



That your school runs well

Approach to Lasallian
educational model

LASALLIAN STUDIES Nº 17

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BROTHERS OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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*In today's Gospel
Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls
to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep.
One quality he must possess,
according to our Savior,
is to know each one of them individually.
This should also be one of main concerns
of those who instruct others:
to be able to understand their pupils
and to discern the right way to guide them.*

Saint John Baptist de La Salle
Meditation 33, point I

PROLOGUE

The book that you have in your hands was written by fourteen teachers from five different continents all with diverse cultures, different formation journeys but with one thing in common – we are all Brothers of the Christian Schools. We are teachers not only by profession but also by vocation. From this perspective which has been a defining one for us, we offer you a reflection on something that we consider essential in our lives: Christian education.

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, fifty years since Vatican II, we continue to wonder about what John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers of the Christian Schools understood about education in 17th century France. And we see with gratitude, and with responsibility, the course of the Institute created by them over the course of three-hundred years. We wonder especially about the future of this educational program in which teachers from all regions of the world participate, in an associative and multi-cultural experience that our founders never even dreamed about.

This three-century perspective has helped us to fix the reach of the term we are studying: “Lasallian pedagogy”.

We know that the understanding of this term is not the same in one language as in another, nor in one cultural milieu than in another. For some it is sometimes limited to the scope of the procedures, while for others it includes the totality of education. That is why in our thinking we wanted to use a more general approach (“education,” in the English-speaking world), without looking down at concrete operations (more often used in other areas). We are therefore taking both a global and a detailed approach as we deal with both the guiding purposes and the profound spirit of education, as well as with both the specific style and character of procedures. We hope that we have taken into account the nuances that we will be presenting in the different versions of this study.

What you will find in these pages is the result of shared work which had its special moment during a Seminar on Lasallian Education that was held at the FSC Generalate in Rome in May 2012. Beginning with that event, fourteen Brothers, invited by the Service of Lasallian Research and Resources, decided to journey together to discuss ideas and perspectives which they considered essential in terms of Lasallian education from its beginnings, throughout its history, and on into the future.

We invite you to read this book from beginning to end. It is written in three parts, each with its own logic. It is important for you to discover the key lines that have supported this reflective effort. In the first part we looked at the origins: how education was understood in the first Lasallian community. Recalling its journey, we propose a definition that seems to us to be faithful. Then, in the second part, we recalled a handful of significant events over the course of the next two centuries: we wanted to see where education was at the time and how it lived out that first definition. Finally, in the third part, we have focused on the present in order to ask ourselves how to live out Lasallian education in an entirely new world.

This is not a finished book, with completed concepts, but an educational, shared reflection, of a group of teachers who continue wondering about the convictions that have supported Lasallian educational effort for more than three-hundred years. It is, therefore, a book that should generate discussion, bring ideas together, open perspectives. It is in no way closed in any of its aspects: it was deliberately conceived of as an example of a work that could be used anywhere in the Lasallian or non-Lasallian world. A hypothesis is proposed on principles and an outline about history is sketched. This book delves into the two of them and draws its own conclusions.

As in Lasallian education, the value and usefulness of this book are not in its conclusions but in its own journey.

Special thanks go to Brother Pedro María Gil for being the project coordinator of this book and for having helped us to generate ideas and to envisage future horizons. Thanks also to the experience and fraternal exigency of our Brothers Bruno Alpago, Gerard Rummery, Alain Houry, León Lauraire, Edgard Hengemüle and Robert Berger, who have gone the

distance in Lasallian research. We are grateful also for the presence of Brothers Francis Ricousse, Pierre Ouattara, Fabio Coronado, Patricio Bolton, Peter Killeen and Cledes Casagrande for having accepted the challenge of reflecting together. Of course we are also grateful for the support from the Superior General and his Council and from the Brothers in the Generalate.

We will be satisfied with our work if this book opens the door to discussion.

Brother Diego Muñoz
Service of Lasallian Research and Resources
Generalate, Rome

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS WORK

Works of Saint John Baptist de La Salle in Spanish

C	Cartas
EMO	Explicación del Método de Oración
GE	Guía de las Escuelas Cristianas
MA	Meditaciones para algunas fiestas especiales que hay durante el año
MD	Meditaciones para todos los domingos del año
MF	Meditaciones para las fiestas principales del año
MLF	Memorial de la lectura en francés
MSO	Memorial sobre los orígenes
MR	Meditaciones para el Tiempo de Retiro
RP	Reglas personales
RU	Reglas de cortesía y urbanidad cristianas

Works of Saint John Baptist de La Salle in French

CE	Conduite des Écoles
DA	Devoirs d'un chrétien I
DB	Devoirs d'un chrétien II
DC	Devoirs d'un chrétien III
EM	Explication de la méthode d'oraison
I	Instructions et prières
LA	Lettres autographes
LI	Lettres imprimées
MD	Méditations pour les dimanches
MF	Méditations pour les fêtes
MH	Mémoire sur l'habit
RB	Règles de la bienséance
RC	Règles communes

Works of Saint John Baptist de La Salle in English

- CCS The Conduct of the Christian Schools
MTR Meditations for the Time of Retreat
RFD Rule and Foundational Documents

Documents of the Institute of Brothers of the Christian Schools

- Circ Circulars of the Institute
CL Cahiers lasalliens
Decl Declaration: Brother of the Christian Schools in the world today
PERLA Proyecto Educativo Regional Latinoamericano Lasallista

Documental sources

- AMG Archives Maison Généralice. Rome
BM Sous-Séries S. J.B. de La Salle : Écrits : Conduite des Écoles. AMG
CD Sous-Séries Supérieurs généraux, Série C de l'Institut. AMG



1.

The first definition

Our first step is to express what “Lasallian education” was in the very first days of the institution.

To respond to this issue, we have two direct fundamental sources: *The Conduct of Schools* and the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*. The first speaks primarily about procedures; the second about the person of the teacher. If we show a summary of the history of those first forty or fifty years and we properly contextualize that history with references to the environment of the time, we can then configure Lasallian education around five axes.

We will consider them one by one, as they have come down to us from our foundational journey. Then we will see if they provide a definition or even a system for us.

1.

The first definition

Pedro María Gil fsc

Given the fact that the first members of the community of the Christian schools did not write it down for us, it is not so easy to specify what Lasallian education meant for them.

We do know how they did things but nobody would be satisfied by reducing the concept of “education” to how things were done in a particular place or in a specific institution. “Education” is a term that includes more. This is why it is difficult to define the concept.

There is no doubt that in this case it must include more. There is a good

reason for stating this: in using the adjective “Lasallian” we speak of an institution to which one belongs, with a lifetime commitment. It is true that this adjective can also be applied to a style, a set of data or references that do not involve someone else other than to the activity to which one is devoted. In that case we refer to persons or even institutions where living and doing do not necessarily coincide, a situation that contradicts the first Lasallian constitution: the life ideal of not making any difference between what is required for your work and what is required for your sanctification.

For that reason, in this case it is more appropriate to spell out the scope of the topic beyond the procedural. So our concept of Lasallian education is the result of intersecting two approaches: that of the *Conduct of Schools* and the *Meditations for the Time of the annual Retreat* of the teachers. One refers to the teacher's activities; the other to the meaning of their lives.

1.

So, in this study, by Lasallian education we understand the way of living out an educational relationship proper to the Lasallian institution.

“Educational relationship” is an expression that includes everything related to education. In this relationship, besides the personal, we want to include its institutionalization or structure for the purpose of achieving expected and shared results. In this sense, while it is evident that “education” goes beyond the limits of the school as a concrete organization, it does not exceed the organizing plan that defines any educational institution. All educational programs need to be organized in a concrete manner and, as such, they can be called a “school,” so that, aware that the terms are not equivalent, we will use the words “education,” “school,” and “educational relationship” as all belonging to the same system.

“Living” the school is an expression that is deliberately symbolic and it aims to encompass the way one works, the bridges that this work necessarily builds regarding persons and the resulting mutual configuration. The expression refers to the dialogue between the life of the worker and his/her work and it translates the old scope of the Lasallian expression “state.”

Therefore, “living the school” or “living an educational relationship” assumes that the resulting “education” is a set of techniques or procedures that build up a person and at the same time come from the person.

“Lasallian institution” is an expression that refers to the group formed by communities of teachers and the network of their schools that were established between 1680 and 1726 in a region of France. It also refers to this same group that spread throughout the world and has three centuries of history during what we call Modernity and now Post-Modernity.

As we shall soon see, in this definition there are TWO DIMENSIONS: a structural dimension and a content dimension. One contains the frame that supports everything; the other has to do with the present time in which it is made explicit.

2.

Unlike those who would limit the term “education” to a method of carrying out education, we understand the term “Lasallian education” to mean a way of living education: this means that in its definition we include the teacher along with his/her procedures.

Therefore in this study when we refer to « education », we understand it as set of procedures or institutional designs and a specific way of living them out. We do not limit ourselves to a set of procedures that are used in a specific way but we include the way of “living” these procedures. We would also add that the way of living the set of procedures is a common, community type of living. Therefore the reality is plural and it is shared. It has a personal focus not just a set of instructions.

In this way of understanding things there are several elements by way of STRUCTURE that we understand by the term Lasallian education:

the first is the overall set of techniques and the resulting configuration of the educational program that uses them;

then, there is the fact that this overall set and the design are inseparable from the life of those who use them: thus they are not just things that are used or allowed to be used but they are realities that form part

of the lives of persons who are called teachers;

finally, there is the fact that living this overall set and configuring the person of the teacher is something that happens within the group that is committed for life to live in that way.

3.

This line-up or summary of procedures, life and community, however, does not tell us more than the framework of the reality that we need to understand. We need its content, its concrete embodiment at each moment. Properly speaking this second dimension specifically defines Lasallian education because you can share with others the same basic structure: procedure-life-community. The content of that structure is, then, its definitive configuration.

Now, first we need to define the reference point to make this explicit. Indeed, when we speak of an institution with a history of centuries, it is not so easy to make that final configuration. At what point of the three centuries of its history should we look at to propose something?

There is one factor that makes those three centuries of history much more than a heterogeneous succession of three-hundred years. It is one block of time, clearly defined. The Lasallian institution is a typical creature of what in Europe is known as MODERNITY, much more than it is the succession of three-hundred years.

Modernity and the Lasallian institution were born together, in a period in which all social institutions were redefined on the same pattern: organizational rationality. What does this fact tell us? It tells us that, like all institutions in the Modernity period, Lasallian education maintains the same identity or configuration while that great period of history endures. Therefore – and not simply due to faithfulness to the event that consolidated its foundation – we can define it according to the configuration of structure and content that we observed in its beginnings, during its foundational period.

Accordingly, while Modernity endures, all subsequent life of the institu-

tion will be defined by its relationship to that first circumstance. This will give it a guarantee of a period in which things had meaning and it will function as a constant reference point. But at the same time this can be a handicap when the history of that institution goes through times and places where the configuration is different from that of its beginnings. This will occur especially when that great time in history is ending.

So sticking with the definition of something like Lasallian education always poses a challenge for interpreting the beginning, its structure and its subsequent visibility.

4.

With that caution about its historicity, we propose the configuration of Lasallian education during its foundational period. Thus, accepting the structure of procedures, the life of the teacher and the committed group, we ask ourselves: What features can be noted in the beginning as the CONTENT of that education? Can we at least identify some significant features in the vital journey of the first Lasallian community?

In the initial Lasallian education there is one factor, which is determining and specific: the Poor. They are the ones who guide the design of the program that was conceived for their service. Therefore the program should underscore more the instrumental parts rather than knowledge, reason more that content, problem resolution more than the memorization of facts. This is the second factor.

The school of the Poor, like any other school, is always conceived in terms of social integration but it has something specific: right away you think of the world of work, there is no immediate support between basic training and work. This is the third factor.

Among the three – **recipients, objective and program** – these factors produce diverse organizational and technical systems for appropriate learning. They depend on the genius of each society, the type of poverty, the economic and political framework, the quality of teacher training, etc.

So you can appreciate the richness that is derived from the play between

deep meaning and daily running of an educational institution such as a Lasallian one. And you can see how you cannot reduce the scope of the expression “Lasallian education” either to the list of procedures employed or to the anthropology behind them. This concept plays with both dimensions.

5.

So we understand that in Lasallian education – as perhaps in other types of education – there are **two other factors** that contribute to its final specification from the point of view of its content.

The first, which is the fourth in this series –is its commonality, **shared community**. It consists in the commitment of a group of people to carry out the program in a certain way. This commitment may be of a permanent nature, so that it exceeds the contractual or present-day limits.

Anyone would think that the vital involvement of a person with others to carry out a program is a source for the specific traits in the configuration of the resulting education. The spring from which it constantly flows and which undergoes constant evaluation and reconfiguration is a human group that identifies with this mission.

That identification is such that in this consideration of contents there still appears one factor: the closeness of the mystery or of **transcendence**.

In fact, since it is a shared identification, we find ourselves necessarily facing something that brings us to the root of the human relationship. It is something that speaks of responsibility, fidelity, hope, staying power, development. It speaks of effort or even sacrifice, vocation, collective history, the ultimate transcendental horizon.

We cannot, therefore, consider the religious or faith dimension as an optional extra. When we try to reflect on Lasallian education we need to keep in mind that the source and the destiny, the daily grind or mediation, is always something that transcends strict data or that can be contextualized in a scenario of a different kind.

This brings us to a personal consideration of the education as its definitive configuration.

6.

It is clear that this way of interpreting Lasallian education may be debatable for those whose point of view is only functional. It is also clear that, in using this approach we will find a teaching model that is very close to that of the institutional identity. There is technique on one side and the institution on the other: avoiding those two extremes is the condition for speaking seriously about Lasallian education.

If we accept this scope of the reflection, if we champion the personal rather than the strictly functional, it is because from its beginnings the Lasallian institution has considered its educational ministry as a vocation, a call, great mediation in the encounter with God as well as with the poor and those it tries to serve. It seems, then, that there is some obligation to do justice to the relationship between being and doing that defines the institution itself.

Similarly, we must be aware that the Lasallian institution lives today, after three centuries, in circumstances it had never known before: over the course of its last half-century of life, like all social institutions, it has carried out its program in a world with new dimensions, both in the educational profession as well as in culture and in religion. This means that within its programs there is nothing that is obvious when you speak about educational homogeneity. And without some type of homogeneity it is very difficult to speak of Lasallian education as something that is alive today.

We need to verify or substantiate, then, our proposal, in order to overcome both a functional reduction as well as identity dissolution.

Both tasks are essential, if we are trying to find in the expression "Lasallian education" some trait of life today, some orientation towards the future.

7.

This first part of our study is devoted to reflecting on the teaching system or set of the Lasallian origins.

It consists of five reflections on each of the axes we just pointed out as the expression of the CONTENT of this teaching: **Poor, Work, Reason, Community of Teachers and Faith**. Inside of this reflection there is always the suggestion of the STRUCTURE where life and work come together.

Each comment responds to the view of a different author, but all are part of a common scenario just described in these pages. For that reason in concluding this overview we should set up some pages of synthesis or coordination that makes use of them all. This first systematization will allow us to establish the initial definition, the reference or the first reality that can be spoken of as “Lasallian education.”

This first part of our study will be the task of the final chapter.

Chapter 1 - THE TARGET GROUP

Bruno Alpago fsc

Led by God though in spite of himself to become involved with gratuitous schools for boys.¹ John Baptist de La Salle and a group of teachers began in Rheims (France) towards 1680 what would end up being the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Some fifteen years of laborious searching allowed the new community a trusting awareness of its own identity and of its mission in the Church and in society. Such is what La Salle and 12 Brothers expressed in pronouncing their perpetual vows 6 June 1694.

On the same date the Founder submitted for the assent of the Brothers the text of the *Rule*. A copy commonly dated 1705 which appears to reproduce in general this first edition bears these affirmations in its first chapter: “The necessity of this Institute is very great because the working class and the poor, being usually little instructed and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their children, cannot give them the instruction they need and a respectable and Christian education [...] It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and of the poor that the Christian Schools were established” (CL 25, pp. 16-17).

ARTISANS AND THE POOR²

In order to indicate the group in society from which the pupils of the Christian Schools ordinarily came La Salle’s writings utilise five times the expression *artisans and the poor*: in the *Common Rules*, articles 4, 5 and 6 of the first chapter, and in two of the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*:

¹ The faith interpretation that La Salle made of his own itinerary can be seen in the *Memorandum of the Beginnings* a lost manuscript of which the first biographers retain remnants; cf. CL 7, pages 167-169.

² Taken from Alpago (2000): *The Institute in the educational service of the poor*, ch. 1.

194 (1,1) and 207 (3,2). The selection of this expression appears very carefully made, quite intentional³.

Poor. An expression with variable geometry

Nowhere in his writings does La Salle offer a definition of the poor. However there are many such in the literature of the epoch. The Dictionary of the French Academy which was published for the first time in 1694 and liberally exploits that of Antoine Furetière (1690, posthumous) says concerning poor: “Adj. Having no means of subsistence, lacking what is needed for living [...] Poor is likewise a noun and in that case it means a beggar. Embarrassed poor: those who experience shame at having to beg alms publicly. Parish poor: those dependent on parish alms”. Trévoux’s dictionary (1721) does not differ from these.

Different writers gave other interpretations to the word poverty. For a certain author guarded in his style, “poverty is not having a stable and secure income that allows one to live without needing to work. The man who as luck would have it has no other source of income than his mental or physical work can count himself among the poor” (Sassier, 1990, p. 61). Put more simply poverty for some meant a permanent situation of lowly life, for others hunger and wretchedness.⁴

Ultimately and in language directly understandable it was affirmed that the poor were “those lacking everything”, “lacked everything needed for life”. The emblematic image for the poor person was thus the beggar as the dictionaries were saying.

How then determine what was “everything needed for life”? It seems that at the time and with reference to those everyone called poor a good parameter would be “Assuring daily bread for oneself and one’s own” understanding assuring, bread and daily in their most obvious meaning.

Poverty was widespread in the France of the Great King. Many of its

³ The term “artisans and the poor” gets two other mentions, one in the *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* referring to those taking part in certain types of amusements considered improper for Christians (RB 205,5,406.413).

⁴ However the ease and frequency with which this occurred made it difficult in practice to separate both concepts.

inhabitants - certainly more than half - subsisted in danger of not being assured at one time or another of their daily bread.

