austria, and after the society had adopted the name of "Fathers of the Faith", Father Ainvelle returned from exile in March 1800. He and his colleagues went on to open secondary schools (first in Lyons and then in Amiens), preach rousing "missions", decide the vocation of Madeleine Sophie Barat, the Foundress of the Madames of the Sacred Heart and pave the way, in a sense, for the restoration of the Society of Jesus.[74]Denounced by Portalis as "Jesuits in disguise", they soon incurred Napoleon's wrath.[75]

It would be impossible to underestimate their role in the restoration of St. La Salle's Institute; and we shall have to return to this theme in what follows. For the moment we merely note a characteristic passage in a letter sent by Brother Gerbaud on the 1st of June 1803 to Brother Frumence: "Why am I in Paris? The reason is, my very venerable Brother, that I have the honor of acting here as your precursor: since, while awaiting you, Father Varin, to whom you were so kind as to introduce us when he left Rome, has brought me here...[76]Our former school, 'Gros Caillou', is going to be reopened; the two classrooms are being remodelled, and while they are being readied, I have a few pupils in a room at the pastor's house. Meanwhile, as we await the present occupants moving from our small house at the end of the semester, I am living at the home of our distinguished benefactrice, Madame de Trans."

"I must renew my fervor, and, thank God, it can be done; it can be done, I say, in this house that worldly people call the "mansion", but that I call an earthly paradise; indeed, it is inhabited by terrestrial angels, or, if you like, by heavenly beings. It is the residence of those "Gentlemen of the Faith", one of whom is my holy and venerable spiritual director. Indeed, it is no longer sorrowfully, but rather with gratitude that I dare ask, what sort of future is in store for us. Lord God of goodness, you have wiped away our tears, or, if your faithful servants are still shedding tears, they are tears of love or of compassion for those who have lost their way.[77]

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[73]Chevalier, op. cit., pp. 290 & 293.

[74]In France the restoration was the work of Father Cloriviere.

[75]For Father Tournely, Father Varin and the Fathers of the Faith, see Father Joseph Burnichon's La Compagnie de Jesus en France, Histoire d'un siecle (1814-1914), Paris, 1914, Vol. I, Chap. 1.

[76]At this point Brother Gerbaud indicates that he was "replaced at St.Germain by a nephew of the late Brother Agathon".

[77]Motherhouse Archives, K g x 4, Paris-Gros-Caillou File, com−plete text of the letter. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 712-16. Among the Fathers of the Faith received by Madame de Trans there was a Father Leblanc whom we shall meet later on who

These lines say a great deal for the hope which induced Brother Gerbaud to leave St. Germain-en-Laye, in spite of the favorable beginnings of that school.[78]Anne Magdeleine Chamillard, saved from the guillotine, wished, by way of thanksgiving, to found pious institutions. She listened to the advice of Father Varin, who, in turn, had been informed by Brother Frumence concerning the outstanding qualities, both religious and educational, of Brother Gerbaud and concerning the promise for the future that such an excellent person could guarantee. To the restoration of 'Gros Caillou'-- the pledge of other revivals to come -- she contributed an endowment of 70,000 francs, the interest on which was to support a chaplain, three teachers and the payment of the rent for their residence.[79]The former bookkeeper with the Danois company contributed, as his share, the savings from the economies he practiced during the years of his enforced "laicization."[80]

Before the Director of Gros Caillou surrounded himself with young teachers, with whom he would deal as the novices they were,[81]he secured the assistance of one of the Institute's veterans, Jean-Claude Collin, who was over sixty years of age and who had been in the Congregation since 1771, where he was known as Brother Tiburcius, a name that appears in our account of the story of St. Germain.[82]

When the new Parisian school was only in the planning stage, it had received government approval as the result of a report submitted to Napoleon by the Director of Religion. On the 6th Ventose in the Year XI (the 25th of February 1803) Portalis wrote: "Because Madame Chamillard, the widow Trans, found shelter and security among the residents of *Gros Caillou* during the violence of the Revolution, she desires to express her gratitude by building a school in this neighborhood that would benefit the children of the poor. She proposes to lease premises there where she can procure the education of these children in the first principles of religion and to add a chapel where Mass will be celebrated and catechism taught. The Archbishop of Paris, who transmitted the petition to me, gives his approval. I am pleased, Citizen First Consul, to propose that you support this school under supervision of the Archbishop.[83] Napoleon's signature ratified the distinguished lady's wishes. And while it did not restore life immediately to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the gesture did announce a most encouraging future. Brother Gerbaud quickly informed Rome that the decree of approval explicitly mentioned the members of the Congregation that were intended to teach in the school; it was "the only" Congregation, he added, that was

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was closely associated with the Brothers who restored the Insti−tute in Belgium. (Father Leblanc's letter to Brother Anaclet−us, June 10th 1833, cited by Felix Hutin, l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes en Belgique , Vol. II, pg. 526.)

[78]And at the risk of "antagonizing" one of the school's benefactors, a M. Huet, who, however "did not slacken his zeal". (Brother Gerbaud's letter, end of the post-script).

[79]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 709.

[80]See above, pp. 414-415. A later document, dated the 18th of March 1812, informs us the Marquess de Trans acknowledged that she was indebted to "M. Thomas, Superior-general of the Christian Brothers ...in Lyons", for the sum of 6,000 francs, and that her heirs could repay the creditors by setting up an annuity. (Motherhouse Archives, K g x-4, Paris-Gros-Caillou File.)

[81]Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pg. 20

[82]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 709.

[83]Idem., ibid., pp. 714-15, according to the AF IV file of the National Archives

advantaged by the support of the highest civil authority.[84]

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Such an advantage -- and, still more the remarkable personality of Sebastian Thomas -- bestowed an authority and an influence and soon a real superiority that was destined to spread beyond the regions neighboring Paris, into areas of the north and center of the country. Something else was evolving in the South of France: there were native movements, initially juxtaposed; -- regionalism, locally inherited from the "Ancien Regime", which had not totally disappeared. But fortunately circumstances worked to counter it.

In the past, the Roman assignment of Brother Gabriel Drolin, delegated by the Founder to the Holy See but kept in the background, in a modest role, defined nothing more than an extension of the Institute's beginnings in Champagne, Paris and Normandy to the Pontifical enclave in Avignon, Provence, the Dauphine and Languedoc. At the outset of the 19th century, the presence in Rome of Brother Frumence, invested by the Pope with supreme authority, would bring about a shift of the axis. Lyons, replacing Avignon in the South, was not only the headquarters of an important administrative division: the work and the faith of a humble teacher, the determination of a city that was ardently religious and profoundly devoted to the cause of popular education, and the will of an Archbishop, an ambassador to the Holy See and the uncle of Napoleon, turned out to be a combination of forces which would give new life to the Lasallian Society and for nearly forty years would settle it in the antique capital of the French nation.

One after another, Brothers' Communities, submissive to the house in Lyons, were reassembling. However, the Lyons' Community assumed a more immediate and a more effective authority over the southern Communities. In the reorganization and "regrouping" of the schools in the neighborhood of Paris, Brother Frumence operated especially through the intermediary of his "right arm", Brother Gerbaud. It was the latter's advice, his orders, and, when necessary, his prohibitions that were quite clearly understood in Grenoble, Valence, Puy, Castres, Toulouse or Bordeaux; and schools appeared especially to multipy in regions nearest the residence of the Vicar-general.

However, like Laon, Chartres and Rheims did not wait to be propelled from the outside in order to rebuild. At Bordeaux and Toulouse significant undertakings sprung, so to speak, from the fruitful earth and, for a time, grew in a sort of isolation, but, because they were similar to each other, and because people intervened, they began to bend toward convergence.

The restoration of the school in Bordeaux deserves more than a passing mention. It emerged wholly from the conscience and the struggle of Louis Arnaud Lafargue and Joseph Darbignac, two young men who, prior to the Revolution, had not belonged to the Institute, and the second of whom was not even a former pupil of the Christian Brothers.

Louis Arnaud Lafargue was born in Bordeaux on the 23rd of August 1771. His father was a carpenter by trade. The godparents of his elder brother, who were also humble people, declared on the occasion of the child's baptism that they were unable to write their names.[85] The young boy lived in this working-class environment to which later one he would dedicate his life. By the time of the Revolution he had gotten through his apprenticeship and was

[84] Letter cited, June 1st 1803.

[85] Motherhouse Archives, Brother Elias File, baptismal certificate, dated the 15th of April 1768, of a Lafargue child, named Peter, like his father. This document cannot refer to Louis Arnaud, who was also so called (or, simply, called "Louis") in official papers and whose date of birth is attested to by Congregation documents.

probably a manual laborer. He enlisted in the army;[86]and campaigned in the western Pyrenees with the rank of corporal and worked as assistant secretary to the quartermaster of the 114th company.[87] The peace signed with Spain enabled him to obtain his discharge.

He returned to his native city. For the next three years we know nothing of the former soldier's activities: the post he filled in the armed services suggests that his education and competence opened up to him some avenues in the commercial life of a great city. His religious convictions were brought out into the open; and they earned him a degree of persecution on the part of a government that was hostile to the Catholic Church. Toward the beginning of the Year VII Lois Armand was involved in a military draft which struck at young people suspected of stirring up "trouble". The police had him served with papers for the army in Italy.[88] On the 29th Vendemiaire, in a petition sent "to the Citizens composing the Directory of the French Republic", he protested this arbitrary measure.[89]

In support of his statements, he produced a testimonial from thirty-eight residence of Bordeaux, "known and quite prominent in favor of freedom". The petitioner's neighbors declared: "This young man has always behaved most regularly... He is occupied without interruption, with the work to which he is dedicated...;never, whether by word or by action, has he manifested that he is not a friend of the government...; if he has been conscripted...it can only be by way of a misunderstanding.[90]

Whether the result -- however, remote -- of this intervention or of a real health complication, Louis Lafargue ended the second phase of his military career on Ventose of the Year VII.At that time he presented his discharge papers to the Commissioner of War, who was headquartered in Bordeaux. Nevertheless, it was not for another year and a half that the Commandant of the 11th Division considered him as finally "mustered out". The description attached to the "discharge" depicts a man of thirty years of age, of medium height, a southerner with black hair, long, pointed nose, and "low" forehead, and the facial features apparently of Gascony, with "grey eyes", lively, spirited, expressive, and (according to all that we know about the man) an insightful mind, a sincere and open spirit.[91]A representative of the Christian Brothers who wrote a "report of (his) visitation" in 1810 said of M.Lafargue, who had become Brother Elias: "He is a deeply virtuous man, has excellent judgment and is

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[86]A certificate, drawn up at Oyarsum on the 5th Germinal in the Year III (March 15, 1795) by members of the Counsel of the administration of the 14th Battalion of the Bec d'Ames attests that Louis Arnaud Lafargue, "Corporal in the 4th company" had been attached since the 8th Vendemiaire in the Year II and that he always performed his duty with the zeal and the exactitude that characterizes a good Republican and a true defender of his country. (The name "Bec d'Ambes" was imposed in 1793 on the Department of the Girond after the "Girondists" had been proscribed.)

[87]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Elias File

[88]Idem, ibid., copy of the Decree of the Directory, for the 2nd Vendemiaire in the Year VII (Sept. 24, 1798), and the note of the Commandant of the Police for the Girond, dated the 24th.

[89]The text is as follows: Louis Arnaud Lafargue, 27 years of age, residing in the Commune of Bordeaux, No. 7 des Salinieres, sincerely and confidently sets before you the fol−lowing facts: 1) that it was with the greatest surprise that he learned that you included him in your order of the 2nd Vendemiaire...but that, wish−ing to show his respect for (your) orders..., he made it his duty to obey...by this day taking the road for Nice; 2) that, convinced that the intention of the executive Directory is not to apply a harsh measure to a young man of a mild and peaceful disposition, who has always shown himself a friend to the Republic, he has hastened to disabuse you in this regard by proving to you, in a clear and evident way, that, since the Revolution, he has behaved as a good citizen and that he has never been observed in the ranks of those...misguided persons who unfortunately tend to excess...

[90]Motherhouse Archives, File cited, petition and certificate of the 29th Vendemiaire in the Year VII (Oct. 21, 1798).

[91]Motherhouse Archives, discharge papers, dated the 5th Pluviose in the Year VII (Jan.25, 1799), Nimes, and inspected at Bordeaux on the 15th Ventose (March 5, 1799). Discharge signed by General Dufour, on the 5th Vendemiaire in the Year IX (Sept. 28, 1800).

most prudent; he has talents of a very high order as an educator, not only in the sciences (which he really should teach), but also regarding the extraordinary order (which he imposes). He does not punish very often. He is naturally mild, patient, joyful and open...He speaks (easily). He has a horror of the world and he lives...in the region in which he was born as though he were a hundred miles away...[92] And when he died his Superior, Brother Philippe, paid him the following tribute: "He had a happy disposition...Never was that kindness, that simple joyousness, that irresistible charm that made his company so attractive, tarnished by vice. His pure and candid soul, like a small child's, was reflected in his face...[93]

This description is enough to grasp in full light the former soldier who, as the 18th century came to a close, sought out spiritual direction from one of his neighbors, a remarkable priest, Father Guillaume Joseph Chaminade. The future founder of the Marianists was to meet the man who restored the Christian Brothers schools to Bordeaux, just as the Fathers of the Faith had met Brother Gerbaud, the eventual successor to St. John Baptist de La Salle. And it was in this way that the great apostles of Catholic preaching and education rose up along the paths taken by the Brothers as the Revolution reached its term. The reestablishment of the Institute founded by a distinguished Frenchman in the reign of Louis XIV was bound up in the closest way with the renewal of the French Church in the modern era.

Guillaume Chaminade, born in Perigueux in 1761, studied in Bordeaux before preparing himself for the priesthood at the Seminary of St.Sulpice. During the Terror he travelled the wharfs and the side-streets of the capital of the Girond to bring the Blessed Sacrament to the sick. He emerged from hiding in 1795, but the persecution of Fructidor forced him to take refuge for a while as far away as Spain. As religious peace dawned, he returned to his flock. On the 8th of December 1800, two teachers, three pupils, three employees and three day-laborers founded, under his inspiration, the Congregation of the "Servants of Mary."[94]In this group was Louis Arnaud Lafargue.

Not long before, this "patriot" and "good Republican" was defending against temptation his conscience and his beliefs. And now he was making a gift of the "zeal" that had been tested in the "Army of the Pyrenees" to God and the Most Blessed Virgin. On the 6th of May 1801 he began a "retreat" which was to have very far-reaching consequences. Indeed, it would terminate in a sort of novitiate in which Lafargue's guide, besides Father Chaminade, was a Brother who had at one time directed the city's schools, a M. Peyron;[95] he had since retired to one of the neighborhooods after having been a tutor in a family. Peyron supplied Lafargue with a number of books from his former Community. Indeed, he may have told Lafargue of his desire to join him: death prevented him from acting on his intentions.[96]

Louis Arnaud was well aware of the achievements of the Christian Brothers. He had frequented their schools for seven years, and, it is believed that at least on one occasion he had substituted for Brother Cherubin. As a model pupil, he may well have become an imitator of the men who taught him. Father Chaminade eagerly urged him to pursue this project. Armed with the Rule of the Institute, and, perhaps, also, the *Conduct of Schools*, Lafargue became a Christian educator. On the 1st of November 1801 he rented a house; and on the 2nd of January 1802 he began his new career.

Six months later he had an associate, who was Joseph Darbignac, also a native of

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[92]Motherhouse Archives, HA p 6 File. "Notes on Some Brothers".

[93]Relations mortuaires, Vol. II (1847), pp. 1-10.

[94]Garnier, op. cit., pp. 60-1; Goyau, op. cit., pg. 532.

[95]Brother Louis

[96]Motherhouse Archives, Bordeaux File

Bordeaux and a former soldier, who seems to have been a very handsome man. At the age of twenty he had served in the army of the Republic. And like Lafargue, he had remained steadfastly faithful to his God. Not only did he wear the scapular under his uniform, but also, morning and evening, he never failed to say his prayers. At the fall of Tolosa in 1794 he suffered several sabre blows to the head. Gravely wounded, he was discharged and took a job in a factory in Bordeaux. Dissident priests made use of him in the performance of their covert apostolate. And in the liturgical ceremonies, as an emergency sub-deacon, he chanted the epistle and on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, he took part in the reading of the Passion. It was impossible for this young man to escape Father Chaminade's salutary influence: Father Chaminade belonged to the Marian Congregation and eventually became its president. As Joseph's spiritual director, he suggested that he cooperate with the edifying Louis Arnaud. Joseph had no objections, even though he lacked all pedagogical formation, and, indeed, was devoid of even an elementary education. His past associations with the Brothers were limited to attendance at a few catechism classes. The 1810 report, already referred to, states that he "was not very good at writing", and that he "had not learned grammar"; he was thought to be "not very bright" and he was severe to the point of being something of a scold where pupils were concerned. His background explained and excused these defects; and in 1802 no one was going to quibble over them. Quite correctly, Father Chaminade trusted Darbignac's good will, his docility and his ardent convictions. Lafargue was pleased to welcome an associate with whom he was able to get on. Actually, he found him to be a genuine Religious, humble, faithful and persevering -- a noble soul with a happy disposition.[97]

In this way was born the tiny Bordeaux Community -- a genuine *proles sine matre creata*. The future would prove that it was viable provided, not only that it obtained financial support, but also that it was able to infuse into its veins the blood of the Lasallian Congregation. Soon a postulant (another teacher) applied. And quickly thereafter came the moment when, clothed in a Religious garb, Louis Arnaud Lafargue and Joseph Darbignac, with the persevering encouragement of Guillaume Chaminade, would henceforth be known as Brothers Elias and Paulinus, respectively.

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In 1804 the teachers in Bordeaux made contact in Toulouse with Brother Bernardine, who does not need to be introduced to our readers. This former member of the General Chapter of 1777 and star of the first magnitude had continued uninterruptedly on the horizon and attained his zenith during the period of the restoration of the Institute. Along with him, the Toulouse group was resolutely to pursue the task that had been mapped out just prior to the year 1789. The center which was opened up in the Upper-Garonne assumed an importance analogous to that of the Communities in Paris and Rheims: its religious vitality transcended by a very great deal the imperfect achievements of Brother Vivien; its activity spread over the entire southwest of France, just as Brother Gerbaud's influence was felt throughout the region bounded by the Loire and Belgium. François René Gaudenne, Pierre Blanc and Sebastian Thomas: -- around these three men the work of the restoration began to crystallize; they obtained rather different results, depending upon their degree of dynamism and their special virtues. The most powerful worker was obviously Brother Gerbaud: as to energy and intelligence, Brother Bernardine did not seem inferior to him; but perhaps he yielded to him in his spirit of discipline and in spiritual clearsightedness. Furthermore, the youthfulness of the Parisian teacher guaranteed the future for him. And, for this variety of reasons, the man who reorganized the "Gros Caillou" school had labored more efficaciously,

[97] Idem., ibid. Centenaire de la restauration d'Institut, pp. 36-37; Essai sur a Maison-Mere, pg. 136; Garnier, op. cit., pg. 62.

under Brother Frumence's direction, to re-establish the essential and total unity of the Congregation. However, it would be impossible to underestimate, both before and during the Lyons' period, the crucial value of the work accomplished at Toulouse.
In 1801 Pierre Blanc had not abandoned the development of his enterprise in Castres. The presence of Mayor Aussenac, one of his former pupils, at the head of the city government, kindled his expectations. Actually, during the following year pupils were once again assembled under the guidance of this very able teacher. But Castres was a very small place, and both space and resources continued to be at a premium. It is easy to understand how Brother Bernardine was quick to respond to an appeal from Languedoc's capital city.

Father Bernadet, the former pastor of St. Stephen's, finally returned from exile, offered Brother Bernardine moral support, and, as far as his straitened circumstances permitted, financial assistance, which, in the days of Lomenie Brienne and Bishop Fontanges, he had supplied to Brother Amand of Jesus. The question was whether the interruption created by the Revolution would be ignored. Blanc travelled to Toulouse, where he laid the foundations for a small day-school; and, then, upon his return to Castres, he and his collaborators drew up an "Act of association" on the 20th of February 1803.

"We, the undersigned, promising, by these presence, to Pierre Blanc or Brother Bernardine to unite ourselves, to remain, to live and to teach schools with him in the same way as we did before the Revolution in the Society or Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, with the changes that he thinks, as we also think, are required by the actual state of affairs, in order to procure the glory of God in the city of Toulouse. And since we wish to live together according to the Rule that we formerly professed, we settle on the said Pierre Blanc as our Superior and Director for three years, the period not to begin until the eve of the opening of the said schools; but, since it would be impossible for him to assume the responsibility to direct these schools if he were not assured of assistants, we promise to begin to obey him from now on."[98]

The signatories to this document, which breathed the spirit and the language of De La Salle, were Jean-François Marcel, Joseph Durand, Jacques Imbert and Pierre Sazerac. The first two were Pierre Blanc's associates at Castres in 1797 and 1798. Jean-François Marcel, who was a native of Castres, had been associated for a very long time with the fortunes of Pierre Blanc, to whom he was devoted since childhood. Born on the 14th of October 1770, he was in the novitiate at Avignon under the name of Brother Dalmas in 1786. We saw him rally the Community of Carcassonne in 1791.[99] Henceforth he was known as Brother Marcel, a name he bore in the Institute as a perpetually professed Brother until his death in 1826.[100]
Jacques Imbert was the old Brother Cesarius who, at the time that the act of association was drawn up was already in his seventies. He was born in Le Puy in 1732. Like Bernardine and Dalmas, he had made his novitiate in Avigon. A simple serving Brother in the school at Castres, after the diaspora of 1792 he settled in the Agout Valley, where he became a wealthy farmer. His return to Religious obedience and the humble zeal he showed during the nine years preceding his death in the service of the school in Toulouse testify to his uprightness, his faith and his detachment.[101]

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[98] Brother Lemandus, op. cit., pg. 137.

[99] See above, pg. 167.

[100] Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pg. 70. Lemandus, pp. 140-1 & 542. Brother Lucard (Vol. II, pg. 710) confused J.F. Marcel with another Christian Brothers, Jacques Catalan, born in Toulon in 1761.

[101] Lemandus, pp. 139-40.

Pierre Sazerac, Brother Diogenes, in spite of his gallantry, turned out to be less reliable. It was at his suggestion, on the 3rd of July 1803, that the members of the small group committed themselves to vows, renewable annually, of chastity, obedience and stability. Diogenes was neither obedient nor "stable": he rejected the direction of Brother Bernardine, who had charged him with being harsh toward his pupils. And by 1807 he was a public school teacher in the Commune of Caraman.[102]

A more enduring and spontaneous fidelity fully compensated for this defection. Joseph Bardou, a former pupil of the Brothers in Castres, and one of the young people who, in or about 1796, published their counter-revolutionary views in that city, placed himself at Pierre Blanc's disposal in 1803. Eventually, he took the name of Brother Joseph of Mary, pronounced his perpetual vows in 1807 and, as successor to Brother Bernardine as the head of the Community, he distinguished himself by "his gentleness, charity, humility, love of poverty and his concern for the salvation of souls".[103]In May of 1804, Pierre Rocher was restored to the name of "Brother Edward of Mary" and, in spite of his sixty-six years, ever alert, he left Lozere to contribute his important cooperation to the work of his friend and contemporary, the "Superior" of Toulouse.[104]

It was not without some bitterness that the people of Castres saw the capital of their ancient province deprived of schoolteachers. The mayor of the city, Joseph Lastours, who sought the well-being of his constituency, pleaded with Brother Bernardine to obtain a team of Christian Brothers for him. His efforts succeeded only at the end of 1805.[105]

The school in Toulouse was opened during the final years of the Consulate. From the outset it was a modest residence school: very few children were admitted: -- about fifteen, at the most; they paid 36 francs a month and they became familiar with the rather austere regimen that had characterized the older establishments at Mirepoix and Charlemagne.[106]The primary classes were in operation in March of 1802: Brother Bernardine taught the first grade, Pierre Sazerac the second, Joseph Durand the third, and François-Marcel the fourth.

From the beginning the local authorities were favorable; but the national government only mildly encouraged their attitude respecting the Brothers. It wished to keep the Religious teachers in a subordinate position: the City Council was not authorized to yield Citizen Blanc the former convents that would be suitable for the development of his project.[107]From the point of view of the clergy the way seemed obstacle-free: Archbishop Primat, did not, indeed, immediately inspire confidence. The "Constitutional" Bishop of Cambrai, he had resigned his priestly credentials in 1793; and in 1798 he reappeared as head of the schismatic church in Lyons. Immediately after the signing of the Concordat, Talleyrand and Fouché sponsored him for the See of Paris -- a fact that speaks volumes for the influence of the former Oratorian priest. Nevertheless, he was determined to erase his troubled past; the Papal Legate removed

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[102]Idem., pp. 141-2.

[103]Idem., pp. 142-4.

[104]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 285. Joseph Durand parted company with Brother Bernardine at about this time in order to become a priest. (Lemandus, Vol. II, pg. 142)

[105]Lemandus, pp. 144-5.

[106]Idem., pg. 157.

[107]Idem., pg. 158.

all censures; and in 1805 he granted him a "new absolution".[108]As a bishop, who presided "magnificently"[109]in his cathedral, he was certainly superior to his predecessors Dillon and Lomenie; and the Brothers found him attentive to their efforts. Further, they could rely completely on Father Bernadet. The fine old pastor set them up again in the house that he had furnished for them in 1788; and while he was henceforth prevented from contributing to their income, he contrived to make their life and their work easier. The upkeep of the property was his responsibility; and the teachers paid no rent. Father Bernadet heard the confessions of all the pupils; and he arranged for three Masses a week in the Community chapel.[110]

The law and fiscal realities forced Brother Bernardine to postpone to a better day the restoration of tuition-free instruction. In any case, he specified that, in agreement with the pastor of the parish and, of course, with the mayor, tuition would be less than that demanded by other teachers in Toulouse. He increased as far as possible the number of poor pupils, and, as soon as Father Bernadet had collected the necessary funds, he provided the poor children with free textbooks and school supplies. [111]

In the clearest and most steadfast way he manifested a desire to act in conformity with the ideals and the principles of his Congregation. Since, until further notice, he performed the duties of Superior with respect to his associates, he placed his authority beyond discussion: the Brothers' "Assembly", on the 16th of October, proclaimed, that with respect to Pierre Blanc's power, they went back to "the Common Rule", "the Rule of Government", "the Rule of the Brother Director", "the Decrees of the General Chapters" and *The Conduct of Schools.*[112]Whether it was a question of opening new schools, the admission into the association of formerly professed Brothers, the dismissal of unsuitable candidates, the formation of novices, the admission of postulants or the authorization of the taking or of the renewal of vows, Brother Bernardine made the decisions -- for as long as the Brother Vicar-general's prerogatives were, in the eyes of the French, unspecified.[113]

Unlike the Community in Rheims, the one in Toulouse did not shirk its Religious responsibilities. Once the uncertainties were cleared away, it saw its salvation in nothing less than complete submission to the Superior designated by the Holy See. But, for nearly three years it ruled itself according to its own special statutes. With the "Superior" whom the "act of association" of the 20th of February 1803 had placed at its head, the Brothers' assembly operated as the Council of "the Regime". Every Thursday, after the recitation of the Litany of St. Joseph, it deliberated over the Community's business, the spiritual as well as the temporal. If one of the members of the association wished to propose either an educational improvement or a reform regarding the Rule, he wrote out his suggestion and submitted it to Brother Bernardine three days before the meeting. The Superior passed the text on to his subordinates, gave them time to think the matter over, collected their opinions and recorded in the association's register the summaries that bear the mark of his concise style and strong

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[108]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. I, pg. 450. Leflon, op. cit., Vol. I, pg. 234; Vol. II, pg. 208.

[109]La Gorce, loc. cit.

[110]Lemandus, pg. 138.

[111]Idem., pp. 138 & 156.

[112]Idem., pg. 142.

[113]Idem., pg. 138.

character.[114]

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This endeavor, however interesting and well conducted, could end, as we see, only in a restoration in miniature of the system that had been destroyed. It lacked an impetus to "excellence", and an appetite for the universal - indispensable features that would be finally realized in Lyons. Having witnessed some fragmentary revivals, we turn now to the genuine resurrection.

The occurrence could never have been the result of blind chance; in this instance we dare say that the plan of Providence was transparent. The city in which Jean Gerson had taught catechism to children and where Charles Démia wrote his *Remonstrances* concerning the education of the poor[115]had a long a marvelous tradition of Christian education. Démia's institutions, his "School Bureau", his "Seminary" and his Sisters of St. Charles had endured up to the Revolution.[116]After ten years, the people in Lyons, who still remembered them were inspired by such a recent past to rebuild them on the spot. They employed what remained of the past and introduced into the work of the future pieces that had been retrieved from the ruins. Among the architects and craftsmen of the monument in progress were many people who had labored in the workplaces of the past. The Sisters of St. Charles were quick to return to the task. The School Bureau relocated some its former leaders. But since the Seminary had not trained a long line of teachers as the Brothers of the Christian Schools had, the perpetuation of Father Démia's heritage fell, quite justly and quite logically, to De La Salle's disciples.

In Lyons they found an atmosphere to their taste -- a religious tradition that ran deep, ardent and sincere. Father Linsol−as the Vicar-general, who was the diocese's only guide after 1795, prohibited every form of political oath and pronounced them wicked en masse. He organized his 105 priests into 23 groups of "Missionaries". For over five years the Lyons and Forez areas became missionary country, crisscrossed by evangelists. Since the churches were closed, the parishes in the villages (as today in certain African countries) were entrusted to devout laymen, assisted by catechists.[117]The events of 1797, 1798 and 1799 did not interrupt the success of this system. Everywhere in this region the Catholic Church asserted its vitality. Father Linsolas counted forty-five per cent practising Catholics in the Ferez region and could identify scarcely 2,000 notoriously irreligious persons in the same area.[118]There was a remarkable clergy in Lyons, where the names of Fathers Rast, Girard and Paul were distinguished. Jacques Joseph Rast pursued his ministry in spite of the Jacobins. His coolness and his goodness made him popular; hailed into the Courts set up by the Terror, he convinced the judges of his innocence: denounced anew to the Revolutionary Committee, he won a sort of triumphant absolution from his fellow citizens: voices at a club meeting were raised to declare him "an honest man". Finally, persecutors got a hold of him, and for twenty-six months, during the Directory, he endured prison. Freed in 1800, he contributed heavily toward the restoration of religious peace through his apostolic zeal, his charity for his

[114]Idem., pg. 146.

[115]See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 54-59.

[116]A. Bonnel, Les Ecoles de Lyon pendant la periode revolutionaire, Lyons, 1893.

[117]La Gorce, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 143-45; Goyau, op. cit., pg. 527.

[118]La Gorce, ibid.

enemies and his great love of the poor.
Jean-Pierre Girard, former pastor of Lucenay, worked alongside Father Linsolas. And like him took over the functions of Vicar-general until 1803. He was still a young man -- he was hardly in his forties at the highpoint of the Revolution -- when he retired from the diocese with the coming of Fesch and died in Paris in 1815.
Father Georges Paul, born in 1743, was Director of the St. Charles Seminary at the time of the destruction of that institution. He took his place with the Vicar-general's auxiliaries in the city's "Missions". As pastor of St. Bruno's, and then as titulary Canon of the primatial church, he played a role in the history of the schools in Lyons that we shall detail in a moment.[119]

Other priests, no less attached to orthodoxy, and themselves destined to exercise a profound influence upon their fellow-citizens, attempted to temper Father Linsolas' intransigence. They followed the example of Father Emery and the Sulpicians; they strove from the beginning of the Consulate to seek out ways of accommodation, to reassure people and to re-establish normal worship. Thus, the Vicar-capitulary, Bernard Rully; and thus, also Father Courbon, the former pastor of Holy Cross, who,was Bishop Marbeuf's Vicar-general as he would be also for Cardinal Fesch.[120]

However, the Church in Lyons was without an archbishop at the time that the Concordat was promulgated. Bishop Marinville, whom Bonaparte had just nominated for the Pope's selection to the See of Chambery, was the official administrator of the ecclesiastical district of the Rhone, Loire and Ain,[121]while Napoleon's uncle awaited the mitre.

Such was the religious situation in the great southeastern city during the time in which the future of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was being decided. There was still nothing permanent, except the high hopes -- the ripe fruit of the heroic deeds of the recent past and of the desire to rebuild -- that were expressed on all sides. The "jurers", powerless since the resignation of Bishop Primat,[122]were inclined to submit and return within the framework of the Roman Catholic clergy in order to cooperate in the work of salvation.

In this soil, torn by so many struggles, devastated by civil war and by the atrocious reprisals of Fouché and Collot Herbois, but at the same time worked over by the 'Confessors of the Faith', watered and made fruitful by the blood of victims, the germ of life found warmth and sustenance, and the grain grew. And the Lasallian Congregation was part of the earliest harvest.