Some went through their whole life like this. Others fell into this situation when they lost a state of relative well-being which they did not succeed in regaining. Others went through tight times with more or less frequency. An income that was enough in November with the harvest still recent and provisions cheap was probably not enough in May with reserves diminished and the new harvest yet to come. Illness would occasion out of the ordinary expenses worsened by lost days' pay. Not having family welfare, an income that was enough for a small family dwindled with the arrival of new children. Market ups and downs affected the street without notice for masses of workers whose work demand dwindled.

Two other poverty factors deserve mention: climate and war. After the terrible winter of 1663-64 came the difficult one of 1683-84, followed in some places (Rheims for example) by the very severe one of 1684-85. The continued fall in mean temperature between the years 1687 and 1700 is recorded as "the little glacial era". Within this the especially cold year of 1692 and the "rotten" year of 1693 brought about the loss of successive harvests (and that of 1691 had already been poor). Joined to this, epidemics and war contributed to a demographic catastrophe not experienced in France in the succeeding centuries⁵. In the midst of a rather more benign climate however the winter of 1708-09 was atrocious.

In such circumstances the scarcity of supplies rapidly translated into hunger for the poor. The peasants who in order to free themselves from debt had to sell houses, lands and tools went to swell the army of permanent beggars of the towns.

For its part war abounded in the reign of Louis XIV. He inherited some conflicts: the Thirty Years War plus the War of the Fronde. However those which broke out or which he provoked during his personal rule became longer each time: campaigns in Flanders and in Franche-Comté in

⁵ It is calculated that between 1693 and 1694 the difference between births and deaths resulted in a negative leap of 1,500,000 inhabitants for a population of some 20,000,000 (cf. Lachiver, 1990, pp. 96-208).

1667-68; war in Holland from 1672-1679; war with the Augsburg League from 1688 to 1697; War of the Spanish Succession from 1701 to 1713. Moreover there was the Protestant guerrilla activity brought about in 1685 by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Because of all this the economic situation of peasants, workers and minor artisans was extremely vulnerable, not being able either to count on any form – or only in incipient shape – of social security. The phrase “A poor person is anyone who can become one” (Jean Gutton) corresponds well to these times.

It is not surprising then that the number of the poor was high. An investigation initiated by Marshall Vauban culminated in 1707 – a relatively favourable period – in a not very encouraging analysis: “Almost a tenth of the population is reduced to a state of begging, and in fact begs; [...] as to the other nine parts five are no in condition to give alms because they themselves are reduced practically more or less to this sad situation; [...] of the four remaining parts, three are going very badly, full of debt and lawsuits; as to the tenth, less than one hundred thousand families are to be counted; there are not ten thousand [families] large or small who can be said to be very comfortable⁶.

With things being such it is probable that Lachiver’s estimate is probably not exaggerated. He states that some 75% of France’s population in Louis XIV’s times was made up of poor people or of people of such scant fortunes that they didn’t succeed in keeping up when prices of items of basic need rose (Lachiver, 1990, p. 431).

Artisans

According to the dictionaries cited above an artisan was a worker who laboured at a mechanical art, a tradesman, for example a shoemaker, locksmith, carpenter, hatter, etc. As a striking or brighter item of information, Trévoux’s dictionary indicated that some artisans (and traders) had succeeded - notwithstanding belonging to this group - in distinguishing

⁶ The upper group includes nobles, ecclesiastics, bourgeois and well established traders; cited in Sossier, 1990, pp. 126 f.

themselves in science and literature.

These “mechanical arts” were not all estimated equal whether from the social point of view or the economic. Goldsmiths and silversmiths, tapestry-makers, gunsmiths and still others were at the peak of the artisans’ world while beneath them was to be found the wide range of “small artisans” who busied themselves with plain work in wood, leather, wool or in construction. Still further down were to be found unqualified labourers who could only offer the strength of their arms.

Within each trade the apprentices formed the lowest rung. With apprenticeship completed you entered the level of “journeyman” or tradesman. The top grade – that of “master” – was acceded to by only a very few who might encounter numerous difficulties including financial ones.

Relations within a trade, with other trades and with the authorities were surrounded with minute regulations down to the tiniest detail. With its origins in a framework of small business, this organisation found itself relentlessly pursued by new work conditions, precursors of the industrial revolution.

More than within the same trade, solidarity between artisans was forged among those who occupied the same level even across different trades. There were masters who did not hold back from practically reducing their apprentices to servitude. At the same time there was a multiplying of societies (illegal to be sure) of apprentices – and strikes.

The majority of apprentices worked as wage-earners. Others were self-employed. The best ones had other artisans under their orders. The possessions of one or another ranged from just their own work-tools to a workshop-business more or less well set up.

There were artisans who succeeded in improving their financial situation. The majority of the small artisans and the unqualified workers lived strictly from day to day. Sickness, accidents, family increase, decrease in demand for labour, quite simply obliged them to have recourse to outside assistance in order to subsist.

Given all of this the categories of artisans and of poor were often muddled. “The artisans [of Poitiers] are so poor that they have hardly ceased

working when they have to be put into the work-house”, communicated the superintendent in 1684. Fifteen years later the superintendent of Tours was mentioning “three thousand men and women - almost all silk-workers – deprived of all employment and seeking alms as a mob” (Sassier, 1990, p. 157).

These were the “artisans and the poor” whose sons formed the main body of the clientele served by the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

THE PUPILS OF THE “CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS”

The social milieu

Outside of the few occasions in which pupils are designated as “the sons of artisans and the poor” Lasallian writings most commonly and with reason designate them and their families simply as “poor”.

Such was the daily reality

The “poor Brothers” had large numbers of the poor day after day in their schools. Many phrases taken from Lasallian writings testify to this fact. “Only the poor come looking for us”. “Recognise Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children whom you have to instruct”. Recalling Saint Francis de Sales, La Salle asks the Brothers: “Do you have these sentiments of charity and tenderness towards the poor children whom you have to educate?” “You have the happiness of working in the instruction of the poor”. “You have the good fortune to be employed particularly in instructing the poor”. “You are with the poor every day”. “The majority [of your pupils] were born poor” (MF 86,2,2; 96,3,2; 101,3,2; 113,1,2; 143,2,2; 166,2,2; 189,1,2; MR 202,2,2).

The situation of these children was worthy of compassion

Even though in the writings of the Founder we do not come across a definition of poor, the daily and prolonged commitment that he and his Brothers had with the poor afforded a very accurate knowledge of the reality. From this proximity there emerged lines as objective and perspicacious as the following: “Consider that it is a practice only too common for working people and the poor to allow their children to live on their

own, roaming all over like vagabonds, as long as they are unable to put them to some work. These parents have no concern to send their children to school, because their poverty does not allow them to pay teachers, or else, obliged as they are to look for work outside the home, they have to abandon their children to fend for themselves” (MR 194.1.1).

Other texts of similar origin echo similar sentiments. In general the artisans and the poor “being usually little instructed and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their children” the majority of parents “are not sufficiently instructed” about religion “but most parents are not sufficiently enlightened in these matters. Some are taken up with their daily concerns and the care of their family; others, under the constant anxiety of earning the necessities of life for themselves and their children, cannot take the time to teach their children their duties as Christians” (MR 194,1,1; RC 1,4; MR 193,2,1).

Some of these not sufficiently instructed parents - even while keeping their distance from the gratuitous school - came to appreciate the benefits of education. The *Conduct* proposes some courses of action to deal with such apathy including coming to suggest that they should be denied parish alms if they don't take care to send their children to school.

The same *Conduct* states that “Ordinarily, the children of the poor do as they wish. Their parents often take no care of them or even idolize them. What their children want they also want” (GE 16,2,17-24; 16,2,19; 16,2,20).

However “The results of this condition are regrettable, for these poor children, accustomed to lead an idle life for many years, have great difficulty adjusting when it comes time for them to go to work. Furthermore, through association with bad companions, they learn to commit many sins that are very difficult to stop later on because of the persistent bad habits they have contracted over such a long time”. For all these reasons the Brothers “ought to look upon the children whom you are appointed to teach as poor, abandoned orphans. Although the majority of them do have a father here on earth, they are still as if they had none and are abandoned to themselves for the salvation of their souls” (MR 194,1,1; MD 37,3,1).

Children need instruction, control, affection - La Salle doesn't shy away from the term tenderness: the Brothers "will love tenderly all their students". "You have poor children in your care every day – love them tenderly". "You know that you are responsible for the instruction of the poor. Imitate the tenderness of [Saint Dominic] toward them, and overcome nature when it suggests that you ought to have more consideration for the wealthy." "Do you have these sentiments of charity and tenderness toward the poor children whom you have to educate? Do you take advantage of their affection for you to lead them to God? If you have for them the firmness of a father to restrain and to withdraw them from misbehaviour, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you and to do for them all the good that depends on you" (RC 7,13; MF 166,2,2; 150,1,2; 101,3,2).

Population characteristics

Residence and gender

The pupils of the Christian Schools all lived in towns – big or small – as long as these allowed for the existence of a school of at least two classes. The Brothers were to teach "together and by association". La Salle did not occupy himself directly with rural areas.⁷

All the pupils were boys. La Salle and the Brothers of his time did not take on the teaching of girls.⁸

Age

There is an explicit indication in the Conduct: "No child shall be admitted who is not fully six years old unless, in some individual case, size and intelligence makes up for the lack of age."

A "model" admission form mentions a 6 year old pupil and a 12 year old. In admission register "models" can be seen an eight and a half year old

⁷ "The members of this Community devote themselves to teaching in tuition-free schools, in towns only..." (MH 0,0,3), towns which could be quite small. This urban option did not prevent La Salle and the Brothers from taking on the care of *Teachers Colleges* in which were formed country teachers as is covered further on.

⁸ Mixed schools were forbidden but they did exist; cf. CL 7, pp. 49-55.

child who has had two years schooling while another twelve and a half years one has four years schooling – there is even mention of a 16 year old. It is impossible to know for certain how many of these examples correspond to reality.

Other indications: “It is to be arranged that pupils do not learn to write until they reach the age of ten”.⁹ But “If, however, it should happen that there are any who have reached twelve years of age and have not yet begun to write, they may be put in the writing class [...] provided that they know how to read French well and correctly and that it seems that they will not be attending school for much more time” (GE 22,4,2; 22,1,7-8; 13,4,5-7; 13,1 13; 4,1,3; 4,1,2).

Certain observations or arrangements suppose the presence in the school of little children: it is very difficult for the very little ones to maintain the proper posture in church; corporal punishment is not to be given if this only serves to make a child cry; “There are also many little children who likewise must not be corrected or only very rarely. They have not attained the use of reason and are not capable of profiting from correction”. The *Conduct* sets out the prayers to be said for a deceased pupil “as long as he is more than seven”¹⁰ taking for granted that there would be those of a lower age.

On the other hand the presence of pupils more than twelve must have been common. The *Conduct* considers the cases of lads who have to work and consequently are present at school on a reduced timetable (GE 15,6,9; 15,4,6; 15,6,38; 7,3,8; 16,1,1-6).

All the same a minimum age is pointed out: six years, unless...The upper limit was imposed by the life – often hard – of artisans and the poor.¹¹

⁹ A restrictive sentence eliminated in the edition of 1720.

¹⁰ Those less than 7 have not arrived at the use of reason and as such cannot commit sin and do not need prayers.

¹¹ In addition to being below age the *Conduct* indicates other impediments to the admission of pupils: “Little children shall not be admitted if they can come only during summertime, in good weather, or at a later hour than the others. No children shall be admitted who are so retarded and of such a low intelligence that they cannot learn anything and might thus distract others or cause trouble in the school. No child shall be accepted if the child suffers from some communicable disease, such as scrofula, skin rash, or major epileptic seizures, no matter the reason” (GE 22,4,2 y 4).

Numbers of pupils

The *Conduct* prescribes: “Each class should contain between fifty and sixty students [...]. In classes of students learning only writing or only reading from charts or from a spelling book, the number should not exceed fifty” (GE 23,1,9-10).

The information that the biographers give about the influx of pupils to the Christian Schools makes you think that such numbers were repeatedly surpassed.

On the occasion of the visit to one of his schools the Parish Priest of the large Parisian parish of Saint Sulpice found it populated by over four hundred pupils. The question is whether the school had five or six classes - whatever the case the average was more than 60 per class. The same Parish Priest set up a monthly Mass for all the pupils of the schools and there were more than a thousand children. There were fourteen classes which gave an average of seventy per class (CL 7, pp. 363-364).

In Rouen there is talk of one hundred pupils per class (Maillefer cited by Gallego, 1986, p. 394). The schools opened in Chartres in 1699 “lost no time in filling up”. The Sunday school opened in the Paris Novitiate “lost no time in filling up” – there were 200 youths under 20 receiving different lessons based on needs and capacities (cf. CL 7, pp. 372 and 389).

In a short time different towns where the Brothers had made a beginning with a school – given its success – asked for new openings (Paris, Calais, Troyes, Versailles... the Darnetal school was followed by Rouen and others). The Founder’s correspondence repeatedly reflects his preoccupation that the schools be filled. When this happened he did not conceal his satisfaction.

In April 1706 he told Brother Gabriel Drolin that in the Marseilles school the two Brothers had close to 200 pupils. In May 1710 he urged the same correspondent: “You must try to increase the number of your students.” This is to be weighed against some lines further on: “You told me in your previous letter that you had at least sixty students.” His unease on hear-

ing the statements of a certain traveler, M. Ricordeau, is understandable: “He also says that you have less than 30 students.” In his final letter of December 1716 to the same Brother he asks him: “Please let me know how many students you have” (C 22,9; 28,26.28; 31,18; 32,12).

To the young Brother Matthias he wrote: “Act in such a way as to increase the number of your pupils as much as you can”¹² and to Brother Robert: “Take care not to reduce the number of your students by your scolding; teach them well so that they will not drop out. You are doing well to try to have your students make progress, both to increase their number... I am very pleased that you have a large number of students. Be sure to make them progress well.”¹³

In this influx of students - viewed in the light of faith – La Salle was offering the invitation to recognise “a more extended ministry” with which already in this world God recompenses educators who devote themselves to extending his reign (MR 207,1).

Poor and rich

In reality, while the intention was to place elementary education within the reach of the poor, the Christian Schools did not have a homogeneous clientele. While being gratuitous for all nevertheless they received those who were not poor in the strict sense of the word. The teachers or at least the directors or inspectors must have known pretty well who were poor and who were not. This diversity explains certain norms.

“They will show equal affection for all their pupils – more even for the poor than the rich.” The Brother Inspector had to see to it “that teachers apply themselves with as much, or even more, affection to teaching the poor as to teaching the rich; and that they neglect no one and show no

¹² This Brother was at the time at Mende a region of deeply-rooted Huguenot influence. Parents resisted sending their children to the Catholic school, the only one authorised. The teachers needed to gain the adhesion of the pupils and – as much as possible – that of their parents. It couldn't have been easy for this new teacher who moreover seemed to have his mind preoccupied with other matters (cf. LA 47,4).

¹³ There are indications that, in its early days, this Brother appealed to violent resources (cf. C 56,8; 57,10; 58,16.20).

preference for anyone” – a paradoxical affection whereby some were “more equal” than others (RC 7,14; GE 21,2,12).¹⁴

Some pupils arrived wearing shoes while others had clogs (GE 11,3,11-12). There were those who had a brazier in winter (GE 8,4,6).

For the very poor special care was afforded them: to them and to them only it was permitted to give school texts as a prize – not however to those who could buy them (GE 14,1,9); and they were to be provided with paper for writing lessons if such lies outside their financial resources (GE 21,1,6). The Inspector needed to see that in the classrooms “he shall know the number of books available in each class for the use of poor students... The Director or the Inspector of Schools will have identified those children they know are so poor that they cannot buy books” (GE 21,1,5; 18,11,1-2). Finally there were the really poor (and the teacher had to make a list of these) who were to benefit from the provision of food that their better-off companions made voluntarily at lunch and the afternoon snack (cf. GE 2,3,1-10). On the other hand “No student with wealthy parents should be allowed to come to the school beyond the first day without having the books needed for the lessons, or if in the writing class, without paper and an inkstand to do the writing” (GE 22,4,5).

We know that some corporations of masters instigated legal actions against La Salle and the Brothers for receiving non-paying pupils whose parents were able to pay. Would these have been so many as to bring ruin to the other teachers? Or was it a question of real or supposed rights of the group? It was possibly a bit of each.

According to Blain “among a hundred of the poorest pupils who came to the Christian Schools, three or four rich or well-off ones could have been slipped in.” This was enough to unleash the reprisals of the other teachers (cf. CL 8, p.7). Would this have been the true proportion?

The *Memoire on Latin* opens a crevice into the question: “Of a hundred

¹⁴ The possibility of the opposite temptation is not bypassed: the Brothers will realize God “whether they have neglected some of his disciples, who were perhaps the most backward, or perhaps the poorest of whether they had a predilection for certain, and because were richer or graceful, and possessed more natural attraction for others” (MR 206,1,1).

boys who were in the Brothers' schools how many would later study Latin? Even if there were a few..." Further on: "Experience teaches that [...] ordinary people and with greater reason the poor who come to the Christian Schools never know how to read Latin well [...] and so it is quite useless to dedicate time teaching people how to read well a language they will never use" (CL 7, pp. 375-376). For the author of the text, those who could aspire to clerical or university studies were a rarity or simply did not exist among the pupils of these schools. This is a useful indication even when there is no strict correlation between financial well-being and such studies.

"God has entrusted them"

The text which emphasized the orphan state of poor children continues: "Although the majority of them do have a father here on earth, they are still as if they had none and are abandoned to themselves for the salvation of their souls. This is the reason God places them as if under your guardianship. This God of goodness places them in your hands and undertakes to give them everything you ask of him for them" (MD 37,3,1).

Reading their experience with eyes of faith La Salle and the Brothers lived it as a sharing in the saving design of God and this is acknowledged in words such as these: "[The Brothers] will manifest equal affection for all pupils, even more for the poor than for the rich, because they are much more entrusted by their Institute with the former than with the latter" (RC 7,14). "You are under the obligation to instruct the children of the poor", you must, "prefer them to the wealthiest children on earth" (MF 80,3,2). Their employment requires them to have "the role of saviour" of the poor (cf. MF 86,3,2). "Poverty ought to be dear to you, responsible as you are for the instruction of the poor" (MF 96,3,2). For the Brothers "Jesus Christ has called you to fulfill his ministry and to teach the poor" (MF 99,2,2). "You have a purpose that strongly resembles" that of the Premonstratensians, which is "to teach the truths of the Gospel to the poor" (MF 132,2,2). "You are by your state obliged to instruct poor children" (MF 133,3,2). "Is this how you [like Saint Paulinus] love the poor? God asks you to give them ... spiritual alms" (MF 137,2,2). You know

that you are responsible for the instruction of the poor” (MF 150,1,2). “You have to teach poor children” (MF 153,3,2). In the poor God has entrusted to us “the treasures of the Church” (MF 154,1,2). “These poor children are also the ones whom God has entrusted to you and to whom you are obliged to proclaim the truths of the holy Gospel” (MF 166,2,2). “You are required by your work to love the poor, because the task you have in this work is to be devoted to their instruction” (MF 173,1,2). “You, then have succeeded the Apostles in their work of catechizing and instructing the poor” (MF 200,1,2).

Many times in Lasallian writings the pupils of the schools are described as “those that God has entrusted to you”, “those that God has entrusted to your care.” When parents, church pastors and public authorities entrusted these children to the Lasallian pedagogues it was God who was entrusting them.

Expectations of achievements

Instituted in favour of the children of artisans and the poor the Christian Schools were focused on the needs of this group in times of limited social mobility. It was a matter of acquiring skills that would enable improved work performance – getting better jobs, becoming more efficient in their profession, getting into new jobs that demanded an assured mastery of numeracy and literacy. It was a matter of incorporating behaviours such as how to perform correctly in front of whatever person or body. It was a matter finally and as overall culmination that they should know the “duties of a Christian” and live in accordance with their faith.

The *Rule* says succinctly that “the principal fruit” of the schools was “to forestall these disorders” encountered by artisans and the poor “and to prevent their evil consequences” (RC 1,6).

At greater length the MR 194,1 lists the “important advantage” that God produces by means of the schools: “where the teaching is offered free of charge and entirely for the glory of God, where the children are kept all day, learn reading, writing, and their religion, and are always busy, so that when their parents want them to go to work, they are prepared for employment”.

The allusion to employment was reiterated: for parents culpable of their children's absences from schools there was need to "make them understand [...] the wrong that they do to their children in not making them learn to read and write, and how much this can harm their children, since lack of this knowledge will leave the children incapable of any employment. It should be explained to them how important it is for an artisan to know how to read and write well. It should be emphasized that, however limited the child's intelligence, the child that knows how to read and write will be capable of anything" (GE 16,2,18.21) meaning capable of anything at their level of "artisan".

These "exterior" apprenticeships would turn these poor youngsters into good citizens of the State of which they were beginning to become members (MF 160,3,2).

Much more important was all that concerned faith and a virtuous life. One text among many others says it very clearly: "You have been appointed by God to succeed the holy Apostles in teaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ and in confirming his holy law in the minds and hearts of those whom you instruct when you teach catechism, which is your principal function" (of the Brothers) (cf. MF 145,3,2). "You too must consider it a great personal reward [of God], this consolation that you feel at the bottom of your heart, that the children whom you instruct behave well, know their religion thoroughly, and live a life of piety" (MF 207.2,2).

What was at stake was that the Christian life experienced in school would be continued in adult life. La Salle said as much in words that make evident his own joy: "You can expect yet another reward, which God will give you in advance in this life if you are generously devoted to your duty and if, through zeal and the grace of your state, you have known well how to give your disciples a foundation in the Christian spirit. This is the very special satisfaction you will have when they grow up and you see them living with justice and piety, keeping free from evil associates, and performing good deeds [...]. Look upon this, then, as a considerable reward that God gives you, even in this world, to see that religion and piety are increased among the faithful, especially among the working class and the poor (MR 207,3,1.2).

After looking upon these poor children as “as images of Jesus Christ and as those who are best disposed to receive his Spirit in abundance” (MF 173,1,2) as “the ones most disposed to profit by his teaching, because in them it meets with fewer external obstacles” (MF 166,2,2) it was expected that by means of the Christian Schools there would be brought about in them the plan of our loving God who wills that all of us “come to the knowledge of the truth” and are saved (1Tm 2,4 cited in MR 193) and that they “might have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10,10 cited in MR 196,3).

OTHERS TARGETED

At the death of the Founder on April 7, 1719, there were Brothers in 22 houses distributed throughout France and one in Rome. There were one or two schools served by each house. These were all, save one, gratuitous schools in which teaching of the elements was offered.

The exception was the complex of Saint Yon in the outskirts of Rouen. Since 1705, there had been there – adjacent to the Novitiate – a boarding-school for sons of middle-class families - business people for the most part. Those who attended received in addition to accommodation a curriculum more developed than in the communal gratuitous schools. The success obtained by these pupils attracted others. Certain parents confided to the Brothers the “reform” of their problem sons. Finally they accepted some prisoners even, sent there with lettres de cachet (bonded prisoners under royal secret). None of these groups was composed of the poor – the families or the State paid their expenses. However they had needs that educational structures of the time couldn't meet.

Previously, Lasallian service of the poor had given rise to other institutions unfortunately less long-lived.

The first in time was the Seminary for country school teachers whose effective beginnings are to be situated around 1686 - in Rheims - at the request of the Duke of Mazarin. Some years later La Salle described it thus: “Provision is also made [by the Brothers] for training schoolmasters for rural districts in a house, separate from the Community, that we call a *Normal school*. Those who are trained there remain for only a few years,

until they are well prepared in religious spirit as well as for their work. They dress just like ordinary secular people except for the black - or at least dark brown - color of their clothing, and they cannot be distinguished from them except by the split white collar they wear and their close-cropped hair. They are taught to become proficient in singing, reading, and writing. Their room, board, and laundry are all free. In due course, they are placed in a hamlet or a village as a parish assistant.¹⁵ Having secured a position, they maintain no further contact with the Community except for what is appropriate and courteous. However, they are welcomed back for a periodic retreat” (MH 0,0,4-6).¹⁶

This successful initiative faded away at an uncertain date (1691?) for lack of candidates and of support. It was reborn in Paris in 1699 in the parish of Saint Hyppolyte and produced excellent results under the expert leadership of Brother Nicolas Vuyart. However, upon the decision of this Brother in 1704 to depart from the Institute support came to an end and the *Seminary* suffered shipwreck. There was however a third attempt in Saint Denis from 1709 to 1712. La Salle had relied on commitments made by the young cleric Jean-Charles Clément but this person reneged and his family instituted a judicial process which ended in a sentence for the Founder and the closure of the institution - and that was the end of that.

The other was called *Sunday school* or *Christian Academy*. It began operating towards 1700 at the request of the Parish Priest of Saint Sulpice in the “Grand’Maison” of the Paris novitiate. However in 1703 the Brothers had to emigrate from the “Grand’Maison”. Re-established in another place, the *Academy* was the victim of lawsuits initiated by the writing-masters and in 1704 it closed. Paris would lament this loss for many years.

In the same “Grand’Maison” had operated a boarding establishment for *sons of Irish nobles*, Catholics who had accompanied the deposed monarch- in-exile James II. These youths found there the time needed to set them up in jobs available for them.

¹⁵ That is to say, assistant – in such a case - to the Parish Priest. One of his numerous functions (well down the list however) was to teach basic literacy.

¹⁶ This Memoire of the Habit dates from late 1689 or early 1690.

CONCLUSION

With their total gratuity the Christian Schools allowed access to formal education to very many families whose poverty did not allow them to pay schoolmasters (cf. MR 194,1,1). The poor came in this way to open doors for themselves into a new world of culture, employment, society and church.

It was a matter of a real social ascent which would project itself into the future – fathers who had benefited in their childhood from the benefits of schooling would later display eagerness for their children to benefit in their turn.

The Christian Schools had likewise been frequented by pupils of more favourable socio-economic situation - it is difficult to be precise as to the numbers - but undoubtedly not many. This passed off without traumas within the community but it brought about serious external difficulties in a context where it was taken for granted that rich and poor should remain separate. La Salle and his Brothers based their endeavours on being useful to the poor – not on excluding the rich from their service. This overturned deep-rooted customs and ideas, and called into question the school organization of the time. The Christian Schools did not fit known images whether by opening to all without discrimination or by the breadth of their courses.

Lasallian pedagogy showed itself solid and flexible enough to be able to deal effectively with situations not limited to elementary schools for the sons of artisans and the poor – literacy skills for young workers, teacher education, boarding colleges and adult prisoners. With the passage of time the range of services would proceed with increased and ever-growing dimensions without abandoning its preference for the first targets of its activity, those who had given birth to it.

There were different forms of “to procure the glory of God as far it was possible and as God would require” (cf. *Formula of Vows*).

Chapter 2 - LA SALLE: SOCIAL AND WORK INSERTION AND CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING

Edgard Hengemüle fsc

The 17th century witnessed a growing affirmation of the value and necessity of education both for individuals and for groups. Among other things that contributed to this valuation there was the spreading of written texts that followed the invention of printing, the importance given to personal reading of the Bible as promoted by Protestants, and the needs created by progress in the worlds of science, commerce and the beginnings of industrialisation.

The need for education was not simply something imposed on the *élite*. In the Third Estate, the growing middle-class, having already attained social elevation through economic growth, felt the need to affirm and demonstrate its value through learning. Around 1700, there was also born an ambition and an impetus for a cultural promotion on behalf of the poorest, among whom were the children and young people growing up in the streets and in idleness, so that, through education, the dangers that stemmed from their situation might be avoided. A movement can be seen, above all in an apprenticeship to reading, and less strongly, to writing, and as a consequence, growth in the number of pupils.

But, in whatever relates to the poor, to artisans, to farmers and to the general public, it is important not to forget that this movement was far from winning unanimous approval. Neither the humanists, nor the philosophers favored universal education, especially anything that surpassed the elements of learning. This was so, among other reasons, because attendance at school threatened the richness of the nation: taking children away from manual work compromised agricultural and industrial production, and also because instruction indiscriminately spread and improved could open the door to social protest.

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

Who was entrusted to promote this movement and to guide education in general? It was the Church. It defined its objectives. It established the content. It chose and controlled the teachers. It administered education.

In this effort the Church was supported by public power at the level of the kingdom and the local population. The kingdom had no general, systematic or coherent policy on education. It lacked any specific organisation such as a ministry to promote it or a budget to finance it. But it encouraged especially elementary education. At the local level also there was no public policy with regard to projects to solve the problem of popular education and the responsibilities were left to the Church. "Cities limited themselves to examine the propositions made to them and guided by official Catholicism accepted, sometimes collaborated to bring about temporal achievements in this semi-secular, semi-religious work of educating children" (Poutet, 1970, pp. 70-71). In the private domain, the ecclesial force was strongly seconded by organisations such as the Company of the Most Blessed Sacrament¹⁷ and many Religious Congregations.

Someone might ask: Among those who had access to written texts, with the spread of printing, the increase in books and readers, the extension of teaching by the Church and with its official support, were there not changes? A specialist in this area considers that the spread of reading was certainly considerable with an enormous multiplying effect. Each time that a person who could read could exercise in the family, in his local area in his village, a role of transmission which in many cases was a role of interpretation from Latin or French or from dialects in the Provinces (cf. Grosperin, 1984, p. 168). The appreciable increase in readers allowed, therefore, access by a large section of the population to knowledge of the message of writings.

¹⁷ A relatively secret organisation made up of members from the higher levels of society dedicated to a spiritual life and Christian action through charitable works, concern for moral destitution, combating heresy, supporting missionary work, and concern to remedy the religious ignorance of the children of the people.

LA SALLE AND EDUCATION IN THE GREAT CENTURY

A man of the Church, the Founder knew the renewal movement concerning education in his time from within his Church. He not only knew it; he inserted himself into this school current. Within it, he imprinted his personal stamp. He multiplied schools which at the end of his life were 42 in number, within which there worked 100 Brothers. By teaching reading, writing, spelling, calculation, politeness and catechesis, and by offering popular education, connecting life and Gospel inspiration, he gave his support so that the children of artisans and the poor could access what was necessary:

1. social insertion,
2. insertion into work,
3. above all, Christian training.

SOCIAL INSERTION

In 17th century France there was a deep belief in the inequality and the great social and economic contrasts between the existing human groups. Such contrasts in the divisions in society of the three known social orders, or three Estates: Clerics, Nobility, and Third Estate, grouped in distinct levels from the high middle-class down to the indigent.

In this unequal society, any suggestion of change was suspect. The dominant idea was social stability and the maintenance of existing social structures. By far the predominating idea among the élites was that each group remains within its reality, that is to say, within its state and condition, and so limits its ambitions.

This attitude became personalised in the figure of the “honnête homme”, particularly in the second half of the 17th century. This man who besides being upright and courteous, capable of maintaining agreeable relationships and giving importance to culture, was in no way revolutionary but conforming to the laws and customs of the society without any belief in progress or change in institutions except for the improvement of individual consciences; someone who maintained a happy medium and preserved the traditional faith, making it the foundation of the social order.

The stability of such an order was justified by a whole system of ideas. Philosophically, the nobility put forward the theory of the innate, according to which the value of the person came from birth: the blood, the lineage already contained what the individual was going to be.¹⁸ Theologically, that knowing how to situate oneself in one's social category was something that God wished: that Divine Providence destined some to be clerics or nobles and that others were born to be poor with all that such a chance meant.

Parallel to social stability, there reigned also conformity to the political order. This also had its theological justification. In this regard, it is known that Bossuet based the idea of absolute monarchy on the Bible itself when he wrote: "Politics drawn from the very words of Sacred Scripture".

Education and Society

What about education in all this? The first thing to say is that until the 19th century there was no explicit connection made between education and society. As in all the history of schooling in civilization, there was also in the 17th century the fact that in both institutions – society and education, especially in its formal development for the school – two mutually influenced and related realities. They were to a certain extent reciprocal productions.

In the environment indicated by French society of Louis XIV's century, the kinds of basic education offered changed in accordance with the belonging of persons to one or other of the three Estates, or, as was said at the time, "in accordance with his condition." Education, in general, besides being thought 'convenient' at each social level, was considered and functioned in inculcating respect for the social order, particularly to the established social orders, and as an agent in reproducing existing social norms. Grosperin (1984, p. 21) asks: "How could it be forgotten that the moral education passed on in the 'little schools' was one of humility and of complete respect for the established order of the social hierarchy?"

¹⁸ This was the theory against which the middle-class was opposed, arguing that the criterion of a person's value came from his worth; that intellectual and moral values did not come from the cradle but were acquired through work and education.

One of the demonstrations of this was the importance given in the school curriculum of the time to teaching politeness. It taught each person to become aware of his condition as a member of a hierarchical society and of his own role in that society in knowing the specific rules of his condition so as to behave as he should.

Effects

Does this mean that despite all its shortcomings, popular education had social effects, whether wished for or not? A whole mass of evidence, different and complementary, reveals that this was certainly true.

The king himself, in an open letter, recognised that since the creation of popular schools, spread through the efforts of men such as Demia and La Salle, there was “a notable change in public order and behaviour” (referred to by Giolitto, p. 397). In Rheims, Grenoble, Calais, Rouen... juvenile delinquency and idleness diminished in middle of the cities and the most notorious streets were “purified.”

Could it be said that the effects, especially learning to read, resulted in forming revolutionaries? Groperrin, in a citation already cited, does not think so (cf. 1984, p. 168). Could books of piety, stories and readings from the *Blue Library*¹⁹, proverbs, predictions and formulas from almanacs, official communications bring very much too popular culture and change it? It is important to be very careful about projecting onto former periods, the role that printing and the spread of reading had in the 19th and 20th centuries. Printed material certainly did not provoke a social revolution between the former pupils of the “little schools” of the Ancien Régime, these schools being in the final analysis, schools of conformity.

La Salle, education and social insertion

What about La Salle in this regard? Before speaking of the teaching and practice of La Salle in society, and before making a critical judgment on one or other of these things, it is prudent – important- to consider that Monsieur de La Salle is someone whom God raised up, step by step, to a

¹⁹ A collection of books, printed at Troyes, intended for popular use, which received its name because of the colour of its covers.

surprising social, economic and cultural exodus. He began by working **for** the teachers of the popular class. Later, he went and lived **with** them. Finally, he ended up living **like** them.

In Lasallian teaching (doctrine), the relationship of the school to civil society is very little present. As regards the formation of the pupil as a citizen, the Founder, in a summary of all his work, adds practically nothing to what is said in the meditation on Saint Louis, king of France: the good of the State will be sought in teaching the pupils “to read and to write, and all that refers to it” in the ministry of the Christian teacher “in what refers to the external” (cf. MF 160,3,2).

La Salle was aware of the different social orders and the existing economic, social and cultural inequality of his time and country. Above all, after beginning his work born of contact with teachers and pupils of a socio-economic and cultural origin different from his, he deepened his knowledge of the poverty in popular circles. It was by taking this into account and even more of the “disastrous consequences” resulting from the fact that many parents had no conditions that prepared them nor any time to take care of the Christian instruction of their children, and that these children grew up left to themselves and acquiring bad habits by living in the streets with bad companions (cf. RC 1,4-6; MR 193,2,1; 194,1,1).

But, a man of his time, he in no way questioned in theory the existing social order, nor the basic doctrine that justified it (cf. DA 214,1,1; MD 9,1,2 ; MF 166,2,1; 91,1,1; 91,1,2; 106,2,2; DB: 2,10,3). Chartier sees De La Salle’s acceptance of the social order of his time in the fact that the *Rules of Decorum* are a secular apprenticeship for a world “in which courteous actions must translate social relationships with complete clarity” (cf. Chartier, 1990, p. 63; RU 0,9 y 0,13).

As regards questioning social stability, something to which the Founder never refers, it follows that one of the characteristics of the time is the modesty of being in the middle, the absence of any excess. In concrete terms, in the first of his catechisms when he speaks of “the principal capital vices” that is to say pride, he defines it in the following terms: “Pride is the unregulated desire to rise above one’s state which does not correspond with God’s regulation or the indulgence in such elevation” (DA 214,1,1).

From his grandfather and from his father, councilors to the kingdom, John Baptist de La Salle had learned respect for institutions, understood as customs and social structures, established in the country or by law or custom. So too for political structures, among which the principal was the monarchy, the power exercised by the king. As regards this theme:

1. In his writings, La Salle states that a king rules in an absolute manner in his kingdom. He teaches that it is necessary to accord respect to his person and to his representatives, as well as to his portraits and his statues. This means depending on him and observing his laws (cf. EMO 2,52 y 4,138,4; RU 0,0,12 y 209,1,613; DA 203,0,12 y 206,0,14; DB 1,14,3).