We must dig into the humus for the nearly invisible seed -- the smallest of which, no doubt, were the ones covered over in Lyons; and the least of these were the Lasallian seeds cast to the four winds by the Revolution. And while, potentially, they contained the tree which was destined for marvelous growth and which thrust out its branches to the multitude of scattered, uneasy, wavering, indeed bewildered Brothers, the fact is that at work in it, as in all mother-cells, there was a finality: -- the living being that must issue from the embryo would exactly reproduce the family likeness, so well known to preceding centuries.

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[119]Notice sur M. Jacques-Joseph Rast (City Library of Lyons, no. 114-691); Motherhouse Archives, JF b-1 File, notes on some priests of the Archdiocese of Lyons.

[120]Andre Latreille, Napoleon et le Saint Siege (1801-1808). L'ambassade du cardinal Fesch a Rome. Paris, 1935, pg. 87.

[121]Archives of the Commune of Lyons, D, I City registers, meeting of the Counsel for the 28th Floreal in the Year X (May 18, 1802).

[122]Latreille, op. cit., pg. 88.

For several years a model Christian Brother had been living in the Quarantaine neighborhood of Lyons, on the right bank of the Saone, at the foot of the St. Just hill. He was Antoine Cadoux, Brother François of Jesus.[123]He was seventy-six years of age in 1799 when, perhaps shortly after the 18th Brumaire, he undertook to return to education, to its risks and perils. Relinquishing his job with Merlanchon, as the head of its coach-building works, he moved close-by to St. John's Cathedral, to a courtyard in Rue St. Romain, where he opened a small day-school and endeavored to provide his pupils, apart from the elements of language and grammar, a sound religious instruction. Father Jean-Pierre Girard, in his apostolic visitations, was struck by the answers he received from some of the youth in Lyons: they knew their prayers and they possessed catechetical notions with a precision and an orthodoxy that was rather unusual. He became interested in their teacher: and was delighted to discover in this former Brother a disciple of the saintly priest who, inspired by Charles Démia, organized the schools in Rheims, in the great Parisian parish of the St. Sulpice, and spread into the southern provinces from Grenoble to Marseille. The work begun by Démia for the children of the common people had no chance of rebirth in its former style except in the hands of the Sisters of St. Charles: and thus young girls would be provided for. But what of the boys? The presence of Antoine Cadoux in Lyons was providential sign. Would not the city which, in the 17th century, took such noble and spectacular measures in school matters, be the first, after the disaster of 1792, to harbor the precious waifs of "mother France"? The work of De La Salle's precursor would be continued in the work of his incomparable heirs.

At about the time of the signing of the Concordat, Father Girard advised Brother François of Jesus to begin a community of teachers. The institution in the St. Romain courtyard had become outgrown; larger quarters had to be sought. They were found on Rue Tramassac, among those antique and darkened residences which cluster and nestle between the river and the hill, under the protection of Our Lady of Fourvière. It was a neighborhood full of great memories, a microcosm of art, charity and the piety of the people of Lyons, a soil impregnated with Christianity. It was in the shelter of this Marian sanctuary that the Brothers' Institute was to be reborn. And in spite of many vicissitudes, after a century and a half, it still receives in the person of some of its representatives, the blessings which, from the Basilica, flow over the city every 8th of September, and it is illumined by the lights which, on the night of the 8th of September, transforms Lyons into a splendid "repository of the Immaculate Conception".[124]

Antoine Cadoux disappeared like a shadow; and the frail old man was buried in the neighboring cemetery. Nevertheless, what he stood for supplied the foundation, so to speak, of the future structure; and his spirit was embodied in the ultimate achievement. In obedience to the Vicar-general, the solitary instructor set out to find associates. Seventeen miles lower down the Valley of the Rhone, a Brother who had been his colleague in Aix-en-Provence was teaching. He was Jacques Juge, Brother Pigmenion.[125]This man had been the Director of the school in Uzes in 1792. Once his rejection of the oath had been learned by the city officials,[126]he left the Department of the Gard and, by way of his native region of the Drome, he went as far as Condrieu, where the Community, founded in 1756, dissolved rather than adhere to the "Civil Constitution". That Community was succeeded (once the persecution

[123]See above, pg. 421; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 699-701; Centenaire, pp. 21-2.

[124]Emile Baumann, Lyon et le Lyonnais, Paris, 1935, pg. 103.

[125]Born in the Diois, at Bouvent, on the 7th of February 1747, a novice in Avignon on the 24th of March 1768 and professed on the 8th of October 1775.

[126]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 216-21.

was over) by Jacques Juge. The former Director of Uzès experienced quiet times until Brother François of Jesus' invitation reached him. "I would gladly join you", he replied. But how take leave of his hosts? He enjoyed their complete confidence and feared the charge of ingratitude. His school was prospering; and he was being invited to leave it "to begin another in a place in which he was unknown". He knew, however, what he owed to Religious obedience. Thus, he perceived "only a single way to anticipate complaints and criticism": let Father Girard order him to come to Lyons; and Jacques Juge would quickly recover his identity as a Christian Brothers and think nothing but to pack his bags.[127]

His letter is dated March 1802. The order he was awaiting came in April. Brother Pigmenion arrived a few days later at the residence of Father Rast who, as a former Canon of St. Paul's, had, no doubt, retained his home in the vicinity of the venerable church on the banks of the Saone. Hardly had he been welcomed than Brother François of Jesus' death once again posed the problem that had been under consideration. On Friday, the 16th of April the newcomer was made completely responsible for planning the future.

Happily, circumstances proved promising. On Easter of that year France was celebrating, at Notre Dame in Paris, its reconciliation with the Holy See. Brother Pigmenion was making progress along a path unimpeded by the most serious obstacles. In the Biblical language of the author of the Necrological Notices, he might have been (with the assistance of the head of State, who was being hailed as the new Cyrus) the "Zorobabel" of the Lasallian Jerusalem![128]

Without any delay he accepted his predecessor's heritage. On the 23rd of May 1802, the Feast of the Finding of the True Cross, Fathers Girard and Rast solemnly dedicated the "Citizen Jacques Juge" school. Brother Pigmenion received Holy Communion at a Mass celebrated in the presence of some forty pupils and their families. "The tiny mustard seed", Father Girard called the new institution: but, he added, we must feed the hope of witnessing its growth and of harvesting its fruits.[129]A hundred years later, the Institute, contemplating the marvelous results of this humble beginning, would commemorate the ceremony in Lyons with thanksgiving.[130]

But for the Congregation, cast aside by the Legislative Assembly, to appear to be on the verge of "taking off" its future had to be assured. A beginning had been made; but there was a disappointment in the offing.

Four former Brothers, recruited to join the enterprise, appeared at Rue Tramassac in the course of the second semester. They were all natives of the Upper Loire: Étienne Borie, Jean Baptist Faure, Pierre Jourde and Antoine Boudoul.[131]We are familiar with the trials of the first two, who were Brothers Paul of Jesus and Servulus.[132] Pierre Jourde (Brother Odo), born in 1760 and a novice in 1780, taught before and during the Revolution in Aurillac.[133]

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[127]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 700-01.

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[129]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 701-02.

[130]Centenaire, pg. 5.

[131]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 702-03. We are correcting Antoine Boudoul's name, according to the Register of Entrants; Brother Lucard calls him "Baudoul".

[132]See above, pg. 289.

[133]See above, pg. 129. Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pg. 297 also provides some information concerning Brother Odo. The Congregation's Registers gives us the curriculum vitae of the four Brothers.

Antoine Boudoul (Brother Paulian) was fifty-two years old; he had been a member of the Institute since 1778 and had pronounced his perpetual vows in 1783; at one time at the head of the novitiate in Avignon, he must have returned to Puy, like Brother Odo, after the dissolution of the Communities. These were veterans who had struggled and who had suffered; their painful experiences had toughened their courage, strengthened and further purified their vocations. They were impatient, too, to return to the full rigor of the Rule. They wanted a Religious habit; and they complained of being unable to find in Lyons a house that was suitable for Community exercises. In vain did Father Courbon, recently promoted to be Vicar-general of the archdiocese, urge them not to hurry matters. But almost immediately Brother Paul of Jesus, disappointed, returned to Puy. Brother Paulian persuaded the others to accompany him to Belley, where he dreamed of opening a more regular Community. But, since the Concordat subjected the Department of the Ain to the jurisdiction of Lyons, Father Courbon opposed that project by interposing his veto, which was not subject to appeal. Brother Servulus, seeking a life of penance and obscurity, applied for admission to a Cistercian monastery. Rejected, he followed the good example of Pierre Jourde and wisely decided to ask for asylum with Brother Pigmenion.[134]

In this partially reconstituted group we should point out the presence of a novice, Pierre Gambert, Brother Augustine. He entered at the end of 1802. Great hopes were held out for him, which did not disappoint.[135]On this note we come to the close of the prelude, however uncertain, of the restoration in Lyons. However, it remains for us to examine, over the same period, the arrangements and the efforts of the local authorities to reform education: this inquiry will show us how the ground was prepared for the return of the Brothers from Rome.

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The shortcomings of public education preoccupied the best minds. A municipal councilor, Citizen Cozon, in his report of the 22nd Frimaire in the Year IX, demanded teachers "who inspired confidence and respect". Since the city was made up of three districts (North, South and West), three teachers were needed in the first two, and four in the western district.[136]Besides, secondary schools seemed to be indispensable: one of them was to be opened in the former Jesuit "Petit College", below Fourvière.[137]

The western district was administered by a mayor, Andrew Barnard-Charpieux, whose remarkable activity would be exerted especially in favor of the education of the common people. On the 23rd Messidor in the Year X (13th of July 1802), he wrote to Citizen Najac, Prefect of the Rhone: "...The Law of the 11th Floreal...finally puts an end to the evils occasioned for ten years by the imperfect or defective system of public education and it would be to misunderstand a benefit, the results of which so powerfully influence the social well-being, to fail to grasp as quickly as possible every means to organize the various parts of this education."

On the 2nd Thermidor he sent Najac the list "of citizens who had opened private schools in the West", and he vouched for their "enlightenment" and their "morality". A passage in this letter deserves special attention because it reveals a breadth of view in Bernard-

[134]Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 703.

[135]For Brother Augustine, see the Circular, Centenaire, pg. 60.

[136]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Register of Decisions, for the Year IX (1800-1801), f-os 17 to 19.

[137]Idem. for the Year X (1801-1802), f-os 254-255.

Charpieux that would be presently witnessed in the deliberations of the municipal Council: "All classes of society have an equal right (to education) and...we would be failing in this most import−ant social goal should we not open a tuition-free secondary school."[138]

Two weeks later a report unanimously adopted by the Counsel vigorously set forth the doctrine that was most in conformity with the ideas of ancient France and with the ideas of St. John Baptist de La Salle concerning the widest possible diffusion of human knowledge. The Counsel protested the tuition prescribed by the recent law: "In a populous city such as our own, made up in great part by workers who lack the means of giving their children the first elements of education, it is the duty of the authorities to provide this primary instruction and to support the costs. By demanding a tuition from the parents, the effect of the Law of the 11th Floreal is neutralized: some children are admitted to the schools to the exclusion of the majority, who always belong to the poorest class; and thus the hope for moral improvement disappears; ignorance becomes endemic, vice and immorality are propagated, and society can only bewail the evils which are the inevitable result. Tuition-free education, from primary instruction to the most advanced sciences, has been one of the institutions that has most distinguished humanity. Admitted without distinction into the public schools, the poor, like the rich, can there develop equally the fortunate seed of talent and knowledge that they carry with them from birth. Lyons has been honored by several institutions of this nature; the Revolution destroyed them. We must therefore combine our efforts to restore them and finally rescue education from the decay into which a long series of calamities has plunged it.[139]

Then and there the Assembly called for twenty primary schools for boys and girls. It left to the mayors the task of drawing up educational guidelines and of selecting (reserving final approval) teachers of both sexes. So as to fulfill the law, a tuition schedule was established for the children of well-to-do families: but in the same article it was stipulated that "most of (of the pupils) would be exempt, given their well-recognized indigence". Tuition-free education was extended, as far as possible, to secondary instruction. And in private schools tuition schedules were not left to the arbitrary whims of the heads of institutions,"so that education might be equal for all".[140]

Bernard-Charpieux had clearly inspired these decisions. He worked together with the new Prefect, Jean-Xavier Bureaux Puzy -- a farsighted, cultivated man, who had once served in the Constituent Assembly as Deputy for the Nobility of the Franche-Comte.[141]Bernard-Charpieux got Puzy to approve of the restoration of an institution invented by Démia, "the school jury": "This," (he wrote to Puzy on the 15th of September 1802), "is a Council composed of virtuous and enlightened men, whose participation will be free and who will devote themselves exclusively to the progress of education."The nine members of this jury, under the alternating presidency of the three mayors of Lyons, would prepare the schools' budget, provide for the costs of buildings and furnishings, and for teachers' salaries. They would examine the credentials of candidates for teaching posts and propose the names of the best of them to the city administration. Like their predecessors of the 17th and 18th centuries, they would visit classes, make awards to pupils and supervise studies and discipline. Petit

[138]Municipal Library of Lyons, Coste File, 1056.

[139]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, second Register. Meeting for the 15th Thermidor in the Year X (3rd of August 1802). This report is given in the circular, Centenaire, pp. 77-78.

[140]Idem., ibid. Meeting for the 15th Thermidor in the Year X (August 4, 1802), f-os 48 to 51.

[141]A friend of Lafayette, with whom he was a prisoner at Olmutz, Bureaux Puzy went from the Department of Allier to the administration of the Department of the Rhone in Fructidor of the Year X. (Latreille, op. cit., pg. 96)

College became the site of their monthly meetings.[142]

A decree of the Prefecture, dated the 11th Frimaire in the Year XI, nominated the officers for this group.[143]One of them was Father Paul. Bernard-Charpieux wrote to him on the 16th Frimaire: "...The zeal with which you have cooperated with everything that tends to restore public education assures me of your eagerness to accept this appointment. Please accept the expression of my respect and affection[144]

The appointment clearly indicated the mayor's intentions. It proclaimed the continuity of the old and the new orders in the schools of Lyons. Moreover, it emerges from the administrative correspondence that Father Paul was not only the most influential member of the jury, he was also the real director of elementary education. He himself proceeded to the distribution of funds according to the condition of the treasury; he attended to the naming of the teachers and maintained regular relations with them.[145]Quite correctly, one of the city counselors, in a report dated 1804 credited the former Director of St. Charles' Seminary with having acquired for the city the services of "some Brothers of Christian Doctrine".[146]

With Father Paul at his side, Bernard-Charpieux did not spare his concerns for rebuilding, furnishing and heating the structures set aside for classrooms and teachers' residences.[147]On the 15th Nivose in the Year XI (the 5th of January 1803), the school regulation was completed. It prescribed that the teachers "inspire their pupils with the principles of religion and sound morality". Children would be admitted to elementary schools at the age of six years; and their studies would not extend beyond their thirteenth year. However, because of the ignorance which plagued the generation that had grown up since 1792, special courses would be introduced for adolescents. And finally, professional education was being planned: "When funds are adequate", there will be "in each municipal district workshops for skills suited to each of the sexes" and the pupils will be trained there in the various trades "tuition-free".[148]This was another return to the guidelines set down by Demia.

On the 7th Ventose (the 26th of February) Sain-Rousset, mayor of the southern district, announced to the city Council the opening of the primary schools that had "at one time been called 'the little schools'". His colleagues in the West and the North commissioned him to submit the list of teachers of both sexes for the twenty schools in the three districts for the Assembly's approval. Among the teachers for the West was "Jacques Juge, fifty-five

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[142]Centenaire, pp. 31-32.

[143]Chevalier, op. cit., pg. 78.

[144] . Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western mayor's office no. 94. Another member of the jury was Citizen Vitet, vice-president of the Court of Appeals (Municipal Archives of Lyons, Western mayor's office, no. 96). According to the second Register of Decisions of the City Counsel (D f-o 185) the names of their seven colleagues were as follows: Cozen, Mayeuvre, Couderc, Robin Orleans, Rambaud-Montclos, Leroy, and Lecourt.

[145]In a Lyons document that we shall examine later on (cf. below, pg. 540) Father Paul is described as "Superior of the Christian Schools project".

[146]Centenaire, pg. 32.

[147]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western mayor's office, Bernard-Charpieux's letters for th 1st, 8th, 22nd Nivose in the Year XI (Dec. 22, 30, 1802, Jan. 13, 1803) (nos. 110, 111, 115, 135).

[148]Centenaire, pp. 30, 32, 88 and 89.

years old, 45 Rue Tramassac Street".[149][150]

[149] Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, second Register, f-os 184-185. Cf. Chevalier, op. cit., pg. 77.

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CHAPTER TWO

Toward a "Restoration" of the Institute

Apparently, the beginning of 1803 had not brought any great change in the situation of the former Brothers on French soil. True, in Rheims and Toulouse Communities were being organized; but these were merely local undertakings, individual endeavors, that did not reflect the unified conditions of a renaissance. In Laon and Chartres the fine work of the teachers continued, somewhat more boldly than in the preceding period; and it was directed in such a way that, when the time came, it would be easily combined with more generalized accomplishments; but their efforts did not extend beyond these cities. The interesting work of Louis Arnaud Lafargue, the ex-soldier in Bordeaux, was temporarily guided by a priest whose lofty goals and eminent virtue strove for results other than that of rehabilitating De La Salle's work. The instruction dispensed to a handful of children by Nicholas Cendre might inspire the people in Orleans to wish to see their former schools revived; but up to then, nothing but a rather ineffectual goodwill was evident. Brother Liberius, who would become a worker in the revival, was still an isolated witness to the past, like so many others of his confreres, public or private schoolteachers destined to be employed outside their Congregation or who would only return to it tardily; among the former, there was Robert de Parpe in Fontainebleau and John Baptist Delvainquier in Bourges; among the latter were Brother Evaristus in Valence, Brother Corentine in Vergezac, Brother Philippe Joseph in Elbeuf, and Brother Patrice in Marseille.

During that winter in the Year XI Sebastian Thomas was still teaching at St. Germain-en-Laye; Jacques Juge, awaiting to be put on salary by the Commune of Lyons, was living a quasi-solitary's life on Rue Tramassac. One had the impression of tramping over snowfields, under a pallid sun, and of seeing no other vegetation than the melancholy foliage of a few pine trees that had escaped the storm.

What had become of those mighty monarchs of the forest? Where were the names of the Brothers who sat in on the last General Chapter in 1787? The intrepid and brilliant Superior was dead; dead, too, were his Assistants, Pascal and Sylvester, for whom the Communities of Orvieto and *Trinita dei Monti* celebrated Requiem Masses in February and October of 1801, at the same time as for Brothers Florence and Macarius, and two other Brothers, Thomas and Desiré.[1] Dead at Orleans was Brother Aphrodisias, at Montpellier Brother Benezet, and at Farrara, the former Director of Mareville, Brother Jean of Mary; also dead in 1789 was Brother Vincent Ferrier at the Rossignolerie, and, ten years later, Brother Brice, upon his return from exile. The secretary of the Chapter, Brother Solomon, had perished in the September massacre.

Others, like Brother Lupicin, Brother Leander, Brother Jean of the Cross, Brother Serapian, the Procurator-general Philippe of Jesus, and the former Assistants, Brothers Zacheus and Anacletus disappeared without a trace. Brothers Lothaire, Amand of Jesus, Eunuce, Cherubin, Ferreol and Bernardine survived. But only one of these, Pierre Blanc, the Director of Carcassonne, Castres and Toulouse, preserved the unconquerable spirit, the splendid and fruitful action, the independence of a freedom-fighter. Jean-Baptist Crepeaux (Brother Eunuce) at 74 years of age, Nicolas Tupain (Brother Amand) at 76, were in no position to entertain long-ranged hopes nor endure difficult enterprises. Joseph Ducord

[1] House Registers of Orvieto (pg. 21) and Rome (pg. 28).

(Brother Cherubin) had buried himself in Bollene and could barely drag himself from his lodgings. Very little could be expected from Brother Ferreol: from Marseilles, (his family name of Balthazar Jacob seems to suggest Jewish origins) he returned completely to secular life, even though, as the Director of Aix-en-Provence, he had rejected the "Constitutional oath"; he settled in his birthplace, on "St. Michael's plain". Since the Year V he had received a pension. In April 1809 he applied to the Office of Registry and Estates for the use of buildings on Corderie Boulevard that were still being occupied by a "squatter" named Guinot; Jacob wanted to open a school similar to the ones that the Brothers had started "in Bordeaux and Lyons": such a gesture suggested the desire for a last-moment step in the direction of the apostolate. At the time, Balthazar Jacob had frequent contacts with his former confreres. After the death of Brother Frumence, he showed up at the General-Chapter in Lyons as a "Consulter". He was, then, once again, toward the end of the Empire, a member of the Brothers' Institute.[2]However, this seventy-one year old man had lost all sense of religious obligation: subsequently, as we shall see, Brother Gerbaud issued an order for him to leave the Congregation once for all.

There remained Brother Assistant Lothaire, Jean-Baptist Claude Clerc. Born on the 21st of June 1739, he had scarcely entered upon old age; his talents, his moral authority, the responsibilities he had filled with such distinction and his friendship with Brother Solomon,[3] seemed to designate him as the one to play a principal role in the France of 1803. No suspicion hovered over his conduct ; no disagreement separated him from his former Institute. However, sceptical concerning the future and adducing the uncertain state of his health, he shunned the most pressing appeals. Retired to Besancon, his birthplace, he worked, somewhat tardily but creditably, to reassemble the Brothers in that locality. But it was only *in extremis* and in preparation for God's judgment that he asked to be readmitted into his Religious family. He died on the 6th of April 1809 in the Community in Besancon.

Thus, the veteran leaders were lacking to the Congregation in especially serious circumstances. In the absence of Brother Agathon, his venerable predecessor, Brother Florence, might have rallied a number of the faithful. The 1767-1777 Generalate had not achieved the success nor the heights of the "Agathon years"; Brother Florence's gentleness clashed painfully with the demands of the Archbishop of Rouen, with some indocile spirits and with the obstacles that religion had encountered from Gallicans, Jansenists and the "Philosophers". But in his wisdom he had trained excellent disciples at St. Yon and at the Parisian Holy Spirit House; and, finally, since his resignation in 1777, that wisdom had been successfully exercised in Avignon and throughout the southern province. The witness rendered to the faith, in the midst of persecution, by "Jean Boubel" surrounded him like the halo of the near-martyr that he was. Further, he had the support and shared the prestige of his friend, Étienne-François Bouhelier, Brother Maurillian.

He died before the situation could improve. A short while ago we saw the two friends at the home of the baker, Cure, after their release from prison in 1794.[4]

Brother Pierre Celestine, the Procurator at Petit-Collège in Lyons, who had collected stories about Brother Maurillian, recounted the life of these marvelous old men;[5]"Never", he writes, "was the Rule better observed than in this little Community". Citizen Cure's guests

[2]Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II, pp. 200-3.

[3]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 614-615.

[4]See above, pg. 291.

[5]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Florence File, Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1923, pp. 48-50.

donned their Religious habits at 4:30 in the morning. “Reading the Imitation, morning prayer, meditation, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, office work and breakfast -- all took place according to schedule,” and at the sound of the bell. The baker’s wife prepared their meals.

After the recitation of the Litany of the Holy Child Jesus, Jean Boubel and Étienne Bouhelier reluctantly removed their Brothers’ habit. Dressed in secular suits, they circulated through the streets of Avignon in order to give their private lessons. Returning home, they studied catechism with the punctuality of novices. The recreation prescribed by the Holy Founder was fol−lowed by the Litany of St. Joseph. The former Superior and his colleague taught again in the afternoon. And when evening came on, dressed once again in their monastic garb, they scrupulously completed the exercises specified in the Christian Brothers’ Rule.

When the Jacobin violence ended, a priest dropped by occasionally to say Mass in their quarters. At the risk of being denounced or attacked, they sometimes ventured as far as Villeneuve-les-Avignon where the Roman Mass was beginning to be revived.

Eventually, Brother Florence became bedridden with rheumatism; and a Father Giraud came to bring him the Sacraments. “How awful it would be”, he often said to Brother Maurillian, “if God should call you first. May it please God to call me from this world before you!” And then, with the presentiment of his approaching death, he prophesied: “You will see the Institute restored to what it once was.”

On the 26th Nivose in the Year VIII (the 16th of January 1800) at 10 o’clock in the morning, in the office of Agricola Ignatius Philip, public official in the Commune of Avignon, appeared Citizen Gabriel Carle (sic), baker, 52 years of age, residing in Rue Galante and Citizen Louis Millerand, an assayer “in the office of warrants”, to announce the death of “Jean Boubet (sic), a former Ignorantin Brother”, son of Nicholas and Marguerite Meret, native of Caincourt, Department of the Moselle. The deceased had died the night before in his dwelling on Rue Galante, at the age of 75.[6]

The body was buried in St. Roch’s Cemetery. This tomb which, in the last year of the 18th century was enclosing the body of De La Salle’s fourth successor sixteen months after the disappearance of the fifth, seemed to swallowed up the “old” Institute. However, the spiritual inheritance, preserved in the depths of souls, would one day return and suddenly bear fruit. Brother Maurillian brought a portion of it to the Brothers in Lyons when, in the course of 1803, he resolved to join Jacques Juge. He was over eighty years of age. “God’s blessing is departing my home”, declared the baker in Avignon when his highly regarded guest crossed over the threshold to leave Rue Galante. The blessing, which, for nine years, sanctified that charitable house, of course, abided in it and descended as well upon the Brothers who were regrouping in Lyons. Age and infirmities interrupted neither his prayer nor his desire for mortification. Throughout the severe winters he showed up to recite the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin with the novices in a cold, damp chapel. His conversation edified the Community and filled the young with stories of a glorious past. Born in 1722, he lived on until 1809, and he died in the fiftieth year of perpetual profession, after having served the Institute under the Generalates of Brothers Claude, Florence, Agathon and Frumence.[7]

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[6] Jean Boubel’s death certificate, Register of the civil office of the clerk of the Court of Avignon. The document was published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1938, pg. 63. in an article by M. Francis Martin on “Les Freres d’Avignon pendant la Revolution”. “Carle” rather than “Cure” may well have been a lapsus calami. “Being illiterate”, the baker had written nothing. The Register of Entrances to St. Yon gives Paroy and not Caincourt as the birthplace. Rue Galante is today Rue Deveria.

[7] Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pg. 14.

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Of the leadership that existed in 1787 there survived, after the Revolution, only isolated individuals. Except for Brother Bernardine,none of them considered themselves in a position to pick up the pieces. But Pierre Blanc had holed up in his fiefdom in Toulouse. Of the men who were formerly out of consideration but who had been brought to the fore by events, only Brother Gerbaud seemed to have had the stature to succeed the fallen leader. However, the Papal Decree of the 7th of August 1795 had created a legal and factual situation that had thrust itself upon consciences. In August of 1800 that Decree was re-enforced: Pius VII, who had returned to Rome a few weeks earlier, confirmed Brother Frumence in his position as Vicar-general of the Institute. Furthermore, he seems to have thought that it was superfluous to go beyond a mere verbal declaration, pronounced in the presence of Brother Frumence himself and Brothers Guillaume of Jesus and Raymond.[8]

Although the procedure was extraordinary, there was no question but what Brother Frumence assumed the supreme authority that St. John Baptist de La Salle understood that he was transmitting to Brother Barthélemy in 1717. And the disciple who would henceforth hold it could not be repudiated by his Father: it was forty years since he had entered the novitiate at St. Yon, and it was thirty years since he had pronounced perpetual vows.[9]His career had been most upright and most conformed to the Religious ideal. On the 30th of May 1803 he was beginning his sixty-seventh year, counting from his Baptism at Mesnil-Martin-Fort, a parish in the diocese of Amiens. His health was rather precarious, and he had aged prematurely under the pressure of trials and anxieties, especially during the period following the invasion of the Papal States, the abduction of Pius VI and the dispersal of the Brothers from Rome. His hair had turned white, his face was lined and he suffered severely from asthma. But his features reflected an unfailing gentleness. He was a marvelously patient man...possessed of a disposition that -- in the words of a document of the period -- was "totally benign".[10]Kindness seemed indeed to be his characteristic virtue -- a cordial, smiling kindness which translated spontaneously into sincere joviality and into expressions which, if not vulgar, were at least full of good-humored simplicity and an earthy pungency in his conversation and letters. After many years spent in Italy, he preserved the mentality of a native of Picardy.

Like his compatriot, Brother Agathon, he possessed the highest degree of common sense, as well as the prudence and the composure peculiar to the northerner, the familiarity with psychological forces and the precise appreciation of what is real and of what is possible.[11]Difficulties neither surprised nor discouraged nor caught him off guard. And God knows whether he would emerge free from the overwhelming tasks of reorganization that everywhere faced him. The skillful and diligent administrator pondered them, analyzed them and, in the end, overcame them, whether head-on or by outflanking them or by employing the delaying tactics that consolidated his position. He didn't hurry things, nor break the reed, nor snuff out the flickering candle. What forbearance, what mercy he had to practice with respect to so many men who wandered rather aimlessly, who had lost their habit of obedience, and who, sought out by Divine Grace and the cherished memories of youth or mature years, still vacillated at the gates of the Institute or, having taken the first steps in the direction of the

[8]Motherhouse Archives, Sommario del distretto di Roma.

[9]Admitted on the 30th of October 1763, perpetual vows 22nd Sept. 1772. St. Yon Register, pg. 127.

[10]Quoted in Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 142.

[11]Cf. Centenaire, pg. 94.

ancient fold, hesitated or fled!

Brother Frumence repeated his paternal exhortations. He had no weaknesses when it came to dealing with those who were negligent, but he was merciful with those who were weak. He was ever ready to pardon. He threw himself into prayer, a prayer which did not disdain to stoop before men, even as it rose up before God. "He spoke effusively and from the heart",[12]in his everyday conversation, as on his knees before the altar. One had to hear him recalling the great example of De La Salle and the other holy men whom he had met in the Congregation; one had to hear him calling upon the Most Blessed Virgin, involving her in every discussion, in all his preoccupations.[13].He was indefatigably dutiful and regular, indeed heroic, in his pastoral activities. Illness did not stop him: he wrote and ruled, during the weeks when an asthmatic crisis would force him to remain in his room. It was difficult to resist the attractiveness of his virtues, the "kindness" of his speech, and the charm which emanated from his countenance and from his person, which was neither pretentious nor inflexible.

French Brothers soon learned to love the leader selected for them by Providence and by the Popes. For at the moment of which we speak the Vicar-general was well known only to his Roman confreres. Upon his return to *San Salvatore in Lauro* shortly after (or just at the time of) Pius VII's election, he reopened that institution's school: Brother Raymond directed it under his orders. Brother Guillaume of Jesus, with the help of Brother Charles Borromeo, reopened classes at *Trinita dei Monti*. There were about twelve Brothers in the two Communities. The Pope, renewing a permission given by Bishop Passeri, Vice-administrator of the city when the Holy See was vacant, dispensed them from the vow of teaching tuition-free until the situation improved.[14]The city recovered slowly from the terrible shock of 1798. Nevertheless, children flocked by the hundreds to the banks of the Tiber and slopes of Mount Pincio. Ferrara and Orvieto also had a large pupil-population. And Brother Frumence, at the request of Pius VII, founded a school in Bolsena, which he entrusted to the direction of Brother Spirit of Jesus.[15]

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Since the days when Brother Agathon had sent the Brother Vicar-general the loftily inspired letter that was his last will and testament,[16]war and persecution had brutally separated the French Brothers from their confreres in other countries. Mutual silence seemed to continue during the first years of the Consulate. As long as uncertainties obtained in the relations between the Republic and the Church, the erstwhile subordinates of the Superior-general acted on the strength of their personal perceptions of things and contracted such engagements with the civil authorities as they thought were not repugnant to their conscience, would defend their interests or would serve the cause of popular education. They sought advice from orthodox churchmen, and they took their places under the leadership of pastors who had returned to their dioceses or parishes. Many probably were unaware of the Brief of 1795; and if they had gotten wind of Brother Frumence's appointment, they imagined in perfectly good faith that his role was limited to governing in the Italian houses. For the rest, accustomed to the "Ancien Regime", which tied the existence and action of Religious

[12]Essai, pg. 142.

[13]Ibid

[14]Archives of the Brother Procurator-general to the Holy See, File I, no. 22; Brother Guillaume of Jesus' note (the original is in Italian). Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 697-8 and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 121

[15]Essai, pp. 114-5.

[16]See above, pp. 360-364.

Congregations to the State, the French Brothers had trouble understanding how their Institute could survive the abrogation of the "Letters-patent" of 1725.