2. Poutet (1970, p. 41) observes that in the *Duties of a Christian*, in the *Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility* and in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, La Salle does not insist on the duties as a 'subject' with the king. Fiévet states that he has not found in any of the writings any reference to the reigning monarch such as will be found subsequently in the Napoleonic catechism.²⁰

3. Blain (CL 8, p. 127) says that La Salle lamented the death of Louis XIV more for its consequences for the Church than for the Institute. This does not mean that that he did not feel it as a loss for his institution. On more than one occasion, he benefitted from the royal protection. The sovereign paid the pension for the Brothers in the school at Alès; one of the instruments created to destroy heresy in that city, and called, therefore, a royal school. Through the archbishop of Paris, he entrusted to La Salle the care of the young Irish boys exiled in France. With money drawn from goods confiscated from Protestants or recovered from pirates, there was also a pension granted to the Brothers in Calais educating the children of sea-

²⁰ Question: What are our duties to Napoleon 1, our emperor? Answer: We must owe to our emperor, Napoleon 1, love, respect, obedience, fidelity, military service and the tributes ordained for the preservation and defence of the Emperor and the Throne. Question: Are there no particular reasons why we should be particularly interested in Napoleon 1, our Emperor? Answer: Yes, because God has raised him up under difficult circumstances to re-establish the holy religion of our ancestors and to be its protector, and because by his consecration received from the holy pontiff he has become the Lord's Anointed. Showering our emperor with his gifts whether in peace or in war, God has made him a minister of his power and image on the earth" (cited by Fiévet, pp. 50-51).

men.²¹ At Saint Yon, the Brothers received as pensioners the delinquents condemned by letters bearing the royal seal.²²

4. To this there could be added that, even in the time of the Founder, the Brothers began to run schools in Versailles, the royal domain, under the eyes of the court. The monarch conceded the right not to have to lodge royal soldiers in the *Seminary for Rural Schoolmasters at Saint Denis*. At Boulogne, land was given for the building of a house for the Brothers. Blain (CL 8, p. 127) goes as far as saying that “his Majesty had conceded everything that, until then, had been asked of him in the establishment of the Christian Schools.”

In educational practice?

For La Salle, the school, along with other functions, also exercised a social role. The very fact that he did not want his teaching institutions described as “charity schools” but rather “Christian Schools” contained a message in itself: the school was more than an object of charity. In bringing children off the street, he contributed to diminishing delinquency in the city centre. By giving to all and sundry an integral education, he also taught them “to live well” as members of society.

Theoretically, in having them read the *Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility*, he prepared them for living in society. In a practical manner, he taught them to respect others, beginning with their class companions; helping one another in school tasks, leading them to practise charity, to be “benefactors” with their poorest companions; entrusting them to be responsible in rendering services to the class and to the school through exercising the roles of those known as “officers”; helping those who were better-off socially and economically to live with the poor majority, which gave the latter the opportunity to enlarge their vocabulary and to acquire

²¹ Observation of Poutet (1970, p. 45): The king’s order to give “the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Calais” the sum of 150 pounds as ‘reward for the care and guidance given in the instruction of sailors who serve in my ships’ is almost an official recognition of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to be given weight in the absence of letters patent”.

²² Poutet also observes (1970, p. 47): “At Saint Yon, the letters patent also speak of adults ‘entrusted to the Brothers by the king’, a service more appropriately by judicial institutions”.

better models and to build relationships which could be useful for them in their future professional lives.

By teaching the sons of the people, La Salle offered them perspectives on better living conditions. This leads Hermosilla (Lasalliana 06-C-22) to state that the Founder “by placing a pen in the hands of the poor did not give them a weapon – as Voltaire and La Chatolais said – but rather their own means of support, their defense”.

In summary, as can be seen, La Salle was no theoretician about society, nor in the same way was he first of all a creator of pedagogical doctrine. Nevertheless, the gospel inspiration of his popular and effective education certainly contributed in large measure to social reform.

Among authors who study him, Favre attributes to him not only a social contribution but he can be seen as in the vanguard of political democracy: “Ahead of the democratic currents of his time, Saint John Baptist de La Salle worked courageously in France for the education of the people” (Favre, 1959, p. 156). Someone who stated this more explicitly and moreover categorises this contribution of La Salle for him, not only in the social but also in the political sphere, was P. Vincent:

Preparing good teachers for popular education is a generous and fruitful idea, and at the same time is most certainly democratic... Each time, without seeking to do so, in spreading instruction among the lower classes, he was one of the creators of the Revolution and one of those who worked most efficiently for the proclamation of human equality (Vincent, 1885, p. 185).

INSERTION INTO WORK

Furet and Ozouf (1977) recall that “even before the Revolution, reading and writing were thought necessary for Society and a great secret of modernity, a way that the market economy requires free will and written contracts.” Moreover, the development of manufacturing and commercial expansion open professional horizons to those among the people who can keep accounts, write commercial letters, draw...

Professional formation: Need and practice

In this developing world, as in any other world, you have to earn your livelihood. The normal way of doing this is through exercising a profession. This, in the popular world, was first and foremost a manual profession, in that, usually practical experience, knowing how to do something was more important than study or knowledge in itself. This in no way lessens the importance of an advisable formal apprenticeship.

In the absence of technical professional schools at the time of De La Salle, such a professional apprenticeship took place in the family, or by frequenting persons of the profession to learn to learn more institutionally and methodically, rather than in the offices of a corporation.

In the school world, the persons who offered teaching of a professional nature were the writing masters, who, at that time, added to calligraphy the teaching of grammar and arithmetic, including bookkeeping. They were not, in the first place, teachers. They were professional calligraphers, public writers and accountants.

As regards popular elementary schools, they, without any professional character, did not relate to the world of work. The rudiments they taught, particularly writing and calculation, more than culture, were practical tools for life. Usually, what they offered was not continuity of studies for the pupils but help in living a more useful Christian life.

Among those who gave importance to this question was Demia²³. He proposed that his pupils be formed as good artisans and that the factories and manufacturers could avail themselves of good careful apprentices and workers. In view of that, he paid attention, for example, to manual work and the reading of contracts.

Professional teaching took a considerable place with feminine communities of apostolic religious, who taught domestic skills (cooking, bread-making, spinning, crocheting, knitting...), horticulture, fruit culture or

²³ "In de Admonitions, in 1666, Charles Demia outlines an analysis of the bad conditions in which the poor lives. This text had a deep influence on Nicolas Barre, Nicolas Roland and Jean Baptist de La Salle" (Lauraire, 2001, p. 87).

in manufacturing linen, so as to offer the young of modest condition the means of gaining their livelihood.

La Salle and insertion into work

La Salle was interested in the future of pupils as regards work. He took into account that one of the “disastrous consequences” of the abandonment of the sons of artisans and the poor left to themselves, was that with the life as vagrants that lasted for years, they subsequently had “great difficulty in becoming accustomed to work.” He maintained the hope that these same young people, brought to the school, and kept busy the whole day, would be in condition to be employed in work whenever the parents wished (cf. MR 194,1).

In the *Conduct of Schools* it is very clear that the professional future of the pupils was one of the important themes in dialogue with the families. At the enrolment of a somewhat older pupil, the Director asked the parents “what did they wish to make of him; did they wish him to learn a trade, and in what length of time.” When the parents, above all those who were poor, were negligent in guaranteeing the assiduity of their sons, or thought of withdrawing them from school, the argument was not based on religion but on the future consequences of his attitude for the professional future of the pupils. If they neither remained in the school nor were studying, not learning to read and to write, “they will almost certainly be unable to be employed.” If, on the other hand, a son of an artisan knows how to read and write, “even though he may not be very intelligent, he is capable of doing everything” (GE 16,2,18 y 16,2,21)²⁴.

At least two works of De La Salle – the Novitiate for the Brothers and the Seminary for lay Country Schoolmasters- had a professional finality in the full meaning of the word, because they guaranteed a theoretical foundation, correct disposition and practical support for the teaching profession. In the same way, his Sunday school had a professional stamp. His programme of technical drawing was an implicit resource for whoever studied it.

²⁴ “It is said that someone capable of doing everything to indicate that given the opportunity he is well qualified to do whatever employment he is given” (Furetière).

The “Christian school”, that is, the Lasallian elementary course offered to the children of artisans and the poor, did not, technically speaking, offer authorization for a particular employment. But it was a preparation for work in a broad sense. It was so, in the first place, by giving a foundation to basic matters – counting, reading, good handwriting and calligraphy – technical skills for whatever profession of any time, because given the reality of the time, it provided the pupil with the skills “to be able to do everything”,²⁵ as we have just seen.

La Salle, in imparting what was secular in his curriculum, was not preparing people as clerics or for classical studies. In those foundational years, he offered a terminal programme that prepared poor pupils to find an employment for life. When parents asked for a continuation of school for their children, his studies were directed towards apprenticeship to a trade or towards general knowledge but not towards preparation for future studies (cf. Everett in *Lasalliana* 19-4-A-75). This is what occurred in the free boarding school at Saint Yon with its curriculum of a superior modern primary school for the particular benefit of the children of merchants.

Even the curriculum of the *Conduct of Schools* directed the teachers so that, in reading and writing classes, pupils were directed to copy such things “as it may be useful for them to know how to write and of which they might later have need.” Among those “documents which might be useful” were those related to the world of work, such as “budgets and work contracts” (GE 6,0,2; 4,4,14; cf. 23,3,11).

On the other hand, if the primary Lasallian school did not prepare professionals in the strict meaning of the word, the pupil who had studied there with his mastery of the basic instruments, and in addition, having been taught to copy, to spell, budgets, work contracts, invoices, receipts... was in better condition than any other child or young person to become

²⁵ Lauraire remarks: first (1966, p.57), “The expression capable of doing everything” can seem to be an optimistic exaggeration, but only to someone ignorant of the socio-professional principles of the XVIIth century where the shortage of qualified persons to exercise these employments existed”; second (*Lasalliana* A-04-25), “The pupils of that time could become competent in particular works when mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic were still rare in France at the time. The consequence was that those who came to this mastery were a privileged species”.

apprenticed in any group of offices and to quickly and perfectly master the secrets of the profession exercised there.

This was also true as regards secondary activities (handicrafts, manufacturing, the beginnings of industrial work...). Because as regards “handwriting offices”, that is to say, public employment at a tertiary level, those who followed the complete Lasallian elementary course were ready for it. They were similar to professional calligraphers. Indeed, “learning writing and numeration were considered at that time as professional studies” (cf. Marey, s/d).

The *Conduct of Schools* describes in detail in twenty five pages, the many functions and duties of the “offices”, that is to say, of the pupils entrusted with an “office”, a service rendered, a task exercised by a pupil on behalf of his class or of the whole school (GE, 18). Being entrusted with an office, among other advantages, made many pupils take an active part in the life of the school, it educated them to show initiative, it developed an awareness and an exercise of responsibility, work done with care, qualities all welcome in the world of work.

This leads to the consideration that in the exercise of an employment it is not only what is done. There are also to be considered the aptitudes and the way of doing it. There are dispositions, attitudes, habits and skills required in whatever kind of work and appreciated by any workman, independent of his particular profession. For example, the taste and the habit of doing work well, concentration, discipline, ability to plan, making use of the time available, consistency in the company, order in the work places, the ability to work in a group... In real terms you could speak of transferring school habits to the professional domain. From this viewpoint, there is no doubt that the “Christian school” of La Salle also contained preparation for exercising an employment in the broad sense.

CHRISTIAN QUALIFICATION

La Salle’s century continued being marked by Christianity. Religious and civil powers influenced and supported one another. The whole of reality continued to be seen basically through the eyes of faith. Performing duties had almost always a basic religious inspiration. Religious and sacramental

practice in particular, was general, almost universal. The period was marked by a strong interest in religious knowledge.

But many authors warn against a utopian vision of this century. The acquirement of a new cultural ability, reading, allowed for contact with natural ideas different from orthodox Catholic doctrine and a morality based on the gospel.

Forming the good Christian

Instruction was related with religion and its finality was religious formation. What the Church hierarchy and the civil power most sought from education was the formation of the young faithful as good Christians.

Within the reality of Christianity there was a mingling of the religious and the secular. Education, and Christian education, catechesis and literacy went hand in hand, and all school activities were impregnated with or referred to religion.

There is a mass of evidence that mentions this essential finality and this reciprocal influence. At the classroom door, there was blessed water for the pupils to make the sign of the cross. There were crucifixes and religious paintings on the walls. Moreover, having made the sign of the cross the pupils knelt down on arriving at their place; they prayed at the beginning and end of class, and, usually, at the end of lessons; they shared in the Mass each day and, on Sundays and feasts, at Vespers as well. In writing lessons, they made use of pious or moral formulae.

With a certain frequency, the first small diocesan catechisms served also as alphabets. The psalms were so closely associated with reading texts that, in Latin, an outstanding reader was referred to as *psalteratus*, and in French, the distinct pronunciation with the swaying of the body was expressed by the verb *psalmodier*. In the majority of schools, apprenticeship to reading was begun in Latin. That was natural: Latin was the language of the Church, of the liturgy, psalms, Mass, litanies, prayers... Punishments were charged with religious and inspirational motives and the best rewards were "of piety."

This kind of education obviously supposed a certain understanding of the

school teacher. He was indeed, a “teacher of Christian living”, as Demia called him. The fountain of his responsibility was religious as well. He was invited to carry out his ministry of Christian teaching carefully because he would give an account to God for the way in which he carried it out.

Such a kind of education determined the criteria for the selection of teachers and the control of their lives. To be chosen, the criterion was always more about piety and good living than intellectual and pedagogical ability to teach profane knowledge. His behaviour was strictly controlled by the parish priest, or the *chantre* (the person in charge of the “little schools”), or the superior of an institute or religious congregation.

In summary, education had no basis in scientific experimentation; it continued to be a task dependent on religion. This was the case for the better pedagogues of the century. Pedagogical works such as the *Didactica Magna* of Comenius “in spite of its systematic analysis and the relevance of its observations, appeared to be a practical theology” (Jolibert, 1981, p. 158).

Saving souls

Was this education even a slave of theology because there was a final authority? To guarantee a more terminal objective, the salvation of the pupils, to guarantee the salvation of their souls, in the ecclesial formula: “The final objective of the educational process consists in that we desire for children, above all, their salvation”, was the conviction of Saint-Cyran (cited by Giles, 1987, p. 159)²⁶.

This worry for the salvation was in the flowering of the religiousness of the time and it was the powerful engine to encourage the life of the Church. Why? To a great extent for the existing conviction from which nobody could be saved without knowing the necessary things of the salvation.

The consequence of this conviction was the feeling of the prime need to instruct the people in a Christian manner, above all the ignorant population of the rural area, a feeling shared by all the promoters of pastoral concern in France in the XVIIth century. This feeling finds its greatest expres-

²⁶ Saint-Cyran: a French theologian, friend of Jansenius, and director of consciences at Port-Royal.

sion in the cry of alarm of the great Saint Vincent de Paul: “The Church of Christ cannot abandon the poor... In Paris there are ten thousand priests and in the provinces the poor lose themselves in appalling ignorance” (Paul, 1925, p. 34)

To achieve this objective, the Church placed great confidence in the Christian school, one of the instruments of the new parish pastoral care advocated by the Council of Trent. Defenders and founders speak of it as the Christian novitiate, of “the seminary of seminaries” (Bourdoise, 1667, pp. 96-97), the main means of gaining access directly to the fountains of the faith, for inspiration from the gospel maxims, for support of the Church and the fountain of parish renewal. The thinking was that “preaching which fixes the doctrine in words can do nothing without education which writes the truths of Christianity in minds and translates them into behaviours” (Giolitto, 1986, p. 391).

To such a school, trusted by Church and society, there were entrusted three tasks: to catechise, to teach morality and to defend the faith.

To catechise

Good education, through catechesis, teaches the Christian orthodox doctrinal data of his religion, making him aware of his condition as a Christian and of the corresponding duties.

Catechising was the true aim of the school. It was the first of the material taught, the most important, the essential, which must never be absent from the curriculum. The parish priests in Paris, in a document directed to Parliament to defend their right to maintain and direct parish schools, justified their petition by saying that the school was “a supplement to catechesis.” To such an extent was teaching identified with catechesis that, in the language of the time, instruction was practically synonymous with religious instruction.

We need to recall that religious instruction, catechesis, was accompanied by learning prayers, assisting at Mass and the service of acolytes and in the frequentation of the sacraments. The different materials of catechesis were in the final analysis, given. The first among these was the importance of reading. Why? Basically, to make reading useful, it was necessary to

include aspects that were religious, such as the study of the catechism and the recitation of the psalms. Looked at in another way, these materials were of secondary importance, means for attaining the principal end. This was so when it was not used as bait, as a pretext to attract children to catechesis (cf. Hengemüle, 2009, pp. 78-80), moreover to serve to distinguish schools from the Sunday catechism and allow children to be retained for a longer time under the control of the teachers.

Considering the school as a place for catechesis, moreover to relativize the importance and the space conceded to other teaching material also brought consequences with it. Among these: the school was, frequently, something for priests and seminarians. Logically: No one was better suited than them to minister catechesis.

Teaching Morality

But to save oneself, besides knowing the basic truths of religion, it was necessary to practise what were called at the time true practices, that is to say, besides believing, it was necessary to live. Expressed in another way, education had also to teach morality.

From this in broad terms, a good education needed to teach how to live in a way worthy of a good Christian; to be a model of life; to live a completely Christian life; in summary, to be a good, dutiful and just person.

Coming down to particulars, morality is expressed positively under various forms: to educate into good customs; to exercise Christian virtues; to inculcate a way of acting, a Christian discipline; to teach how to carry out duties to God, to others and to oneself. To guide and preserve, if possible, the baptismal innocence of children, a role that Demia came to state as the first aim of education (cf. Germain, 1972, p. 76).

From a negative point of view, moral teaching first of all should inspire a deep horror of sin, especially anything associated with impurity. This is demonstrated also in defensive activities, such as attention to making sure that the pupils not read dangerous books which could lead them to become libertines, understood at the same time as challenging orthodoxy or becoming immoral.

Defend the Catholic faith

Speaking about education in XVIIth century France, the combative and proselytising presence in the country of Calvinist Protestants, known local as Huguenots or also known as R.P.R. (Religion of the so-called Reformers) should not be overlooked. This reality demanded of Catholic education through its instrument, the school, a further role: to defend the Catholic faith, to be a combat weapon, a dike against the reformist wave. This took two forms.