The promulgation of the Concordat re-established relations between those who had been cut off in France and the Communities in the Papal States. And the Rhone Valley, we believe, was the first to be fully informed of the events which had occurred in Rome. Lyons, Valence and Marseille knew that the Pope had provided not only for the administration of the schools created within the immediate jurisdiction of the Holy See, but for the present and the future of the entire Lasallian family; that the authority conferred upon the Vicar-general was indeed what "the statutes and the Constitutions" granted the Superior elected by a Chapter; and that he would hold them -- in relation to "all" and "each" of the Brothers -- until a new Assembly could be convoked according to Rule to appoint Brother Agathon's successor.

The situation was clear to Brother Pigmenion when he, after the secession of his associates (i.e., toward the end of the autumn of 1802), undertook to explain his frustrations to Brother Frumence.[17].We do not have the text of this letter; on the other hand, we are in a position to quote *in toto* the message that Brother Paul of Jesus, one of the dissidents, sent to Brother Vicar: it is dated from Puy, "the 13th of January 1803 and informs us as completely as we would wish.[18]

" My very venerable Brother, I bring you my profound respect."[19]At the beginning of the year I received the too kind letter you were so good to write me; it points perfectly to your profound humility and it further confirms the high opinion that rumor has given of your rare merit. What prayers of thanksgiving we can offer the Lord who touches us with His Goodness by giving us, in your person, such an accomplished Superior that He heals the wound opened in our hearts when we lost our very dear Brother Agathon.[20]With St. Paul we all say, Let us rejoice; and, with the same Apostle, we repeat, let us rejoice in the Lord, because, in your person, he has given us for Superior a man after His own heart."

"In September of last year, my very dear Brother, I was in Lyons, and it was certainly my intention to remain there, since I went there furnished with two suitcases; but failing to find in the house they inhabited one suited to a Community, I was disgusted and left...[21][22] Now, then, my very dear Brother, that you inform me that such is your will, I submit to return and remain there, when they will have me. I shall write immediately to Lyons, to dear Brother Pigmenion, that I shall join him as last year, in order to cooperate with him in the same work that he has so happily begun, and I have no doubt but what Brother Paulian, to whom I shall show your letter, will do the same. For it would be harsh of me, indeed very harsh, once again to send away[23] some forty pupils, among whom there are two postulants, since they were dismissed such short while ago and since there is no one to replace me except two false Brothers, both of whom are married.

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[17]Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 703-4

[18]Motherhouse Archives, BE a, Brother Frumence File. Cf. Lucard's quotations, Vol. II, pp. 704-6.

[19]Taken by itself this opening would prove that Brother Paul of Jesus regarded Brother Frumence as his Superior-general.

[20]The sentence is curiously constructed; but it doesn't seem to mean anything but that "You close up the wound which the loss of our dear Brother Agathon opened in our hearts".

[21]The hiatus is in the original text.

[23]This portion of the sentence incorporates a gloss by Brother Lucard.

"The Bishop's first Vicar-general in this city informed me about three weeks ago, through my confessor, that he forbad me to leave, and the Bishop, in his visit to this city, told me the same thing. So as not to offend these authorities and so as not to be thwarted by them, we shall leave without consulting them."

"I rejoice with great joy, my very dear Brother, to see how our Institute prospers so well in Italy. By what fate, by what spell do we not have the same good fortune in France? It's our sins, no doubt, that make us unworthy of that broad and abundant mercy."

I have the distinction of knowing very dear Brother Guillaume of Jesus as my senior in Religion, as he is in ability and in virtue. I am extremely appreciative of the remembrance with which he honors me; I beg you to be good enough to extend to him my best wishes. Allow me, please, to ask you to greet most respectfully all our dear Brothers and especially Brothers Rieul (my fellow novice), Charles Borromeo, Gregory and dear Brothers Contest and Pierre, beseeching all of them to be kind enough to favor me with their fervent prayers. (The latter's uncle married since the beginning of the Revolution; and his mother died. Louis August[24]also married since the beginning of the Revolution; but he has no children.)

"My very dear Brother, there are some Sisters of St. Francis here who urgently appeal to you to be so kind as to inquire, upon occasion, whether their Superior-general is still alive, what her address is, whether they are subject to the jurisdiction of the Ordinary and whether the privileges pertaining to their Order still obtain."

"You would be obliging one who ardently desires to see you leading us in France and who, furthermore, has the honor of being, with the most profound respect, as I wish you and our dear Brothers a Happy New Year, My Very Venerable Brother, your humble and obedient servant, Brother Paul of Jesus, commonly known here as Brother Borie, Brother of the Christian Schools."

A postscript asks the Superior's directions concerning funds which the dutiful Brother had at his disposal; he was also anxious to know whether he should hand over his "silver watch" to Brother Pigmenion.

Obviously, Étiennne Borie experienced real happiness at finding that he was once again under a legitimate Superior; deferential expressions leapt to his pen; for this confessor of the faith, once the victim of persecution, nothing mattered any more except the pleasure of returning to the ranks, of giving up his independence and his modest bank account. Not even a Bishop could stop him!

By issuing Brother Paul of Jesus an order to leave Le Puy in order to cooperate with Brother Pigmenion in starting a Community the Vicar-general was exercising an act of jurisdiction on French soil in a most significant way. Lyons, where this gesture had its beginnings, had been working hard for the future. A meeting of minds followed upon the contact between the "Romans" and the French. And Brother Paul's letter augured a prosperous future for the Institute.

But there was no miraculous Pentecost. The Holy Spirit does not constrain human freedom. It selects its docile instruments; and they are few and apparently weak in comparison with the size and the difficulty of the task. However, the crucial mission, the secret of the Father, is entrusted to the least and the most humble. They will obtain the victory, because they are free of self-love and attachment to the vanities of this world. They will convert and strengthen their brothers. But they must still practise patience: God's plans require the cooperation of circumstances, a share of suffering, and the kind of testing that comes from opposition; men who pride themselves in their foresight and wisdom yield only after having been surrounded by prayer, unsettled by example and overwhelmed by sacrifice.

[24]Brother Louis August, former Procurator-general to the Holy See.

But, then, even they become capable of absolute dedication.

Brother Paulian, whom Étienne Borie thought ready to join the group in Lyons, waited for another year before he brought his otherwise marvelous enthusiasm back to the Congregation. There was even greater hesitancy on the part of the future Assistant, Brother Jonas. We have already met with other loiterers, even among those Brothers who, at the height of the Revolution, had, like Jean-Baptist Mairez, given heroic witness to their faith and perseverance.

The Community in Rheims, spurred on by François René Gaudenne, distinguished itself at the beginning of 1803 by an undertaking that did it credit and seemed to augur concrete results. The schools of the city had just been reopened when nine teachers (Brothers Herve, Florentius, Mark, Pierre Martyr, Narcissus, Dizier, Oliver, Gonzales and Vivien) signed a petition, written in Latin, "to His Holiness Pope Pius VII, Sovereign Pontiff".[25]
It translates as follows:

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rheims and eight other cities of France in which by the Divine Mercy their houses have been recently reopened,[26]conformably to the end of the Institute and according to their Rule and their statutes, prostrate themselves at the feet of His Holiness in order this day to make, as they have been accustomed to do since the time when the pious Servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle, priest, Doctor in Sacred Theology and Canon of the Church in Rheims founded them, their profession of faith in the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church and at the same time, witness to their most respectful and unshakable dedication to the Holy See of Rome and to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII, Vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ on earth and the successor of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles. They also urgently ask his Holiness kindly to grant his Apostolic Blessing, confident that this blessing will contribute powerfully to obtain from God the help they need to achieve work useful for their own salvation and for that of the children who are, or who shall be in the future, entrusted to their care."

This fine text boldly proclaimed the traditional submission of John Baptist de La Salle's disciples to the Church of Rome; it is situated in the exact tradition of the last will and testament of 1719 and of Brother Agathon's statements during the twenty-one years of his Generalate; and, finally, it was in the spirit of the Concordat. It lacked, however, the adherence that was explicit in the Brief of 1795. Perhaps the omission was involuntary, but it is important to emphasize it, because at this critical moment, it suggests either ignorance or even silence -- either of which might have had consequences.

The Pope, however, even though he quite probably sent the petition from the people in Rheims to Brother Vicar-general, did not expressly refer to the omission in his response, which had been postponed until the 5th of August 1803. In their postscript the nine Brothers specified that "if His Holiness answered them", the reply should be addressed to "M. Vivien, at the former Rheims College".[27]Pius VII sent "salutations and Apostolic benediction" to the "dear sons "who had asked for them: "Your letter has brought us a double satisfaction. For we rejoiced greatly to learn that you have been recalled to your country, that your former duties have been restored to you, and that you have returned to the house which is as it were

[25]Document published, following the text in the Vatican Archives, in Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 127-8. No certain date is given. The author of the Essai thought that it was written in January 1803. Perhaps it was worked out at the very time the Rheims Community was taking over the schools (end of Pluviose in the Year XI, <February 1803>).

[26]Rheims, St. Germain, Laon, Chartres, Lyons and Toulouse had at the time Christian schools operated by the Brothers. The one at Gros Caillou in Paris was about to be opened. Brother Vivien perhaps filled out his list with St. Hubert's and Tournai, which, at this time, was included in French territory. (See below, pp. 515-516, Brother Gerbaud's letter in which the Brothers in this city are discussed.)

[27]Doubtless Brother Vivien was, at this time, counting on a transfer to the College.

the cradle of your Order.[28] And the a thing that was for us no less a subject of joy, your behavior: not to return to your activities, which had been interrupted, without having first given witness to the remarkable fidelity and dedication you have for us, who rightly believe that dedication is the characteristic, the mark by which we distinguish a genuine child of the Catholic Church founded on the rock, from those who are strangers to it. That is why we hope that the fine feelings which inspire you will not fail to instill in children and inculcate them in the young people who are sent to your schools. Thus animated and well disposed, as you are, you will always receive from us the special signs of our paternal charity, of which we now grant you the pledge in an Apostolic blessing that we give to all. Given at Rome, at St. Mary Major, August, in the year of Our Lord 1803, in the 4th year of Our Pontificate.[29]

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In brief, the Holy Father, moved by the sentiments of the Brothers in Rheims, trusted in their good will. He was all the more justified in viewing the future optimistically in that, meanwhile, he had learned of the letter sent on the 1st of June 1803 by Brother Gerbaud, Director of Gos Caillou, to Brother Frumence. We have explained why Sebastian Thomas left St. Germain-en-Laye for Paris. The distinguished Brother had placed himself under the direction of the Fathers of the Faith. The document whose analysis we shall now complete was the product, we may be sure, of conversations between the Brothers and his counsellors.
The Motherhouse Archives contains a sort of report entitled "Remarks on the Plan to re-establish the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools".[30] A note in another hand attributes authorship to Brother Gerbaud: however, his own handwriting is nowhere in evidence and we are inclined to consider it the work of one of the Fathers who shared Madame de Trans hospitality with Brother Gerbaud. It might even have been Father Varin's personally. The paper has no date: a reading of it reveals that it preceded the letter of the 1st of June, and, as a consequence, occasioned the reestablishment of De La Salle's Congregation in a way and in a form which, after Brother Agathon's death, proved alone to be acceptable.

The anonymous author writes as follows: "Since this Society has had the misfortune of losing its Superior, as well as the members of its Counsel with a single exception,[31] who, because of his age and infirmities, etc. no longer wishes to be involved with anything, the way to reunion, which at the outset appears to be the simplest, would be for those Brothers who are willing and who, very few in number, had the good fortune to escape the disaster, proceed according to Rule to elect a Superior-general. Once elected and recognized, he alone would be responsible for the steps to be taken with the government, as well as to provide for individual institutions, both those already existing and those yet to exist.

"But an election of a Superior according to Rule cannot be held soon. First, there would have to be a General Chapter, (which) the government would not permit. Furthermore, the convocation according to Rule of such an assembly can only be done by the Superior himself, or, failing that, by his Counsel. Any other voice would be considered by the Brothers as alien.

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[28] Actually, the Community had not regained possession of the buildings on the "Rue Neuve".

[29] Motherhouse Archives, File HA p.1; Cf. Chevalier, op.cit., pp. 113-4, and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pg. 220.

[30] Motherhouse Archives, BE b-2 (Brother Gerbaud File).

[31] Brother Lothaire.

"They are dispersed, isolated and unknown. Some of them do not have the means to support the cost of a journey; others cannot leave the posts they occupy. Should we ask them simply by writing to them, and without further ado, for their votes? Then, who will do the asking? Who will receive the votes? Who will assure the Institute that the Superior elected in this way is legitimate? Who will solve the difficulties which, in the execution of such a plan, turn up at every step. Furthermore, such a plan cannot be effective, since the Sovereign Pontiff has appointed Brother Frumence Vicar-general of the Institute: there would be at least an impropriety."

"Would it not be simpler, more suitable and better to ask this respected Brother himself to come to France, provided with a short Brief that he could easily obtain, for the rebuilding of the Body of which he would remain the head until it should be possible to proceed to an election according to Rule"?

"Once he got to Paris and was residing at Gros Caillou, in a former house of the Order, Brother Frumence could see for himself how things stood. At the same time, he could negotiate an authorization from the government, and perhaps he would influence, with still greater effect, the minds and hearts of the good French Brothers to recognize him. In this way, the government, on the one hand, and the Brothers on the other and the Superior in the center, the Institute, with the assistance of Providence and worthy people who would take an interest in it, would perhaps in a short time be on its feet, for the greater glory of God."

The final *ad majoram Dei gloriam* clearly suggests the source of the "advice". Furthermore, the language witnesses to the work of a vigorous and wise mind, examining the situation without any axe to grind, from a position both above and outside the fray, and both as a canonist and as a realist. The various aspects of the problem are studied, the attitude of the Consular government (inclined to promote Christian educators, but opposed to the reestablishment of Religious Orders) is flawlessly analyzed; an unbreakable cluster of objections is raised to a premature convocation of a General Chapter and to the election of a Superior- general apart from ways specified by the Rule. And, finally, the advice concludes with the crucial argument: Brother Frumence's investiture by the Holy See. The sole point that the consulter, with incomplete information at his command, failed to clear up had to do with the scope of the powers granted to the Brother Vicar: had he read the Brief of 1795 he would have concluded that a fresh intervention on the part of the Pope was unnecessary in order to re-establish the Institute on French soil and bind "the good French Brothers" in obedience to a legitimate Superior.

The transfer of the Superior to Gros Caillou appeared both an elegant and a logical solution. From Brother Gerbaud's point of view, there could be only joyous agreement. On two occasions he had received word from Brother Frumence who, already alerted by Lyons and doubtless by several other cities where the Brothers were teaching, followed attentively events in his country. The letters that Brother Gerbaud exchanged with him are summed up in an excellent analysis, dated the 1st of June, when Brother Gerbaud wrote as follows:[32]

"My very venerable Brother, I have sent you two letters and a printed notebook by way of Father Gautier, the secretary of the Cardinal-Bishop of Lyons, Bonaparte's uncle, who is going to Rome as ambassador. But fearing that this gentleman might stay overly long in Lyons, I am taking the liberty of sending you the present communication, which contains substantially as much as the other two."

"I wish then to assure you of my profound respect and of my gratitude for your kindness; since the two letters with which you have honored me are a tender demonstration of your genuinely paternal charity for all the Brothers and for me in particular."

[32]Motherhouse Archives, K g a 4, Gros Caillou File. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 712-16. We do not know why Brother Lucard dates this letter the 3rd of June. And, in accordance with an unfortunate habit, he paraphrases it.

"In order to concur in your views, my very venerable Brother, and, with all my power, to support the ardor of your zeal, I shall explain the situation of our poor Institute in France; and then the plan for its rebirth as conceived by persons who are best informed and respected, both by the eminence of their virtue and by the rank they occupy."[33]

"At this point Brother Gerbaud explains the motives and the action that occasioned his departure from St. Germain-en-Laye; and he goes into the moving panegyric of the Fathers of the Faith that we have already discussed."[34] He then moves on to the essential question:

"Our state of affairs is as follows: Brother Macarius died at St. Vourn. Brother Lothaire is in Besancon; but since he is sixty-four years old, infirm and assumes that our restoration is impossible, he does not want to get involved with anything having to do with administration, although in other respects, he is quite well disposed in our favor. Brothers Aime and Rupert feel the same way. Brother Aventine is married. Brother Boniface has made me wait for your little errand and still has not performed it; finding myself in Paris, I thought I would do it right away, but I couldn't find what you wanted anywhere; I shall look again, and if I find it, I will send it to you; meanwhile, use the little illustrated book by Simonin that I am sending you by way of Father Gautier. Brothers Nicholas and Nicacius are dead."

"Brother Julien, my respected and affectionate master of novices, is alive, at St. Hubert in the Ardennes, at the head of a tidy residence school that he started with his brother, Agapet. Brothers Teonas, Gondebert and Alexis also have one that is flourishing in Tournai.[35] Brother Vivien, at the head of eight other Brothers, is in Rheims; and Brother Constantius, with three more, is in St. Germain. There are others at Chartres, at Lyons and at other place of which I am unaware."

"When you come, my very venerable Brother, like the father of a family, you are going to have to separate the wheat from the chaff, unless the ardor of your charity should change all into wheat, which well might be the case with God's Grace; but, so as to be under no illusions, we have described things at their worst."

This summary gave the Brother Vicar-general a good idea of the task ahead. Before harvesting and storing, the field had to be cleared. In recent years fallow land had become widespread over the neglected estate: --lost vocations, moral failures, instances of discouragement that were probably irremediable and accommodations to the world. A former Director of St. Yon had married; the former Director of Langres had become immured in his own success as a teacher. Brother Boniface, become M. Dubois, was consumed by his bookstore, and (for the rest, more valuable than the reference to him in the letter allows us to suppose) was obliged (since he, too, had taken a wife) to collaborate with his former confreres only as an outsider, as an honorary "agent" and supplier of religious books and

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[33] This sentence seems to us to confirm the attribution of the previous memoir to the Fathers of the Faith.

[34] See above, pg. 474.

[35] Brother Gerbaud is mistaken when he makes Brother Alexis the colleague of Brothers Gondebert and Theonas. The latter, under his civilian name of "Riviere", in fact, was the Director of the residence school in Tournai and Brother Gondebert (Henry Husson) was his associate. Brother Alexis (Nicholas Colombeau Vaillant) had been made the primary school teacher by the city of Tournai on the 13th Thermidor in the Year V (July 2, 1797) and his school was housed in the former convent that was called "Campeaux". On the 17th Floreal in the Year XII (April 8, 1804) the mayor certified that Mr. Nicholas Colombeau Vaillant ...was worthy of praise for his moral and political behav−ior, for his knowledge of bookkeeping, for the care he took to raise a large family, made up of a wife, seven small children and a mother in her eighties...(Communal Archives of Tournai, Bundle 10, 1807, Public Educa−tion). In our next volume we shall have an occasion to return to the situation of the Brothers in Tournai, mentioned by several Belgian historians, and the object of Brother Maxime's learned research.

textbooks.[36]

Even among the elite, upon whom Brother Gerbaud counted, there were those who rallied very slowly, such as Brother Julien's group. Of the Brothers in Tournai, Nicolas Vaillant, who had married, had to operate on the periphery of the Institute. Julien Rivière (Brother Théonas), after returning, could no longer adapt to religious discipline and finally resumed the lay state. Still, the Director of Gros Caillou was right to trust in Providence as well as in the charitable "ardor" of Brother Frumence: in the undergrowth there were many seeds that would bear fruit; and it would turn out that what were apparently "tares" must not be impatiently cut off, and that once harvest time came what seemed to the Lord's workers to be parasitic growths, in truth contained the hope of "good grain".

But in order to operate prudently and proceed discerningly, a trained leader was urgently needed. Brother Gerbaud hit upon the principal problem and dealt with it accordingly.

"The only practicable plan in the eyes of people who are as virtuous as they are well informed is the following: Have, my very dear Brother, the goodness, the zeal and the affection for Our Order to come to France and to fix your residence and the seat of your authority in Paris, in order to be available to the respectable people who support us, and be in a position to negotiate our restoration, which is desired by many, including leaders in government. Already, our small school is approved by the First Consul, to be operated by the Brothers of Christian Doctrine: these are the terms employed. It's the only one in France that has such a privilege. It would be good, in order to bring to naught, or, at least, to reduce to silence, the Brothers who, on specious pretexts, promote disunion, if you come provided with a short Brief from His Holiness, which, while confirming you in your authority, until now centered in Italy, extends it to all Christian Brothers wherever they may be in the world.[37][38] Once in Paris, you can find temporary lodgings in your house at Gros Caillou; I have been ordered[39]to tell you this and to beg you to have no anxieties in this regard. You see how things stand. People who support us will consult with you, sustain you and introduce you to the government. Recognized as the legitimate Superior, you will obtain our incorporation and all the genuine sons of De La Salle will hasten to be reunited around you; and you will send them into the cities where people are asking for them. There are many more posts than there are candidates to fill them, but it is better that way than otherwise. You will be training French novices by your presence and Italian novices through your delegate; and with Divine assistance the Institute, reborn from its own ashes, will become, for the glory of God and the salvation of poor children, what De La Salle, Brother René,[40](Sic) [41]Brother Barthélemy, Brother Timothy, Brother Solomon and so many others ceaselessly ask of Him Whom they now enjoy in Heaven, while they await us."

"Such, my very venerable Brother, is the plan of every respected person who is concerned for us. While awaiting your reply, I shall undertake to make it acceptable to those good Brothers whom I know; even before talking to them about it, I am sure that it will present no difficulties for them. Brothers Julien and Constantius are those of whom I have the highest hopes, because of their eminent piety and the purity of their zeal; without distrusting

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[36]These packages of books are discussed in several letters exchanged between Brother Frumence and M. and Mme. Dubois.

[37]It is apparent that Brother Gerbaud borrows docilely from considerations contained in the previous memoir.

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[39]Obviously, the Marquise de Trans.

[40]There is no doubt that we must read "Brother Irenée".

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the others whom I do not know as well, I am united with them all."

"I join with Father Varin and his venerable good Brothers, with Father Gubby, the Cardinal-Legate's theologian, with the Bishops and Archbishops of Liseux, Tours, Versailles, and others in great numbers, who desire our restoration, to pray for you, my very dear Brother, in the name of the pure and disinterested zeal that inspires you, to come as soon as you can; I believe that what is enough to make up your mind is whether I have shown you that it is for the greater glory of God; my warrant for this is Father Gubby who, according to the privileged knowledge he has of you, is certain that this reason alone is enough to enable you to overcome every obstacle."

"Come, then: we await you as children do a father; none but you can complete such a mission, because according to our ancient customs, there must be only a single authority and its center must be France. This necessity is further reinforced when we think of the French government, which refuses us permission to correspond with a foreign Superior."

"I am, with the most profound respect, my very venerable Brother, your most humble and obedient servant, Thomas, Gros Caillou, 842 Rue Grenelle, Paris.[42]

The language of this pressing appeal could only go to the heart of the man for whom it was intended. Letters sent to Rome by Brother Pigemenion and by Brother Paul of Jesus had already borne witness to the fidelity of those whom Sebastian Thomas was pleased to describe as "good Brothers"; but they involved nothing more than individuals from the provinces trying their hand at humble proposals; and they were not equal to the task of making the basic points: the wishes of the episcopacy, the inclinations of the government, the relations to be established between the Institute and the civil authority, and the absolute necessity of returning the seat of the Congregation to France. Brother Gerbaud was not speaking simply in his own person: his Parisian residence enabled him to pick up reports from official circles and pass on the opinions of the most highly placed persons. The approbation he had obtained from Bonaparte showed that he was solidly supported; his connections with the Fathers of the Faith, his relations with those who surrounded Cardinal Caprara, the papal Legate to the Consulate, and with Cardinal Fesch's personal secretary, gave him a mandate from the highest of the Church's dignitaries, the most influential advisers in the religious world, to win over the Brother Vicar-general.

Brother Frumence, however, was devoured by perplexities; his correspondent's insistent entreaties were freely interpreted in the light of the state of mind that prevailed outside of France. The Revolution continued to be a formidable thing for exiles; out of contact with the mother-country for ten years, they judged of events according to their painful recollections and the presuppositions of the "Ancien Regime"; and they lent a willing ear to rumors and to the editorials spread by foreign journals and the most unrelenting champions of the politics of expatriation. What good had the Concordat done for Catholicism? Would the peace endure? Did it not conceal hidden motives and traps? Was Bonaparte -- the former "General Vendemiaire", the savior of the Convention of the Year III, the man associated with the Treaty of Tolentino, the despoiler of the Papal States, the accomplice in the "Fructidor coup d'Etat", and the avowed supporter of Islam in Egypt -- to be trusted? This portrait, the pieces of which were no inventions, appeared all too authentic. Rome shuddered at the thought of him. Pius VII and Cardinal Consalvi needed a supernatural boldness and enlightenment from the Holy Spirit to restore an alliance with the "eldest daughter of the

[42]The letter includes the following postscript: My respects, please, to Brothers William, Esdras, Emery, Pius and all your worthy associates, whose prayers I seek. Although my letter, at first glance, must not be pleasing to them, I beg them, too, my very venerable Brother, to consider the greater glory of God, and then I am certain of their peace and their consent to your departure, which is absolutely necessary for our survival. There follows a sentence having to do with M. Huet of St. Germain-en-Laye. (See above, pg. 474.)

Church" at the cost of generous oversights and unprecedented concessions.

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From his nephew Joseph Fesch received the task of consolidating and expanding the results of the Treaty of Messidor, the Easter celebration at Notre Dame. He worked at this, although, in fact, not always skillfully, but with constancy and a conscience worthy of commendation. He acted as a churchman steeped, of course, in Gallicanism (indeed, in a sort of Caesarism), especially at the beginning of his mission; but he was sincere in his Christian faith, his reacquired piety and his zeal for the interests of Catholicism; and, as his youthful past faded away, he became increasingly attached to the Holy See.

Among the other causes that profited from his quite pronounced preferences, the appeals of the Brothers of the Christian Schools were granted a generous audience. And it was the appearance on the scene of the Archbishop of Lyons that was to encourage crucial trends. The restoration of the Institute became principally the work of Cardinal Fesch; and Paris, which Brother Gerbaud had quite naturally selected for the Vicar-general's residence, had to cede to the Archiepiscopal city of the Primate of Lyons. From some points of view, it was a shift that was detrimental to the normal growth of the Christian Brothers: its Superiors, removed from the capital, could only do business with the Empire through intermediaries; and it was in danger of falling (sometimes rather heavily) under the too immediate influence of a prelate in whom was recognizable the exigent personality and obstinate will of Bonaparte himself. On the other hand, what we shall call the "Lyons solution" protected the Brothers from perils that were still unsuspected in 1803: had they remained in close contact with the Fathers of the Faith, in the aristocratic ambiance of the Faubourg St. Germain and the Marquise de Trans, they would have been included in the Emperor's suspicions of "Jesuits" and royalists; and they would have collided with the machinations of the Ministry of Police.[43] Any number of obstacles, inspired by Fouché, would have impeded the action of the religious educators; and, perhaps, some sort of a decree of dissolution would have punished their associations with Father Varin. Faced with Cardinal Fesch, and, on the whole, with less difficulty than earlier in Rouen when they were eluding the influence of Dominique La Rochefoucauld and his Vicar-general, the Brothers were able to defend their legitimate independence; their Archbishop's affection for them was never absent. So dependable was it that it succeeded in restraining the man's despotic tendencies; and the Brothers were not to pay an exorbitant price for the genuine devotion that the "Cardinal-Uncle" showed in their favor until the end of the reign of Napoleon I.

The sequel to this account will explain and justify the gratitude the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle have always had for their protector. A portrait of the Cardinal occupies a prominent place in their Motherhouse. Their chronicles speak of His Empirial Eminence with veneration. But truth has its rights; and since the man is here being introduced at the center of the stage, it is appropriate to consult his most recent and impartial biographer, André Latreille, for the data and the deeds which characterized him.[44]

he son of a native of Basel who had immigrated to Corsica and the half-brother of Laetitia Ramolino Bonaparte ("Madame Mother"), Joseph Fesch was raised with his nephews, Joseph and Napoleon, whose birth followed his own by only five or six years. Having entered Holy Orders, he took the "Constitutional oath" on the 27th of February 1791, even before the bishop of Ajaccio. At the side of the schismatic Bishop, he declared his

[43] Concerning Fouché, we do not have to recall the light shed on his character by Louis Madelin in a book known to everyone.

[44] . Latreille, op.cit., passim and especially pp. 55-6, 79, 80-1, 101, and 125. See also Goyau, op.cit., pg. 542. Fesch's first biographer was Father Lyonnet, many of whose judgments and assertions were undocumented.

"patriotism" and his devotion to France and the new order of things. When persecution raged, he put his priesthood, if not his faith, "on the back burner". He shared the vicissitudes of the Bonaparte family, left the island, and, during the wars of the Revolution, became an inspector of transportation, speculated, bartered and amassed a considerable, if somewhat suspect, fortune. His morals, however, continued to be respectable and according to every eyewitness, consistent with his clerical commitments.

At the beginning of the Consulate, he settled "into the comforts of a soft life", frequenting the theatre and the gambling houses, although he did not neglect to look out for his money and to keep very exact accounts. This situation was not immediately altered by the signing of the Concordat. Napoleon Bonaparte, however, meant to use his uncle for the purposes of his own religious politics. As a priest, Joseph Fesch, in the Church rather than elsewhere, would contribute to Bonaparte's grand design. On the 25th of July 1802, he was appointed Bishop of Lyons!

Through the action of Grace and under the guidance of Father Emery, the former episcopal vicar of Ajaccio once again relocated his ecclesiastical soul. Father Emery cleansed, retrained and redirected his conscience. After a serious retreat, this former "juror" was absolved of the censures he had incurred. Henceforth, he showed a sincere attachment to (and, Latreille adds, "a surprising docility" for) the man who helped him to reconciliation. In return, Father Emery honored him with his friendship and had no difficulty in recognizing that the Church had regained a good servant. There was no mistaking -- Fesch was no St. Charles Borromeo or St. Francis de Sales! The "old man" survived in him, with his passion for money, honors and power, with a quantity of prejudices, biases, obstinate opinions and meannesses. But he showed the indelible sign of his priesthood, which he wore externally as he did in the intimacy of his heart. While he was jealous of his rights to the point of pigheadedness, he neglected none of his duties. He sought agreement between Church and State by conceding much, to be sure, to the civil arm, without however, sacrificing a certain essential flexibility, even when it meant incurring Napoleon's disfavor or wrath. He wished that his diocese might become a model of wise administration, canonical regularity, doctrinal and moral propriety and spiritual peace.

Still dwelling upon these resolutions, he received episcopal consecreation at the hands of Cardinal Caprara in the Cathedral in Paris on the 15th of August 1802. However, he did not appear in Lyons until the 5th of December and did not take formal possession of his See until the 2nd of January 1803. Numerous questions of a political and private nature detained him in a government which, even at that moment, was preparing him as ambassador to Rome. But, finally, he was welcomed by the clergy, the faithful and the departmental and municipal authorities. Bernard-Charpieux had obtained from the Counsel a budget of 3,000 francs so that the reception would be worthy of the prelate.[45]

Joseph Fesch started off under the best of auspices. As his Vicars-general he chose the honest and prudent Father Courbon, and, as a sign of ultimate reconciliation, Father Renaud, a "juror" who had made his peace with the Church.[46] These men were not alone among the

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[45]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D second register of municipal deliberations, F-o 147, meeting of the Council on the 8th Nivose in the Year XI (Dec. 30, 1802).

[46]Latreille, op.cit., pg. 115. Centenaire, pg. 28. On the 9th Ventose in the Year XII (March 1, 1804) Fesch wrote to Father Courbon: ...I learn with sorrow that the Daughters of St.Vincent de Paul and the Brothers and Sisters of Christian Doctrine affect an aversion for Father Renaud. Such behavior seems to me to be quite reprehensible. I recommend, then, that you counsel them in this matter in the way your prudence will suggest. It is important to reconcile minds, and I shall take a very serious view of anyone who does not adopt the same purpose as I do. (Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Fesch sources, Letters, no. 1).

Archbishop's immediate entourage: from Paris he brought Andrew Jauffret, his "confidant" and the future Bishop of Metz. This priest was the brother of the head of the Secretariat for the Administration of Worship: the Jauffret brothers acted as a line of communication between Fesch and Portalis. In the ordinary relations between Fesch and Portalis, the one a former student in the Major Seminary in Aix and the other a former member of the bar in the same city, there also figured Father Joachim John Xavier Isoard, who corresponded with Portalis and whose counsel was never wanting to the Cardinal-Ambassador; Father Tournefort, who would become a Canon of the Metropolitan church in Lyons; and Father Astros, the nephew of Jean-Étienne Portalis and soon to be the Vicar-general in Paris. We shall meet with most of these names again when an effort would be made to restore the Brothers' Institute within the framework of the French Empire.

Similarly, among the Archbishop's associates the Brothers relied upon the good will of Pierre-Étienne Bonnevie, a native of Rethel who, thanks to Joseph Fesch, had also become an adoptive citizen of Lyons; he was the Vicar-general of the Archdiocese, and, besides, the colleague of the Vicmonte Chateaubriand in the offices of the embassy to the Holy See; in this capacity he had dealings with Brother Frumence. Later on Headmaster of the Lycee in Lyons and Dean of the Archiepiscopal Chapter, this pleasant and stately priest who bore nobly his "Roman features and powdered hair", this eloquent and learned man would manifest a special concern for the modest teachers in the Christian schools,[47]whose Founder was a compatriot of his.

Father Cholleton was no less friendly to them. At one time he had been persecuted for the faith; interned on Re Island during the Directorate Terror, he exercised his apostolic zeal among his suffering companions; he succeeded in obtaining vestments and sacred vessels to celebrate Mass in a corridor of the prison; for the benefit of the clerical prisoners, he instituted religious devotions and courses in Holy Scripture.[48]

Upon his return to Lyons he distinguished himself among the first ranks of those who worked for the salvation of souls; the Archbishop teased his good Vicar somewhat for his assiduity in the confessional. Father Cholleton seemed to him to be quite a mystic. Nevertheless, he also knew him to be thoroughly competent as an administrator: on the 17th Fructidor in the Year XIII the Prefect appointed the distinguished priest to be a member of the school commission.[49]

It was an exalted office in which Father Cholleton assisted Father Paul, the real director of elementary education in the Rhone, Ain and Loire regions. A canonry in November 1805 was the recompense for the labors of the priest to whom the Christian Brothers owed their rebirth: "Your new dutie," (wrote Archbishop Fesch to Father Paul) "put you in a position to dedicate yourself totally to this exciting work. Actually you will be able to be involved in it with all the more success in that you will be less distracted by the activities of your holy ministry; such was my purpose; it is now accomplished and it gives me sincere satisfaction."[50]

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These were the protagonists in the religious history of Lyons at the beginning of the

[47]Motherhouse Archives, File JF b 1 (account concerning Father Bonnevie).

[48]Victor Pierre, op.cit., pp. 191-2 and 347-8.

[49]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Mayoralty of western section, no. 1075.

[50]Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Fesch sources, Second Register of Correspondence, letter to Father Paul, 27th of November 1805.

19th century. Their role is no less important, no less crucial as regards the restoration of the Christian Brothers. We shall now follow the First Consul's uncle to Rome. It was there that his influence was to produce its full effect in favor of the Brothers.

Bonaparte conferred the cardinal's hat on the Archbishop on the 27th of March 1803 and on the 4th of April approved Fesch's nomination as the Republic's ambassador to the Holy See.[51]

In those days the rhythm of life was less rapid than it is today; and while the Napoleonic bent ordinarily was to resist delay, in this instance he was obliged to reckon with that sluggishness that was altogether ecclesiastical and Roman. "The Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons" (Brother Gerbaud's letter informs us) would not be ready to leave Paris before June the 1st. And so, the Brother, fearing further delays, decided to send another letter directly to Brother Frumence, besides the one he entrusted to Father Gautier, the ambassador's secretary. The Vicar-general of the Institute would have time to reflect before meeting with the new prince of the Church."

While Brother Gerbaud's initiatives were still developing. On the 7th of September the Brothers' Community in Lyons undertook a step which ran the risk of rather complicating and, while certainly altering, would speed up the course of events. For six months the Community had grown and it had consolidated its position: "veterans", Brothers Julien of Mary (Pierre Imbert), Justinian of Mary (Joseph Celse-Telmon), Rosier. formerly employed in the schools in Puy, Nicodemus, henceforth known as Brother Irenée (all of whose ages fell between fifty-eight and seventy-three), and a Brother Aurelius, probably younger, joined "Brother Director" Pigmenion and Brothers Odo and Servulus. They wrote His Eminence, who was by then engaged on his diplomatic mission:

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools, gathered together in the house in Lyons and responsible for the tuition-free schools for boys in this city, on this day turn to your lofty and powerful protection in order to assure the restoration of their Institute. In the present condition of things they dare beseech you to be so good, in conformity with their wishes, to intercede either with His Holiness or with their dear Brother Frumence, or, finally, with the French government so that the headquarters of their Institute might be irrevocably established in your metropolitan city."

Their request is based upon the greatest advantage, whether religious or civil, to their association. The city of Melun, formerly the headquarters of the Institute, no longer affords them either resources or means of livelihood; what is more, none of our Brothers have re-assembled in that city. Only two Brothers have reunited in Paris. Here, living in common, we are seventeen Brothers, along with several postulants.[52]

'We are authorized by the city government -- at least as regards teaching; our schools, which are ten in number, will soon have four zealous protectors each, selected from among the principal residents of the city; and we hope that, with the Grace of God, out Institute will grow from day to day."

"Candidates are all that is lacking: for we are being sought by several large Communes in your diocese, which we cannot accommodate; but if we were to obtain the object of this petition, nothing would stand in the way, so that in a short time, we would be able to supply these Communes, by receiving a greater number of postulants."

"We should have desired to be able to have among us our dear Brother Frumence; but according to what Father Jauffret, your worthy Vicar-general, has written to us, there are

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[51] Latreille, op.cit., pg. 114.

[52] Of these postulants or novices we know certainly, at this time, only Brother Augustine. They, of course, must be counted, if we are to achieve the total number stated, "seventeen" people. Perhaps, though, the venerable Brother Maurillian had also joined the Community by this time.

obstacles to such a move; and it would appear that the opening of several of our houses in Italy and Spain[53]would perhaps eliminate the idea of returning our General to France, where, since the founding of our Institute, he has resided at St. Yon in Rouen and in Melun, the last residence. However, Your Eminence, we dare to make to you, on this subject, our most humble representation and, since in Rome you are the natural protector of the Church of France, we entrust to you our rights on this important subject."

"But if the time to restore these rights has not yet come, we think that it is indispensable to the very preservation of our association that His Holiness, or our dear Brother Frumence authorized by Him, grant us permission and, as far as needs be, invest us with the necessary power of calling to Lyons the Superiors of the three or four houses that have reopened in France, namely, Rheims, Valence, Chartres and Toulouse,[54]and to include in this call a summons to some fine Brothers scattered in various neighboring dioceses, in order to appoint a Superior-general just for France, who, henceforth residing in Lyons, would be able to supervise the institutions already established in other dioceses, cooperate in the reestablishment of other houses, consider ways of training new candidates, and prevent an evil which, if it continues unopposed, will soon be desperate."

"The evil is this: several of our dear Brothers in the neighboring dioceses do not know where to go or whom to obey; others may make arrangements with city governments that may put distance between them and the selflessness of our vocation and forever separate them from their Institute."

"As things stand, all our institutions are separated one from the other. There is no longer any unity. Up to now, we are partially approved, not as Brothers of the Christian Schools, but as private teachers."

"We are anxious to have our Rule approved by the government, even before we appoint a Superior-general, a thing that would be an effective means to bring our scattered membership together into a common center."

"We point out to Your Eminence that our vacation begins today; we would like to obtain a favorable reply from you, so that if there is a convocation or an election to be held, or if there are visas to be gotten from the government, we may be able to do these things before our classes resume. We should add that in case there is a convocation, we do not anticipate that the members representing the Institute would be more than about twenty, and these would be handpicked members."

In conclusion, the eight signatories offered "prayers for His Eminence and for the entire Bonaparte family".[55]

Quite correctly they called the Cardinal's attention to the isolation of the institutions that had already been reopened and to the dangers implicit in such a situation for the Institute's future. In expressing a desire for Brother Frumence's return, they were suggesting the effective remedy. But the plan to proceed to an election of a Superior "for France" in case Brother Frumence should be detained abroad, as well as the plan to seek the Consular government's approval of the Rule, proved, unfortunately, that Brother Pigmenion was not in agreement with Brother Gerbaud. His petition contains the barest allusion to the Gros Caillou

[53]We do not know what could have led to the belief in a plan to make a foundation beyond the Pyrenees. There is no document that bears a trace of it.

[54]The Brothers in Lyons seem to have been unaware of the schools in St. Germain-en-Laye and in Laon. As for the school in Valence, directed by Brother Evaristus, we cannot say precisely whether it was in the hands of a regular Community. We shall have occasion to return to this institution

[55]Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Register no. 5 (Brothers of the Christian Schools). Original text. Cf. A. Chevalier, op.cit., pp. 87-8 and Centenaire, pp. 40-3. Brother Pigmenion, who wrote the letter, adds the following postscript: "Pardon, Your Excellency, if the handwriting of this letter is poor. But age, work and the Revolution have conspired to make my hand less skillful in forming words."

school; and that was made with the view of dissuading Rome from selecting Paris as the Congregation's headquarters.

The Director of the Lyons Community obviously supported the purposes of his local benefactors, and especially those of Father Jauffret whose letter, as we shall see, was not sent without the stamp of approval of ecclesiastical authority. On the 10th of September it was read at the Archiepiscopal Council responsible for administration in Fesch's absence: "The School Brothers wrote to his Eminence to support their cause with His Holiness, with the view that their house in Lyons should become central, not only for the diocese, but for the whole of France. It was agree that the Council would, for its part, write to His Eminence to support this request, which can only tend to the greater good of religion and to the special advantage of the diocese."These are the words in the minutes written after the discussion.[56]. They are significant: the Vicars-general, won over to the hope of a rebirth of the Brothers and eager to reserve for their own city the first fruits of an excellent organization, were underscoring the meaning of the petition of September 7th. We should indeed be inclined to believe that at least one of them was a party to the composition of that petition; Father Jauffret's impending activities broadly confirm this hypothesis.

The entire City of Lyons, furthermore, wished to preside over the new life of the Institute. Working in their support was Mayor Barnard-Charpieux and the members of the the school board and "the leading citizens": the seed sewn by Antony Cadoux had borne fruit; and henceforth it grew with remarkable rapidity. In February 1803 Jacques Juge was the only Brother among the teachers who had been appointed. But as of the present moment, he, along with his associates (veteran Brothers or novices of recent date) operated ten boys' schools. He was right to boast of a nonstop growth: "huge Communes" sought his assistance. An association of the leading citizens was organizing to obtain, by means both natural and supernatural, the complete success of the heirs of Charles Démia. They sought to achieve "the greater good of religion", but also "the special advantage of the diocese". There were certain difficulties that had escaped attention; and, indeed, impatience would create several more. It was all very well to talk about the Rule being approved and a Superior-general residing in Lyons! But had people learned of the attitude of the civil power, of the mind of the Brothers who were dispersed and of the Communities teaching outside the south-eastern region, and of the views of the Holy See regarding the authority and the residence of the Brother Vicar? The objections contained in the Parisian report and the conclusion submitted to Brother Frumence by Brother Gerbaud were still operative. They were to become fully known, thank God, to the Pope, the Cardinal and to the legitimate Superior of the Congregation. Initially, some hesitation resulted from the differences in point of view adopted by Lyons and Paris. For a moment, the continuance of Brother Frumence at the head of the Society was called into question, and the matter concerning the Rule took an unfortunate turn. But in the end events began to correspond with the clearest thinking, with simplicity of heart and with the loftiest interests of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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Before his departure, the ambassador to the Holy See was in possession of enough favorable and detailed information to guarantee a warm reception at the hands of the French teachers in the Pope's schools. However, he had not yet begun to deal with the problem when he received Brother Pigmenion's letter along with the opinion of the Archiepiscopal Counsel. In September 1803, in rather abrupt style, he wrote to Father Jauffret:

"I have not yet seriously conferred with the Superior of the "Ignorantin Brothers" I

[56] Archbishopric's Archives: "book of deliberations of the Counsel of His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons", begun in June 1803

shall write you about it at greater length at another time...Tomorrow, I shall deal with Brother Frumence and, in the next post, I shall write you at length and I shall send a report to Portalis in order to ask him to have the Rule of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine and their headquarters in Lyons approved...[57]

He was as good as his word. On the 5th of October (the 13th Vendemiaire in the Year XII), a second letter was sent: "I'm involved with the matter of the tuition-free schools; and I sent Portalis a detailed report. I conveyed to him the advantage and the appropriateness of establishing the principal house, along with the Superior of the Institute, in Lyons. Brother Frumence, who wishes for nothing more than the good of his country, supports our plan and was to communicate his views to the Brothers in Lyons. He quite gladly waives any rights to his title and, in every way suggested to him, supports the election of a Superior exclusively for France. For, the major point is this: the French government will never agree that (the Brothers) have a Superior-general, albeit a Frenchman, outside the territory of the Republic. It is up to you, during your stay in Paris, to discuss this good work with Portalis. By your being on the spot you can do a great deal.[58]

The meeting between Cardinal Fesch and Brother Vicar-general, then, produced results that were not negligible. The Cardinal had sized up Brother Frumence exactly, as a very sincere man, modest and thoroughly prepared, for religious as well as patriotic reasons, to step aside, if he had to. Brother Frumence was probably no less favorably impressed; he may have been hesitant in the presence of the odd priest who was unaccustomed to the language and the concerns of the Church; he was looking at an Archbishop whose appearance and manners recalled, not indeed the aristocratic prelates of the days of Louis XV and Louis XVI, but -- as his most authentic portrait represents him -- the open and refreshing features of the old parochial clergy. They understood each other and they were easily drawn to one another. The Cardinal displayed the soul of a great pastor. According to Father Isoard's and Father Bonnevie's accounts, he declared: "If we could have the Brothers, what a service to the country! And what an advantage for my diocese!" An enemy of circumlocution and a master of the most direct sort of language delivered with affable geniality, he is thought to have catechized the humble Brother as follows: "My Brother, you are French; your Order is French; and as a consequence, you love France. Well! Let's help restore it to sound principles, to religion and to God. Can't we find a way to bring you back to France, to rebuild your Society there and re-establish you there with your Constitutions?"[59]

We still have to discover the connection between this conversation that tradition puts into the mouth of Joseph Fesch and the written statements of the 5th of October, which are quite formal regarding the transfer of the seat of the Institute to the diocese of Lyons. They have nothing to say regarding Brother Frumence' return to his native land or of his active cooperation as the highest superior in the tasks of "reconstruction". On the other hand, they assume Brother Vicar-general's "disclaimer and anticipate the election of a Superior appointed to lead the French Communities. The Cardinal, then, seems to have followed the suggestions contained in the messages sent by Father Jauffret and Brother Pigmenion.

There is a plausible interpretation: During the conversation at the end of September Brother Frumence had not concealed his opinions concerning recent political events; he had

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[57] Archbishopric's Archives, Fesch sources: Register no. 1, Correspondence.

[58] Ibid., loc. cit. Cf. Centenaire, pg. 46, and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 143, note 1.

[59] Centenaire, pp. 43-5, according to the evidence gathered by Father Lyonnet in his biography of Cardinal Fesch, Vol. I, pg. 288.

expressed a distaste for leaving Rome and of placing himself at the mercy of a "government born of the Revolution", for rushing into an "unstable" situation with a handful of Brothers who had just returned from lay-life. This is the argument that emerges from the writing of Father Lyonnet.[60]We should, perhaps, have to agree that with the ambassador, the First Consul's uncle, the cautious and respectful "Roman" spoke with greater discrimination. And in this first exchange of views Fesch did not press his point too far. The plan of the people in his diocese presented him with room for retreat: they had mentioned "a resignation" which, without going to the heart of the matter, seemed likely to please the First Consul. And the report of the conversation, the official tran−script the substance of which Father Jauffret was to send to the Office of Cults, quite naturally laid stress on this point.

Portalis was quick to embrace it. Before quoting his report, we shall deal with other details concerning the attitude of his colleague, France's representative in Rome. The latter did not doubt that he held in his hands the fate of the Brothers of the Christian schools. On the 4th of January 1804, the Community in Lyons, through Brothers Julien, Justinian, Rosier, Paulian, Servulus and Odo, declared its complete dedication to His Eminence and to the Pope, to "the august Bonaparte family" and to the authorities of the Republic; "the ardent zeal" displayed by the Cardinal for the "restoration of the Institute" earned him, on the part of the Brothers in his Archiepiscopal city, obedience enhanced by an affectionate gratitude. When Father Jauffret returned from Paris, he made them joyous with the announcement of "good news".[61]At this time, Archbishop Fesch was thinking of doing nothing more than reorganizing the Lasallian Society under his dependence. He mistrusted Congregations that were subject to superiors other than himself; he was little concerned with their morale or with their legitimate autonomy.[62].Here again his view was like that of his nephew who, on one occasion, through Portalis, proclaimed his quite firm determination to leave no room alongside the "secular clergy" for a monastic "militia".[63]. And he intended to introduce the Brothers into a diocesan framework.

On the 18th of January, 1804 Fesch wrote to Jauffret: "The Archbishop or his Vicars-general are the natural patrons of charitable organizations...I must not appear in these meetings (of school boards) except as having precedence and preponderant authority, at least in fact. Thus, you should not consent to be the patron of the Ignorantin Brothers except in this way.[64] So inspired, he tended easily to ignore Brother Frumence. A Superior chosen in Lyons under his supervision and auspices by a small group of French schoolteachers was quite agreeable to him. The future would only gradually change this line of conduct, when Fesch became better acquainted with both Brother Vicar-general and De La Salle's Rule and also when the support, lavishly doled out by the Archbishop, would result in important progress in the Communities outside a single diocese, followed by the incorporation of the Brothers into the Napoleonic University. However, there would be no radical change.

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It is now important to return to Paris. The ambassador's judgments, commented upon orally by Father Jauffret, had their intended effect. On the 10th Frimaire in the Year XII (2nd of December 1803) Portalis sent the following report to Bonaparte: "The City of Lyons has just entrusted the direction of its primary schools to some members of the former (Institute)

[60]Quoted in Centenaire, pg. 45

[61]Archbishopric's Archives, Fesch sources, Register no. 5 (Brothers of the Christian Schools).

[62]Latreille, op.cit., pg. 376

[63]See above, pg. 445

[64]Archbishopric's Archives, Fesch sources, Register no. 1, Correspondence

of Christian Doctrine, known as the Ignorantin Brothers."[65]Through their efforts, the children of the people receive the elements of reading, calculation and religious and moral instruction.

"The members of (the Institute) of Christian Doctrine cannot be regarded as forming a corporation; they are simply associated for the tuition-free education of youth. Some of their confreres are also commissioned, individually and a simple citizens, in the tuition-free schools in Rheims, Chartres and some of the other cities in France. I have been assured that everywhere they have the same good effect; that everywhere they bring about a remarkable change in the submissiveness of children."

"Now, the members of (the Institute) of Christian Doctrine are scattered throughout the length of France. To utilize their institutions and make their services enduring, it is important for them to have a place to gather."

"The Brothers of Christian Doctrine, restored under the existing government, would inspire the rising generation with a love for the government and for its leader. It would be financially beneficial because these teachers are satisfied with the merest essentials and their instruction is tuition-free. The education of children can only prosper by the fact that they are handed over to the care of teachers who are totally dedicated to this work and are not diverted by family responsibilities."

"In accordance with these considerations, I am gratified to be able to suggest, Citizen First Consul, allowing the Brothers of Christian Doctrine to establish their work in the City of Lyons, where they already have postulants.

His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons has asked this favor for them, which they look upon as a fresh act of kindness on the part of the government and for which they will be most profoundly grateful. Their Superior resides in Rome. I have pointed out (to them) that men who are dedicated to public education cannot be directed by a foreign Superior and that they must have a Superior-general in France. The Cardinal appreciates the truth of this observation. As a consequence, he has announced the Roman Superior-general's disclaimer to all supervision as regards the Brothers of Christian Doctrine in France, and he has agreed that these Brothers shall have a Superior-general who shall reside in Lyons.

If you approve of this arrangement, I shall be gratified, Citizen Consul, to send you a draft of the report.[66]

This document, whose bureaucratic languages in not without a certain sober eloquence nor is it deprived of a certain sympathetic warmth, completely adopts the tone of the speech of the 15th Germinal in the Year X. The need for a religious education of youth, the service rendered to the people by the Brothers, and the moral (indeed, financial) advantages to the schools in which they taught were all so many considerations expressed in past general Councils of the nation and were granted by senior officers of the legislative body, and now they found their way into this report of the 10th Frimaire in the Year XII. There was also added the argument whose influence on Bonaparte was so well known to Portalis and which later on would inspire the founder of the Imperial University: education "gains" by being in the hands of teachers who are liberated from "family cares", and, as a result, are dedicated with all that is in them to their pupils' welfare.

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[65]We must be resigned to the fact that during the Consular and Imperial periods the improper designation "Brothers of Christian Doctrine" was constantly employed: as well as the disagreeable -- although in the contemporary mentality it did not imply a pejorative reference - name "Ignorantin Brothers". The historian records, without approving.

[66]National Archives, F-17 6285. The Departmental Archives of the Rhone (Series T, no. 8) possesses a certified copy of this document, Portalis' signature and those of "the secretary- general and the head of the First Division, Th. Pein. The report of the 10th Frimaire in the Year XII has been published on several occasions, notably by Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 718-20 and in the Circular, Centenaire, pp. 46-8.

But there was also expressed the persistent concern to reject legal existence for every "corporation". Torn between his legal principles as a jurist and his desire to promote the recruitment of the incomparable teachers, the Minister of Cults was rather reduced to playing with words: the Brothers would have the right "to associate", but not the right to rebuild the Congregation. Nevertheless, their "society" would bear a singular resemblance to those ancient "bodies", forever spurned: it was religious, organized around "a central location" that was obviously a Motherhouse; and it obeyed a Superior. It made an open breach in revolutionary legislation and in the system that still prevailed even immediately after the Concordat. Of course, what was essential was that the ritualistic language that might imply the resurrection of the "Ancien Regime" never be uttered. While the Lassallian "society" was revived, it was only to enjoy a freedom measured by the standards of the "new politics", at the good pleasure of men who held that the rights of the State were absolute, and with the fundamental condition of propagating "the love of government and its leader" in the hearts of children.

Further, confidence in the Brothers rested upon the pledge of "His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons". Fesch's intervention proved decisive; the official "benefaction" was his doing; the efficacy and the duration of his support assured the loyalty of his protegés. That is why, in the final analysis, his metropolitan city became the Institute's headquarters. There would reside the Superior who, according to the details circulated in the letter from Rome and by Father Jauffert, would not be Brother Frumence.

On the 11th Frimaire Bonaparte scrawled his vigorous signature, preceded by the lone word, "Approved", on Portalis' note. The second report, mentioned in the conclusion of the statement of principles, seems to have been written four months later.[67] But no confirming decree was issued until the day in 1808 when the Brothers of the Christian Schools were made dependent upon the Grand-Master of the University.

Could the summary approval in December 1803 be regarded as a sort of implicit abrogation of the Law of the 18th of August 1792 and, therefore, as a legal recognition, analogous to the "Letters patent" of 1724 and 1777? Fourcroy did not think so: we shall examine the conditions and the reasons for this response, as well as the personal opinions of the Counselor of State. Other officials and jurists expressed their doubts or openly negative opinion. On the 11th Floreal in the Year XIII, Duchatel, the Director-general of the Office of Lands and Titles, wrote to his subordinates that "the Emperor's intention" was "to re-establish the institution of the Brothers and Sisters of the Christian Schools": it must be inferred, then, from this circular letter (the principal burden of which was "to suspend" the sale of property that was once included in the patrimony, or for the use, of religious teachers)[68]that the decision handed down in the Year XII had not been communicated to the Minister of Finance. A lawyer in Chartres, Minister Herrison, examining the will of Brother Acarius on the 23rd Prairial in the Year XIII, concluded that the deceased's property belonged as an inheritance to Jean-Michel Philibert Briere (Brother Joseph), since "the Institute was not restored to it primitive incorporation".[69]

However, the majority of jurists throughout the 19th century decided that the First Consul, by approving Portalis' report, had reinstated the rights of the Lasallian Society. It had

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[67] See below, pp. 541-543.

[68] Motherhouse Archives, copy of the Duchatel circular, in Brother Victorine's handwriting. Four months earlier, the Prefect of Calvados had written to the Director of Titles in his jurisdiction: I think there is reason to discontinue the transfer (of the former house of the Brothers in Lisieux) until His Majesty the Emperor's benevolent intentions regarding the Brothers are known. (Letter of the 20th Nivose in the Year XIII, Jan. 10, 1805). Departmental Archives of Calvados, Series T.

[69] Motherhouse Archives, File HA q (the Schools in Chartres).

been recognized that all modern legislation regarding the Brothers of the Christian Schools, prior to the wretched Law of the 7th of July 1904, sprang from Bonaparte's initiative without any further legislation during the First Empire invalidating the meaning or the scope of the original gesture. The Brothers escaped the measures promulgated by the Decree of the 3rd Messidor in the Year XII against "unauthorized associations founded under the pretext of religion", as well as the blows directed by the Decree of the 26th of September 1809 against several "ecclesiastical Congregations". Portalis (as we shall see) continued to regard his report of the 2nd Frimaire in the Year XII as the necessary and sufficient foundation of the new structure begun in Lyons. Finally, the special support, constantly granted by Napoleon I to the Institute, his ringing declarations before the Council of State, article 109 of the Decree of the 17th of March 1808 (the charter of the University) and another decree issued during the period of the Hundred Days, which placed the legal competency of the Brothers' association out of question, seemed to be so many buttresses put into place according to a preconceived plan in order to support the architecture of the overall work.[70].

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While the highest officials in the Republic and the Church were exerting themselves on behalf of De La Salle's disciples, Lyons presented the spectacle of an entire city won over to the cause of the Christian teachers. Bureaux Puzy, Prefect of the Rhone, wrote to Mayor Bernard-Charpieux on the 16th Frimaire in the Year XII: "Citizens Martelin and Poncet, primary school teachers...protest the measure...adopted by the administrative office, to entrust the primary schools to the Ignorantins. Surely, the Commune has the right to choose its own teachers. The choice it makes of the Ignorantins does not deprive the petitioners of the freedom to have private schools..."[71]

The mayor of the western region continued to be a most diligent advocate for the Brothers. At the time he was contemplating cooperation with Fesch's enterprises by introducing the Brothers into Petit-Collège. A Consular Decree of the 14th Prairial in the Year XI authorized the transfer, by the State to the City, of this building that some thought to be suitable for a secondary school.[72]That school was finally housed in the former Dominican monastery. For a while Petit-Collège seemed suited for the Sisters of St. Charles. But then the rapid expansion of that Community caused it to be transferred to another structure.[73]Bernard-Charpieux explained the new plans at length in a letter to Portalis on the 14th Pluviose in the year XII;[74]its style, so characteristic of this wonderful gentleman, sacrifices none of the basic soundness of his cause:

"Citizen Counselor of State...as my gaze surveys the western region, whose administration is entrusted to me, and which constitutes a third of the population of Lyons, and which in great part is made up only of laborers and factory workers, who are little favored by fortune, I thought it necessary to establish within this class -- the more interesting in that it is through its labors and industry that commerce prospers -- an education which, more closely related to it, might, by inspiring it with religious morality --that primary bond in

[70]Motherhouse Archives, "Note on the legal existence and civic personality of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", dated the 8th of June 1881 and signed by Brother Irlide, Superior-general

[71]Quoted in the Circular, Centenaire, pp. 32-33.

[72]See above, pg. 494.

[73]Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 130-1. From a letter to be quoted presently, it follows that the secondary school was still not opened in February of 1804.

[74]The 4th of February 1804. Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, western mayoralty, no. 544. Cf. Centenaire, pp 52-3.

every society -- promise it, through a study to which the pupils would not be exclusively devoted, an education necessary for their profession. Since they are not sufficiently wealthy to study the higher sciences, and not sufficiently poor to study nothing but the elements of reading, I have found in the Society of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, the necessary components of such an institution. Their success before the Revolution, the austerity of their lives, their detachment and the virtues that these worthy men practice to an eminent degree conciliate in them the benevolence of authority with the veneration of fathers and children.

"At this time they are employed in the primary schools of this city; but, on a proposal coming from the City Council, and in the certainty that they are sincerely dedicated to the government, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons has frequently shown a keen interest in giving greater scope to their association by bringing them together in the buildings of Petit-Collège under the direction of a Superior and binding them to a rule that would be devised by both civil and religious authorities...

"It belongs to one of the most worthy exponents of government, to the virtuous citizen whose illustrious leader has charged with the noble and attractive office of raising the altars and regenerating morals to appraise this proposal, which without doing injury to secondary schools, ...has to do basically with the progress of morality and public education."

At about the same time there was being worked out the statutes of that pious association to which the Brothers in Lyons alluded on the 7th of September 1803. A number of Catholics of the city met on the 24th Ventose in the Year XII -- "the 15th of March" (1804) -- at the Archbishop's residence to listen to the following proposal made by one of their members: "The most praiseworthy institution...after the Seminary is the Brothers of the Christian Schools...The point is to encourage them by your public approbation. It is important to surround them with esteem, veneration and the support of good people. It is important to help them, to strengthen and consolidate them by your advice, concord and especially by your prayers. It is necessary that men, whose vocation is to dedicate themselves wholly to the tuition-free education of the people, to inspire the fear and the love of God in children and train them in a pure and holy morality, find among you their defenders, their apologists, their benefactors and their associates."

The program that was being contemplated "would in no way impinge upon the Communal administration". The "Congregation of men associated in the work of the Brothers...dedicated to the Christian education of children", would be an "organization" of a few good people, united "in spirit and in heart" in the prayers and the works of the school and "seconding" the teachers in an essentially spiritual way.

A monthly Mass would be celebrated for the intentions of the members and their families in the oratory of the Community directed by Brother Pigmenion. The "medal" distributed to active members would bear, front and back, the following inscriptions (surely, the inheritance of Lyons' famous educator, recalling his favorite slogan*):*[75] *Pauperes evangelizantur -- Beati misericor−des -- Sinite parvulos venire ad me -- Venite, Benedicti*.

These men of action, become auxiliaries of "the school jury", would visit the homes of the people and encourage parents to send their sons to the Brothers' schools. Facilitating the opening of new classes, assuming the responsibility for supplying textbooks and scholastic prizes, staying in contact "with the Brothers' Superior and with "the Director of the 'Seminary for Schools'", they united their beneficent action to the life of "the large family" of teachers in Christian education. A "fine example" would thus be given "to Catholic France".

Following this definition of goals there was a sketch of the regulations. As the

[75] *Pauperibus evangelizare misit* C. D. (Charles Démia). See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 51-52.

headquarters of the association, the Brothers' residence in Lyons was named; its church was the Community's oratory; and its chaplain, the priest who ministered to the entire Lasallian Institute. An assembly which was held monthly, after Mass, had as its agenda the questions that "the Superior-general" wanted to have discussed. Christmas time was selected as the period for a "patronal feast".

The people in Lyons intended to maintain a monopoly on this association. "Gentlemen outside" their city would only be able to join this group; and the Archbishop would exercise all the rights of a Superior over the organization, which was essentially diocesan. In case of need, his place in the presidency could be taken over by the leading member of the Institute. The task of the secretary would fall to "the Director of the Brothers ' seminary", who was also known as the Director of novices.

In this way was heralded an enterprise in every sense consistent with the mystical and social bent, the mentality peculiar to Lyons. However, the first discussion ended with only a temporary organization. Nineteen people had responded to the summons: among them, four priests, Fathers Paul, Vincent, Daude and Vallous Trourrieux; among the fifteen laymen there was Saint-Fonds, Montanier, Boissieux, Rambaud-Moneloz, Alexander Jordan and the Mayyor, Bernard-Charpieux.

These Catholics were unanimous in "considering the work of the Brothers...as one of the most valuable from various points of view, religious, moral and social", and they promised it their enthusiasm and their support.

"Regretting however that all the churchmen and the citizens with whom they form but one spirit and one heart and who are very numerous in the city" were unable to hear of the project in time, "because of the illness and convalescence of Father Paul, the Superior of the Christian Schools", they decided to designate "four of the priests or laymen present, in cooperation with Father Jauffret, the Vicar-general", along with Father Paul, "to become involved with the concerns" in question. Fathers Vincent and Daude and the laymen, Montanier and Saint-Fonds, were elected unanimously.

A more thoroughgoing plan was put off until such a time as the government would give legal recognition to the Brothers of the Christian Schools[76]

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Father Paul, Bernard-Charpieux and their fellow-citizens, then, continued to be unaware of Napoleon's decision. As we see, there is not a line referring to it in Bernard-Charpieux's letter to Portalis, who according to plan, was getting ready to submit to Napoleon a final report, to which a draft decree was to be attached.

We believe that this is the document preserved in the National Archives, dated the 15th Germinal in the Year XII.[77]It resumes and develops in a more pompous style the themes that were set forth in Frimaire. Further, we should also note that it takes into account the suggestions made by Bernard-Charpieux.