First of all, with reference to Catholics themselves. They needed to be instructed and to be led to so securely dominate their own religion that they would not be overcome by the Protestants and so that, in doctrinal discussions, they could confront them with success. The school, in addition, was called to contribute to stamp out “heresy” and its adherents be converted to Catholicism.

In this, the school was not an isolated force. It was by itself one of the instruments in the struggle of the Catholic Church and the government to destroy Protestantism and to make its members Catholics.

The reigning authority first forbade teaching the reformed doctrine in Protestant schools, and later prohibited such schools. It strengthened the power of the Catholic Church over the “little schools.” It decided that the schoolmasters of these schools and of the colleges could only be Catholics approved by ecclesiastical authority after having made a profession of faith. A royal decree of 1698 required children from 7 to 14 years of age to attend the parish school “for the instruction of everyone, and particularly for those whose parents confessed to being R.P.R.” To make this last means effective, the king’s lawyers and high justice functionaries required a monthly list of children not attending the school, so that judicial action could be taken against the parents.

The results? Grosperin (1984, p. 167) corroborates that the elementary schools “certainly were a powerful weapon in educating faith and morality, and, during a long time, in the Ancien Régime, ensured much more in this regard. There was a pervading Christian spirit in French society through the parish catechism, the homilies, the reform-

ing missions, but the most efficient instrument among these was the school.”

La Salle and Christian qualification

La Salle lived this Christianity in the field of education. The statement about the religious stamp that marked his thought and educational practice is one of the points about which historians of education are unanimous. For Gutiérrez, the *Conduct of Christian Schools*, with all that it contains in being concrete, didactic, administrative, up to date, prosaic and secular, comprises “the application to school practice of a theology of education” (Gutiérrez, 1970, p. 234). To read the *Rules of Decorum and Christian Civility*, a secular book of its very nature, someone who was not forewarned, could in more than one passage wonder if he had in his hands a work on civility or a catechism (cf. RU 0,0,1-0,0,8; 204,1; 219-222; 205,4; 396-399; 207,0,477; 207,6; 587).

The Christian school in its origin and end

For La Salle, education is of religious origin. The “Christian schools” are God’s initiative in realising his saving plan. Thus, in its origin as in its end, the finality of Lasallian education is clearly religious. La Salle’s Institute and those who compose it exist in order “to give a Christian education to children”, to make them “Christian”, “true Christians”, “disciples”, “true disciples of Jesus Christ” (RC 3,1; MD 57,3,2; MF 160,3,2; 171,3,2; 102,2,2; 116,2,2).

Service to the Church

For La Salle, the school has a pastoral meaning. Its disciples, through education, work for the good of the Church. As skilful, faithful architects they perfect the living stones, the pupils, who already form part of it and even more so as adults (cf. MF 160,3,2; MR 193,2,2; 199,1,1). For this reason, ecclesial, parish and diocesan authorities call on the Brothers for all parts of the Kingdom; to consolidate the “true religion”.

In some cases also, to re-establish it by contributing with the support of the Church and the government for the conversion of Protestants. Directly in Mende, Alès and Les Vans. Indirectly in Calais.

The Christian pupil

For La Salle, what is it that makes the pupil a Christian? First, give him Christian instruction. Then, develop in him a Christian spirit which leads him to see and value reality from the viewpoint and evaluation of God, and to do everything “for purely Christian motives” (RU 0,0,3).

It is also fundamental to catch up with the ethical-morality of the disciple. To help him correct his faults; separating him from sin and occasions of sin, above all preventing him from acquiring sinful habits; by introducing him to the practice of virtue and the living of the Beatitudes; to lead him to produce good works. In summary, to prepare him to be a Christian living in a Christian manner.

Christian formation included what La Salle, in the language of his time, called piety which showed itself in many forms. In a general way, this identified and showed the good person. In Lasallian educational practice, this could be shown in respect for the sacred; in the exercise of a relationship with God, in private and liturgical prayer expressed in practices such as taking part in Vespers and by the reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist²⁷.

Paths of Christian formation

In La Salle’s school, how was this will to form Christians shown? What forms of help were there? He made use of means such as catechesis, the reflection and the examen.

Catechesis instructed on the truths and practices of religion. It took place not twice each week as was common in schools, but every day, including Sundays and the majority of feasts. The reflection was given during the prayer at the end of the morning classes. It was an excellent moment to form a Christian mentality, identified by La Salle as “Christian spirit”. It was in the line of any Christian whatever, an encouragement to avoid evil

²⁷ La Salle composed various works to help pupils and the faithful in private and public prayer: *Exercises of piety for what is done during the day in the Christian Schools; Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession and Communion; Exterior and public worship which Christians owe to God and the means of achieving it.*

and to practice the good. The examen of conscience was integrated into the final prayer of the afternoon classes. Its object was things like duties to God and to one's neighbour, using time well and other school duties.

But education to develop thought, sensitivity and Christian practice came through everything in the Lasallian School: through the atmosphere it created, from the didactic material used, and through developed practices.

It was sufficient to look inside a room with Lasallian classes to take into account the Christian identity of the place: there was the holy water stand, the crucifix, the sacred images, rosaries... The essential content was catechetical. Among the materials used were books like the Psalter or a text of Christian instruction (cf. GE 3,8,1). Illustrated examples for the various forms of punctuation came from the world of religion. The models to be re-produced in calligraphy were texts from the Bible or Christian maxims.

More than this: almost half the time of a school day was given to activities with a religious character. Reading in French was learned before Latin, among other reasons, because the children "capable of reading French well" could "instruct themselves in Christian doctrine, learn from the printed catechism, sanctify Sundays and feasts by reading good books and by prayers composed in French" (MLF 8,2). Permission for eventual absences from class was granted, in large part, for motives of a religious character. A good part of the "offices" exercised in the school and in classes had the same character. "Piety" was the first condition for a pupil to be promoted in a lesson. The most "pious" were those who received the most beautiful and valuable prizes.

Nevertheless, the great means of Christian education was the Christian teacher. For La Salle, he is a minister of God, of Jesus Christ and of the Church. He is someone who knows the true doctrine and adheres to it; someone who lives a deep spiritual life and is an example to his disciples; a person who shows affection and wins them through affection. All of this is "in order to move them to live in a Christian manner" (MF 115,3,2).

Results

The biographer Blain tells us of the results of the transformation among the pupils who attended La Salle's schools. The Founder himself, even

during his lifetime, verified that the “Christian schools” were contributing to the progress of religion: “Look upon this as a considerable reward that God gives you even in this world, when you see that by means of the schools with which he has entrusted you, religion and piety are growing among the faithful, especially among the artisans and the poor” (MR 207,3,2; cf. CL 7, p. 290; 364; CL 8, p. 11).

What was different

To have a more complete and precise idea of the position and educational practice of La Salle with regard to Christian qualification within the context in which he lived and worked, it should not be forgotten that:

1. As has been already explained, La Salle, as regards the content to be taught, maintained a clear hierarchy in according the religious character a place of priority: “Are you careful to instruct your disciples in religion? This is your principal obligation” (MF 92,3,1; cf. MR 206,1,2). But differently from some of his contemporaries, he gave equal weight to secular learning as a means to know how to live well and to be capable “of doing everything” in professional life: “You will given an account... if you have not preferred secular lessons to those of religion, but you must not neglect those **since they are strictly required of you**” (MR 206,1,2; cf. MF 92,3,1. Added emphasis).

Such an appreciation of the secular leads to considering the *Syllabary* composed by La Salle. Poutet (1979, pp. 19-20), after some 15 years of investigation on this text, came to the following conclusions: “Saint John Baptist de La Salle published a *French syllabary*, without translating Latin syllables. The syllabary, however, did include Latin prayers. Very functional in character, it was much less religious than many syllabaries of “alphabets” used in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries. In doing this, La Salle showed himself to be aware of the autonomy of the secular...”

2. This “strict obligation” to teach secular content indicates La Salle’s concern to pay attention to the broader interests of the pupils in attracting them to the school as a school and not exclusively as a “complement to catechesis.”

3. This concern of the Founder is shown as well in his adherence to the

beginning tendency to teach reading through French. In fact, his pupils, during their passage through the school, had to use Latin only to pronounce correctly prayers in that language, given they had no need of it in daily life: “Moreover, it is completely useless to dedicate much time in having to teach persons to read a language which they would never have to use” (MLF 9,2).

CONCLUSION

In summary, La Salle did not miss the historical train. He knew the educational movement of his time, he placed himself within it and he also marked by his personal contributions. Theoretically, he was to a large extent a child of his time. But, in his practice, he helped the possibility of social advancement of those to be educated by teaching them the basic elements of culture and by being concerned to prepare them for real life, including work. In a period where Christianity was strong, he helped them above all to achieve a transcendental vocation, to live their whole lives as “really true Christians”.

Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY: A FACTOR IN SUCCESS

León Lauraire fsc

RECALLING THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The XVI century saw the triumph of the Renaissance and marked the beginning of a major development in education in Europe. In contrast to the preceding centuries, people began to show an interest in education for the working classes, including for girls, and to support the creation of schools for them. Since we are dealing with Lasallian methodology, it is appropriate to mention a few details about the situation in France at the time. Historians highlight five main factors that underlay the developments in education.

- Most obvious was the appearance and diffusion of printing, starting with the Gutenberg Bible of 1450-1455 (called in French the Mazarin Bible). This gave rise to a multiplicity of written works which then came within the reach of a great number of people. These printed books were distributed by colporteurs (a flourishing trade of the time) and they served to stimulate in people a desire to learn to read and with that the wish to go to school.
- The appearance and spread of Reformation Religion, including in some regions of France, was a major factor in the development of schools. It was a logical consequence of the Reformers' conviction that every individual believer should have access to a personal contact with the Bible, so as to know it and to absorb its ideas. That meant learning to read and therefore going to school. The history of the period shows that the principal founders of the Reform supported schools and recommended their creation at every level. In France, the question of schools quickly became a matter of competition and rivalry between Protestants and Catholics, and this in turn became a positive factor in the multiplication and quality of the schools. The Edict of Nantes of Henri IV in 1598 facilitated

the expansion of protestant schools in those areas where the Reform had taken root. In 1685, on the other hand, the Revocation of that Edict by Louis XIV put a violent stop to that expansion.

- In the Catholic Church, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was a general response to the emergence of the Reform. In view of the ignorance of their religion among many of the faithful, the Council thought that the general spread of primary schools would provide an appropriate solution to this lack of knowledge. Thanks to the «catechisms» which were published at that time, the pupils could study and assimilate the truths of faith which were considered indispensable for eternal salvation. That became the essential purpose of the Catholic schools, and the details of their organisation flowed from it.
- Simultaneously, the humanist ideas of the Renaissance were spreading. People of that time became more interested in the development of the individual and they thought that education could contribute greatly to it. Going to school and learning one's culture were the natural means to this end. The motivation was, therefore, mostly profane, but it did not want for nobility and generosity in its aims.
- It was along the same lines of reasoning that various municipalities in France took the initiative of opening schools for ordinary people to allow all those under their authority to overcome ignorance.

These were the main factors in the development of schools. With varying degrees of energy, this expansion took place in all the countries of Europe during the same period. Many founders and pioneers emerged and their dynamism accelerated the development of schools and of teaching. The history of education in every country preserves the memory of their names, and their writings have been handed down to posterity. Among them, mention should be made especially of the founders and foundresses of Religious Orders dedicated to teaching. The whole of society benefited from their contributions.

WHY HAVE A LASALLIAN METHODOLOGY?

In the flourishing and often very optimistic forward movement in education, however, one key element was missing. Those who encouraged and legislated for schools for the people (the Council, the Reformers and various civil or religious authorities) hardly seemed to be concerned about the concrete ways for putting these ideas into operation. In France, teaching had been dependent on the Church since the end of the fifth century (i.e. for more than a thousand years), but there was no national organisation for it, no common system governed and administered by a unified authority. There were diocesan or parochial officials, independent teaching Orders and uncontrolled individual initiatives. However, a school naturally presupposes things such as suitable premises, working materials, programmes, methods, competent teachers (men or women), trained and supported. These things which are so necessary for providing the right schools for the children were apparently left to the initiative and the generosity of the providers. They sometimes came about as a result of improvisation, but what was needed was a political will, an overall organisation, consistent economic resources, clearly defined goals, appropriate forms of support, follow up, monitoring and assessment.

In this atmosphere of uncertainty and after a lengthy period of trial and experiment, Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and his first teachers appeared on the scene in 1679, more than a century after the end of the Council of Trent. In theory they could have based themselves on the work and writings of others who preceded them. But the question was whether these could provide them with what was right for their plan of education.

De La Salle and his Teachers analyse the Educational Scene

In 1679, when Adrien Nyel and the first teachers turned to Jean-Baptiste De La Salle for help in opening their first schools for poor boys in Rheims, they were not operating in an educational vacuum. Schools for poor boys and girls (Charity Schools) already existed pretty well all over France, but they were insufficient in numbers and of doubtful quality. As for methodologies, there were three models of operation for them to observe:

- The simultaneous method, which had been operating for a long time, especially in the Colleges and Universities, Jean-Baptiste De La Salle enjoyed the benefits of this kind of teaching during his own studies in Rheims and in Paris. So he had plenty of experience of it.
- The personal tutor system, which was widespread in the well-off families. Naturally, they had to pay the tutors of their children and meet all the expenses connected with education. Some children even had the services of several specialist tutors, and there were tutors for girls as well as for boys. However, this kind of education was not available to children of poor families, such as those whom Nyel and De La Salle were hoping to reach.
- The individual method, generally used in the primary schools of the period (*Petites Écoles*), which taught the basics, especially reading. These basics are often referred to as the “rudiments”, and normally they were indeed “rudimentary”. With regard to schools for boys, all the important works published in the second half of the XVII century prescribe the individual method: *L'École Paroissiale* (the Parish School) by Jacques de Batencour (1654) and the *Règlements pour les Écoles de Lyon* (Regulations for the Schools of Lyons) by Charles Demia (1685).

One wonders why it was decided to use the individual method in the *Petites Écoles*, but we can only speculate on the answer.

- Perhaps there were not enough pupils in some schools to allow for the establishment of classes of the same level and for the employment of several teachers. That was certainly true in many cases.
- Very probably, they did not have buildings that were spacious enough and suitable for accommodating pupils in groups.
- Were there no schoolbooks for the teaching of reading or arithmetic to give a copy to each pupil in the same class? In many places that seems to have been the situation.
- At a deeper level, it may be that people believed that these first steps in learning could only be done on an individual basis, since they were difficult and called for prolonged efforts in personal

progress. That is what we see in various documents from the period.

We can note that the individual method did not die out in France at the end of the XVII century, despite the innovations introduced by the Brothers. It continued throughout the XVIII century and even up to the middle of the XIX century, especially in the country schools. This supports the idea that it was partly linked to the lack of facilities.

However, the problems with the individual method are obvious. It inevitably involves an enormous waste of time for the pupils and slows down considerably the progress of their education. The pupils have to wait their turn to be heard while the teacher occupies himself with just one of them. Since the pupils have not yet learned to read, it is difficult for them to find something useful to do. This lack of activity naturally produces problems of order and discipline. It is not surprising that the teachers of that time often had recourse to repressive forms of discipline.

The Decision of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle

Aware as he was of the disadvantages of the individual method and wishing to produce efficient schools, De La Salle opted for the simultaneous method from the beginning. Some educational historians, and especially some Institute texts of the XIX century, present the Founder as the “inspired inventor” of the simultaneous method. This is clearly incorrect, as we have indicated above. “Ever since the first time there were three people on the earth, the simultaneous method has been in operation”, as Brother Maximin so rightly wrote in 1922 in his work on the Teacher Training Colleges of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle (cf. Maximin, 1922, pp. 177-183). He cites the examples of the Greeks who approached the disciples of Jesus during his ministry, and also those of the medieval universities, the Colleges of the XVI and XVII centuries. In his own times, Jean-Baptiste De La Salle could refer to the writings of Amos Comenius (1592-1671), of Saint Pierre Fourier (1565-1640) or the Ursulines of Paris, etc.

Although he was not its inventor, De La Salle decided to use the simultaneous method in all his schools. He did not think of it as something new

and unknown, but he set out to systematise it, and it is the method we find described in the *Conduite des Écoles* (Conduct of Schools) right from the first manuscript of 1706.

The advantages of the simultaneous method are obvious. We can list the main ones as follows:

- A large saving in time for the pupils.
- The possibility of having bigger numbers in class.
- A saving of public money for the government or the local authorities.
- A more stimulating environment for learning.
- The possibility for pupils to help one another if need be.
- A better running of the school and hence better working conditions.
- Making it easy for teachers to exercise supervision.
- Favouring closer contacts between teacher and pupils.

In the time of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, illiteracy in France was running at about 20%. We must also remember that there were other factors of inequality – geography, religion, gender, social standing. We can see that the need for education was enormous and that the simultaneous method represented an appropriate kind of response to it. *A propos* of this, we can recall that the *Conduite des Écoles* considered it normal to have classes of 60 pupils in the lower and upper classes and 70 in the middle classes.

RESULTS OF USING THE SIMULTANEOUS METHOD

Opening a school to provide teaching and education involves more than just selecting a teaching methodology. That was the experience of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and the first Brothers. We do not know the details of their initial doubts and difficulties, but they must have had some. The examples available to them were not very helpful. Consequently, we can note that it took them twenty five years (1679-1706) before they produced the first text of the *Conduite des Écoles*. We know from Institute history that several of them died before seeing the text.

To clarify the terminology, it is useful for us to turn to the ideas and language of modern times. The Founder and the first Brothers could not have recourse to an educational terminology that did not exist at the time. Nowadays, we use a number of different terms such as styles of learning and teaching, methodologies, teaching procedures. None of these words appear in the initial text of the *Conduite des Écoles*.

- Teaching Methods. In the *Conduite des Écoles*, this term does not appear until the first half of the XIX century, when the Brothers' traditional way of organising their schools was being called into question by the development of the Monitor System of teaching. That led the Brothers to formulate a clear statement of their traditional system. They stated it in the Preface of the *Conduite* of 1838. This text was so important that it was repeated, with variations of style, in the following editions up to 1916. The following extracts give an idea of the tenor of the Preface:

«Four methods or modes [NB: the two words were still synonymous] dominate the world of primary education today: the Individual Method, the Simultaneous Method, the Mutual (Monitor) Method and the Simultaneous-Mutual Method.

The teacher who instructs the children by giving individual lessons to each of them in all subjects is following the Individual Method.

The teacher who puts pupils of the same level together in sections and teaches one of these sections in turn while the others study, is following the Simultaneous Method.