"Among the foundations which honor religion and the nation, that of the tuition-free Teachers, known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, has the right to the support of the First Consul and deserves well at the hands of a government that lives only for the general and personal happiness of its citizens.

"The desire expressed by Plato when he planned the ideal of a perfect Republic would seem, in a sense, to be realized by this group of teachers. The philosopher wanted dedicated teachers who had no other ambition but to train learned and virtuous pupils. And that is the

[76] .Archbishopric's Archives, Register no.5, minutes of meeting. Cf. Centenaire, pp. 52-3.

[77] April 5th, 1804. National Archives, F-19 6285

sole ambition of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They do not constitute a religious corporation. Such was the decision of the Sorbonne in its consultation of the 7th of March 1777. [78]But they are dedicated unreservedly to the tuition-free education of the children of workers and of the poor.

Having summarized the circumstances of their foundation and rehearsed the advantages that their pedagogy and the sobriety of their lives procure for the public, the Germinal report makes the point: Lyons has entrusted "its six elementary schools" to these teachers. "Would it not be well to extend this benefit to the entire Republic? Rheims, Chartres and Bordeaux had already experienced the Brothers' talents."

"It's not a problem, then, of creating something that does not exist nor of restoring something that has been lost. We need only encourage and direct an already developed and popular institution."

There were no objections. The Holy See consented to the resignation of the "Vicar-or Director-general", who was residing in Rome. A Superior with full power over the entire Society "was to be named in Lyons". The Cardinal-Archbishop or his Vicars- general were to "supervise" the institution "as regards spiritual matters". "The building called 'Petit- Collège' would serve "as both headquarters" for the admission of "student-teachers and as a tuition-free school for children..."

Following this preamble, the proposed decree was cast in the style of an executive order. Following are its six articles:

1. "The teachers in the primary schools in Lyons known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, are authorized to admit student-teachers;
2. "All the teachers known as Brothers of the Christian Schools are presided over by a Director- general, who resides in their house in Lyons.
3. "People can be admitted among these teachers only by being received at the house in Lyons, under the supervision of the Director-general, for the length of time required by their regulations;
4. "The national house, called "Petit-Collège", situated in the western borough, with its annexes, is placed at the disposal of the Director-general of the Christian Schools;
5. "The teachers of the Christian Schools will have not communication with a foreign Superior;
6. "Concerning spiritual matters, the teachers will be under the authority of the local Archbishops and Bishops; and for secular matters they will be subject to inspection and supervision by he local authorities."

An attached document contains some quotations from the Rule having to do with the name, the end, the spirit and the governance of the Society. It indicates the nature and the duration of the vows that are pronounced by the Brothers; simple vows, triennial or perpetual. It was believed necessary to specify that the instruction dispensed to children was to be limited "to reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic", while it remained quite clear that religious teachers would apply the best of their zeal to catechism. "They have taught mathematics with success in their big residence school in Maréville", a commentator remarks, "but that was probably an exception to the Rule". It was this sort of misleading information that betrayed a determination, henceforth, to reduce the Brothers to the exclusive role of elementary school teachers.

The wording, which was quite brief, avoided speaking about a "Congregation" or even about a "Society"; and it referred to a "Director-general" rather than to a "Superior"; it

[78] .[78]During the delicate negotiations occasioned by the registration of the "Letters patent" of 1777, in order to disarm the hostility of the Parisian Court, Brother Agathon sought the expert opinion of the Sorbonne, which emphasized the "secular" character of the Institute.[78]

was careful to classify the new Communities in a French setting, under the Church hierarchy and the political bureaucracy. The entire decree re−veals the hand of a veteran "jurist", a defender of the Concordat with pronounced Gallican leanings. Nevertheless, the essentials were safeguarded: the need for a novitiate was recognized; the subordination of the membership of the Brothers to a single head was declared; and the "rule" was singled out for a sort of implicit approbation. There was reason to hope for a very humble, but regular, return to Religious life.

Indeed, Portalis' kindness was unfailing. More than ever, the Minister of Cults relied upon the Brothers "to regenerate" the common people. Daily he could only increasingly assess the dimensions of the moral and intellectual catastrophe. In a report on the 27th Germinal in the Year XII, he wrote: "The small Communes are swamped with teachers who are incapable of educating youth by their lessons and can do nothing more than corrupt them by their example.[79] He became the spokesman for Pius VII's complaints concerning the presence in the teaching personnel of married priests and apostate monks -- a "scandal" that it was crucial to eradicate[80] Did not the expansion of the Christian Brothers seem be the most efficacious way of disinfecting the entire country?

It becomes astonishing, then, to learn that the documents of the month of April 1804 had not been removed from the ministerial files. They form a single sheaf with the first report of 1803, the only one to receive Bonaparte's approval.

"Napoleon had already anticipated..." The replacement of the Consulate by the Empire (that triumphal progress that would end with the Decree of the 18th of May) was marked by significant stages; revolutionary conspiracies became evident simultaneously with the approach of dictatorship. With the assassination of the Duke of Enghien in March the gulf once again widened between the Corsican General and traditional France. Cadoudal's conspiracy rekindled political passions and alerted the First Consul against partisanship and royalty, and awakened this suspicions of the forces which seemed to him imbued with the same spirit.

It was during this time that the Fathers of the Faith began to get worried. Cardinal Fesch, who was sympathetic to them, was obliged to disassociate himself from them and to effect a gesture of repudiation. On the 25th of April 1804 he explained to Father Jauffret: "(They) are my friends; I appreciate and revere them; but let them adhere to the strictly hierarchical order; the Church has no knowledge of them as an approved Congregation; and France and the French Bishops will never make exceptions, and that is what they want."[81]

There was an administrative statement drawn up which was especially aimed at them. On the 19th prairial (the 8th of June) Portalis talked to the Privy Counsel concerning "religious associations and societies...established clandestinely and outside the law"; he reviewed the principles "concerning the intervention of public authority" in such cases."[82] And two weeks later the Decree of the 3rd Messidor disbanded the unauthorized association.

The government "protected benevolent and charitable foundations" whose "salutary effects" it had discerned.[83]. Hospital nuns and the Sisters of St. Charles of Lyons were among the associations explicitly supported. They will continue to exist, provided that, within six

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[79] Quoted by Des Cilleuls, pg. 346.

[80] . Des Cilleuls, op.cit., pg. 347. The author erroneously dates the second document as the 21st Ventose in the Year XII (March 13, 1804). In it Portalis, in fact, addresses the Emperor as "His Majesty".

[81] Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Fesch source, Register no. 1.

[82] Chevalier, op.cit., pg. 97.

[83] Portalis' report of the 19 Prairial

months time, they present their statutes and rules for inspection and verification by the Privy Council.

There was no mention of the Christian Brothers.[84]The silence was intentional: the still half-secret approval worked in their favor. The Emperor, predisposed in their favor by Fesch and by the Minister of Cults, had no intention of treating them worse than the Sisters of St. Charles. Nevertheless, while he was determined not to grant them any special privileges, until further notice he abided by his basic decision. Like the nuns who were beneficiaries of the Messidor exceptions, the Brothers in Lyons, also, would have to produce their Rule. And they should consider themselves lucky to find themselves under the protective mantle of the Cardinal-Archbishop, rather than having thrown in their lot with the Fathers in the Faubourg St. Germain. Meanwhile, as, gradually, the situation stabilized, Portalis assured them of the use of Petit-Collège and whatever security was compatible with the circumstances; negotiations were to be resumed in Rome with the view of locating the best solution to the problem of the Generalate.

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The most urgent need was being pursued in the hospitable city of Lyons. On the 3rd Prairial in the Year III, "a member of the Commission for Public Education" read a remarkable report to the City Council.[85] It painted a picture of the human mind exposed "to nature's blind instincts"; of the adolescent child as it was observed "during the disastrous years of the Revolution": -- brutal, "ready to commit crime, if crime served its purpose, remorseless and without fear of anything except punishment. But the nightmare was finally over. The government had "reestablished religion and reestablished the schools". Hardly eighteen months had passed: children of both sexes, to the number of 2,400, were receiving instruction in twenty-two places in the city; and an arts-and-crafts school for girls was operating.[86]Even at this date the shop occupied one of the sites of Petit-Collège. Each of these scholastic institutions, declared the speaker, was "functioning nearly perfectly".

This remarkable progress was due completely to Father Paul. This "invaluable man" had entrusted the young boys to the Brothers who were "so famous" for elementary education. He had "thrown himself...into concerns well beneath his talents", into the details of "internal operation", without, however, neglecting his parochial duties. In his apostolic zeal he "was everywhere". His associates on the "jury" also deserved to be recognized for their contribution.

Credit for the success belonged also to the "Congregations" of men and women who "carried on" the educational traditions and methods of the past. What a fortunate idea inspired the organizers of the schools "to re-establish the scattered members" of these marvelous Institutes! The government seemed to have entered upon the road first opened up by the people of Lyons. "Highly placed officials" declared that the Congregation of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine was well as the Sisters of St. Charles were going to regain their legal recognition; the city would be the center for "the teacher-training schools" destined for the "Republic's various primary schools".[87]

The city could not, therefore, without impropriety, shirk the financial responsibilities

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[84]Centenaire, pp. 48-9; Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 125.

[85]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D. Third Register of the deliberations of the Council F-o 70-72. Cf. Chevalier, pp. 99-101.

[86]During the first years of the Empire, France continued to be nominally a "Republic".

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involved in the support of both Congregations. At the risk of abandoning plans for a secondary school in the southern section of the city, it was necessary to increase from 24,000 to 32,650 francs the sum earmarked for education.

The City Assembly supported these decisions enthusiastically. Its attitude had not been changed by the Messidor Decree. On the 7th of that month Bernard-Charpieux wrote to Cardinal Fesch: "Father Jauffret has promised me to inform you of my request regarding the Brothers of Christian Doctrine; that Institute has won a success beyond our expectations and it promises to have the best influence on the morality and the education of children. Vacation time draws near and it is important to assemble the Brothers in order to elect their Superior. Upon this step depends the growth and prosperity of this budding institution which, because of the invaluable individuals of which it is composed, has the right to Your Eminence's encouragement and kindness, who can be regarded as its founder.[88]

In this way Lyons continued to seek a quick and complete restoration of the Lasallian Institute and to refuse to think about it without a prior "election of a Superior".

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The Archbishop had not anticipated the step taken by the mayor of the western section to seek out the Imperial government's intentions. On the 18th Messidor (July 7th) "the Minister of State responsible for all matters having to do with cults" wrote to Cardinal Fesch, His Majesty's ambassador to Rome:

"I have not lost sight of what concerns the Brothers of Christian Doctrine. The matter has been put off until the decree that has just been handed down determining the forms according to which a religious group or association can be authorized. Henceforth, it will be necessary that the group whose foundation is being sought present the statutes and rules according to which the members propose to live. Once the Emperor has handed them on, these statutes and rules will be discussed and verified by the Privy Council. If the Privy Council finds nothing contrary to our national law, it will issue a decree of authorization. I shall inform your Vicars of this procedure, who shall then instruct the Brothers of Christian Doctrine concerning it, and then the Broth−ers shall send me their statutes and rules. I have adopted the favorable opinion that you have of their Institute. I shall make my report to the Emperor and I hope that it all turns out as you desire.[89]

The Brothers in Lyons and their supporters henceforth knew the direction things were taking. Father Jauffret took it upon himself hastily to gather together bits of information concerning the Rule and to edit a summary of it. On the 27th Messidor, at the Archbishop's residence, he convoked "all the Brothers of the Christian Schools" in the city, "both professed and postulants...in the presence of their spiritual director, Father Paul". He read his proposal to them and expressly invited them to sign it. Brothers Justinian of Mary, Joseph, Pigmenion, Julian, Rosier, Anselm, Irenée, Florence, Stanislaus, August, Jordan, Maurice, Desire, Pierre, Agathon, Damas, Alexandre and Clement -- in all, nineteen professed veterans and novices (up to the most recent arrivals in the Community) -- stated that they recognized in the Vicar-general's work the "spirit" of their former rules. In a moment we shall see that this assent was not without reservations and the unanimity was merely apparent. Father Jauffret, "in the name of the Cardinal-Archbishop", of course, gave his complete approval to the document which he had authored. He testified, in the minutes of the meeting, that the rules that were to

[88] Municipal Archives of Lyons, D. Western mayoralty, no. 614.

[89] Original signed by Portalis. Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, File no. 5, no. 367. Fesch, on the 6th Thermidor (July 26), acknowledged to Portalis the receipt of this letter and also summarized it in a reply to Bernard-Charpieux (same source, file of the special correspondence of His Eminence during his Roman sojourn, and Register no. 1 of his diocesan correspondence).

be put into effect seemed to him "to be valuable for the Brothers, for religion and for the nation", and that they spoke well for the teachers' "pure and generous patriotism" and for "their dedication" to the "existing government, the Emperor and the entire imperial family".[90]

What we have is a genuine *Treatise* on De La Salle's Institute: --110 articles divided into 18 chapters. The conscientious priest borrowed from the Founder to explain "the end, the need and the spirit" of the Congregation. He reedited the Rule of Government concerning the qualities of the Superior-general, the Assistants, the General Chapter, the Visitors, and the Directors of Communities. He entered into numerous details regarding the admission of postulants into the novitiate -- which he calls "a seminary".

The topic of the vows becomes the subject of a long analysis. We meet with detailed and ascetical definitions of poverty, chastity, obedience, stability and the obligations bearing upon tuition-free teaching. At first, perpetual vows are explicitly mentioned. But then the author, recalling the biases of his contemporaries and anticipating objections that jurists were sure to raise, he changed that paragraph and, for what remains, speaks only of annual and triennial vows.

He stipulates that "the Brothers...founded for the tuition- free instruction of the children of the people" were "not called to know anything besides what is related to this sort of education". Not only Latin, but every "learned language" is forbidden to them. It was a flagrant misreading of the glorious tradition of the residence schools; and the consequences would be only too keenly felt.

From chapter nine to chapter thirteen, Father Jauffret expatiates upon the "different institutions of the Society", the "relationship" between the levels of hierarchy, "spiritual exercises", clothing, maintenance, food, and the bursars' bookkeeping! He seems to allow a Brother to teach alone, outside of his residence. He enumerates the "patronal feasts", emphasizes "the true, simple, unaffected devotion" required by De La Salle's disciples, and slips in a sentence *ad usum terrenae potestatis* regarding the prayers with which the Institute assails Heaven for the intentions of "His Majesty the Emperor".

He then returns to the make-up and election of the "Regime". His chapter fifteen, "Concerning the Correction of Faults and Cases of Expulsion" explains what needs to be understood by the expressions "charitable advertisements" and "remonstrances", and, among the causes for expulsion (placing these on the same footing), he mentions "suspicious relationships, calumnious statements", refusal to obey, pride, laziness, harsh treatment of pupils and "opinions contrary to the respect, devotion and gratitude" that the Society must foster with respect to a "reparatory government" as well as to "Emperor Napoleon" and "his august family".

After some articles dealing with "serving Brothers", the author thought it would be a good idea to insert what is at least an unexpected digression (entitled "Non-resident Associates") concerned with the organization in Lyons that cooperated with the Christian Brothers at the level of faith and charity.He concludes his crowded, rather confused, compilation with a statement of principles which, with respect to the State, augments the essay's imprudence and, with respect to the autonomy of the Institute, aggravates its errors. Chapter seventeen states: "Nothing may be changed of the spirit of these rules...(However) the Superior-general's ordinary Council may consider (their) practical application, the reform of abuses, the maintenance of discipline, the perfection of the Congregation's virtue, as well as that of its members, through legislation, which, however, will not be obligatory without the

[90]Motherhouse Archives, box 16, Series F, no. 20. Minutes for the 27th Messidor in the Year XII (July 17,1804), countersigned by Father Jauffret on the 1st Thermidor (July 20); and letter from Father Grandami, mentioned below.

approval of the Archbishop.[91]

Thus, Father Jauffret scarcely hesitated to thrust Cardinal Fesch into the role of Dominique La Rochefoucauld, although he himself had none of the hostility that Father Marescot had for the Brothers.[92] He completely ignored certain fundamental rules. There is a very curious document which, if we are to believe it, suggests that resistance appeared in the bosom of the Community in Lyons. We refer to the letter that a former-postulant-become-priest, a Vicar of St. Aspais' parish in Melun, Father Grand-ami, wrote on the 18th of December 1815 to Brother Gerbaud.[93]Written eleven years after the events, it may involve lapses of memory: it remains, however, quite accurate, and it throws light on incidents that are confirmed elsewhere.

...At the time of Our Holy Father the Pope's first visit to France,[94]I was in your renascent Community in Lyons. Father Jauffret, now Bishop of Metz, intending, by means of Cardinal Fesch, to gain the approbation of your Institute by the Emperor, had written some sort of new Rule: whereupon, the Director of novices took off, Brother Odo followed and the former Brother Fort[95]who was not professed followed their example. The following day we were called to the Archbishop's residence to sign the pretty little regulation, that was to be submitted to the Emperor; and they brought as many of us as possible together the better to support it... [96]." I was the only one who, while refusing to sign it, nevertheless, did not approve of the violent reaction of the three troublemakers. The Superior, Brother Pigmenion, urged me to sign. I refused on the grounds that, since I had resolved not to remain, but to dedicate my life to the priesthood, I did not want my name bandied about...He took me aside and asked: Were you scandalized by those who deserted? I said: No; and that I simply sympathized with (the protesters) who had refused to lend their adherence to the new rules, in disdain of the Holy Founder's forty years of experience."

Examining the list of signatures in the report of the 27th Messidor, the names of Brother Paulian, Odo and Servulus are missing. Neither are the first two included in a roll of the Brothers drawn up in the course of the following year.[97]All three show up again on an 1808 list,[98]and there can be no doubt but what Antoine Boudoul and Pierre Jourde, signed in on this latter occasion as infirmarians, had for a long time been reinstated in the Community residence. Jean-Baptist Faure had been for a long time occupied in teaching in St. George's parish on Rue des Prêtres. The conclusion emerges: rather than sign Father Jauffret's

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[91]We possess two "versions" of Father Jauffret's text: the first, in the Motherhouse Archives (Box 16, Series F, nos. 17 to 21 (bis), on separate sheets of paper, where the margins are left blank, doubtless with a view to additions and changes (chapter one is missing); the second, which is certainly a fair copy, in 28 columns, in-quarto, in the Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Register no. 5 (Brothers of the Christian Schools): to this copy there is added a "memoir" whose contents we shall examine. Cf. Centenaire, pp. 33-5; 49-50; 68-9.

[92]See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 328-331, 336-338, 349-353.

[93]Motherhouse Archives, autographed letter in Brother Gerbaud's file.

[94]There is hardly any need to point out that the editing of the statutes took place a few months prior to Napoleon's coronation.

[95],[95](Sic) Of course the reference is to J.B. Faure, Brother Servulus, who, during the period of the Revolution, was without vows

[96]Father Grand-ami adds: "There were one or two novices who, out of respect, signed it on their knees

[97]Centenaire, pg. 88, according to the Departmental Archives of the Rhone, Series T, no. 8.

[98]Motherhouse Archives, File JFC-1, according to the above source.

propositions, the dissidents repeated their 1802 "flight", prepared to return to the fold once peace was restored by the presence of the Superior of their Institute.

While Brother Pigmenion and his eighteen colleagues showed greater docility to Joseph Fesch's Vicar-general, their conscientious scruples continued to show through. In his report, the author of the "new rule" was obliged to mention their "desire to re-establish perpetual vows after triennial vows for those among the Brothers who, after a long period of testing, would be thought worthy of them". The "seniors" had "borne witness that the perpetuity of the vows" was one of the foundations of their Religious Society.

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In their "dismay", adds Father Grand-ami, Jauffret's "fine plan" collapsed. The catastrophe might have been expected. In spite of the precautions devised by the good priest and in spite of the distortions he imposed upon De La Salle's Rule, his version could only raise suspicions in the Privy Council. We can imagine the impatient gestures with which Napoleon's bureaucrats would greet the priest's voluminous tract; and we can visualize the smiles of irony and the shrug of the shoulders as these Voltairians read the definitions of vows, the program of "spiritual exercises", the description of the "mantle", the habit, the "stockings and shoes", and the enumeration of disciplinary sanctions. And they were certainly going to jump on that illicit word "Congregation", which, clumsily, however innocently, found its way into the final sentence. All of this poor psychology, which Portalis would vainly attempt to exorcize,[99] drew down upon the Vicar-general both Cardinal Fesch's biting reprimands and Napoleon's anger. It was the beginning of the end, which, in nine months' time, would explode in a clap of thunder. Immediately after his initiative Father Jauffret became a profoundly anxious man. And this is why he hurried to add to the notorious "rules" another "memoir" that was almost as lengthy, which he addressed to "M. Portalis, Minister of Cults".[100]

In it he takes protection behind references to the Bull of 1725, analyses its eighteen articles and, at the same time, retraces the origins of La Salle's work. He attempts to please the Brothers by introducing, in this roundabout way, an argument in favor of perpetual vows, which "would restore discipline to the institution", and which, furthermore, "since they would not be solemn, they could be easily annulled". But, he frankly admits, "it appears to us" that they would displease the Privy Council.

He implores the Minister that "people not change the essence" of the Society, that they be on their guard lest they "subject" the Brothers "to outside inspectors", and "trouble them in their...piety". Should opposite ideas prevail, it would be better to temporize until the Cardinal returns.

However, good arguments appeared to favor an early end of the entire process. The Brothers in Lyons "were invited (according to their lawyer) to take possession of Petit-Collège: this building had been intended as a secondary school", but the administrative Office thought that it would be better suited, in its section of "Old Lyons", to the education of the children of the people. The mayor of the western section was "provided...with 10,000 francs" to set up quarters suited to the needs of a Community: a delay ran the risk of requiring another appropriation of funds.

And then Father Jauffret sought to win a decision from the civil authorities by

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[99] See below, pg. 573.

[100] Text in 16 columns in Register no. 5 of the Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons. Cf. A. Chevalier, op.cit., pp. 108- 9, 111, and 112; Centenaire, pg. 53-4 and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 130 and 144.

pointing to the fruitful activities of the Brothers "in Rheims, Chartres, Toulouse and St. Omer, as he believed" and, especially by calling to mind the success of the schools in Lyons and the advantages offered by this city, where "the Superior-general and his Counsel" would be lining up "under the immediate direction of His Eminence, the Emperor's uncle".

There, twenty Brothers were instructing "at least 1400 children" without costing the Commune "more than 16000 francs". Was it not a stroke of good fortune "for a great Empire" that "men would take vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability in their vocation" in order to devote themselves to the common people? Embroidering on the language of the "Germinal Report", Portalis' priest friend declared that "not even Plato could have imagined such an ideal society".

The details of the final restoration remained to be worked out. The "memoir" refers to them explicitly: the residence of the Superior-general at Petit-College, and in the same building the creation of a novitiate, which would also be the preparatory course for "student-teachers"; the submission of the Brothers to the secular authorities, and for spiritual matters, to the Bishop of the diocese. It would be clearly advisable to regularize the situation of former members of the Institute scattered in various places: some "devoted to teaching but alone"; others, together in twos or threes, following, "or attempting to follow" the methods of their Congregation. "For the coordination and good order of public education" all Brothers making use of the name of De La Salle should be compelled to "obey the same rules and the same Superior". Those who evaded these prescriptions would not be allowed to "adopt the title of Brothers of the Christian Schools, to wear their habit, nor admit postulants capable of being "incorporated" into the renascent Society.

A particularly touchy question arose in connection with the eventual election of a Superior. On the previous May 27th Napoleon, approving the restoration of the Vincentian Fathers, reserved for himself the selection of their Superior. The Brothers could scarcely allow this sort of meddling on the part of the civil authorities. At this point Father Jauffret was to suggest, if it were necessary to submit to a diminished freedom, stipulating a simple "confirmation" of the Superior by the Emperor.[101]

At the end of July Portalis received a huge file at about the same time that Fesch acknowledged the reception of a letter dated the 18th Messidor. Regardless of the objections that must have arisen in his mind, the Minister was prepared to give effect to the Vicar-general's demands. But he knew that it was impossible to work quickly: the sovereign's reactions, even more so than those of the Privy Counsel, were easily predictable; it was a situation for pleading the usual delays of the bureaucracy and the need for long and careful studies. Favorable opportunities might arise and time would heal the wounds. Until further notice, the Brothers in Lyons were supported by a network of goodwill, by the unshakable bond that existed between Fesch, Portalis and Jauffret, and by the personal will of Napoleon, thoroughly determined not to deprive cities that were reorganizing their schools of the cooperation of the Brothers, and, in such an important matter, not to disappoint the hopes of the public.

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The friends of the Institute were acting as though the future was pretty well decided. Bernard-Charpieux worked with tireless constancy. He had at his disposal a rather large sum of money to set up classes in "St. Irenée' presbytery". Calling this enterprise to the attention of his Archbishop on the 18th Fructidor in the Year XII, he looked forward to Fesch's early return in order to have an important conversation with him regarding "the Sisters of

[101] In the final analysis this was the method that obtained for the Vincentians. See Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 143-4.

St.Charles and the Brothers of Christian Doctrine".[102]

He was obsessed by the thought of completely returning the Congregation of the Brothers to Lyons. And it was precisely for this purpose that he ventured on a road whose destination was not exactly calculated.

Twelve days before writing to the Embassy to the Holy See, he had written, on the 24th of August, to his colleague, the Mayor of Rheims, Jobert-Lucas: "I beseech you to be so kind as to ask Brother Vivien, who lives in your Commune, to come and spend the vacation at Lyons in order to share his views regarding the institution of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, which, according to a decree of His Majesty the Emperor, is to be organized under the auspices of Cardinal Fesch and M. Portalis, Minister of Cults. The concern you have for public education give me hope, Sir, that you will be good enough to intervene with M. Vivien and assure him that he will receive from the officials of this city the welcome due to his wisdom and merits.[103].

"M. Vivien" had persisted in creating his quite personal operation in Champagne with associates whom he was able to bend to his own ideas and wishes.[104] He and the city of Rheims were on the best of terms: quite recently, on the 1st Messidor, in the Counsel Hall, the mayor listened to one of François René Gaudenne's pupils congratulate his teacher "in the name of all his fellow pupils"; in his reply the mayor promised to preside over the formal distribution of awards.[105]

On the 15th Fructidor he acceded to Bernard-Charpieux's re−quest by granting the Director of the Communal schools a sum of 150 francs to make the journey from Rheims to Lyons.[106]The "former Brothers who composed the Community" were equally willing to assist his departure; having proclaimed their leader's "zeal" and "his great sacrifices", they supported his resolution to "go to Lyons as well as other imperial cities...in order to...work for the revival of the entire Society".[107]

The 21st Fructidor, "the mayor of the western section" told of his gratitutde and underwrote a reimbursement for travel expenses.[108]His every tactic tended to keep Brother Vivien with him for as long as possible. As he explains in letters he wrote (on the 5th "additional day" in the Year XII and on the 24th Vendemiaire in the Year XIII):[109] This Brother, as estimable for his zeal as for his teaching, whose advice every day contributes to the improvement of our educational institutions...has resolved, (in spite of his) reluctance and on the urgent insistence of the authorities, to remain with us until His Holiness' visit...No doubt, Sir and dear colleague, you will find it fitting that the City of Rheims, which can be

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[102]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western mayoralty, no. 672.

[103]Ibid., no. 662. The original of this letter, dated the 6th Fructidor in the Year XII (Aug. 25, 1804) is in the Municipal Archives of Rheims, Public Education, Year XI -- 1815, bundle no. 361. Cf. Centenaire, pg. 56. There is a slight error regarding the date

[104]See above, pp. 462-464.

[105]Municipal Archives of Rheims, loc.cit.

[106]Ibid..

[107]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 1, "certificate" signed by six Brothers in Rheims, on the 19th Fructidor in the Year XII (6th September 1804).

[108]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D. Western mayoralty, no. 678.

[109]The 22nd September and the 16th October 1805, Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western mayoralty, nos. 691 and 728. Cf. Centenaire, pg. 56 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pp. 222-3.

considered the cradle of the excellent institute of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, has here a representative for these exciting times...He will be extremely valuable to me during the interval for the establishment of a novitiate and a residence school... If his absence proved harmful to the schools in Rheims or left his associates overworked, Lyons would send some teachers as temporary replacements. Brother Vivien's stay in the Department of the Rhone had "no other purpose" than "the interests" of "the Order" and "a concern" with which a city especially attached to the traditions and the future of popular education must be sympathetic.

Bernard-Charpieux went even further. On the 26th Vendemiaire (October 18th) he wrote to the former bishop of the "Constitutional" Church in Lyons, who, after the Concordat, had become the prelate of the Archiepiscopal See of Toulouse, Archbishop Primat:

The Institute of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine has always been valuable for the education of youth, and for the support of public morality. The members who make up this Order, nearly all of them scattered in desperate times, are dedicating themselves once again and with such success that the government has unhesitatingly granted official authorization in order to encourage and support the institutions they direct. Brother Vivien, one of the most worthy for his dedication, zeal and wisdom, has already come from Rheims to Lyons to be introduced to His Holiness on the latter's visit to this city. Allow me, Your Excellency, to seek your mediation to induce Brother Bernardine of Toulouse to take the same step in the company of two colleagues of his own choice; from the sharing of their insights I expect the happiest of consequences for the final organization of a Congregation that inspires the keenest excitement. What you contribute to a city that is happy to have given you birth provides me with the well founded hope that you will be good enough to prevail upon Brother Bernardine and his colleagues to make this journey, beseeching you to assure them that they shall receive from Lyons all the welcome that is due to their merit.[110]

Here, then, were François René Gaudenne and Pierre Blanc both invited to contribute their persons and their counsel to the reorganization of the Institute. The mayor of the western region, certain not to lavish his "encouragements" upon Brothers without the Emperor's approval, believed that official recognition of their Society was already a fact. If, however, we scrutinize his letters for their meaning and attentively weigh their language, we find no allusion to Brother Vicar-general nor to his eventual role, nor, indeed, to his presumed resignation. Brother Vivien "would share his views" on the work to be done; he would work, along with the people in Lyons, to found a novitiate as well as a residence school; Brother Bernardine would also share his "insights". Both of them would be introduced, as though they were the most noteworthy personalities of the French Institute, to the Pope who, according to the most recent word received at the Office of the Prefect of the Rhone, would stop at Lyons "on the 23rd of November, corresponding to the 2nd Frimaire",[111]before going on to Paris for Napoleon's coronation.

As a consequence, there was at least an uncertainty regarding the appointment of a Superior. From both the previous behavior of the two Brothers from Rheims and Toulouse, as well as on the basis of the interpretation of a document that we have yet to examine, it results that Brothers Vivien and Bernardine had been reunited with Brother Pigmenion without any sure knowledge of the immediate future.

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[110]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western mayoralty, no. 728. Document published in the circular Centenaire, pg. 57. Notice how discreetly Bernard-Charpieux reminds the Archbishop of his origins in Lyons.

[111]Bernard-Charpieux's letter to the Mayor of Rheims, 24th Vendemiaire in the Year XIII (Oct. 17, 1804).

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CHAPTER THREE

Brother Frumence's Residence at Petit-Collège
The Inquiry of The Year XIII and Conclusion

There are no documents covering the negotiations which decided Brother Frumence to resettle in France. The Congregation's Archives contain nothing explicit on this subject. Documents in public archives and those in the Archbishopric of Lyons analyzed in the previous chapter have another purpose: there the problem was to secure Brother Frumence's "resignation", concerning which, indeed, we know very little. The Cardinal-ambassador and the Director (subsequently, "Minister") of Cults, Portalis, regarded it as an accomplished fact; but we never run into any substantial proof -- the actual text that would dispel all doubt.[1] Vicar-general Jauffret, and Mayor Bernard - Charpieux worked to prepare for the election of a Superior. Their plan seems to have been to assemble at Lyons the best qualified representatives of the 'old Institute', in order to rebuild the Society from the ground up. Following the instructions arriving from Paris, "rules", emanating from actions taken by the clergy in Lyons, were drawn up that neither envisaged nor required the cooperation of the man placed at the head of the Brothers of the Christian Schools by Pope Pius VI and confirmed by Pope Pius VII.

The appeals made in August of 1804 to Brother Vivien and in October to Brother Bernardine seem, indeed, to show that Bernard-Charpieux had no suspicion of the terms of the Papal Brief of 1795. Pierre Blanc had opened his schools and his Community in Toulouse and, with his colleagues, voted an "act of association" without consulting the rights of an authority higher than his own. And so, too, with François René Gaudenne in Rheims. The promise of obedience that he had sent to the Holy See was quite general, and it clearly slighted Brother Frumence. There is little else to conclude but that the powers granted to the Vicar-general of the Institute by the Popes were officially ignored on French soil, if, indeed, they were completely understood there.