The teacher who divides the pupils into a number of sections and has them taught by more advanced pupils, called MONITORS, limiting himself to maintaining general order, is following the Mutual Method.

The teacher who divides the class into sections as described for the Simultaneous Method and gives the lesson to each section in turn, but who then, instead of making the other pupils study individually has them taught by Monitors, is following the Simultaneous-Mutual or Mixed Method”.

- For each of these Methods, the *Conduite des Écoles* gives a brief outline of the characteristics, the advantages and the disadvantages.

“The Individual Method can only be used in private education. It has been banned from the state schools because of the waste of time it gives rise to.

The advantages of the Simultaneous Method are incontestable, especially in a school where the numbers are great enough to require several teachers, because the teachers have fewer subdivisions in their classes and can then give their group of pupils longer lessons and greater attention. However, the value of this method lies especially in the fact that it gives the teacher continuous contact with his pupils and so enables him to develop their intellectual abilities, to study their characters and their inclinations, and so to train their hearts to virtue [Obviously this is what makes the simultaneous method most attractive for the Brothers].

The Mutual Method makes it possible to have a large number of pupils per teacher, without the need for subordinate teachers, but it lacks the opportunity for direct relationships between teacher and pupils.

*The Simultaneous-Mutual Method retains the advantages of the purely simultaneous method by keeping the pupils more surely and usefully occupied, and it can produce very good results. **This is the Method indicated by the present Conduite for all those lessons which are suited to it”.***

In the XVIII century and at the start of the XIX, the neutral observers outside the Institute, and also its competitors who used the mutual method, identified the Brothers with the simultaneous method, and some of them even called it **“the Brothers’ Method”**. This was a way of setting it in opposition to the mutual method which, as we know, used pupil-monitors who were given the task of teaching groups of pupils less advanced than they were.

However, it is interesting to note that the Brothers did not wish to confine themselves to the simultaneous method alone. Their analysis was based on lived experience. At the beginning of the XIX century, their

hundred years old tradition of teaching and day to day practice told them that the use of pupil-monitors and groups of pupils of was all part of their regular practice. Indeed, one only has to read the *Conduite des Écoles* of 1706 to see this.

- Some pupils helped groups of those less advanced to recite the lessons.
- Some were given the task of helping their fellow students who had fallen behind because of absences.
- Some helped the pupils having difficulties during times of practice in common.
- Some pupils were called «officers» and were directly responsible for the other pupils in the class.

The editors of the *Conduite* of 1838 and the Brothers Capitulants who approved their text had good reason for presenting one particular method, the simultaneous-mutual method, which best described the actual practice of the Brothers. From then on, this was the method which the Brothers claimed as theirs.

Styles of Learning

In the various editions of the *Conduite des Écoles*, we do not find the expression «styles of learning ». The term is of recent origin arising from educational research of the second half of the XX century. However, we cannot exclude the idea from our present study, because it directly concerns elementary schools, in so far as they are charged with conveying the basic learning skills, sometimes referred to as «learning tools»: reading, writing and arithmetic. Clearly that was the goal of the Lasallian schools right from the start.

These skills can be learned in a number of ways. Recent study and research have identified at least five basic types of learning:

- by conditioned reflexes,
- by trial and error,
- by intuition,
- by imitation and repetition,
- by reflection and comprehension.

During school time, the teacher will prefer one or other of these procedures according to the needs of the moment, and they generally use a combination of all of them, since they are linked and can fuse together.

Reading the *Conduite des Écoles* allows us to see that the Brothers clearly advocated learning by imitation and repetition with a view to establishing conditioned reflexes. This was in fact a fairly widespread practice in the schools of the XVII and XVIII centuries. The imitation of models appears, therefore, in every aspect of school life: the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, politeness and civility, interpersonal relationships, the practice of virtue, the manner of praying.

In all these areas, the teacher was to be the primary model. This was fundamental to the thinking of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, and that explains why the Brothers in the XIX century could not adopt the mutual method without denying their primary belief and age-old tradition concerning the close relationship of the teacher with every one of his pupils. The mutual method removed the teacher physically from his pupils.

In the *Conduite des Écoles*, repetition is brought in to reinforce imitation and to assure solid learning. It was a way of checking on the quality of the work. We can mention the particular instance of the use of repetition at the approach of the monthly tests of what was learned so as to determine a pupil's change of level in order or in class. It also could be used in learning politeness and good manners. When the model can be imitated perfectly and naturally, then the learning process can be considered as completed and can be graded. This is linked to the creation of conditioned reflexes, but intuition and experimentation are not excluded from the learning process, because the pupils are asked to compose texts of a legal nature or think up problems or summarise the catechism lessons, which brings us into the area of learning by understanding. Still, learning by imitation and repetition remains pre-eminent.

Methods

The text of the *Preface* of 1838 cited above shows that the Brothers did not yet distinguish between modes and methods. They use the terms indiscriminately. Later on, in the editions of 1903 and 1916 of the

Conduite, they start to make a distinction. The term “method” is used in a way that is complex and sometimes confused. It takes on different meanings according to the context. The 1903 edition of the *Conduite des Écoles* devotes a chapter to “*the methods and modes of teaching*”. One gets the feeling that studies in education are beginning to influence the language used. The text first of all gives a definition: “a method is the way that must be followed in order to acquire knowledge or communicate it. In the classroom, it consists in the choice and order of the ideas to be taught (i.e. the syllabus and its stages; the concept is not entirely clear) and in the use of the most appropriate means or procedures for developing the pupils’ understanding through teaching”. (Here it is talking about teaching techniques). The *Conduite* then proposes fifteen ways of being methodical, ways that are quite specific about the procedures to follow and would be of interest to any teacher.

It is in the second point of the chapter that the text really comes round to listing “*general teaching methods*”, which it comments on briefly. It mentions two methods to begin with:

- The expository or dogmatic method, later called (in French) ‘*magistrale*’.
- The interrogative or Socratic or inventive method.
- The *Conduite* then adds the intuitive method. “By ‘intuitive method’, one ordinarily means the ensemble of procedures by which one tries to communicate knowledge to the pupils, using objects that appeal to their senses”.

If we look at the history of the Institute, we see that in the beginning the expository and interrogative methods were only used during the catechism periods and in the morning reflection. During the other lessons, the teacher spoke only rarely, as is explained in chapters 11 and 12 of the *Conduite des Écoles*. The learning of reading, writing and arithmetic relied mainly on the efforts of the pupils and the exercises they did. As we have indicated above, the method used for these three disciplines was a “synthetic method” which progressed from the simple to the complex. Successive editions of the *Conduite* show that this method was never called into question until the XX century.

Teaching techniques

In the framework of this study, it would take too long to present the various teaching procedures envisaged by the editions of the *Conduite*. Developments in the texts, however, indicate a desire for precision and variety. The edition of 1860 is a good example of this. The text clearly marks a break in style from that of previous editions. This corresponds to general movements in educational research provoked by the rivalry between the mutual and the simultaneous methods, and also by the need to face up to the increased demand for schooling. In a concern to find the most economical arrangements for receiving pupils and organising schools, it was essential to promote those methods that were most effective, attractive and varied.

This search for concrete teaching techniques manifests itself in the production of several lists of specific actions, starting with the 19 means recommended to help the teacher work methodically. This is developed further in the enumeration of ways to stimulate emulation, ways to maintain order and discipline, the different ways of approaching certain subjects in the curriculum. In all they constitute a system of teaching methods which were also present during the second half of the XIX century.

OPTIMIZING THE CONDITIONS OF WORK FOR THE PUPILS

Whatever the mode and whatever the method, it is important to provide the children with the most favourable conditions of working. Success depends to a large extent on this. When we study the history of primary education in France, we notice that such a concern for good working conditions for pupils – and therefore of teachers – was a long time in coming. Various educational historians describe “*the misery of the Petites Écoles*” under the *Ancien Régime*. The situation did not change very much during the first half of the XIX century. New schools were opened, but some of them operated in makeshift premises that were very unsuitable. In view of this, it is interesting to note that Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and the first Brothers adopted the simultaneous method knowing the consequences that came with it. We can mention four aspects:

- **Material Consequences.** Accepting large groups of pupils and dividing them into levels of achievement involved certain spatio-temporal constraints. You needed places that were big enough, adapted and furnished for such groups; you needed the appropriate teaching materials; and speaking plainly, you needed a basic level of hygiene. Going by their experience over several years, the Brothers identified these constraints, and this led them to add an extra chapter to the *Conduite des Écoles* of 1720, compared with the text of 1706. Consequently, there appeared at the end of Part Two a chapter on: «***the uniformity of structure of the schools and the furniture that is suitable to them***». It is significant that this chapter never disappeared from any of the later editions, although it did undergo some changes in details. It was considered important to keep in mind a certain level of comfort for the pupils.
- **Pedagogical Consequences.** Not only was there the same method of work for all the pupils of the same section, but it was necessary to have the same methods of assessment for all those at the same level of attainment. This is what we find in the very first text of the *Conduite* in 1706. The forms of assessment are precise, rigorous and quite frequent. Recent research on learning and on «teaching by goals» shows how much assessment influences the methods of work and the results obtained.
- **Consequences for discipline.** For work in common to be able to progress under the right conditions, you need good order in the classroom, mutual respect, emulation, support when appropriate and silence. In extreme cases, recourse to sanctions is necessary. You also need basic rules of living together, such as punctuality, application to work, politeness and responsibility. It is in this respect that one should read the second part of the *Conduite des Écoles*: «***On the means for establishing and maintaining good order in the schools***». The Brothers were certainly well aware of this aspect of the work of teaching, and so this second part of the *Conduite*, while varying in its contents in keeping with developments, never disappeared from the publication. It does not change the nature of the method, but it can affect its quality and effectiveness quite noticeably.

- **Consequences for relationships.** Various studies in education of recent times have indicated the impact that interpersonal relationships have in the classroom and on progress in learning. Certainly, Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and the Brothers thought about this differently and expressed it in different terms, but they were equally convinced that the relationship between the pupils and the teacher played an important role in the effectiveness of the method. For that reason, the relational aspect has always been at the heart of a Lasallian school.

THE NEED FOR COHERENCE

MODE – PROCESS – METHOD – TEACHING: one could easily think of all this as something operating in the abstract. But that is never the case, since we are dealing with individual people, and the subjective element intervenes in a decisive way. At every level of teaching, the abiding and most obvious feature is the presence of a number of people gathered in the same place. This does not apply to the individual method and its application is different in the mutual method. Lasallian teachers must always reckon on the element of living together, and this can be viewed from three angles.

- **Adults with Adults.** For De La Salle, for the Brothers or lay Lasallians, this is a matter of developing an educational community and working in association. That means there is a shared educational plan involving effective mutual help and solidarity, sharing and fraternity. These are all elements characteristic of relations between adults, and they create a unity which is reflected in the way people work.
- **Pupils with Pupils.** They need to learn to develop the same type of relations as the adults. De La Salle described the relations between the pupils in a paragraph of his Sixth *Meditation for the Time of Retreat*: “They should be gentle and show kindness towards one another, forgiving one another as God has forgiven them in Jesus Christ. And they should love one another just as Jesus Christ has loved them.”

- **Adults with Pupils.** What we call nowadays the ‘educational relationship’ should have the same features listed above in attitudes and behaviour. In the first two points of Meditation 33 of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, we find a text that must be quoted in support of this assertion. We can note the following extracts. Taking the example of the Good Shepherd, the Founder writes: “It should also be one of the principal concerns of those employed in the teaching of others to know how to understand and discern the way in which one should behave towards them”. “Two things are necessary for and should be visible in those who charged with the guidance of souls; firstly, great virtue so as to serve as an example to the others; secondly, one should see in them a great tenderness towards the souls confided to them”.

CONCLUSION

Warm relationships are characteristic of the atmosphere in a true Lasallian school, and they promote good performance and effectiveness of teaching and learning activities. In this connection, we can refer to the recent remarks of Robert Rosenthal and his collaborators, based on experiments involving difficult children in the schools of California. The report is to be found in the book *Pygmalion à l'école* [Pygmalion at the School] (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1971). These researchers claim to have shown that the results of children in school depend in part on the esteem shown to them by their teachers, on relationships of trust, on tacit encouragement expressed in attitudes. It is, therefore, not enough to have a formal application, cold and aloof, of a method however attractive. It is rather a question of the personal commitment of the teacher to the service of the pupils. This warm presence reassures the children, and helps them to work better in confidence and calm.

By nature and by deliberate choice, the Lasallian educational relationship is warm and brotherly, trusting and stimulating, and it affects the method of working. Without claiming exclusive possession of it, Lasallians are convinced that this type of relationship is indispensable for the harmonious and integrated growth of individuals.

Chapter 4 - ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN LASALLIAN EDUCATION

Gerard Rummery fsc

The development of a Lasallian education is inseparable from the development of the foundational sense of community which characterises the origins of the Lasallian brotherhood. In a century in which founders of new movements in France, such as Vincent de Paul and Jean-Jacques Olier, initially referred to their groups as *societies* rather than congregations or institutes, it is not surprising to note that John Baptist de La Salle first refers to his small group of schoolmasters as a community, then in the first article of the Rule of 1705 as Society, and then as *Institute* (cf. Blain, 2000a, p. 13).²⁸

THE BIOGRAPHERS TELL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

There are some clear stages to this development.²⁹ By Christmas 1679, the teachers from the two schools at Saint Maurice and Saint Jacques had moved into one house. By Holy Week in 1680, De La Salle had taken seven teachers into his own home and had established some kind of pattern of living, praying and eating together. In the summer of the same year, De La Salle went to Paris to consult Père Barré who some years previously had established a community of male teachers in Rouen. Although we do not know exactly what happened in this meeting, we can speculate that, as Barré had not lived with his group but with his own Minim community in Rouen, Barré's personal reflection on the 'failure' of his group of men to stay together, led him to counsel De La Salle to live with them (cf. Gallego, 1986, p. 149). By June 24th 1682, De La Salle

²⁸ N.B. The word "Society" appears in the vows of 1691 - text transmitted by Blain, of which autograph is not had - and in the vows of 1694. The Rule of 1705 will say: "The Institute [...] is a Society ..."

²⁹ cf. *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, 2000, chapters IX-XII, pp.78-119.

had moved from the family home in Rue Sainte Marguerite into Rue Neuve where he lived with nine of his teachers.

As further requests for his teachers arrived, we find that De La Salle's reply to a letter from Chateau-Porcien states that "it would be wrong of me, Gentlemen, not to send you school teachers from our *community*, in view of the enthusiasm and zeal you show for the Christian education and instruction of your children" (C 111,2). It is significant that already in this foundation period, De La Salle saw the teachers from the different schools in different places as essentially one community. Certainly, the biographers are at one in stressing aspects of the community life lived first in his own home and subsequently in the house in Rue Neuve (cf. Blain, 2000a, pp. 88-91; Maillefer, 1996, pp. 43-44). Blain enumerates "rising and retiring, interior prayer, holy Mass, and meals assigned to fixed times."

It was not long, however, before Blain writes of another development and begins to use the expression "small *congregation*":

Seeing that he was responsible for a number of teachers working in several different towns, John Baptist de La Salle considered it appropriate to form them into a small congregation, and to prescribe for them a uniform style of life (Blain, 2000b, p. 172).

By 1686, the masters had adopted a distinctive style of dress and had chosen to call themselves Brothers. Implicit in the words they used to justify this choice of name was, that even though they may have taught in different schools and eventually even in different towns, they were conscious of belonging to a community: they stated that they wished to be *brothers to one another*. At the same time, their completion of the phrase with the words, *and elder brothers of the children who came to be taught by them* (Blain, 2000b, p. 186), united their chosen identity with their mission as a community because they would carry out this mission through a particular kind of school, not as individuals.

Memoir on the Habit

It is in the *Memoir on the Habit*, that De La Salle wrote in Paris around 1690 when Baudrand, parish priest of Saint Sulpice, wished to impose the

ecclesiastical habit on the Brothers, that we find the clearest insistence that this ‘small congregation’ constituted a ‘community’ even though it was located in Reims and surrounding towns as well as in Paris. Leaving aside De La Salle’s preoccupation that wearing the ecclesiastical habit might tempt some members to become clerics, there is his use of the word ‘community’ some forty times, and his clear statement that “community exercises and work in schools need a person’s full time” (MH 0,0,10). In his own way without being more explicit, De La Salle is stating clearly that this mission is for persons who choose **not** to be ordained because their priestly duties would not allow them the time to carry out their teaching duties adequately.

In 1690 with the purchase of Vaugirard, De La Salle took steps to strengthen both indispensable aspects of his community of teachers, their spiritual lives and their skill as teachers. While the accounts of the biographers stress the austerity and privations associated henceforth with the very mention of ‘Vaugirard’, it is important to recall that this is the first prolonged period where new members of the community were given 3-4 months training as teachers, while older members probably had their initial experience and training reinforced by their work with the new members joining the community.

The “heroic vow”

The crisis of 1691 that led De La Salle with Gabriel Drolin and Nicolas Vuyart to imitate what Olier and his two companions had done some fifty years previously by pronouncing what has always been referred to as the ‘heroic vow’, confirms from the very words of the formula itself, *even if we were to remain just we three in the said Society*, that the aim was to establish the society (cf. Blain, 2000b, pp. 289-290).

Three years later on 6th June 1694, this vow was fulfilled when De La Salle and a chosen twelve Brothers make their lifelong consecration to God through the vows of association for the Christian education of the poor, obedience and stability, for it is then that the society as such had been founded. The assembly from Trinity to Pentecost established the future shape and organisation, including the important provision that it was to

remain a brotherhood, a lay, non-clerical congregation with its own duly elected lay superior from its own members.

Although we cannot state with any certainty just when De La Salle began to use the word 'institute', the fact that we find the word in the very title of the first chapter of the 1705 version of the document called *Common Rules of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* suggests that, by this time, the members of this group saw themselves as 'founded' or 'instituted.'

HOW DID DE LA SALLE SUPPORT THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY IN HIS WRITINGS?

De La Salle's *Rule of 1705*, which is obviously a development of the Daily Regulation from the early 1680's, insists that a true spirit of community be always shown and maintained.

In this Institute there will always be shown and preserved a true spirit of community. All the exercises will be performed in common from morning until night (RC 3,1)... All will eat in the same refectory (RC 3,2)... All will take recreation together; likewise all will walk out together on holidays without separating or forming several groups (RC 3,3).