A still more significant and more surprising silence was that of Cardinal Fesch, whose correspondence from October 1803 onward is mute concerning the Brother Vicar. Starting in August of 1803, we find the Cardinal anxious to establish the Brothers on his native island of Corsica: he pestered Father Jauffret to "procure four or five Ignorantins" who would be able not only to manage an elementary school (including "a residence school") in Ajaccio, but also to build themselves a suitable house.[2]

At that time he did not mention the teacher who later on brought the project to a successful conclusion -- Brother Raymond, at the moment dwelling at *San Salvatore in Lauro,* along with Brother Frumence. The thorny conversations occasioned by the up-coming coronation of the "Emperor of the French", first of all as to principle and then as to rubrics, and (after Pius VII's consent was won) as to the Papal journey, preoccupied the ambassador's thought until the eve of his own return to France. It went without saying that the concerns of the Christian Brothers dropped into the background. In this matter the "Cardinal-uncle" was aware of the favorable inclinations of his nephew; he seems to have entrusted the details to the diligence of his friends, Jauffret and Portalis.

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[1] Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 143

[2] Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Correspondence Register no. 1, letter dated 1st of August 1804.

And, then, without the least suggestion of sensationalism, Brother Frumence arrived in Lyons on the 19th of November, a few hours before the Pope. He had left Rome on the 31st of October in one of the embassy's coaches, in the company of Brothers Esdras and Pierre, and after having appointed Brother Guillaume of Jesus Director of *San Salvatore* and Brother Felicissime Director of *Trinita dei Monti*. At Plaisance he was joined by a third travelling companion, Brother Emery whom Brother Esprit-de-Jesus had introduced to him.[3]

While not actually confided to writing, the reasons for this return cannot give rise to the slightest controversy and had actually been intruding themselves for some time. Cardinal Fesch, learning by events, had given up the position adopted by the negotiators in Lyons. There can be no doubt but what Brother Frumence sent him Brother Gerbaud's report and letter. These marvelously crucial texts were finally bearing fruit. In order to restore the Institute to its real foundations in 1804, there was no other solution than that of recognizing the leader whom the Holy See (be a process that was certainly extraordinary although still done in virtue of its sovereign authority) had appointed in 1795.

The question arises why the Archbishop-ambassador had not immediately taken under consideration such strong arguments as had been developed by Sebastian Thomas; why he never mentions them anywhere; and why Brother Gerbaud himself had not been called to Lyons at the same time as his confreres in Rheims and Toulouse. First of all, Brother Frumence's resistance to his transfer from Italy explains, in our judgment, Fesch's silence. In Rome time and reflection were needed to change the Brothers' attitudes, to dilute their biases concerning the "new France" and doubtless, too, concerning their confreres on the other side of the Alps. Once Fesch had been won over to Brother Gerbaud's plan, he convinced Brother Vicar "to dare". By what rhetoric or by what outbursts (appropriate, perhaps, to the Cardinal's temperament) we do not know. But, for both sides, it was a lucky stroke. The modest Brother considered the extent of his responsibilities; and, with divine help, he accepted the burden. Henceforth, his line of action was marked out: while speaking softly, he would act as firmly as circumstances would permit. He would not, on whatever occasion, wave the Brief that had appointed him; but he would consider that investiture as the necessary authority in order patiently and with the gentleness that was his nature, to gather together the members of the former Institute, to make himself known and loved, and to restore the Brothers to the observance of the Rule. The redemption of Lasalle's work lay in the reconquest of its unity.

It must be recognized that the action of the people in Lyons showed quite clearly that they meant to bypass Paris. In the eyes of the Archiepiscopal advisers and the officials of the Commune, Lyons alone was in a position to revive the Brothers' Institute. Their city was so enthusiastic for the education of the common people, so powerfully equipped for educational organization and so rich and religious that it must become the center of the restored Congregation. On this point, in the final analysis, their satisfaction was all the more natural and all the more justifiable in that Brother Pigmenion's Community was the most regular and in that their Archbishop (by reason of his family situation, his political associations, the prominence of his role in relation to the Pope, and the keen interest he showed in the Christian Brothers), could, better than anybody else guarantee the success of the enterprise.

In this way, Brother Gerbaud was forgotten. The "school board", the city, the priests and the most militant Catholics in this southeastern capital had embraced the cause of Christian education. Jacques Juges and his colleagues were under obligation to them and protected by them: all the teachers had to do was to subscribe to decisions made by

[3]Motherhouse Archives, Sommario cronologico delle fondazioni et dei principali fatti riguardanti de Roma. Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 129.

ecclesiastical and civil authorities, even if they did not seem to them totally to conform with Christian Brothers' traditions, to the demands of a healthy autonomy, nor to the wisdom and prudence of the Founder. We can understand their attitude in this especially difficult moment: it was a great thing to be assured of reunion with the combined support of the Church and State, to live, as in the past, as catechists, teachers and religious integrally faithful to their heavenly vocation. The Brothers in Lyons fulfilled their fundamental duty and, for the rest, trusted in Providence.

They sought not only a local restoration, but an early mustering of all the dispersed teachers. Support for this boundless hope came from every quarter: statements from the Minister of Cults, and the draft of a Rule, the materials for which they had supplied the Archbishop's office and which was going to be submitted to the Privy Council. Their reservations could only be expressed timidly; their information, their scanty experience with the "world" did not enable them clearly to anticipate the human obstacles. They were pleased with the cooperation promised by that depositary of Brother Agathon's wisdom, that upright man, intrepid and accurate, Brother Vivien and by the eminent "Capitulant" of 1777, Brother Bernardine of Castres, Carcassonne and Toulouse, whose reputation was unequaled throughout the South. "Sebastian Thomas", the former teacher in Rouen, had hardly emerged from the shadows: he was still considered a part of the new generation, the one which reached its "thirties" at the outbreak of the Revolution. Apart from those who surrounded him, who could suspect the future Superior's talents or predict the influence he would exercise?

Nevertheless, his opinion, misconstrued for over a year, prevailed, because it was never contradicted by events. The report from which he drew his inspiration had declared that the election of a Superior-general presented insuperable obstacles: there no longer existed a "Regime" empowered to convoke a Chapter of the Congregation; votes gathered in some extraordinary way and based on options that might not be free of errors and involuntary injustices ran the serious risk of raising a variety of objections. Before the Institute selected a new leader, it had to be reorganized, a census of its membership had to be made, and its Rule had to be re-established. These conditions could not have been taken for granted. While the delay affecting the approval of the "statutes" might not have halted the operation of the schools, it did hold the future hostage. In its slow and feeble rebirth, the Institute was at the mercy of imperial ambition. It had no supreme Council; it was only painfully collecting the adherence of former members. The Messidor Decree might very well have been dealing with an accomplished fact: it nonetheless suggested the government's suspicions with respect to religious associations, and it had the harsh effect of any sudden reversal. At the end of June 1804, and more acutely in the weeks during which people awaited in vain for oracles from the Privy Council, the foundations on which Cardinal Fesch and his Vicars-general had pretended to build their edifice began to crumble; if plans were not changed, anything that got built would have immediately collapsed.

As a consequence, all true friends of the Institute were compelled to return to the solution proposed by Brother Gerbaud. It had the advantages of simplicity, speed and "fittingness": Brother Vicar-general had received his title and privileges from the Holy See: why strip him of them? There was no doubt but what he had proved his complete selflessness. Did not such behavior in itself manifest his greatness of soul? As an exemplary Brother, he would inspire the respect of his subordinates. His tact, delicacy, patience, his flexibility, combined with his seriousness, and his kindness, which never degenerated into blindness (all natural qualities developed during his Roman experience) enabled him to disentangle the confusion that perplexed Fesch, Father Jauffret, Portalis and Bernard-Charpieux. While the Popes had selected this man, it was the Holy Spirit who had guided their choice. God willed to use Brother Frumence to continue the work of St. John Baptist de

La Salle.

Emperor Napoleon conceded the presence of the Brothers, as Christian teachers, on French soil, while he postponed the final recognition of their association. Since it was dictated by the facts, it seemed normal that the functioning Superior should retain his authority, which had been guaranteed both in Paris and in Lyons by the sincerest obedience. Both cities had sent out early invitations to Brother Agathon's legitimate successor. The wavering and the silence which, elsewhere, were continuing would cease with a word from the Sovereign Pontiff. The Congregation's whole history guaranteed a filial, universal obedience.

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Brother Vicar's arrival in Lyons, in the company of his three "Roman" confreres, was a step of crucial importance along the road to renewal. It coincided with the triumphal journey of Pius VII across a France which, awash in the blood of the butchery of its own making, was just emerging from the ruins. And the coincidence, far from being fortuitous, rather speaks the language of cause and effect. Cardinal Fesch had persuaded Brother Frumence to close out the period of exile and *diaspora* with a significant gesture, just as he had obtained from the Pope the extraordinary visit that seemed to declare the end of the Revolution. His was the double effect of a most productive embassy: the restoration of the Christian Brothers obviously could not be compared, at least at the level of political and religious history, with the coronation of an Emperor. Nevertheless, was the scope of the former event, which practically went unnoticed by contemporaries, so much inferior to the ceremony that took place on the 2nd of December in 1804? After the festivities in Notre Dame, Papal disappointment and grievance grew apace. The Superior of the Institute of the Brothers would also meet with difficulties, suffering and sadness after his very low-key installation in Lyons. But he was readying a vast and splendid future for the apostles of Christian educa−tion. Napoleon did not keep all his promises: within four years there occurred a painful rupture in the relations between the Roman Church and the French Empire. And before ten years were out, the all-powerful Emperor had disappeared, the victim of his own pride, sweeping away with him, if not the enduring works of a genius (like the Concordat, the Civil Code and the structure of the contemporary state), at least the rash products of conquest and despotism. The family members whom he had made kings lost their crowns, and his uncle, the Archbishop, along with "Madame mother" sought refuge with the saintly old man whom Bonaparte had persecuted.

The parallel we are suggesting, then, is not inspired by a simple coincidence of dates: if we think about Providence, it appears less daring, less absurd than superficially informed minds might imagine. On the one hand, there is the marvelous scene, the incomparable spectacle, the epic magnificence of gleaming finery in Louis David's painting in the Louvre. On the other, there is the modest canvas that the Christian Brothers commissioned to commemorate the return of their Superior, which does not even preserve the name of its very ordinary creator: the four former expatriates from Italy, laying aside their pilgrims' staffs and kneeling at the feet of the risen Christ, the Most Blessed Virgin and St. John Baptist de La Salle.[4]There was an aesthetically valueless *ex voto* fastened to the wall of the chapel and a prayer of thanksgiving, uttered first of all in the depths of the heart and then recited half aloud, but amplified as it re-echoed from Lyons to the most distant countries of the world. Keener, more active emotion emerges here than from the recollections of glory evoked by the imperial painter's masterpiece.

[4]This painting is preserved by the Brothers in Lyons. Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 129.

Brothers Frumence, Emery, Esdras and Pierre were like a vanguard to Pius VII's procession. On the 20th of November 1804 the people in Lyons rushed to receive the Holy Father's blessing in St. Jean's Cathedral and in Place Bellecour. People snatched at the intense joy of the moment. After less than a forty hour stay at the Archbishop's residence, His Holiness' and the Cardinal's carriages had to make for Paris.[5]

To the slopes of Fourvière Rome had entrusted the Brothers who had returned to France. How would the civil authority take their homecoming? On November 10th Portalis wrote to the Prefect of the Department of the Rhone: "I am pleased to send you a copy of the decision in which the government authorizes the establishment of the Institute of Christian Doctrine in Lyons." The "decision" was nothing more than the favorable report of December 2 1803, accompanied by Bonaparte's approval. On November 22nd 1803, and therefore at the very moment the Pope was leaving the country, Bureaux Puzy sent copies of the official document "to the mayors of Lyons" and to the Commissioner-general of Police.[6]

The First Consul's consent became, in eleven months' time, the Emperor's consent. Under the counter-signature of the Minister of Cults, it was published to public officials. Was it not, then, the equivalent of a governmental decree? Portalis quite clearly let it be understood that he so considered it. And, under the circumstances in which it was sent to Lyons, the Prefect and the Mayors must have assumed that the Brother Vicar-general's powers no longer presented any difficulty. Brother Frumence could consider his "resignation", whether oral or written, as completely nullified. He kept the title that was given him by the Papal Brief of the 7th of August 1795; he exercised the rights of the Superior of the Christian Brothers until, according to the "Rule", the Congregation could plan, following procedures laid down by the Founder, an election of a Superior-general and several Assistants. Such an action alone would indicate the complete "restoration" of their Society, as Pius VI had at one time declared. But six years were to go by before their invincible hope would be realized.

At that moment, the imperial administration faithfully transmitted the text of Frimaire in the Year XII to the Brother Vicar. Enthusiastically, Bernard-Charpieux served as intermediary: in his letter of the 26th of November 1804, he referred to the document as "his Majesty's Decree", and he, too, regarded it both as approval of the "Brothers' organization ... throughout the Empire" and permission (however implicit) to select a Superior, whom, he had no doubt, "would put into effect arrangements necessary" for the proper functioning of the Brothers.

He wrote to Brother Frumence: "Providence is calling you to a great destiny; you have pledged yourself to recall youth to filial respect, to the love of work, and especially to dedicate themselves to the Head of the government who, overcoming every obstacle, desires to promote peace and happiness in our families, especially among those who, doomed to misfortune, have most need of consolation. Please be his interpreter among unfortunate children; tell them that his paternal concern constantly watches to welcome the poor, to enrich their talents, to make them worthy of his kindness, whatever their name, rank or the class into which they have been born."

The language, rather overlaid with political enthusiasm and middle-class stuffiness, does credit to the charitable heart, the "social sense" and the Christian feelings of the Mayor of the western region. Bernard-Charpieux thought himself lucky to see his adopted city[7]become, "after Rheims, the cradle in which would be trained the invaluable association"

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[5]Latreille, op.cit., pp. 338-9.

[6]Departmental Archives of the Rhone, Series T, no. 8. Cf. Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp.144-5, and Centenaire, pg.50.

[7]He was born in Vienne, in the Dauphine, in 1758.

of De La Salle's followers. He was convinced of an early forwarding of the "Rules", put together under the auspices of "His Holiness" and "His Imperial Majesty", and he concluded with "declarations of his particular esteem" for Brother Frumence.[8]

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The very diligent and devoted administrator spared no pains to offer the Institute's Superior the most suitable residence. Beginning in April 1802, great feats of remodelling were performed at Petit-Collège. These were still in progress between September and November of 1804. They especially involved the complete reconstruction of the roofs. In March 1805 Bernard-Charpieux reported to the Prefect an overall expenditure of 20,996 francs. "I might have interrupted the construction had not the government expressed its interest in favor of an organization founded (with the support of) of His Eminence Cardinal Fesch and which, daily, won new successes. The Commune retained property rights over the land as well as over whatever furnishings it had purchased.[9]

Brother Pigmenion and his Community had the use (without a lease) of this former Jesuit school, starting on the 21st of October 1804. Three months later Brother Frumence joined them and the Archbishop definitively assigned him this residence during the first days of December.[10]

For sixteen years Petit-Collège remained the "Motherhouse" of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.[11]Under the name of Our Lady Help of Christians, it had been used as a mission church in dependence upon "The Trinity", the Jesuit institution situated on the banks of the Rhone (and, in the 19th century transformed into a State secondary school). The buildings, erected in 1630, disappeared in 1726 to be replaced by a huge, well-built structure. After 1762 the Oratorians, followed by the Missionaries of St. Joseph, succeeded the Jesuits, who had been driven out of the Kingdom. In 1792 a "Constitutional Club" held its meetings there. In the following year what was once a school became little more than a prison. In June 1803 a decree of the Consular government (already mentioned) handed the buildings over to the city of Lyons.[12]

The external appearance and the essential interior features have changed very little since the last century. On the lower slopes of the hill which, from the Saone ascends to the Basilica of Our Lady there is a collection of high walls, terraces and roofs, a graceless mass, to which clings the rubble of Garillan Heights. The facade, with its three floors and fourteen windows, pierced by an ornamental door, overlooks a rather squalid little square. Air and light are rather sparingly scattered in the vaulted corridors, the many rooms and the tiny garden and yard which is narrow and deep like a well. There once existed a chapel, which was deconsecrated in 1880 and is no longer recognizable. The finest ornament in this austere dwelling is a monumental stairway which, with its noble panels, occupies the center of the

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[8]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western Mayoralty, Nov. 25th 1804, no. 774. Cf Centenaire, pp. 50-1, Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 144-5.

[9]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D, Western Mayoralty, letters nos. 283, 737, 777, and 845, May 7th 1802, Oct. 22nd, Dec. 4th, and 10th of March 1804.

[10]Essai sur la Maison Mere, pp. 130-1.

[11]After the Motherhouse was moved to Paris, the main Community of Brothers in Lyons retained the use of Petit-Collège until 1843. (Centenaire, pg. 97)

[12]The circular, Centenaire, pg. 51; Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 130.

building and rises to its very top.

The Brothers found here neither the pleasing vistas of Melun nor the conveniences, space and charm of St. Yon. A network of small streets hemmed them in, and the heaped up hovels seemed to stifle them. This ancient residence, which sheltered the Brothers without belonging to them, continued to have (in spite of the repairs that were made) the status of a provisional dwelling.

But it made very little difference to them. They relished the charm of living the common life and of laboring in France at their own spiritual progress and at the work of their Founder. To live a monastic life in the shelter of these walls and under the protection of Our Lady of Fourvière seemed a normal thing. In the 17th century John Baptist de La Salle's followers had known the rigors of "Little La Trappe"" at Vaugirard. And, in the years that followed, want and, indeed, poverty had spared few of their Communities. The élite, gathered together in Lyons after the most cruel of trials, and the Superior, courageously come from Rome with his eminently virtuous companions, did not hesitate to accept a rather harsh confinement, along with the wet and the cold on the banks of the Saone.[13]Brother Maurillian, Brother Emery and Brother Servulus would school both their contemporaries and the youth of the new century in mortification and abnegation, of which Brother Frumence was the first to give an example. And the whole of this was tempered by prayer and the joy of starting anew a genuinely Lasallian existence. Tirelessly they went out to the pressed up against the Cathedral – Rues du Boeuf, Tramassac, Jewry, Saint-Jean, des Trois-Maries, which carved out a ribbon of sky at the top of facades decorated with beautiful sculptures and doors with Gothic or Renaissance panels and curious ensignia. The Brothers traversed the bridges to teach in the southern and northern "sectors" of the city as well.[14]

From Italy Brother Frumence had carried an attractive statue, draped with ample veals; it was an image of the "Immaculate Conception", which he had received through the generosity of Pius VII. He placed the protecting Virgin at the entrance to the suite of rooms occupied by the Community.[15]

Around about this image twenty-eight Brothers, novices and postulants gathered at the end of 1804. Sixteen Brothers, according to a statistic of a few months later, taught classes at St. Jean, St. Louis, St. Polycarp, St. Nizier, St. François, St. Georges, St. Paul and St. Bonaventure. The Brothers at St. Jean's taught their classes at Petit- Collège; while the others performed their tasks in Rues Lanterne, Vieille-Monnaie, de la Gerbe, Confort, des Prêtres, de l'Arbalète and Porte-Charlet. Preparations were in the making to open other schools at St. Just and in the northern sector, which would have brought the number of pupils to about 2,000.[16]

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[13]The following year Brother Jean-François, in a letter to the Prefect, would, of course, say that the buildings, at one time quite dilapidated, since the repairs, had supplied "convenient and healthy quarters". But by that time he was no longer in a situation to complain.

[14]The former Petit-Collège is today the headquarters of the Vth Ward. The circular, Centenaire, pp. 51-2 and the Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 132 (with the map on pg. 133) supplies detailed information, which an on-site visit has enabled us to verify. Vingtrinier, in his book, Le Lyon de nos peres, and Emile Bauman, author of Lyon et Lyonnais ("Gens et Pays de chez nous" publications, J. de Gigord, editor) evokes marvelously the picturesque corners that were the landscape of the lives of the Brothers.

[15]At the time of writing the statue given by the Pope is at Caluire, the novitiate near Lyons. The Brothers of Petit-Collège had inscribed on a nearby wall the following couplet, which is devoid of any literary pretensions*: A la religion soyez toujour fidele Nul ne sera jamais honnete homme sans elle.* (Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 139)

[16]Departmental Archives of the Rhone, T, 8. Statistics prepared for the Prefect by the Director, Brother Jean François, cf. Centenaire, pg. 88.

Among the teachers there were Brothers Justinian of Mary (called Celsus), Pierre-Celestine (Antoine Stablet), former tutors in the school in Vans,[17] Brothers Esdras (Thibaut Maire) and Pierre (André Perron), two natives of Comte and the diocese of Besancon, who had followed the destiny of Brother Frumence, Brother Servulus of whose eventful history we are aware, and Brother Luc (Alexis Ville), who had once been associated with Brother Moniteur in the vicissitudes of the school in St. Malo, and who had emerged from his retreat in Drome.[18] Brother Pigmenion, previously Director in Porte-Charlet, was about to leave for Trévoux, accompanied by a novice, Brother Augustine. The Archbishop's office commissioned the Brothers to restore the Institute in the Department of the Ain. In this way, discreetly but rapidly, the first leader of the Brothers in Lyons faded into the background. Under the authority of the Vicar-general, leadership over the Community was assumed by Brother Jean François (François Garcin), who was seventy-four years of age at the time.

The number of Brothers at the Congregation's headquarters grew rapidly. In 1808 the total rose to fifty-three, of whom fifteen were novices.[19]Twenty-one teachers were then employed in the schools. Except for Brother Barthélemy[20]and Brother Servulus, they were "less than forty years of age", and therefore recruited during the post-revolutionary period. The older Brothers (and some of the younger ones) functioned as infirmarians, launderers, cooks, tailors and porters. Among these were Brothers Paulian and Odo, and the man who inspired the vocation of the future Superior-general, Philippe (André Galet), Brother Lauren, whom his famous pupil likened to the Egyptian hermit, Paul the Simple, "the disciple of the great Antony", because of the radiant peace which never left him even in the monotonous existence of the laundry, or in the midst of the most obscure tasks. Old men, like Brothers Julien of Mary, Dorotheus, Decorosus and Palemon meditated on their approaching ends in definitive retirement. Members of the Institute who took the habit during the generalate of Brother Agathon, at this time, made up hardly a third of the personnel in the Motherhouse. However, it is well to point out that several Brothers from the Agathon years had left Lyons to open Communities of which we shall speak in the next volume.

A normal "Regime" was not re-established. Brother Frumence administered and ruled with the assistance of three Brothers of his immediate entourage: the Director, Brother Jean François, Brother Emery, "the master of pupils", and Brother Pierre-Celestine, when the latter succeeded Brother Vivien to the office of bursar. (We shall presently return to the role of Franéois René Gaudenne.) Brother Ambrose of Jesus (Joseph Favre), who was only twenty years of age, functioned as secretary to this small counsel. Brother Vicar-general's right-hand man continued to be Brother Emery (Jean-Baptist Die), who had arrived at maturity of years and experience and at a flowering of virtue that had become the admiration of his Superior, his rivals and his novices.[21]

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[17]See above, pg. 256.

[18]See above, pp. 319-320.

[19]Departmental Archives of the Rhone, T, 8, personnel list as of the 16th of August 1808. (Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, File JFb-1.

[20]Barthélemy Garnier, called Brother Antipas at the time he took the habit in 1770; born in Marcolles, diocese of Viviers, on the 26th of November, 1748; he made his final vows in 1779 and, from 1810 to 1812 he was assistant to Brother Gerbaud.

[21]Relations mortuaires, Vol. I, pp. 155-7. Centenaire, pp. 95-6. Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 139. See above, pg. 335.

Two letters from the offices of Bernard-Charpieux and Sain-Rousset, respectively,[22] inform us concerning the legal situation and the educational endeavors of the Brothers in Petit-Collège after Brother Frumence's arrival. The officials in Lyons had replied to the well-known text of Fourcroy (Director of public education) dated the 12th of December 1804. While we must postpone the analysis of it until we take an overall view of the Congregation, still, both logic and chronology suggest that we include here those parts of the text that relate to the "Motherhouse".

The twenty-eight Brothers, wrote Bernard-Charpieux's associate on December 21st "have no other Rule than to remind the young...of filial respect...and work, and especially to inspire them with a love for the government and of its august leader. They propose...in order to stir up emulation and, by way of reward, to establish a special school in which drawing and mathematics will be taught (tuition-free, of course) to the children who are the best behaved and who can profit from it. The Brothers' salaries will be paid from city revenues..."[23]

The Assistant for the southern sector recalled on the 31st of December 1804[24] that the teachers were appointed by "the administrative Office" which was presided over by the Prefect. "Until the time the report presented to the government on the 2nd of December and approved by it on the 3rd of the same month had become known in Lyons, the Brothers of Christian Doctrine have functioned only as private teachers. Today, they are housed together in the buildings of the former College of Our Lady...They make no promises or vows:[25] they are simple laymen, united in community, who are dedicated to the education of the poor class among the people...The subjects to which their instruction is limited are reading, writing and the principal rules of calculation...They may not, under any pretext whatsoever, teach either Latin nor the higher sciences, nor any foreign language, whether living or dead." In the final paragraph it is pointed out that the rules have been sent to the Minister of Cults.[26]

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Thus, what was intended to be temporary endured. Cardinal Fesch, irritated, wanted to take things into his own hands. This is what lay behind a huge archiepiscopal correspondence which, beginning in December of 1804, extended into April of 1805.

The first letter is dated the 30th of December 1804. For four weeks after Napoleon's coronation, Fesch prolonged his stay in Paris, where he maintained contact with the Mayors of Lyons, who had themselves been guests at the ceremony in Notre Dame. He wrote to Portalis: "I know of your zeal to reestablish the Brothers and Sisters of the Christian Schools; I know that you have earlier approved of their (legal) existence and that their Rules are in the hands of the Privy Council. I will now beseech you to hasten the report, because it is crucial that the Rules be approved, so that the two foundations may grow and become each day more

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[22] The central Town Hall in Lyons was not established until September 22, 1805 in conformity with the Law of March 1804. At that time Fay Sathonay became Mayor of the city; Bernard- Charpieux and Sain-Rousset were among his five associates.(Municipal Archives of Lyons, 4th Register of Counsel minutes.)

[23] Departmental Archives of the Rhone, T, 8. Cf. Chevalier, op.cit., pp. 153-4 and Centenaire, pg. 89. The "Western mayor's" letter bears the signature of his assistant, Gleize.

[24] 10th Nivose.

[25] Obviously, the bureaucrat was here paying lip service to the official fiction

[26] Departmental Archives of the Rhone, T, 9. Cf. Chevalier, pp. 154-6 and Essai sur la Maison Mere, pg. 140. The letter is signed by the assistant, Rambaud-Brosse. Mayor Sain-Rousset "was one of the four courageous citizens who, on the 28th of December 1793, dared to appear at the Convention to ask that Collot Herbois be fired and that the massacre cease".(Centenaire, pg. 31)

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valuable in the education of the children of the people...I dare hope that the Mayors of Lyons, who are still here for a few days, will be able to bring to the city the assurance that the Institutes we are talking about can operate in the spirit of their Rules, as sanctioned by the government.[27].

Regnault Saint-Jean d'Angely, President of the Home Section of the Privy Council, thereupon received the following letter on the 6th of January 1805: "You preside...over a section in which the Rules of the Brothers and Sisters of the Christian Schools in Lyons must first be discussed. I take a keen interest in these two teaching societies, whose only concern is the children of the people, which I know to be perfectly conformed to the views of the government. Their Rules are in the hands of the Privy Council; the Minister of Cults has so informed me. I would be obliged to you to hasten the report as much as possible. It is crucial for the future of the institutions that the Brothers and Sisters have in Lyons that these Rules be approved by the time the mayors depart this city...(and they) must (leave Paris) in two weeks.[28]

Regnault asked for an explanation. He had only a summary of the Rules of June-July 1804 and, besides wanting to know the document in its entirety as Father Jauffret wrote it, he wished to see the text of the primitive Rule. Obviously, the Office of Cults, with the best of intentions, was attempting to reduce the Vicar-general's text to the barest essentials. The Cardinal became aware of the annoyances that can arise from a project that is clumsily introduced. In order to come to the aid of the Institute, he abandoned his *imperatoria brevitas* and embarked upon some rather muddle-headed comments, several of which make rather short work of the historical truth. On January 13th[29] he replied:

"...The Brothers, founded by a Canon in Rheims named La Sale (sic) strictly speaking did not have any other Rule than the Bull of Clement XIII, I believe, or Benedict XIV (sic)... There are 14 or 15 articles in the Bull, which I have not seen, and which are inserted into the Rules that have been given to you. The Brothers also direct their own internal affairs according to a rule given to them by their founder. In this Rule there are only a few articles on the duties of Brothers toward God, the children, toward their Superiors and a few maxims concerning prudence and modesty. It would be possible to get a hold of this Rule; but it wouldn't add anything to the knowledge I have given you of it, since it is extremely naive. There is not a single hidden motive in it. I do not have it to hand, and it is difficult to find a copy. The Brothers no longer use it personally since they published some volumes on the Duties of Brothers, in which the articles of the Rule are watered down. But note that for them these books were like reminders...They read them in order to be renewed in the spirit of their vocation.

If Fesch had really intended accurately to inform Saint-Jean d'Angely, he would have consulted Brother Gerbaud. He wouldn't have been mistaken about the name of the Pope who signed the Bull of Approbation. And he wouldn't have so lightly spoken of the Rules worked out by St. John Baptist de La Salle nor included among them "The Collection of Different Short Subjects",[30]not to mention the "Duties of a Christian", which are more or less deliberate confusions. In a few months the Prefect of the Loiret and the Mayor of Orleans,

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[27]National Archives, F 19, 6285

[28]Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Register of Correspondence, no. 1. Cf. Centenaire, pg. 69.

[29]Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, Register cited.

[30]Actually, in 1783 it had become a "Treatise on the Obligations of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". (See Vol. II of the present work, pg. 471.)

with a view to understanding the Institute as it really was, would be able to obtain information from Brother Liberius concerning the fundamental text of the Rule and to study it carefully in the hope of reorganizing a Community in their constituency.[31]

Joseph Fesch, however, seemed to care very little for the institution in Gros Caillou, which had eluded his influence. On the other hand, he strove to do little else than to supply the least dangerous commentary on Jauffret's essay, since at the time the publication of this writing seemed inevitable. Fesch continued:

"I am sending you, enclosed, a copy of the Rules that (the Brothers) have settled on in Lyons and from which the Minister of Cults has drawn the ones he has submitted to you. In these more developed Rules you will find: 1) all the constitutional articles included in the primitive Rule; and 2) all the equally constitutional articles added by the General Chapters.

"Except that the promise of stability in the Institute has been reduced by being limited to a temporary commitment. In former times the Brothers might, after their twenty-fifth year and a lengthy stay in the Society, make perpetual vows. But their Director or their Superior-general might at any time dispense them.[32].The vow were: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience.

"When, in about 1780, the Sorbonne was consulted about the nature of these vows, it declared that they were not solemn; thus, the Brothers of the Christian Schools never made such vows, and, in changing the vows to yearly promises that are always free, they were not changing their constitution -- all the more so since I am very strong in the belief that it was only by later decisions of their General Chapters that they were allowed to commit themselves for more than three years.[33]

"Since you have before you the Rules as revised in Lyons, it is for you to judge whether it would not be just as easy to have them approved as they are, without abridging them, although basically the articles as submitted to you say everything, and articles of Rules cannot be overly abridged."

The Archbishop saw that he was forced to bolster his argument with documents from Lyons. However, he did not disguise the fact that he would have preferred that the Privy Council examine only the Minister of Cult's summary.

Without lingering any further in dangerous territory, he wracked his brain to put his correspondent in possession of the facts. He boasted of the Brothers' "sobriety" -- as witness "a report...to the Constituent Assembly"[34]--their complete circumspection in "matters of State" as well as in matters "concerning families", and he enlarged upon "the good management" of the house in Lyons, the favorable transformation that his diocese experienced in the habits of its young people since the arrival of the Christian teachers. Finally, he vouched for his protegés' "principles" and for their political loyalty.

Other paragraphs have to do with the Sisters of St.Charles, for whom, as for the Brothers, Fesch was seeking "a speed up" of the report. And, in his conclusion, he could not resist lamenting once again the "delays" and the "details" involved in the writing of the Rules.

On January 16th 1805 he sent the original text (up to then in the keeping of the Ministry of Cults) to President Regnault.[35]And on January 19th, in thanking the Petit-Collège

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[31]Departmental Archives of the Loiret, IR 19-1. J. Ph. Maret's letter to Crignon-Desormeaux on the 27th of May, 1804 to return to him the copy of "The Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" loaned to the mayor in the previous February-March by M. Cendre; and Crignon-Desor−meaux's letter to the "private teacher", no. 14 Rue Ange on June 7th

[32]Another error, but the argument is *ad hominem*

[33]The same comment.

[34]The allusion is to one or other of the reports analyzed in Chapter I of the First Part of the present volume

[35]Archives of the Archbishopric, Register cited.

Community, which had sent him New Years greetings,[36]he announced to Brother Frumence the impending dispatch of the approval of the Rules, asked the Brothers for their continued prayers, and wished them the "graces and blessings that the Lord, in His Mercy, reserves for his faithful servants".[37].

The unction was thoroughly ecclesiastical, and the words were those of a kind pastor, but in Paris, the fact was that the project had hardly budged. Bernard-Charpieux, having returned to the Rhone, wrote on the 13th of February to his Archbishop, whose sojourn in Paris seems to have gone beyond the Mayor's expectations: "...With an indescribable impatience I await the imperial decree which, with the advice of the Privy Council, must decide in this city (Lyons) the style of education for four or five thousand individuals of the poor class. Perhaps you have too many important things to do to be able to sacrifice a few minutes on this project; but might not Father Jauffret, under your leadership, be able to speed up a decision, the purpose of which is to inspire attractive youngsters to the practice of a morality that has been too long misunderstood?..."[38]

"If it depended upon me", replied Fesch on the 22nd of February, "all your hopes for the public good would be instantly satisfied...I have not lost sight of the School Brothers".[39].

As a matter of fact, on the 13th of February he had repeated his appeal to Regnault Saint-Jean d'Angely. At that time he had pressed for a simplification of the inquiry: "I beseech you...to limit yourself to the summary of the Rules and Regulations, as M. Portalis presented them to you with my approval, if you think that the report on them should be more quickly terminated and the discussion in the Privy Council ended sooner. I leave all of it to your wisdom.[40]. On the 9th of March there was a new appeal: "...You should expect that by Tuesday (the 12th) you would be able to end this business. I would be obliged to you for speeding up the conclusion; the interests of the two Institutes (Brothers and Sisters) require it and lay the greatest stress upon it. The common good, and especially the common good of my diocese, dictates it."[41]

The Prefect, Bureaux Puzy, received the following report submitted to him in April by the western mayor: "...Seeking the incorporation of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine and that they might be authorized to elect a superior, conformably with the report presented by His Excellency, the Minister of the Interior and approved by His Imperial Majesty. This Institute has obtained the greatest success; nearly 5,000 children[42]learn, the elements of writing and calculation, tuition-free; and they are raised in the principles of religion, morality and virtue; soon the organization, controlled by a superior subject to a higher religious authority for spiritual matters and to the civil authority for administrative regulations, will offer the prospect, in the ten schools which exist throughout the city, of ten workshops, as the source of prosperity for our manufactures."[43]

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[36]For the year 1805. The Gregorian calender was practically, while still not legally, restored.

[37]Archives of the Archbishopric, Register cited

[38]Municipal Archives of Lyons, D. Western Townhall, no. 817. Bernard-Charpieux did not fail to add that these youths must "learn to cherish and respect the head of government to whom (they) owed such a benefit." His letter also contains some curious information concerning a portrait of the Cardinal that the mayor had undertaken to offer to the Brothers in Lyons and that "Mr. Appiani" had promised to send "within forty days".

[39]Archives of the Archbishopric, Register cited

[40]Letter dated Feb. 14th (24th Pluviose). Same source

[41]Letter dated March 7th (18th Ventose). Same source.

[42]This figure certainly includes both boys and girls in the elementary schools.

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Unfortunately, these combined efforts ran into opposition in the form of hostility in the Privy Council. We do not know in what terms or in what way the refusal of approbation was couched, because the events of May 1871 brought about the destruction of a part of the administrative archives of the Empire.[4445] The fact alone remains beyond a doubt. And furthermore there is confirmation for it in one of Cardinal Fesch's letters.

We refer to a letter, or, rather to the reprimand, of the 20th of April 1805, in which His Eminent Highness, having returned to his diocese, took sharp issue with Father Jauffret, who was at the time "Vicar-general of the Grand Chaplaincy -- i.e., a man of some importance in the Court of Napoleon I, the right arm of the "Grand Chaplain", who was "the Cardinal-uncle". The latter refers to an unfortunate undertaking by a priest, of whom no physical trace remains but upon whom Fesch's accusations throws a good deal of light.

Having blamed his Vicar-general for numerous "failures" and frequent "blunders", the Archbishop continues: "The same thing happened in Paris. I asked you to speak to Regnault Saint-Jean d'Angely and you wrote to him. "It was your Jauffret", the Emperor told me, "who spoiled your plan for the 'Ignorantins'; his letter was printed and distributed to the members of the Privy Council. From his letter they thought that somebody was trying to mislead the Counsel."

"What do you have to say to that? You took something that was quite simple, and you made a mystery out of it, and you "blew" it. In the future, stay away from the "Ignorantins" and the Daughters of Doctrine...[46]

The poor priest, surely more clumsy than culpable, had drawn attention to his mistakes of the previous year by attempting to retrieve them. He sought, without difficulty apparently, to convince Regnault to smuggle out the file containing the imprudent "Rules" and submit to the Privy Council only a harmless abridgment, perhaps the quotations prepared by the Minister of Cults. A conversation would have been harmless; whereas a few lines in writing became a capital offense. Jauffret fell into the trap by trusting in a bureaucrat who was more hostile than the priest suspected, and extremely crafty. Somebody cried fraud. Voltairians might have bawled loudly about "Tartuffian" tactics and seized joyously upon this excellent opportunity to harass the "Bigots", the "advocates of the Concordat" and the partisans (including Gallicans, like Portalis) of religious restoration. The Emperor (whose politics and mental reservations inclined him to humor the "philosophical" party), in spite of his favorable attitude toward the Brothers, was satisfied merely to register the blow, but not without grumbling. The Cardinal spoke of his unhappiness in very loud tones indeed. The people in Lyons were very likely cut to the quick. But they would have been mistaken to have been discouraged: a compromised future was not necessarily a hopeless one. Indeed, Father Jauffret rapidly righted himself after this terrible dressing-down. In spite of the prohibitions ab irato, he continued to serve the cause of the Institute with undiminished dedication and with even greater success. But, then, the last word belonged, not to the Counsel, but, at the right moment, to Napoleon.

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The Pope's second passage through Lyons just at this time gave satisfactory assurance and consolation to the Brother Vicar-general, to the Community of Petit-Collège and to all

[44] Essai cited, pg. 147.

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[46] Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, "Diocesan Correspondence of His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons", notebook included in the Register of Correspondence, no. 1.

the members and friends of the Lasallian Congregation. Having left Paris without obtaining from the man he had crowned the abrogation of certain constitutional articles and the integral restitution of the Papal States, Pius VII was in a position to appreciate the depths of human ingratitude and the extent of imperial ambition.[47]He was also thinking about (a genuinely sweet revenge) the revival of the faith, and the attachment of French Catholics to the Papacy. His return journey, which turned into a real triumph, had none of the haste of the first stage of the trip. The kneeling, the emotion and the happiness of the crowds were far more meaningful than any honors or speeches. After the fall of the "Ancien Regime" and after the collapse of the "Civil Constitution", the ancient Christian land showed that it was "Roman". The Concordat, which highlighted the Pope's spiritual power, found its strength in the blood of martyrs and in the voluntary sacrifices made by the church and the faithful between 1791 and 1801.

De La Salle's followers, from the very beginning of the Revolution, had given proof of their orthodoxy. Confiscation of their property, the dispersal of Communities, imprisonment, exile and torture, they suffered it all for the faith. During these days of 1805 they sealed their filial obedience to, and testified their indefectible love for, the Vicar of Christ.

Pius VII had come to bless their chapel in Lyons on the 16th of April, two days after his arrival in the city.[48]On the morning of that Thursday in Easter Week he had celebrated Mass in the Cathedral and distributed the Communion to 1200 people. Among the Brothers who assisted at this service were François René Gaudenne and Pierre Blanc.

In February Brother Bernardine had been asked to appear at Petit-Collège. A "resolution" of the Brothers in Toulouse, dated the 24th of that month, states that "their Superior" had "to respond to Brother Frumence's command"; the journey would be "paid out of common funds". Brother Edward of Mary would exercise interim power, and his colleagues promised not to challenge it.[49]

Brother Vivien was dividing his time between Lyons and Rheims. In a letter addressed from Rheims on the 30th of August to the Minister of Cults, he writes that he "had spent eleven months in the city of Lyons".[50]This statement is identical with the one found in a voucher drawn up at Petit-Collège a few weeks earlier. However, the second document adds a detail: Brother Vivien had spent 500 francs in his travels, since he had journied to Lyons "five times".[51]

In December of 1804 he functioned as treasurer at the Institute headquarters: in this capacity he gave Bernard-Charpieux's associate, Gleize, information which the latter transmitted on December 22 1804 to the Prefect of the Rhone.[52] At the very same time Brothers Mark, Narcissus and Dizier wrote to the city government of Rheims: "Since Brother Vivien's class was in a vacation situation by reason of his absence and his long sojourn in

[47]Napoleon I did not wait for Pius VII to leave; on the 10th of April 1805 he was in Lyons and continued on his journey to crown himself king of Italy in Milan.

[48]The event is commemorated by the following inscription: "On the 18th of April 1805 His Holiness Pius VII blessed this chapel in the Motherhouse of the Brothers of the Christian Schools." (Essai sur la Maison Mere , pg. 135)

[49]Lemandus, op.cit., pg. 165.

[50]National Archives, F-19, 6285.

[51]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 1.

[52]Letter cited above, pg. 571.

Lyons, we have taken on Brother Denis Delibessart to teach that class, and Brother Laurence Toye as well. (The latter as a replacement for "Citizen Roger", who had left during the recent vacation.) Brother Denis substituted as a teacher for François René Gaudenne on the 23rd of December.[53]

However, the Director of the schools in Champagne did not wish to detach himself from the institution which he cherished; and he returned to guide it during the course of the winter. It was at that time that, along with Mayor Tronsson-Lecomte, he prepared to move the Brothers in Rheims into the former Carmelite convent and started a campaign in favor of tuition-free education which, in May of 1805, seemed to be on the point of succeeding.[54]

Another journey to the Rhone prevented him from staying with this task to the end. Cardinal Fesch personally recalled him in an extremely urgent letter, dated the 3rd of March 1804: "You must be in Lyons on the 20th of March so as to be here when His Holiness passes through. I am demanding this of you, as much in my own name as in that of your Vicar-general and of His Holiness himself, who believes you, at this time, to be necessary to the Motherhouse novitiate." The Sub-Prefect and Tronsson-Lecomte had also received from His Eminence directions that did not admit of discussion. All Brother Vivien had to say to his fellow-citizens was that "he would soon make it up to them", either by his presence or by sending some members of his religious family, but especially "by cooperating to establish the institution itself which would perpetuate their schools".[55]

Thus, in the Spring of 1805 the "Superior" from Toulouse and the head of the institution in Rheims stood side-by-side with Brother Frumence. For several years each of them had played primary roles. They had organized their schools in complete independence; "after God", they were "the captains of their ships". Bernard-Charpieux had called them together the first time to consult with them on the question of the restoration of the Institute. That was the period during which it was assumed that the Vicar-general's "resignation" was an accomplished fact, when people strove to believe in an early approbation of the "Rules" and when the problem of a new government for the "Society" was being discussed. It is certain that both of these Brothers, in their mind and conscience, wanted to work for the "reunion" of the Brothers, for the observation of the time-honored Rule, and for the restoration of the "Regime". They possessed the required qualities and a sufficiently large "spirit of faith" to bring about the return of the senior Brothers who were dispersed throughout the Eastern and Southern regions.

But what attitude would they adopt toward their confreres who had come from Rome? They do not seem to have re-established the ties with them which, in 1802 and 1803, had existed between Brother Frumence, on the one hand, and Brothers Pigmenion and Gerbaud on the other. On Pius VII's first visit to Lyons they faced an unexpected situation; they were able to conclude from a rapid analysis that Brother Vicar's authority extended only until the Privy Council made its decision on the Rules. The defeat suffered by Father Jauffret brought about a profound change of minds: until further notice, Brother Frumence must remain Superior.

Were the two great restorers convinced of this? In responding to the "command" fired off from Petit-Collège, Brother Bernardine acted under obedience. Brother Vivien came in

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[53] Municipal Archives of Rheims, no. 361. These documents do not seem to have been known to the author of the article on Brother Vivien in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933.

[54] Arnould, op.cit., pp. 169-73 and Chevalier, pp. 205-6. We shall return to these questions in our fourth volume.

[55] The 5th of March 1805; Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons; Correspondence Register no. 1. Cf. Centenaire, pg. 95.

response to an order from the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyons. However, it should be noted that Fesch wrote that he was speaking "in the name of" Brother Frumence, at the same time as in the name of the Church. The jurisdiction of the Superior who had been designated by the Holy See could not have been more solidly based.

In the Motherhouse Archives there is an ancient note, unfortunately anonymous and dateless: "Brother Bernardine ...and Brother Vivien claimed that Brother Frumence must be replaced by a Superior elected according to Rule ...Informed of their plan, Cardinal Caprara, *legate a latare*, ordered them to leave Petit-Collège within twenty-four hours, under pain of excommunication. Brother Bernardine submitted immediately ...Brother Vivien returned to Rheims.[56]

It is, of course, right to grant this document no more than a qualified acceptance. Perhaps what it had a hold of was only the echo of an ill-founded rumor. And there is nothing to prove that the Directors of Toulouse and Rheims had ever incurred the threat of "excommunication". In any case, beginning in 1805, we never find Brother Bernardine in any but a posture of perfect obedience. He returned to his Community at the end of May;[57]his "resolutions" were drawn up in accord with the Brother Vicar-general; and his correspondence with Lyons continued, until his death (on the 29th of August 1808), on a footing of the most respectful cordiality.

Brother Vivien's activities need a more careful analysis. In spite of what the anonymous chronicler writes, François René Gaudenne did not return immediately to Rheims. Besides his letter to the Minister of Cults and his travel vouchers there are other evidences of his long sojourn in the Rhone. We refer not only to an "inventory of objects belonging to the chapel of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Lyons, acquired and received by Brother Vivien"--a document which seems to antedate the events of April[58]-- but to a "statement of accounts", signed on the 3rd of June by M. Paul, school administrator, and by Brothers Frumence, Pigmenion, Pierre-Celestine and by the treasurer in charge: the latter, whose name was Brother Vivien, states that he relinquishes to the house, "as a sign of his devotedness" 353 livres, and 11 sols "out of his own pocket".[59] A little later (and on the same piece of paper on which he describes the length of his stay at the Motherhouse) he lists the gifts that his personal funds enabled him to make to the Petit-Collège Community: "painting for the refectory", "pillow for dear Brother Vicar", a canvas representing St. Francis of Paula's apparition to St.Francis de Sales, "for the church". Besides, he paid fifty francs to have recovered "a case containing the securities of the Society".[60]

The details indicate a man ever careful to preserve a record of his activities. They also show him to have been a man with one foot in the lay-world, managing, it would seem, rather large sums of money without thinking of himself as strictly bound by the vow of poverty.
It remains to be seen up to what point he meant to observe obedience. The publication of his accounts occurred just before he returned to Rheims. Writing from that city to Portalis on the

[56]Motherhouse Archives, 24 AG-2.

[57]Lemandus, pg. 165.

[58]Motherhouse Archives, File HA p-1. This inventory is marked "Received", dated the 20th of February 1805.

[59]Motherhouse Archives, file HA p 1.

[60]Ibid.

30th of August,[61] he represented himself as "the restorer, at (his own) expense", of the Christian Brothers in "the ancient cradle of the Order". He was asked, he writes, "to reorganize the education of poor youths" in various places. But he refused "to undertake anything on his own", since he was "under the jurisdiction of the Vicar-general, who resides in Lyons"; and, furthermore, doubting "whether the Brothers... are recognized today as in the past, whether they constitute a corporation", or whether they are merely associated as teachers in primary education, or "whether they can wear the habit they once wore, so as to command the respect of children, and (finally) whether the schools in Rheims, Lyons, Toulouse and Chartres...are merely tolerated..."

Such a private letter to a Minister of the Empire is certainly the act of a man who, without believing himself released from all dependence upon Brother Frumence, meant to preserve his freedom and make his own decisions about the extent of his responsibilities. He delegated no one to supervise the operation in Rheims, or to arrange with the civil administration for the good order of his schools or for the special interests of his personnel.

He told Portalis that he would wait for his reply before throwing himself into a new activity, the site of which would be Paris. Here we touch upon a point of history which up to now has been obscure. The Institute's historians are in disagreement regarding the time, and indeed, regarding the reality of this foundation.[62].But, in this connection, there are unquestionable documents which inform us about a Brother Vivien who dealt with his religious obligations in a singularly offhanded way. On the 7th of September 1805 (therefore, during the week following Brother Vivien's contact with the government) Brother Vicar-general signed an "obedience" commissioning François René Gaudenne "to open a school" in Paris, in the parish of St. Louis-en-l'Ile.[63]. There is no evidence that this institution took shape before 1808.[64] It is only in that year that two documents reveal Brother Vivien's presence in the capital: on the 22nd of August, the Vicars-general administering the diocese when the See was unoccupied, testified that this Brother was "in communion" with them; and there is a "certificate of registration for the so-called ecclesiastical pension" granted Mr.Gaudenne, a resident of the Department of the Seine, an income of 285 francs as a "former congregationist", payable as of the 22nd of June 1808.[65]

The man who organized the schools in Rheims seems, then, to have only gradually decided to leave Champagne. This gesture of submission was, however, accomplished in the strangest way. Brother Vivien left Paris on his own initiative. On the 4th of October 1809 Brother Frumence wrote to the pastor of St. Louis of his "extreme surprise": the Director of the school had "left without an obedience"! People didn't even know "where he was". "Perhaps" he returned to the Community in Rheims, the Brother Vicar-general conjectured in a letter he wrote the same day to Brother Gerbaud.[66]Symptoms of insubordination had been noted for several months. In January the Superior of the Institute declared sadly to Brother Gerbaud that "one no longer knows how to advise" Brother Vivien, who was at the time asking for a change of Communities. "Very well," Brother Frumence replied, "you tell me

[61] Letter cited; National Archives F-19, 6285.

[62] The circular Centenaire (pp. 95 & 99) situates in about 1808 and assigns to this period the appointment of Brother Vivien to the post of Director of the St. Louis school. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July 1933, pg. 225 rejects the suggestion that the Brother left Rheims before 1818

[63] Motherhouse Archives, File HA p 1

[64] This, as we have just pointed out, is the opinion reported in the circular Centenaire; cf. Chevalier, op.cit., pg. 293.

[65] Motherhouse Archives, file cited.

[66] Ibid., BE a, Brother Frumence' File, drafts of correspondence, third notebook, nos. 172 & 173

how I should act!"[67]

As it was assumed in Lyons, Gaudenne, without any more ado and on his own authority, resumed command over the schools and the Community which owed their existence to him. "We can no longer count on the Brothers in Rheims" were the Superior's last words in this painful matter.[68]The prophecy proved justified. It would be Brother Gerbaud's task, after his election to the generalate, to re-establish order and finally bring Brother Vivien back into line. Later on we shall study the circumstances, the vicissitudes and the end of what the best qualified historians have called "the Rheims schism". But we had to make some chronological anticipations in order to disentangle the complex role of one of the principal workers in the restoration of the Christian Brothers, examine the charges leveled against him, penetrate the shadows that veiled his soul, and, thereby, point out the obstacles that faced Brother Frumence upon his return from Rome.

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The Revolution continued under the Empire. In fact, that cataclysm began a cycle of history (who can deny it?) destined, perhaps, to come to an end only after many centuries. Napoleon I had quite rightly proclaimed himself the heir to 1789, the executor of the last will and testament of the Constituent Assembly and the Convention in Europe and throughout the world. It is necessary, however, to appoint limits to the plan and the accounts of the present volume, which, since in our overall schema, it deals with the period that is specifically "revolutionary", we shall conclude it at the end of 1805, the last, after all, of the "calendar" with its anti-Christian origin that was invented by the partisans of 1793. On the 1st of January 1806 time was officially calculated as beginning with the birth of the Redeemer, while the months and the days resumed their traditional names. The Emperor of the French laid aside his "Republican" disguise, aspired to found a dynasty like that of the Carolingians and the Capetians, and, through the influence of genius, military victory and institutions, thrust himself upon of the affections of his people and the reverence of his fellow monarchs.

On the one hand, initiatives involving primary education, the opening of numerous schools and the growth of Lasallian Communities, and, on the other hand, the role assigned by Napoleon to the Brothers gradually restored under the authority of their Vicar- general, the place that the master of the French meant to reserve for these religious teachers in his system of domination, the relations of the reorganized Institute with the cities, with the "imperial university", and finally the total restoration of the masterwork of St. John Baptist de La Salle after the death of Brother Frumence, after the "approval" of the Rule resolutely confirmed by the civil arm, and after the election of Brother Gerbaud as Superior-general -- such is the cluster of events the examination of which will follow immediately upon the present volume.

We scarcely touch upon the preface to a transitional period, a period which was still critical. We move, not without dull stretches and not without stumbling, from night to dawn, from "diaspora" to pleas for return, and from persecution to an ever precarious peace. In these moments during which the Holy Founder's Institute was returning to life, Catholic France was itself emerging from a crisis whose beginnings had, distantly, preceded the tragic episodes of the Revolution: the sensuality and skepticism of the 18th century had poisoned

[67]Motherhouse Archives, ibid., summaries of written letters, second book, no. 318, Jan. 21st 1809 and no. 458, May 24th 1809. The second document adds that since Brother Vivien "was married it is hardly fitting that he be placed at the head of a Community:. We have found no proof for this statement, which squares rather poorly with all that we otherwise know about François René Gaudenne. Perhaps the allusion is to a "marriage of convenience", contracted during the Terror to avoid denunciation?

[68]Motherhouse Archives, ibid. Letter dated the 4th of October 1809, to Brother Gerbaud.

the body; and souls were not healed, even after the salutary reactions that had followed the Terror of 1793. Convalescence looked difficult, weakness persisted, and relapses continued to be a subject of anxiety. Even the people who, in many areas, had in the past maintained their faith and morals tended to imitate the example of libertine aristocrats and the unbelieving middle-class; the upcoming generation, during the ten-years of anti-religious politics, of intellectual and moral profligacy, had "forgotten Christianity".[69]Napoleon's "Grand Army" was, with some individual exceptions, a mob of poor humanity, devoid of all solid hope, that died on battle fields, in ambulances and hospitals without the ministry of a priest.

The ignorance, indocility, licentiousness, the "savagery" of children left to their instincts frightened public authorities at the time of the Consulate; we have provided some unexceptionable evidence on this subject.[70] These cries of alarm revealed that people had become conscious of the evil and that they were seeking a remedy. The French in 1802 felt the need of religion. Along with Chateaubriand, they rediscovered the beauties of their churches, the poetry of prayer, the splendor of the sacred services, the marvelous "fittingness" of dogma and the decalogue, and the eternal vitality of a Gospel that consoles, civilizes and purifies. The Parisian newspapers in their columns printed "edifying accounts of first Communions".[71] Soon François Guizot was observing: "The grandparents were unbelievers; the mothers and fathers believed that they shouldn't be believers and perhaps did have in their hearts a religious disposition, which, however, was not the product of any firm conviction."[72]

Such was the social environment in which the Brothers of the Christian Schools had to work. In this huge and urgent task they were not alone. We have mentioned their cooperation with Father Varin, with Father Chaminade and with the clergy in Lyons. At this time, the Fathers of the Faith, in spite of official suspicions, were organizing both their preaching and their secondary schools; Father Rauzin assembled his "French Missionaries" in Lyons. In the Departments of the Ardeche and the Upper Loire, where the work of the Christian Brothers would once again gain ground, the Venerable Mother Rivier preached retreats to women. In Marseille, Father Allemand, with the devout cooperation of a few commercial employees, restored the "Youth Work" that had been founded in 1729. In Paris, Mr. Iautard, for another sort of youth, laid the groundwork for the future Stanislaus College. Prayers, which once again arose from cloisters, contributed their assistance to apostolic endeavors; Mme. Soyecourt bought the buildings on Rue Vaugirard, where the September martyrs had fallen and where her own father had been a prisoner, and there her Carmelites took the place of the Carmelites of former days. Sisters dedicated themselves to the education of young girls, just as the Christian Brothers gave themselves to the instruction of boys: not only those who had succeeded to the inheritances of St. Vincent de Paul, Nicholas Barre, or Charles Demia; but those who offered their good will to new leaders: the Ursulines of Chavagnes, united by Louis Beaudoin beginning in 1803, the Daught−ers of the Cross, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, begun in 1806, the former by Blessed André Fournet and Mother Elizabeth Bichier des Ages, the latter by the intrepid and brilliant Anne Marie Javouhey, the Madames of the Sacred Heart, of whom we have already made mention, the disciples of the Venerable Julie Billiart in the Institute of Our Lady, the Poor Daughters of

[69]Goyau, op.cit., pg. 543.

[70]See pp. 446-449 and 545.

[71]Goyau, op.cit., pg. 543.

[72]Quoted by Goyau, op.cit., pg. 543.

Mercy whom St. Mary Magdalene Postel would later on place under De La Salle's Rule.[73]

From one end of the Empire to the other there was a nearly unexampled germination and the hope of an abundant harvest.[74]The land had always been fertile; vast sewings could be arranged; the seed would bear fruit -- a hundred fold. There were also the old plants, hidden in fallow land, concealed in the tortured soil, half dead, or apparently so, if only one should attempt to awaken the sap and perform grafts.

Regarding teaching vocations the government appealed to consciences. In particular, it wanted to know what had become of former Brothers, what was their state of mind now that the storm had abated, and how best to rouse their determination and use their knowledge and dedication. This was the goal of the great inquiry "in the year XIII"(1804-1805), the results of which are preserved in the National Archives and in Departmental sources: at the end of doleful times and on the threshold of an era of resurrection, this study was needed.

It was Fourcroy, the Director of Public Education, who commissioned it. Reading his circular letter of the 12th of December 1804, we find that, while it reveals stubborn biases with respect to the Congregations, and is silent regarding the approval granted the year before to the undertakings in Lyons, which was sent a month earlier by Portalis to the Prefect of the Rhone and two weeks before by Bernard-Charpieux to Brother Frumence, it still witnesses to the evolution of the Jacobin and indicates in a detailed fashion the concerns and the opinions of the Head of State.Writing to each of the administrators of the French Departments, the senior official states:

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools have served primary education too well that now, at a time when everything useful must be made to achieve its purpose, their Institute can be neglected. His Majesty the Emperor's intention regarding the former teaching Brothers is to adopt a general rule exclusively aimed at education in the primary schools and free of anything that might violate the principles adopted by His Majesty relative to religious bodies.

"I invite you, Gentlemen Prefects, to let me know whether there are any of these Brothers in your Department, whether they are employed in public or private education; by whom and how they are employed; whether it is according to their old rules or to new regulations; and, finally, to provide me with all the information that might concern them.[75]
Supplementary instructions, addressed especially to the Mayors of Lyons asked for information regarding either "new regulations" or "old rules", in case the latter were "still being observed".

As we see, it was a question of recruiting teaching personnel for the schools. The teachers dispersed in 1792 seemed, better than any, likely to supply that need. Note that Fourcroy does not disguise the fact that Napoleon was disposed in favor of the reunion of the Brothers: but the preoccupation persisted to oppose the reestablishment of a Religious "Order" and to limit the Brothers' activity to the education of the common people, viewed from a strictly administrative point of view. The Director of Public Education reserved for himself, at the same time as the Privy Council, the examination of rules in the making or in force; his language, like his record, suggested that he would bring something less than good will to this supervision.

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[73]Goyau, op.cit., pg. 545.

[74]See Canon Adrien Garnier's book Au temps de l'Empire et de la Revolution, l'Eglise et l'education du peuple, Paris, 1933.

[75]Circular published by A. Chevalier, op.cit., pp. 152-3. We have compared this author's text with the copy sent to the Prefect of the Rhone (Departmental Archives of the Rhone, T, 8) and with the copy established by the Prefect of Calvados for the mayors of his jurisdiction. (Departmental Archives of Calvados, Series T). Cf. Centenaire de la restauration de l'Institut, pp. 71-2.

We shall now glance through the enormous file of prefectural responses in the hope of extracting suggestive indications and of uncovering some typical statistics.[76]

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In the Aine, where once the Community of Belley flourished, there was only a very old and unemployed Brother, a M. Delerme.

The Prefect of the Aisne, who delayed sending his report until the 14th of April 1804 stated that "the city of Laon is the only one in his Department" where the Institute survived: "The Brothers, who are six in number", attend to public instruction "under the supervision of the mayor". Elsewhere, vain efforts had been made to replace them. In fact, Guise, which had not forgotten Brother Justin, was involved during December and January in looking for his successor within the Congregation.

At the same time Allier expressed the wish to restore Father Aubery's schools. The inquiry discovered only two former Christian Brothers, who were teaching "at home".

Ardeche had Brother Rosier, "revered in Privas", according to the pastor -dean's evidence. But this teacher, who "had no wish other than that of his Superior's", had rejoined in Lyons, where we have had a glimpse of him.

Ariege had the good fortune to keep J. Holmiere, who guided a residence school: this teacher was married; and therefore he could not be counted on to rejoin his former confreres; as for J.F. Tiers, who taught class in Leran, his "feeble health" slowed him down, of course, even though he "loved his vocation very much".

Aude's reply includes a history of the fifty years prior to the Revolution. The school building had been sold after 1792 "in spite of the local authorities' efforts and in defiance" of the expressed wishes of the citizens. Two Brothers, separately, practiced their profession as teachers in order to gain a livelihood. It would be a good thing if schools, directed by members of the former association, were opened in Carcassonne, Narbonne, Castelnaudary and Limoux.[77][78]

We know how Antony Radier, Matthieu Faure and Jean Renaud, the remnant of the Community in Marseille strove to maintain some of the traditions of the great residence school that had disappeared in 1792 from Bouches-du-Rhone.

Moving on to Calvados, the Prefect, Caffarelli, on the 21st of January, had sent Fourcroy's circular to the mayor of Caen and to the Sub-prefectures. The "lists" sought after had not yet reached him by February-March. After a reminder, Daigremont-Saint-Manvieux, Mayor of the principal city, on the 29th of March, announced that "the search for individuals known as Brothers of the Christian Schools, otherwise called 'Grands Chapeaux', came to nothing". The Sub-prefects of Vire and Pont-l'Eveque also sent "inventories". Falaise's Sub-prefect mentions a Pierre Le Forestier, born on the 15th August 1771, who lived in Combrai and taught "reading, writing and calculation, either by the ancient calculation or by the

[76] The inquiry of 1804-05 is contained in boxes f-17, nos. 12451, 12452, 12454, 1363, 1364, 1365, and 1366 of the National Archives. For our analysis we are indebted to the scholarly patience of Dear Brother Donat Charles, Archivist at the Motherhouse. The Departmental Archives of Calvad−os, Rhone, Loiret and the Archives of the Brothers' Institute has provided us with supplements and useful clarifications. Overall, our work dealt with 50 Departments, of which 41 had Brothers within their borders prior to the Revolution (Ain, Aisne, Allier, Ardeche, Ariege, Aube, Aude, Bouche-du-Rhone, Calvados, Cantal, Cher, Cote-d'Or, Cotes-du-Nord, Drome, Eure-et-Loir, Finistere, Gard, Upper-Garonne, Gironde, Her−ault, Ille-et-Vilaine, Jura, Upper Loire, Lower Loire, Loiret, Lot, Lozere, Meurthe, Morbihan, Moselle, Oise, Pas-de-Calais, Rhone, Seine-et-Marne, Lower Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Somme, Tarn, Var, Vosges and Vaucluse). Information regarding the Marne, Maine-et-Loire, Ardennes and Upper Marne is included in previous chapters. Only Aveyron, Isere, Manche, Meuse and Tarn-et-Garonne are missing.

[77] The Prefect for the Lower Alps announced on the 30th of December 1804 that there were no Brothers of the Christian Schools in his Department.

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decimal calculation, according as people wish".

But at Bayeux and Lisieux there was more interesting information: Dominique Mamel was still a public school teacher in the former city, where he had continued to teach children "successfully"; there was a note -- and we might have suspected as much -- that he did not follow "the old rules or regulations". Joseph Louis Caesar Quillet, parting company with his former Director, taught independently: "this individual has very few pupils", and little ability. Louis Jerome Duvivier, whom Mamel employed after Quillet's departure, had been selected as a tutor by the city Counsel of Longueville (Lower Seine).