The *Daily Regulation*, the *Rule of 1705* and the *Rule of 1718* are a sequential development of how this community gradually determined for itself how its community would best serve the *Necessity and Purpose of the Institute*, that is, as a *Society in which profession is made to conduct schools gratuitously*, as stated in the first article of the Rule.

This an important point to be noted because the uniqueness of the *Rule* is that it never separates the member of the community from the purpose of the Institute. This unity is strengthened again and again both explicitly and implicitly. For example, in Chapter 6 which treats *Topics on Which the Brothers Ought to Converse during Recreation*, No.30 treats of *the obligation of the Brothers in the Society to fulfill their duties in school of instructing the children well, teaching catechism well, and leading them to piety*, No.31 mentions *the different maxims and practices that they can inspire in*

*children to procure for them the spirit of Christianity, while No.32 speaks of the virtues they can practice in school and the faults they ought to avoid there, such as impatience, talking too much, harshness, familiarity, over-indulgence and so on.*³⁰

This essential unity in the Brother's life pervades the whole Rule. Chapter 7,8, 9 and 10 of the 1705 Rule are specifically about *How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School, How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils, How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with regard to Themselves, their Brothers and Outsiders, The Days and Times when the Brothers Will Teach School and the Days on Which They Will Give a Holiday to Their Pupils* (cf. RFD, 2002, pp. 36-51).

Community and school

The essential unity underlying the Brothers' overall statement of identity – *brothers to one another, and older brothers to the pupils* – is reflected in many community practices as well as in the particular roles played by the director and the inspector. For example, the young Brothers on Sunday evening had to present their catechism lessons for the coming week with the sub-questions they had planned to help explain the catechism answer.

In the theological climate of the time, as it was considered essential for personal salvation that all understand and know by heart the basic Christian truths, the “great Mysteries” formulated in the Creed, the Brother had a serious responsibility to ensure that all his pupils could do this. The Director's role, as someone older and more experienced, was to help by suggesting some further details or sub-questions based on his own experience. On Sunday evenings, all members of the community attended and participated in the *Catechism of formation* in which each Brother in turn offered an approach to a particular lesson with the whole community as the class, and this was followed by a discussion and evaluation by all present. This practice was valuable not only because it offered the opportunity of learning what was to become the Brothers' adaptation of

³⁰ cf. English text of Rules of 1705, Rule and Foundational Documents, 2002, p. 35.

the *Catechetical Method of Saint Sulpice*, but it was also an important ‘bonding’ exercise at a number of levels because besides watching and learning from one another, Brothers also experienced in a new way something of the faith and dedication of older community members.

De La Salle’s Meditations

De La Salle’s *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts* as well as his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* give emphasis to the Brothers’ spiritual life as well to the mission of the Institute. There are eleven meditations on the various aspects of religious obedience in the community. De La Salle stresses community as an important factor for achieving success in mission (cf. *Meditations* 30, 60, 65, 68 and 72 to 77). For De La Salle the community is this “Church of Jesus Christ,” where the Spirit manifests his presence (cf. MF 169,3). His meditations, particularly Nos. 37-39 for Rogation Days examine the importance of prayer and the way to encounter God and obtain his grace; the meditations Nos. 42-45 for the feast of Pentecost link openness to the Spirit with the ability to ‘touch hearts’ as essential to the mission; the work of the Brother in school Nos.2,3,56 and 61 is linked to Advent themes and to his reflections on Sunday gospels; the trials of community life are set out realistically in Nos.16, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 59 while the importance of charity, union, and unity are treated in Nos.65, 72,73, 74, 76, and 77.

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* each pair of meditations move easily and quite naturally between the most profound understandings of call, mission and fidelity to the practical consequences of how all this is to be lived out each day in school in relationship with pupils, even, as in Nos. 204 and 205, to the importance of correction in the broadest sense of the word, both for the improvement of the pupil as a human being and also for the mastery of the school subjects which could guarantee future employment. It cannot be emphasised too strongly that where rules of the then contemporary religious congregations rightly stressed the traditional ‘flight from the world’ and envisaged interior prayer as devoted to ‘spiritual’ matters, De La Salle continually reminded his followers when they were at prayer that the ‘Christian school’ was ‘God’s work.’

Perhaps the best example of the essential unity of De La Salle’s vision is

Meditation No.33 for Good Shepherd Sunday. The exegesis of the Gospel text is in the best sense of the word, traditional, but the points of application at once take the Brother from the chapel to consider how they do, or do not, act as “good shepherds” in the classroom.

THE CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

The uniqueness of the *Conduct* is that it is essentially, as the 1720 Preface states so clearly, the work of a community:

This guide has been prepared and put in order (by the late M. De La Salle) only after a great number of conferences between him and the oldest Brothers of the Institute and those most capable of running a school well, and after several years of experience (CCS, 1996, p. 45).

We do not really know just how the first Masters and Brothers made the transition from teaching individuals to the simultaneous classroom pedagogy set out in the *Conduct*. The biographer, Blain, mentions some of the difficulties encountered when young inexperienced teachers relied mainly on corporal punishment to try to control their crowded classes but fails to tell his readers just how Nyel (?) and De La Salle brought about such an educational revolution (cf. Blain, 2000b, pp. 190-195). What we do know is that in successive summers of 1705-6, experienced teachers were asked to write their updated version of how they thought schools could be guided, based on what had evolved in their teaching practices in the twenty-five years since the first schools in Rheims. This manuscript was then sent to all the schools and the Brothers invited to try out what it recommended so that in the light of experience, changes and modifications could be suggested so that a final version could be put in order by De La Salle himself around 1717. *Cahier lasallien* No.24 offers us the opportunity to compare the original text with the printed version to see what has been changed. It is doubtful whether any historian has yet sufficiently stressed the uniqueness of the *Conduct* in the history of western education as a collective work, a teaching manual, based on the experience of practising teachers.

Uniformity of practices in the Conduct

The insistence on uniformity in the *Conduct* needs to be understood

against the background of the society for which it was written. Teachers of elementary education, with classes over 60 or more pupils, ranging from children of six or seven to young adolescents in some cases, making use of a simultaneous system of teaching that required careful implementation and control of diverse activities in a quiet, largely silent classroom, needed a carefully controlled apprenticeship to their craft in order to succeed. Careful attention to levels of attainment, monthly tests, promotion from one level to the next or a decision to require a pupil to repeat a level, all required a careful attention to detail so as to try to achieve the orderly progress of the pupils throughout the few years they could be kept at school. The enforced absence of teachers from time to time through illness or other causes demanded a uniformity of method that made it possible for a teacher to be replaced by another or by the director or inspector, so that, in the Founder's often written words, "the school might run well" (C 57,12).

Importance of teaching writing

A recent study by Joseph Bergin is an important reminder of why De La Salle was prepared in practice to challenge the monopoly of the writing masters in Paris not only to have writing taught in all his schools, in spite of the many difficulties that this brought him and his Brothers, but to teach it with such care that it attracted parents to send their children to gain this advantage:

This is perhaps why only one congregation, Jean-Baptiste de la Salle's Brothers of the Christian Schools (1683), emerged during our period with a deliberate vocation to run *petites écoles* for boys, a vocation which was exclusive and unusual enough to rule out its members becoming priests. La Salle's congregation was also unique in accepting that unless the *petites écoles* offered something more than religious education, parents would not send their children to school – hence its strongly vocational focus. In the great majority of schools, 'reading' literacy rather than 'writing' literacy was the priority, and regardless of whether the teachers were clerics or laymen, religious instruction was a major component of the curriculum. The ability to sing and to teach children plain chant was much sought after in schoolteachers, a revealing indication of what both the church and large sections of French society expected of such schools. And, needless to say, within the envelope of formal instruction lay the daily say-

ing of prayers, attendance at church services and the endless repetition of many other religious gestures, which contributed just as much to the religious formation of those engaging in them (Bergin, 2009, p. 308).

The importance given to handwriting was not simply a matter of prestige. The *Conduct* notes that if a pupil coming to the Brothers' school had already been taught to write, the Director was to inform the parents that the school would attempt to improve his writing over some months, but if the boy had been badly taught from the beginning, it might not always be possible to undo the faults he made.

The attention given in the *Conduct*³¹ to teaching the first steps of writing from the personal attention to the size of the individual pupil's hand and the gradual progression to the pen, the successive promotions through six grades only after mastering each level, was undoubtedly an extraordinary contribution to the employment possibilities that such mastery gave to the children of artisans and the poor. The conflict of the Brothers in Paris with the guild of the Writing Masters was probably inevitable, but De La Salle's recognition of literacy as including both reading and writing is evident in the section of the *Conduct* on absences where he states:

It should be explained to them (parents) how important it is for an artisan to know how to read and write well. It should be emphasised that, however limited the child's intelligence, the child that knows how to read and write will be capable of anything (CCS, 1996, p. 161).

Chapter on Absences

This chapter on *Absences* gives some special insights into the situations that the Brothers had regularly to face. Thus we read that students may be absent because of a distaste for school, but "this may be due to the fact that they have a new teacher who is not sufficiently trained... who at once resort to corrections, or are too lax and have no order or silence in the classroom".³¹ What strikes us about the remedies that are offered to improve this situation are that the blame is placed not on the pupils but on the shortcomings of the teacher. This honest evaluation extends next to the fact that "students absent themselves" because "they have little

³¹ Cf. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, 1996, Section 4, Articles 1-10, pp.72-86.

affection for their teacher” and this is due to the fact “that the teacher is not pleasant and in almost every situation does not know how to win the students.” There is a remedy: “the teachers endeavour to be very pleasant and to acquire a polite, affable, and frank appearance” (cf. CCS, 1996, p. 160).

It is worth reflecting more broadly on this concern about absences. For the Brother, member of a community, the pupil who dropped out of school lost the growth in faith that could come from the daily catechism lesson, the continual reminder of the presence of God, learning how to assist at Mass, how to receive the sacraments and so many other aspects of his religion. But he also lost the opportunity to attain the mastery that could make him employable in the emerging cities. Just as the 1720 printed version of the *Conduct* differs from the original manuscript version in strengthening the importance of correction with its astonishingly honest appraisal of the six ways in which the behaviour of a teacher could become ‘unbearable’ to his pupils, so too throughout the *Conduct*, the challenge of being a successful teacher was ever present so that community and school needed to reinforce one another mutually.

CONCLUSION: HOW DID THE KEY ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY INFLUENCE THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF LASALLIAN EDUCATION [PEDAGOGY]?

The history of Lasallian education from the early 19th century shows how the foundation of schools outside of France was first linked with countries interested for cultural and commercial reasons in a form of French education adapted to particular situations. Often, the initial foundation was for the sons of French families maintaining cultural and commercial links in foreign countries. But, very quickly, the sons of local officials wished to attend these same schools where the level of education was adjudged superior to that of local schools because of the presence of the Brothers’ community of trained teachers, and because an education in French offered many advantages for future employment. Such was the case in Canada, Egypt and in some 43 cities of the then Ottoman Turk Empire.

Foundations in the United States in the 1840's and in Asia in the 1850's and 1860's challenged the Brothers to succeed in founding schools where English was the medium of instruction and where pupils were not exclusively Catholic but Christian as in USA. In Asia, the majority of pupils were members of one of the great religions of Asia. History shows again that it was the strength of a community of trained experienced teachers that made these schools successful to the present day. The Brothers were a Christian presence but they quickly learned to be always respectful of the religion of their pupils rather than proselytisers.

The anthropological foundation stone of the community – *Brothers to one another and older brothers to the young people whom they taught* – guaranteed that the schools were successful in answering local needs and in creating a pedagogy based on mutually respectful relationships. Inseparable from this emphasis on relationships was the Lasallian heritage of 'gratuity', the offering of education to all who wished to come, regardless of whether they could or could not pay.

It is probably significant that although many individual Brothers have been remembered for their particular contribution to local education, the overall work of the Brothers has always been spoken about as the work of the **Brothers**, a clear recognition of the essential link between the role played by an individual and the wider role played by the community of Brothers of which he was a member.

Chapter 5 – THE TEACHER, A FULLY COMMITTED MAN

Diego Muñoz fsc

INTRODUCTION

John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719) worked tirelessly to dignify the character of the teacher. His life, his writings and especially his pedagogical inheritance give a testimony of a man fully committed to consolidating a stable community of educators and a common educational project. His effort was acknowledged by the Catholic Church, namely Pope Pius XII, when he proclaimed him the universal Patron of all educators, in 1950.

Setting aside the saint himself, it is interesting to review the context and experience of a man who lived during the second half of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th, under the reign of Louis the XIV, in France. As he witnessed a time of crisis in European history³², he warned his brothers in his testament about the “calamitous”, difficult and complex times they were living.

La Salle allowed himself to be touched by the poverty of a large part of the population; he made radical options supported by his faith, remained impartial amid the difficulties and led his people along safe paths. He also acknowledged his weakness; he suffered deep crises and needed the support of his own community of Brothers-teachers to guide his personal project. Undoubtedly, *he knew how to be a teacher among his teachers*, whom he trained and accompanied for forty years, achieving a sublime human and spiritual synthesis that made him capable of devising perspectives and scenarios that were unthinkable for his fellow nationals, based on the circumstances of his time.

³² It is the slow passage to Modernity: “The hierarchy, discipline and order that authority is responsible for ensuring, the dogmas firmly mandating life: this is what men of the 17th century appreciated. Limitations, authority, dogmas: that is what their immediate successors, the men of the 18th century, hated. The first ones were Christian; the others, antichristian...” (Hazard, 1961, p. VII).

Let it be said from the outset: upon reviewing his life, his writings and pedagogical-spiritual inheritance, there is no doubt that *John Baptist de La Salle was the promoter of an original model of teacher in the French context of the 17th Century*. Original not because of his desire to innovate and break patterns, rather in light of his capacity to be touched by the reality of the poor lay teachers of the time, because of his zeal in providing educational responses to fight the poverty of the children of artisans and poor people in cities and, especially, because of his unwavering faith in the mysterious presence of God in human history, whose salvation project is expressed in the need to fully educate the person.

To get to the Christian teacher model that stemmed from the experience of de La Salle and the first Brothers of Christian Schools, we will attempt to identify:

- Firstly, the *problem situations* that raised the awareness of La Salle and his Brothers about the reality and the need to prepare, and prepare capable teachers, in order to build an educational project with a future;
- Secondly, his *foundation intuitions*, regarding the person of the teacher that helped him articulate responses in fidelity to God's Project, and,
- Thirdly, his *options* that designed a specific and original profile of the teacher, with creative fidelity to the God of life.

AN UNINSPIRING REALITY

While France was the most populated nation in Europe in the 17th Century, over 80% of its population lived in extreme poverty, beyond material aspects. Ignorance, superstition and illiteracy coexisted in a reign that was in a state of constant war with neighbouring countries. If we add to that the existing extreme climate conditions, especially harsh winters and diseases which became plagues that threatened the population³³, the full picture was very discouraging. Paradoxically, that same society pro-

³³ cf. Study by Lachiver (1991) about hunger at the time of the Great King 1680-1720.

duced an extraordinary blooming of schools thanks to the effort of the Catholic Counter-reform.³⁴

In the middle of the 18th century, several categories of Catholic teachers coexisted in France. Those held in the highest prestige were the members of the clergy and the religious who kept their schools in the shadow of their communities. Such a status was less enjoyed by calligrapher sworn teachers who still had some social recognition; they were gathered in a demanding corporation and were jealous of their role. Lay teachers had a very bad reputation; they were generally victims of their employment instability and poor training. These were the object of John Baptist de La Salle's concern when he came in contact with the reality of the parish and free schools at the service of the poorest people in his hometown.

What *problem situations* did John Baptist de La Salle perceive regarding the reality of the school teachers with whom he began a pedagogical-educational itinerary since he was young?

- a. Firstly, *the image of the lay teacher* in 17th Century France was deplorable.

In the best case scenarios, since they were former students of the same schools, lay teachers attempted to make a living in a difficult socio-economic context by performing a job that temporarily committed them to teaching the basics of reading, writing and catechism. They generally lived in very difficult employment conditions, facing excessive exhaustion, diseases, loneliness and major instability (cf. Lauraire, 2001, pages 214-215). Thus, how could they develop a quality teaching method?³⁵

³⁴ “The extraordinary flourishing of schools caused by the Catholic counter reform in the 16th century is followed by, in the first half of the 18th century, the second great school progress that our country has known, thanks to the emergence in the pedagogical scene of a new partner, the congregations of teachers” (Giolitto, 1986, p. 29).

³⁵ Long before the beginning of the school experience of La Salle in Reims, Charles Demia (1637-1689) in Lyon had become aware of the poor level of formation of the subjects with whom he started to work in parish schools of his town. In a document he wrote to the Lyon authorities requesting the establishment of a seminar for the formation of school teachers, he affirmed: “This employment is exposed to the disdain, often expressed by miserable, unknown and non-prestigious people who cannot inspire pity, capacity and integrity; who will generally never have them unless they become aware of them and are formed in a home established for this purpose” (cf. Poutet, 1994, p. 155).

- b. Secondly, France was experiencing a *militant Christianity* which aimed at catechizing society in a counter-reform context.

The French society was Christian par excellence, however its Church was profoundly divided; the catholic hierarchy lived an intense internal fight among opposed theological perspectives and, additionally, civil and ecclesiastic authorities maintained a violent tension with Protestants³⁶. In this context, school represented a means to “save” the people from their ignorance of a spiritual and material time. However, in the midst of such confusion, what could poorly instructed teachers offer the children of generally illiterate and poor families?

- c. Thirdly, *the profoundly unequal and pigeonholed French society*, offered no alternatives to a mostly poor population.

While a minimal percentage of the French population had access to cultural assets, the majority belonging to the Third state barely achieved minimum survival conditions. In a society where life expectancy was twenty five years, with a high infant mortality rate and no major hygiene or health resources, what mattered was to survive.

In this context, there were corporations of artisans in cities whose families hardly found study alternatives for their children. How could illiterate parents concerned about their children’s survival offer them a better future?

ON THE PATH TO AN ANSWER IN FIDELITY TO GOD’S PROJECT

John Baptist de La Salle was a young theologian with a strong university formation and a solid priestly vocation. His progressive contact with peo-

³⁶ With the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) “... more problems arose than the ones which were resolved since the Huguenots had made a remarkable contribution to education in France and the closing of their schools only worsened the situation. This was in no way resolved by the royal edict of 1698, which dictated that all children between the ages of seven and fourteen had to mandatorily attend catholic schools. There was simply no equipment available. The decree ruled that a person had to be appointed for the position of superintendent of each school district in order to supervise the collection of funds and the teaching of reading, writing and the catholic doctrine, but none of that took place” (Bowen, 200, p. 165).

ple engaged with schools transformed his outlook, his intentions and even his own life project.