The citizens of Lisieux were rather well supplied with Étienne-Joseph and Louis-Joseph Cayez,[79] natives of Cambrai, blood brothers as well as Brothers in Religion. The younger one, Étienne, had opened a residence school and was married. The elder, who had remained a bachelor, seems to have lent his brother a hand and, besides that, gave private lessons. (He resumed his name, "Brother Gerontian" when, presently, he reentered the Congregation. Brother Frumence appointed him Director of the school in Besancon.)

M. Nasse, Mayor of Lisieux, in his report of the 21st of March, wrote: "Besides these two form St. Yon Brothers, three who do not reside in this city, but who (pretty nearly certainly will move there) when they are sure of the reopening of the schools, are M. Lejoncourt, a native of Brest...Guillaume Delastre, a native of Sauchy- Lestree...and Philippe Bienaimé, a native of Vaucouleurs...Only the third is known to us, and Elbeuf detained him for several years more.

The presence of Jean Rousaud (Brother Florentine of Jesus) in Aurillac is confirmed by the report, dated the 5th of January, that came from the Prefecture of Cantal. We are, however, surprised to find the "Brother taken in by M. Delzons" described as an old man: Jean Rouaud would only have been about sixty years of age in 1806.[80]

To supply information to the government the Prefect of Cher went back to the sources. And what he sent to Paris on official stationery was, *in extenso*, the letter which was addressed to him on the 28th of December by Jean-Baptist Delvainquier, Brother Lucan. Delvainquier speaks neither of Jean Parmentier nor of Jacques Lepouce,[81] but only of himself and of a Brother Hubert (Gabriel Baujonnec), about fifty-seven years of age and living in St. Amand. "Both of them", he wrote, "...have continued to function, either publicly or privately. They follow the ancient regulation of their organization and have their pupils study the same classical works (as in the past): the Latin Office of the Church as used in the diocese, *Duties of a Christian, Christian Politeness* and the catechism...

The public school board chose Brothers Hubert and Lucan as elementary school teachers. The former had 110 pupils, the latter 160. A quarter of the pupils were admitted tuition-free; while for non-indigent pupils the tuition was "scaled from 20 to 40 sols a month".

Replying to all the questions asked, J.B. Delvainquier summarizes the Rule of his Institute. He observes: "Now that the corporation is dissolved, each member follows the Rule in his own way", or is satisfied to fulfill his obligations as a schoolteacher. If the Society of the Brothers is restored, it is essential that it be done so on its primitive foundations: a radical transformation would be equivalent to an ultimate destruction. Again, Brother Lucan wanted

[79] Or Cayers, according to the St. Yon catalogue. Brother Gerontian, born on the 14th of October 1760 at Sauchy-Lestree, in the diocese of Cambrai, was a member of the Institute from 1778. We met him at St. Brieuc in 1791. (See above, pp. 143-144) Stephen Joseph was born on the 26th of December 1766, and, under the name of Brother Herman, was among the teachers at St. Yon on the day they refused to take the oath

[80] In January-February the Prefects of Charent and Lower Charent stated there were no Brothers in their Departments.

[81] See above, pp. 419-420.

both the approval of the "Rules" prior to 1792 and the convocation of a General Chapter. It was a goal which, for him, remained academic, since, excessively attached to Bourges, this native of Tournai would never rejoin his religious family except in heart and spirit.

In the Cote-d'Or, according to administrative statements of the 5th of January, "ten school Brothers survive: six at Dijon, two at Beaune, and two at Auxonne. Eight are married and the other two have reached such an advanced age that they cannot devote themselves to the education of youth. Of the eight who were fit, "two had become business men". Six had remained in education. The three cities that employed them had full confidence in them: for "the zeal" of these teachers had in no way cooled. But when they got married, no one could have dreamed that they might have someday been returned to their earlier vocation.

"A single Brother, married, and the father of several children"...maintains "a small private school in St. Brieuc. "The limited extent of his knowledge" did not encourage practically an appeal for his cooperation. The Prefect of the Cotes-du-Nord, nevertheless, desired the restoration of the Institute that was invaluable for the poor class.

His colleague in the Drome complained that "those of the Brothers who have continued to devote themselves to education" are "numerically insignificant". At Valence, Montelimar and Donzere the city Councils invited them to take over the direction of the elementary schools.

Since the beginning of the Revolution, the principal city of the Department had retained Alexander Boyer (Brother Evaristus),[82] a venerated and popular person. On the 4th of September (five months before the Prefect's letter) the Mayor of Valence, Citizen Plant, insisted on appearing in person at the communal school to celebrate "the public and private virtues" of "Citizen Evaristus", recognized as the leader among the teachers and to pray that Heaven would preserve for the octogenarian "that vigor of temperament" that had attained for him "calmness of soul, moderation and regularity of behavior".[83]

Without contradiction Evaristus was a Christian Brother at the same time that he was a citizen. He had not forgotten his "good old days" as Director of Mirepoix and of Charlmagne. He had saved from destruction a copy of the Rule "printed in 1726 in Rouen, by Le Prevost".[84]With all his heart he would unite forces with Brother Frumence. Nevertheless, he could not be counted on as one of those Brothers who was unreservedly attached to the Lyons operation. In his own sector he acted with independence, employed associates who met with his requirements, and maintained the practice of tuition in his schools. The Brother Vicar-general regarded him as an esteemed friend, as a patriarch worthy of every consideration and of every solicitude, rather than as a subordinate liable to the Congregation's discipline. It is only in a broad sense that one can call the Valence operation one of the prototypes of the restored Institute after the cataclysm. The same thing seems to be true of Montelimar, where once the Community had taken the "Constitutional oath" and where the situation of its teachers was nor regularized until 1807.

The situation of the Brothers in Chartres did not appear much clearer on the 16th of October 1804. At that time the Prefect of the Eure-and-Loir decided that "the primary school Community on Rue Saint-Pierre" should admit "novices...directed in conformity with the old rules...of the school Brothers". Their number was to be limited to a maximum of twelve candidates. The expenses of this novitiate would be shared by several Communes, "which, exclusively, would enjoy the advantage of confiding their primary schools...to the Brothers". Fourcroy, to whom this resolution was presented, raised the inevitable objection: he saw the

[82]See above, pp. 421-422.

[83]Lucard, Vol. II, supporting documentation, pp. 729-30.

[84]Prefect's reply to Fourcroy, 26th January 1805.

Prefects' plan as the first step toward the reopening of a Religious Community and suggested to the Minister that the report be sent to the Privy Council. Chartres then had to be satisfied, until further notice, with its "three professed Brothers", Charles Richard, François Langlet and André Fossey;[85]their companions, who in reality were actually "novices" were not included in the reply (dated the 6th of January 1805) to the inquiry, except as "associates". As for their confreres in Nogent-le-Rotrou, the civil administration acknowledged them to be educators who were also faithful to the "former rules" of their Society.

At the same time, there was no further trace of Christian Brothers in the Department of Finistère, if we are to believe the file drawn up in Quimper on the 23rd of January.

On the other hand, there were seven Brothers indicated in several cities of the Gard. But the three who managed secondary education at Sommieres were not inclined to return to the Institute.

Memory in the Upper-Garonne recalled the successful efforts of Brother Bernardine and the pastor St. Stephen's in Toulouse. But the Girond was silent concerning the no less fruitful enterprise of Lafargue Darbignac. True, Father Chaminade's two disciples had not yet joined the Institute. Their decision to become Christian Brothers could not but attract the good will of the authorities and the gratitude of the people, since, as the Prefect declared, on the 25th of January 1805: "...There is no father of a family who does not profess to see soon...peace and union in households, if education is returned to the school Brothers. People know what control they have over youth. Today's teachers do not answer to the needs of the Communes ...Bordeaux...would make sacrifices to attract (the former teachers), if one knew where to find them..."

In the principal city of the Herault, the dispersed Congregation was represented by two bachelors and a childless widower. They continued to teach, while a former colleague of theirs in Agde, married, had become a captain in the merchant-marine.

In St. Malo, in the Ille-and-Villaine, Brothers August, Monitor and Luc continued to be irreplaceable. Rennes had the distinction of once again possessing Brother Adorator, who had returned in 1803-1804 on "the invitation of several citizens whom he had taught". He guided the young "in conformity with the principles of the Institute" of which he was a member. A confrere "would gladly join him", if the government offered to restore the ancient order of things.

We have already noted, in connection with Brothers Agathon, François Borgia and Lysimachus, that the Prefect of the Indre-and- Loire was quite unaware of any activity, even embryonic, on the part of Brothers in his Department.

Four Brothers, Guillaume, Gregory, Poucheux and Outhier by name, resided in the Jura. To the first two, "very learned and deeply dedicated to the government", the city of Dole entrusted a school. The third was a private teacher in Salins; and the fourth, in retirement in Poligny, never taught again.[86]

Since there could have been no Brothers' schools in the Loir-and-Cher prior to 1792, the authorities in that jurisdiction were content to utter a wish to have the Brothers for their primary schools.

People in the city government of Puy wrote to the Prefect of the Upper-Loire on the 31st of December 1804[87]"...M. Leyrard, M. Boyer and M. Borie and M. Rivet have opened four private schools in this Commune." Most of the other teachers of the earlier days were

[85]Brothers Jean- Louis, Montain and Acarius.

[86]The Prefect of Jura, in his report of the 26th of February 1805, indicates, besides, the presence in Dole of "two former Brothers who are very old". Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1927, pg. 38.

[87] :10 Nivose in the Year XIII).

married; some of them had entered business. According to Brother Paul of Jesus, there were in the region nearly twenty schoolteachers who once belonged to the Congregation of the Christian Brothers. But the attitudes of many of them were far from favoring the reestablishment of the ancient discipline. Among those who "intrigued" to maintain their independence, Father Dorcine, Vicar-general of the diocese, mentions the former Director, Brother Louis August, who had become completely secularized.[88]

The Department of the Loire, in December-January 1805, was "one of those which awaited with the greatest impatience the sending of Brothers". Some Communes already enjoyed "the benefits that come" from having such schools.

The reply from the Lower-Loire also remained somewhat vague: "Several of the teachers have opened private schools. Others have retired and are unknown and seemed to have given up that profession."

n Orleans, "M. Cendre" seemed very clearly marked out for superior educational achievement. He made his decision integrally to resume the duties of his vocation known to Mayor Crignon-Desormeaux. But only "M. Le Moine" (who, at the time was living on the Channel) was able to rejoin Brother Liberius in the Institute, since the other teachers among the Christian Brothers had married after the dissolution. Crignon had observed to the Prefect in his letter of the 28th of February 1805 that the house on Rue St. Euvertus, appropriated for primary classes and the school of drawing, was still suitable to house a Community. He sent Maret a copy of the Rules that Cendre had transmitted to him.[89]

In the Lot there was no "school Brother" except "the former Superior" in Cahors, who had become a teacher in secondary education in the Gourdon sector. The Christian Brothers had completely abandoned Lozere, where in the past they had been quite strong.

Lorraine had not forgotten the Brothers' services nor their successes. And the Prefect of the Meurthe wrote, concerning the Brothers, a quite detailed report on the 18th of February 1805. "Nine or ten Brothers" appeared prepared to resume their tasks; buildings on city lands should be opened to them. One must proceed according to a broadly conceived plan. The Imperial official continued:"Without prejudging anything of the question, whether the Regime of the Congregation will or will not be subject to a single Superior-general and will have only one Motherhouse, I think that it is indispensable that there exist in France several training schools, so that the Congregation can recruit and more easily train a large number of candidates...if we do not wish it to happen, as it did in the past, when only a small number of cities experienced the advantages of this Institute.

"I would particularly desire that there might exist in the Department of the Meurthe one such house of probation. The principal building remaining at Nancy would offer a suitable site...I do not propose to return the internal administration of the institution at Maréville to the Brothers of the Christian Schools...It is essential to reduce no further, by such a use, the number of these Brothers...already too few for the demands of education. Besides, the largest part (of the plant) was destroyed by a fire in February-March of 1794...

With that reservation, which was certainly a plausible one, the Prefect exerted himself in favor of the Institute with an intelligence and zeal that went well beyond administrative pettiness. Less bold, his colleagues, with rare exceptions, did little more than transmit what the people wanted regarding the return of the Brothers, or, indeed, abiding by the letter of the official circular, inform the Director of Public education in rather succinct language.

We have already gotten a glimpse of some of this. We see it again in Morbihan, where we

[88] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1934, pp 33-41.

[89] Municipal Archives of Orleans, IR 19-1.

are told without commentary, the occupation of one of the former Brothers in Vannes, "M. Gilbert Fleury, married in Lorient", teacher of writing and mathematics in the Communal secondary school, and of a M. Mathorel, arrived from a school in the Eure and reduced to giving private lessons in the principal city.

Similarly, the Moselle confined itself to mentioning the existence of three Brothers whom age and infirmity had rendered incompetent to resume the task which they had abandoned after the suppression of secular institutes.

Noyon spoke glowingly of the successors of Brother Aubert -- the two Lucas', Elie Francis and Louis Philip -- who, along with Charles Denis Blavet and Marcel Sezelle, taught two-hundred children meticulously, without asking anything from the poorest of them. The city maintained and housed the teachers, who were "strict" and "of good behavior"; they used the methods of their predecessors, and spread the use of the decimal system. Their worth and the results they obtained were all the more appreciated (according to the remarks of the Secretary-general of the Prefecture of the Oise on the 1st of March 1804) in that the majority of schoolteachers were out of their depth and shared the families' aversion for "the new system of weights and measures".

On the 16th of October 1804 the Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais sent the Minister of the Interior the minutes of the city Counsel of St. Omer, which had created six teaching posts in the Commune, and, to fill them, chose J.B. Mairez, Pierre Seurot, Lysimachus Patin, Roman Hubert Le Caffet, J.J. Lacrois and J.B. Fiolet -- all of good reputation and all heirs to the traditions and doctrines of John Baptist de La Salle. The first three soon resumed their Religious names (Brothers Jonas, Theodar and Lysimachus). The latter was to be the "Superior" of the Community. "His good management, his morality and his religious principles", as Mayor Brus-Le-Baubart declared, on the 26th of September 1805, assured him the approbation of the people of St. Omer.[90] Who could better return to the "institution" that "antique splendor"[91]with which it had shone in St. Omer since the far off times of Brother Barthélemy? Brother Lysimachus brought to the Pas-de-Calais the reputation, the spirit and the determination of his colleague in Tours, the illustrious Brother Agathon. He would not be discouraged by the difficulties inherent in his role of rebuilder.[92]

Two individuals working alone came to try their luck in a Department which had hitherto resisted the influence of the Institute. Brother Hermabessiere maintained a primary school in

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[90]Motherhouse Archives, HA q 20, Mayor of St. Omer's letter to Brother Frumence.

[91]Motherhouse Archives, ibid. Quotation from the Register of the minutes of the City Counsel of St.Omer, meeting on the 24th of January 1803.

[92]To this first set of facts, the same Prefect's reply to the Director of Public Education on the 12th of March 1805, added some valuable information concerning John Francis Ledieu (called Brother Rupert) -- the former Director of Langres -- and Ambrose Allard (called Brother aime) who, both bachelors "maintained a residence school in Puisieux". Another Ledieu, married, lived in Arras, as dis Mr. Pachy, Mr. Debureaux and Mr. Damoine, who had also contracted marriage during the Revolution. Mr. Damoine directed "an institution for the suppression of begging" in the principal city of the Department. Further, "the Commission for the city poorhouses in Arras, on the 6th of November 1802 entrusted an orphanage to the four ex-Brothers; Philip Boniface Lefebvre, Joseph Beaudouin,Louis Joseph Lehoucq and John Peter Desenne. It had made impeccable choices. Each of these Brothers as individuals follow rather closely the old regulation. It is desireable that they be authorized to encourage disciples in order to perpetuate a society of such valuable men." Three "former Brothers" are mentioned in the Bethune district. Finally another Prefectural letter dated the 24th of April 1805 mentions the presence in Boulogne of Mr. Coulmaux, who had been a member of the Congregation "for twenty years" before, of Mr. Bleriot (the former Brother Aretas) "head of a secondary school established under the authority of the gov−ernment", and of Mr. Leroy -- doubtlessly the former Brother Mamert whom the schismatic bishop Porion ordained a priest and whom we meet with here "married, assistant town-clerk in the commercial court", at the same time as he was a merchant-grocer! (National Archives, F-17 12453).

Arles-sur-Tech, and Brother Laurence taught in a secondary school in Prades, in the Eastern Pyrenees.

Earlier we analyzed the replies to Fourcroy's questionnaire sent in by Lyons' mayors.[93] Fully informed of the initial project being worked out under the auspices of Cardinal Fesch, we turn now to the Upper Saone: Claude Carre, sixty-six years of age and a former Christian Brother, "subsisted" in Jussey in March 1805, by the lessons he taught to "a few small children, too young to attend the primary schools". He was a "man of pure and irreproachable morals". He would agree to leave Jussey only if he were sure not to go farther than Dole or Lyons. The Prefectural administration had uncovered other Brothers at Gray and in the neighborhood of that city. But nothing could be expected of them in relation to the Congregation and education; one of them had become an innkeeper.

"While a small number of the Brothers who survived the dissolution", wrote the Prefect of the Seine-and-Marne on the 13th of January 1805, "has preserved a taste for their original vocation, nearly all of them seem to have forgotten their Institute and their Rule." He mentions only two of these in Melun -- the first, the head of a private school which he had opened at the beginning of the Revolution; the other was at the head of a Communal school. For Fontainebleau, again, he limited his inquiry to two Christian Brothers "employed by the city". At Meaux the only survivor taught a class "privately". In Lagny, a former Brother "had embraced a career foreign" to his initial vocation.

On the 4th of January 1805 the Mayor of Rouen supplied the Prefect of the Lower-Seine with a conscientious inventory of the situation: "Although the circumstances in which we have lived for the past twelve years have forced some of the Brothers of St. Yon to join the army, others to go into business, and all, in the end, to seek conditions that would meet their needs (since they receive no pensions); nevertheless, there are several in this city, a few of whom are married, others are widowers, and three are free of all commitments.These three were M. Carpentier (certainly, Brother Honorat), M. Le Prince (Brother Vilmer) and M. Billard, "an infirm old man". Besides these there was M. Vaillant, Brother Aventine, whose wife had died.[94]

The Rouen official had also inquired after several other members of the former institution which had been the pride of the Faubourg St. Sever. Among those who had been scattered, he mentions Claude Antoine Poucheux (Brother François), the former Sub- director who had become a teacher of mathematics in Salins, in the Jura, Sebastian Thomas (Brother Gerbaud), Nicholas Bienaimé (Brother Philippe Joseph), Étienne-Joseph Cayez (Brother Herman), -- whom we have met with in our travels, one in Paris, another in Elbeuf and the third in Lisieux.

The Prefect who had sent this important document to the Office of Public Education added a plea in favor of St. Yon. After having recalled the history of the famous residence school, he contemplates the prospect of bringing the Brothers back to Rouen. "The buildings are still at the disposition of the government. When the Emperor was passing through Rouen", he was planning "to transform the buildings into a workhouse" for vagabonds and the poor. "The adoption of such a plan", could be reconciled with "the restoration of the Christian Brothers" Some classes could be opened to the children of the poor, near by the shops where the retraining of adults would be taking place. In his reply of the 6th of February, Fourcroy invited the administration of the Lower Seine to fill in the details for such

[93]Pp. 571-572.

[94]Another member of the Vaillant family, with the Christian name of François, who was also a former Christian Brother, taught school, during the same period, in his native region, at Puisieux. He was married. (Letter cited, from the Prefect of Pas-de-Calais, dated 13th of September 1804)

proposals. But, as we know, the doors of the beloved estate remained permanently closed to the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

In the reorganization of Christian education Versailles and St. Germain-en-Laye had outstripped the Norman capital. "The services rendered by the Brothers", notes the Prefect of the Seine-and-Oise on the 11th of January 1805, "have induced the mayors of these two Communes to entrust the education of children preferentially" to members living in this institute. Four of them each direct a tuition-free school in Versailles...Their salary is fixed at 1,000 francs a year and it is paid to them out of the Communal revenues; besides, their housing and the heating of the schools are provided for them. Living separately, nothing suggests whether they follow their old rules. As for the method of teaching, the success the Brothers had previously (explains) the freedom they have been given to follow what they believe to be most advantageous.Annual examination taken by the pupils "amply justify the confidence" enjoyed by the teachers.

Three teachers "are together" at St. Germain, "for the maintenance of a tuition-free school. They do not constitute an obvious corporation. It seems, however, that they continue to observe the Rule of Doctor de La Salle...and that they follow their old rules...Their behavior is as exemplary (as the morality they teach) is pur."

Unknown (prior to 1792) in the region included in the Department of the Deux-Sevres, the Brothers were henceforth sought after in that quarter. Their presence, the Prefect declared, would be especially justified in those regions plunged by ignorance into "all the horrors of civil disorder" and are still "devoid of education". The district of Thouars had only seventeen schools for it 92 Communes; and the district of Parthenay, which includes 80 Communes, had only twelve schools.

Of the large personnel that made up the Communities in Amiens, Abbeville and Montdidier there remained only eight former Brothers. This information comes from the Prefect of the Somme in his "inventory" of the 11th of January 1805: four practiced in the principal city as private teachers; their names were Anglemont (Brother Jean), Brocard (Brother Didier), Bertrand (Brother Henri) and Poire (Brother Jean-Baptist); all were married. It does not seem that Brother Adelard (Martin Charles Moreau) and Brother Abdias (Antoine Pilatre) -- elementary schoolteachers in Abbeville -- Brother Antherus (Pierre Joseph Rollin) and Brother Anthelme (Charles Roger) -- both living in Montdidier -- had become so completely secularized. Rollin had opened a small residence school and Roger "was planning" to resume his duties as a teacher.

"After the '18th Brumaire'" the Tarn witnessed the rebirth of the school in Castres. The work undertaken by Brother Bernardine had been the sort whose loss people found distressing. The Prefect attributed its closing exclusively to the lack of room. Since the departure of Pierre Blanc and his associates for Toulouse, the Christian Brothers had no representatives except in Albi: and here again the reference was to ex-Brothers who were "no longer involved in teaching"; one of them had once belonged to the local Community, and the other had come from Avignon; but now they were living in retirement "with their families".

The officials in the Var were not too concerned with the precision of their statements, since, without giving the least thought to the school in Toulon, where the schism must have made something of a stir, they blandly claimed that in their Department the existence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was unknown. To their mind, those of their fellow-citizens who, in the past, "wished to train their children in the art of writing" sent them to the residence school in Marseille.

At the beginning of 1804-1805, asserts the Prefect of the Vaucluse, seven Brothers, "most of them quite advanced in years", lived in the former Papal States. The four who lived in Avignon "taught writing and arithmetic in private homes": they had just joined their confreres in Lyons. One of them, Citizen Churbin Ducord, was teaching in a public school

and was paid by the Commune of Bollene.

Finally, the Department of the Vosges did not have a school directed by the Institute before the Revolution, nor one that was opened by a senior Christian Brother since the Consulate or the Empire. But the reputation of the Brothers was so well established throughout France that the people in the Vosges were not the last to ask for the cooperation of these teachers in their schools.[95]

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In 1805, then, as in 1802, there was a unanimity for the prompt restoration of De La Salle's Institute. From this one Society people expected the competence and the dedication that would enable the faith, morals, fundamental knowledge and the first principles of civilization, that had been compromised or destroyed by Revolutionary anarchy, to be restored to the children of the common people and to the sons of workers and craftsmen. That hope was proclaimed with such clarity and such force that it upset every prejudice and it refused to deal with the obstacles and objections mounted by the adversaries of Religious Congregations. Willy-nilly, the "philosophers", "ideologues", yesterday's Jacobins and the most intransigent legalists had to yield to public opinion. Regions which, in the 18th century were deprived of schools of this sort henceforth combined with cities which were the beneficiaries of the best Christian education to demand teachers like the former teachers in Rheims, St. Sulpice, St. Yon and Maréville. After 1792 France had not left off loving the Brothers and regretting their departure. Now that it contemplated the extent of the disaster occasioned by the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, by terrorist persecutions, by the sectarian violence of the "Fructidorians", and by the wave of amoralism and unbelief, it was impatient to clear the foundations to the ground, and to reconstruct on these new footings an edifice capable of sheltering future generations.

The report prepared by the imperial officials concerning the teachers of the past encouraged neither optimism nor illusion. At the level of public education it revealed as much destruction as statistics can discover in the areas of social peace, administration and finance, and in the inheritance of religion and the arts. A huge effort would be required for new beginnings. Granting a large influence to gaps and errors in the Prefects' investigations, it remained, nonetheless, evident that the solid army that once surrounded Superior-general Agathon had been reduced to tatters. There were hardly more than 250 Brothers on French soil. And how many of these had entered into marriage or, for other reasons, in an ultimate break with their vocation, would no longer rally to the standard of the Founder? Age weighed down some, while totally secular occupations detained others. Among those who had retained freedom of mind and action, many were loath to return to the yoke of poverty and obedience. Many, in the cities and the families that had welcomed them, had created for themselves obligations which they could not, or would not, shirk, or customs whose web enfolded them. Some of the most stout hearted doubted the designs of Providence: past experience prevented them from believing in a successful restoration. They refused to leave established positions only to embark upon what they considered to be an adventure. Outside the Community in Lyons, which was already an important nucleus of authentic Religious life and a center of attraction for young recruits, apart from the Parisian school of Gros Caillou, Brother Bernardine's school in Toulouse, survivals or renewal in the Aisne, Eure-and-Loir, Oise, Pas-de-Calais and the Seine-and-Oise, and the new association begun in Bordeaux, and (with the reservations mentioned) Brother Vivien's operation in Rheims, there were only isolated, hesitant and procrastinating individuals, not to mention the rebels and deserters. We might set at about 100 the total number of Brothers actually functioning or in training who had, at this

[95] Report dated January 12th 1805

time, been brought under obedience to the Brother Vicar-general, or who had made up their minds presently to come under his authority. And that is a maximum that is open to debate. Men of good will did not always go on to take the decisive step; submission was qualified by hesitation, and the reawakening of self-love and the love of independence would disturb and give pause to more than one individual. Someone, for whom the recollection of a fervent youth leads back to the fold, lingers on the threshold or walks past the door, because he is disinclined to strip himself of his property, or because he can no longer tolerate criticism, or because he wants to select his work or his residence.

Brother Frumence had to have a superabundance of grace, virtue carried to the heroic, to persevere on his course. The difficulties standing in his way increased and problems became tremendously complex. On days very different from the ones he had lived in Rome, not only prior to 1798, but during the most critical period of his existence there, Brother Vicar-general was called upon to conciliate the civil power, to satisfy the ecclesiastical authorities and at the same time to defend the rights, revive the strength and restore the unity of his own Congregation.

And while he continued to be assured of the Emperor's good will, he collided with the distrust of the Director of Public Education and the Counselors of State. While the cities were favorable, he continued to fear their attempt to dominate, and the absolute control they claimed to exercise over schools and teachers. Nearly everywhere the question of tuition-free education arose as a stumbling-block. Several Brothers accustomed to accepting fees from their pupils were inclined, in this matter, to submit to the demands of cities and thereby to disregard an essential rule of the Institute.

Still clothed in laymen's garb, the Brothers were living a half-secular life. Portalis had, indeed, told Bishop Bernier on the 13th of September 1803 that "the First Consul saw nothing inappropriate in priests wearing the soutane". Such a garment, he remarked, would be "for churchmen another reason for self-respect" and would inspire the respect of others.[96].But, with regard to Religious, some officials were less liberal. Thus, on the 8th of October 1804 the Prefect of the Upper Garonne wrote to the Archbishop of Toulouse: "I charge you to watch with the greatest care so that no religious association develops and so that no one besides the Sisters of Charity appears in public in a habit worn by the corporations.[97]"

In Lyons, Cardinal Fesch decided, for the Community of Petit-College, in favor of a complete return, if not to traditional usage, at least to the robe, the Roman collar, and the sleeveless mantle that had been adopted by the Brothers in the Papal States during the Revolution.[98]His Most Eminent Highness had obliged his clerics, in writing in May of 1805, to resume the external signs of their calling. The Brothers were only asking to follow in line. On the 8th of September, Lyons' great Feast of the Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin, the Brothers went about in a garb which, in all probability, Brother Frumence and those around him had worn inside the house.[99] Only the white rabat was missing. It would be Brother Bernardine who would restore that to its place of honor. Ignoring Prefectural prohibitions, or having won their suspension through Bishop Primat, on the Feast of St. Nicholas in 1805[100]

[96]Letter of the 13th of September 1803, quoted by Leflon, Vol. II, pg. 107

[97]Quoted by Brother Lemandus, pg. 149.

[98]See above, 337.

[99]Circular, Centenaire, pg. 58-9.

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Brother Bernardine and his eight colleagues appeared publicly, dressed from head to toe as Brothers of the Christian Schools. And when two members of the Motherhouse Community, traveling to Bordeaux to open conversations with Lafargue and Darbignac, passed through Toulouse, they were easily prevailed upon to wear the distinctive insignia of the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle. However, the famous dangling sleeves continued to be prohibited until the seventh year of Brother Gerbaud's generalate.[102] At Easter of 1806 the Brothers in Chartres, following the example of their confreres in the South, attended services in the Cathedral in their Religious habits and caused the older ones among their former pupils to "cry for joy".[103]

The monastic sackcloth (as Father Lacordaire's habit was called) was the symbol of a sort of freedom. But Brother Vicar-general was not satisfied with this "theatrical" assertion. He meant to defend his Institute's autonomy. Joseph Fesch's support, because it was indispensable and because of the personality of the individual, ran the risk sometimes of stepping over the boundaries of discretion. The Archbishop agreed to allow the entire Empire to benefit from the work of the Brothers, provided, however, that his diocese first, and then his native island of Corsica, were preferred. In order to keep the groups of Brothers in Lyons under his control, he watched with jealous care. On the 6th of August 1805 he wrote to Father Jauffret: "I would like to see the "Ignorantin" Brothers everywhere, but don't ask Lyons for any of them...Do not prevent others from taking an interest in them, recommend their worth, encourage their growth; in a word, give advice, but assume no responsibilities... [104]In his plans, for the Brothers to be sent to Corsica was more important than for them to open a school in Trévoux, although this was one of the cities in his jurisdiction. When Father Paul told Brother Pigmenion about starting this new school, Fesch declared: "Very well, but I demand priority (for Ajaccio)"...[105]

Should Brother Frumence even think of changing his residence, he would incur the Archbishop's wrath. Napoleon's uncle, in Rome in November of 1805, got wind of a possible transfer of the Motherhouse. We read in a postscript to a letter addressed to Father Jauffret: "It has reached me that somebody is trying to move the headquarters of the 'Ignorantin' Brothers from Lyons; send me a report on this matter; and oppose it like a man."[106]

Such concern is understandable. However, it can produce abusive interference. It was possible for the Brothers to feel the weight of this sort of despotism, especially if they thought they were being appointed and changed exclusively on the order of high Church dignitaries. The draft of one of Brother Frumence's letters proves that disagreements, or at least misunderstandings, did occur. The letter is addressed to a "Vicar-general" of Lyons and must, perhaps, be dated during the period in which the Superior of the Institute had solidly secured his position: ...You attempt to dissipate the apprehensions I seemed to have had. No...,

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[101] Brother Lemandus, pg. 169.

[102]Motherhouse Archives, Brother Gerbaud File, note in the handwriting of Brother Calixtus.

[103]Essai sur la Maison Mere pg. 137.

[104]Archives of the Archbishopric of Lyons, second register of Fesch's correspondence.

[105]Ibid., loc. cit., letter to Courbon, on the 16th of December 1804.

[106]Ibid., loc. cit., letter to Father Jauffret, November 23, 1805.

I have never doubted, and I shall never doubt your zeal for our Congregation, after all you have done, the Archbishop and yourself, and after all that the present circumstances occasion me to hope for the future. My only fear was that there were some who did not believe it permissible to appoint members without the consent of the Superior set over the Institute and that introduces an obstacle into the relations that they should have among themselves...But I see on the contrary that your intentions...had no other purpose than the more exact observance of our rules and customs."[107]

Quietly and without unseasonable haste, Brother Frumence was assembling the materials for an inspiring and enduring work. With gentle firmness, he was selecting the workers, assigning to each a fixed task, an imperative obligation. He relied upon an obedience that was proof against test, although paternally he welcomed the repentant and gave liberal credit to good will. Obstacles were many: one by one he overcame them. At the end of 1805, there remained only four years before his death to clear the ground and stake it out and prepare for the definitive work of his successor. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as it emerged from the Revolutionary period, was to take its place in the Napoleonic system while relocating its own form, spirit and benevolent action. Brother Gerbaud would complete the task of giving back to France and the world the integral treasure, the endlessly fruitful inheritance of the Holy Founder.

[107] Motherhouse Archives, BE a first notebook of drafts of Brother Frumence's letters, no. 53.