He, who had manifested his will to enter priesthood since his adolescence, achieved his desire amidst many family difficulties; however, over a period of four years, between the ages of 27 and 31, he also decided to undertake a new project accompanying a community of poor teachers to ensure an educational service to small free schools. These were not sponsored and financed (funded) with his personal richness, which he generously distributed to the population during a critical winter crisis between 1683 and 1685, but with the financial contribution of the parish priests and rich people of the cities where he was called.

Surely, he was not alone in this process of approaching, accompaniment and subsequent full identification with the teachers. Friends, priests and canons like him had also begun a similar adventure. But it was only thanks to the presence of a teacher from Rouen called Adrian Nyel that La Salle decided to attend a parish school in Reims. Said event unleashed in him new engagements that led him to question himself about the plan that God had for him³⁷. That is how he discovered his vocation as educator, while working as the initiator of a community of teachers, becoming fully involved in the Christian education of the children of artisans and the poor. He committed his entire life to his teachers without turning back, despite the difficulties he had to withstand for being faithful to his beliefs.

Now, *what insights provided the basis for La Salle's option for a specific type of teacher?* When we speak of insights we refer to the perspectives of La Salle and his Brothers-teachers to seek answers to the most pressing problem situations of their school reality. These perspectives are part of a

³⁷ With Nyel, La Salle begins as of 1679, a difficult and painful path to conversion and social displacement from his rich and prestigious world to a world limited to his teachers and the poor he decided to serve. In a memorial he wrote for his people one decade after the beginning of his experience, he stated "... if I had thought that due to the care, based on pure charity, I was giving to school teachers I would have been compelled to live with them at some point, I would have abandoned it; since I, almost naturally, valued less my servant than those I was compelled to employ in schools, especially at the beginning, the simple idea of having to live with them would have seemed unbearable" (MSO 4).

Christian vision of life; in fact, they cannot be understood outside of the standards of a man in the 17th century French society. We identified the following:

1. *The school needs the presence of a teacher, from morning to evening; a man that is fully committed.*

In light of the fragility of the experience of lay teachers, of their poor training and their titanic fight to develop an educational service amidst deplorable socio-economic situations, La Salle made an existential and evangelical option to take up poverty as a permanent condition of life.

Thus, free of the need to secure tangible assets to provide for the future, he engaged in developing a community of teachers with a definite identity and mission, both based on a faithful outlook on life, reality and school.

We find in this first experience an initial key to understanding: La Salle, along with his teachers, became aware of the need to integrate his daily work with his personal and community project; to integrate and unify the employment and living status of the teacher, to make a vital synthesis.

Only a man fully committed to a mission could ensure, with the support of a community organized around the same, a stable educational service as was required by the fragile situation of poverty and social marginalization of the children of artisans and poor people, in 17th century France.

2. *God wants all men to be saved and to acquire knowledge of the truth. In this plan, the teacher is a mediator, a minister, an ambassador of Jesus Christ.*

The poverty of the population was not only expressed in minimal material terms of survival; above all, there was an oppressive illiteracy and religious ignorance that did not collaborate with the construction of a more human and Christian society. That is how La Salle understood it upon confronting the reality with God's salvation plan of humanity.

As a man of faith, he understood that the teacher had to be an individual capable of integrating the demands of faith and social life in a constant school work, evaluated and recognized as successful especially by the par-

ents of the children entrusted to him. A school that functioned well was the best letter of introduction for those who offered Jesus' message for free.

Thus, we get to the second key to understanding, one very important to understanding the dynamic of the formation experienced by the first Lasallian community: school had to teach to live well, integrating the truths of faith (catechism) with all the basic knowledge of coexistence (courtesy and good manners) and learning (reading, writing and arithmetic). That was the manner of expressing the conviction of being a bearer of the truth of Jesus Christ. And, as followers of Jesus Christ, teachers had to be His representatives among the children and the young they served; that is to say, be his ministers and ambassadors in classrooms. To speak of Him, be with Him and to know Him.

Consequently, the teacher was called to integrate his faith and culture in a job where there was constant tension between operation and interiority. His time was the time of God, of salvation; but it was deemed a time managed responsibly to ensure the learning of his students.

3. The service of education is lived through the commitment of a community whose members are associated to ensure the stability and the future of the school.

La Salle, animated by Adrian Nyel and prior to engaging with his small group of teachers from Reims, was already acquainted with the educational experience of priests, religious and lay people. During the 17th century, individuals such as Jacques de Betancourt and Charles Demia had ventured into the training of school teachers. Closer to La Salle, Nicolas Barre and Nicolas Roland had encouraged the organization of communities of female teachers dedicated to the education of girls in Rouen and Reims. The same Adrian Nyel, before meeting La Salle in Reims, had just lived in community with other lay teachers dedicated to literacy in the General Hospital of Rouen; they called each other Brothers.

Since he was a Christian by belief and possessed university training, La Salle mastered a Christian anthropology with profound consequences. His sense of unity of life, of the person, of the profane and sacred aspects also allowed him to understand that the teacher could not be a solitary

man who carried on a personal project; on the contrary, he was a community man, a church man, who discerned with others God's call to work in his name amid the human community. His experience in many prior school initiatives helped him be aware of the need for the teacher to not only feel the support of a community, but also to be the main character in a common experience that ensured continuity in the educational service over time.

Thus, it is important to get to the third key to understand the teacher model suggested by La Salle: the teacher needed to walk alongside others to carry out a continuous educational service that was stable and faithful to a common project, decided by consensus and supported by the experience of those with greater capability and experience.

A teacher supported by a reference community, with a clear identity and a common educational project, was capable of taking up the challenge of a deeply human and spiritual ecclesiastic vocation. Thus, he would pursue his employment without looking back.

4. The school is an accessible space open to all, but preferably targeted to the very poor people in society.

In the social stereotype of 17th century France, it was almost impossible for people from different social backgrounds to coexist. Social borders were evident and clearly expressed in the ways to relate and dress. In general terms, artisans and the poor in cities benefitted from the Christian consideration of those more financially privileged who felt called to assist them generously in the name of Jesus' charity. However, beggars and the homeless poor represented a danger to society because of their violent nature and cities attempted to lock them up in general hospitals to also prevent the spreading of diseases and plagues.

La Salle, attentive to this reality of poverty and marginalisation, made a very clear option: to assist the children of those who looked for an educational opportunity in free parish schools. They generally came from families of artisans from trade corporations in cities, trade teachers, employees, domestic workers and urban farmers or labourers with no qualification. Regardless of whether they were registered in the poor peo-

ple registry in parishes, they survived with difficulty to the extreme conditions of winter, famine and plagues.

This fourth key to understanding is very important to grasp the educational contribution of La Salle and the first Brothers: the poverty reality demanded the renewal of a school which, since it was free and accessible to the poor of the city, did not offer the appropriate conditions to socially promote the children that attended it. The basic popular school had to offer an organization, contents, methodology, a style of relations and a teacher model that were different from those experienced in parish schools of the time.

Above all, the teacher had to rely on the tools necessary to perform well his work, morning to evening: personal and institutional discipline, basic knowledge, Christian experience and love for his vocation. These needs are those that, as a whole, La Salle will attempt to meet through a community of teachers with a concrete educational project.

THE OPTIONS THAT DEFINE THE PROFILE OF THE TEACHER TRAINED BY LA SALLE

We reiterate that John Baptist de La Salle committed his life to two fundamental projects: the creation of a community of teachers and the establishment of a network of schools.³⁸ Both projects had to be consistent with each other, capable of responding to the educational needs of the school recipients, stable in time and based on a common project of faith and zeal: faith in God's call which gave it a sense and dimension of salvation; zeal that contributed a social and ecclesiastical responsibility and commitment.

This dynamic is what offers a favourable framework to understanding the foundation options that La Salle undoubtedly reflected on with his Brothers to configure the profile of a Christian teacher; this is the model we get from his writings, especially two of his fundamental works: *Meditations for the Times of Retreat* and the *Conduct of Schools*.

³⁸ Idea that was reaffirmed by Valladolid in the Introduction to the Complete Works of de La Salle in Spanish (2001).

First option: *The teacher is a man reconciled with his life project. He has understood his vocation as an educator taking on his employment as a ministry that dignifies his character and provides him with a specific identity.*

Attentive to his Brothers teachers and to the development of schools, La Salle attempted to re-read the Gospel based on accessible interpretations so they may find meaning in their lives. He thus understood the profound unity between identity and pedagogy that occurs in the Christian teacher. Identity and pedagogy are continuously recreated; they need each other to set the bases of a project where the teacher becomes a minister of God and achieves the fullness of his human vocation.

The word “minister” is used by La Salle, especially in *Meditations for Times of Retreat*, to refer to the teacher as one chosen by God to do his will, which is no different from making the truth known to children.³⁹ Thus, the teacher as a minister of God is called to take on a responsibility that engages his life as a whole. It is not a temporary employment; it is now a vocation expressed with new demands. We identified three of these:

The first demand refers to the fact that the teacher, as a minister, is called to give his life for his students. In *Meditation for the feast of Saint Anthony from Padua*, he invites the Brothers to review their surrender before the Lord in these terms:

You are obliged in your work to teach the truths of faith to your disciples and to instruct them in their religion. In order to fulfil well this duty, you should consecrate yourself entirely and even, if necessary, give your life. Is this how you act? Do you have this generous disposition? (MF 135,2,2).

The second demand takes the following into account: the teacher as a minister has the mission to save souls. That is to say, to accompany the children not only in educating their attitudes and behaviours, but also in maturing an adequate knowledge of the truths of faith, without which, by

³⁹ “The minister was the one watching over the execution of things... La Salle likes the word minister, which he used close to one hundred times... The Meditations for times of Retreat are particularly rich in this respect (38 times utilized one way or another in the 16 Meditations)...” [Brisebois, Raymond s/f, *Étude de mots du Vocabulaire Lasallien*. Éditions Région France].

the standards of his time, they could not reach full salvation of their lives. This is strongly emphasized by La Salle in all his works and the source of one of his major concerns. In his *Meditation about Saint Ignatius from Loyola* he affirms:

Since the end of your Institute is the same as that of the Institute founded by Saint Ignatius, which is the salvation of souls, and since God has called you to educate children in piety just as he called the disciples of this saintly founder, live in as great a detachment and show as great a zeal to procure the glory of God as this saint did and as the members of this Company do. Then you too will do great good for those whom you instruct (MF 148,3,2).

The third demand is: the teacher as a minister must take on his role as a successor of the apostles of Jesus Christ. His main function is to transmit the truths about faith, whose simplest tool accessible by children is catechism. In *Meditation for the feast of James the Greater*, he affirms:

You have been appointed by God to succeed the holy apostles in teaching the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and in confirming his holy law in the minds and hearts of those whom you instruct when you teach catechism, which is your principal function (MF 145,3,2).

Only a man who has been capable of inner integration can take up the challenge that his vocation as a Teacher demands of him as a commitment to others. There is no separation between human and divine. His life is a permanent transcendence from the immanence of the school.

Second option: *The teacher has performed a vital synthesis of his faith and culture. Thus, he feels completely fulfilled, capable of recalling God in the midst of his daily work, without ceasing to teach to read and write, to calculate and relate to others, all within a single process of comprehensive training of people.*

For La Salle, all the work of the teacher is articulated from an inner life. It is not a blessed and distant view of reality; on the contrary. The teacher has an ecclesiastic and political responsibility with huge consequences for those with whom he works. He states it clearly in his *Meditation for the feast of Saint Louis, king of France*:

In your work you should unite zeal for the good of the Church with zeal

for the good of the state of which your disciples are beginning to be, and one day should be, perfect members. You will procure the good of the Church by making them true Christians and docile to the truths and the maxims of the holy Gospel. You will procure the good of the state by teaching them how to read and write and everything else that pertains to your ministry with regard to exterior things. But piety should be joined to exterior things, otherwise, your work would be of little use (MF 160,3,2).

Thus, the life of the school is perfectly regulated as to learning times and processes: reading, writing, calculations, courtesy and good manners, catechism. All these are important and pertinent to the growth of the student. The *Conduct of Schools* therefore becomes the document that testifies to the effort of the community of Brothers teachers who wish to be faithful to their mission within the daily routine of the school, rather, of the network of schools that were established over forty years with La Salle. After his death, the Brothers will continue showing fidelity to the initial project, committing their time with regularity and constancy.

The dynamic of faith in the teacher, so understood, configures the *transcendental pedagogical realism* specific to the Lasallian perspective. We present a total of six characteristics that emerge as a consequence of the integration between Christian identity and pedagogy:

- a. A faith that translates into practice of life = integration

The teacher is called to live in a permanent dialogue between faith and culture. His effort lies in making a synthesis that allows his students to make decisions for their own lives, based on their understanding of their own lives. For instance, regarding catechesis, the *Conduct of Schools* states that:

In every lesson [Catechism] teachers will be sure to indicate some practices to the students, and to instruct them as thoroughly as is possible concerning those things which pertain to morals and to the conduct which should be observed in order to live as a true Christian. They will reduce these practices and these matters of morals to questions and answers. This will make the students very much attentive and make them retain the answers more easily (GE 9,3,4).

b. Knowledge within reach of the student = accessibility

Since children are the recipients of the educational action of the teacher, the truth as a whole must be faithful to the message of faith, while still simple and accessible to children's mentality. In *Meditation 193*, La Salle makes the following invitation:

Teach them [the truths of faith] not with learned word, lest the cross of Christ, source of our salvation, become void of meaning [1 Cor 1:17] and all you say to them would produce no fruit in their minds or hearts. For these children are simple and for the most part poorly brought up. Those who help them to save themselves must do this in so simple a manner that every word will be clear and easy for them to understand (MR 193,3,2).

c. Awareness of the limitations and power of grace = efficiency

The Christian teacher knows that he is an instrument of God, his minister for his students. Hence, he knows he is limited but at the same time, recognized and supported by the almighty grace of God. Thus, La Salle, in his *Collection of small treatises*, advises his Brothers as follows:

Be satisfied with what you can do, since this satisfies God, but do not spare yourself in what you can do with the help of the grace. Be convinced that, provided you are willing, you can do more with the help of God's grace than you imagine (CT 16,2,10).

d. Students as protagonists = participation

The *Conduct of Schools* suggests a continuous activity for the students, guided and accompanied by the teacher. It is an organized, active and silent school. The teacher is the first to set the example. Each student is focused on his specific task or participates to the class taught by the teacher.

For instance, there are students in this environment who perform jobs; thus, they are responsible and participate to the school dynamic. The chapter of the *Conduct* regarding tasks in school suggests:

There will be several officers in the school. These officers will be charged with several different functions which teachers cannot or ought not to do themselves. These officers are: 1. the recites of prayers; 2. the one that, in the revisions of the holy Mass, says what must say the priest called by this

motive the minister of the holy Mass; 3. the almoner; 4. the Holy Water bearer; 5. the Rosary carrier and assistants; 6. the bell ringer; 7. monitors and supervisors; 8. the firsts on each bench; 9. the visitors of absents; 10. the distributors and collectors of notebooks; 11. the distributors and collectors of books; 12. the sweepers; 13. the doorkeeper; 14. the keeper of the school key (G.E. 18,0,1).

e. Capacity to tend to the needs of each = discernment

The teacher must give particular attention to each. This does not entail massification, rather accompanying each one, according to his or her specific characteristics. La Salle, in his *Meditation for the second Sunday of Easter*, invites to reflect on teachers about the manner in which they should proceed with students. It is undoubtedly a text we could interpret today based on differential psychology:

In today's Gospel Jesus Christ compares those who have charge of souls to a good shepherd who has great care for the sheep. One quality he must possess, according to our Savior, is to know each one of them individually [Jn 10, 4]. This should also be one of main concerns of those who instruct others: to be able to understand their pupils and to discern the right way to guide them. They must show more mildness toward some, more firmness toward others. There are those who call for much patience, those who need to be stimulated and spurred on, some who need to be reproved and punished to correct them of their faults, others who must be constantly watched over to prevent them from being lost or going astray (MD 33,1,1).

This guidance requires understanding and discernment of spirits, qualities you should frequently and earnestly ask of God, for they are most necessary for you in the guidance of those placed in your care (MD 33,1,2).

f. To be able to give account of oneself = self-evaluation

The teacher knows he must report to God in his daily work with the children. That is why he is invited to be attentive to himself, to evaluate his actions and always search for the purity in his intentions. Jesus Christ continues being his very first reference. In *Meditation for the feast of Saint John the Evangelist*, La Salle affirms:

Reflect often that since Jesus gave himself entirely to us and for us, we, too, should give ourselves totally to him, do everything for him, and not

seek ourselves in anything. Our whole care should be to detach ourselves from all things, in order to attach ourselves to god alone, because nothing is equal to him, and he is the only one to whom we can securely give our hearts (MF 88,2,2).

We believe that this series of characteristics helps understand the difficult balance that the Christian teacher must achieve to live between the overwhelming school operation and the spiritual interiority that gives meaning to his life and mission.

Third option: *The teacher lives his vocation in relation to others supported by others he associates with to make a way.*

La Salle not only invited teachers to work in the schools. With them, he created a stable community, with a specific identity and project. With them, he radically committed to maintaining schools and doing everything possible to ensure continuity in the educational service that they were barely designing together. He expresses it in the text of the *Formula for Vows of 1694*, when he publicly decides to perpetually establish his project of association for the educational service of the poor along with his teacher Brothers:

And for this purpose, I... promise and vow to unite myself and to remain in Society with Brothers... to keep together and by association gratuitous schools wherever they may be, even if I were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone, and to do anything in the said Society at which I will be employed, whether by the body of the Society or by the superiors who will have the government thereof (FV 2,0,2-3).

It is not only about creating bonds of brotherhood to support each other as a community amidst the difficulties of life, but also reflecting and together formulating an educational response that is adjusted, pertinent, offering salvation for others, to especially fight poverty. For that purpose, he applied his greatest effort to developing a quality and demanding school to respond to the needs of the neediest people, but with doors always open to everybody. Everyone is entitled to access a school that is open to society.

To be bearers of truth implies a constant learning exercise for the teacher, contact and listening of that same truth that is God. But he is aware that

alone he would fail; he does not only need God, but also others to share his journey; individuals with whom he may feel as a minister capable of guiding others. This is the richness of the community of educators that creates the necessary conditions for the teacher to face his life and grow in truth.

It is not about taking up either a devotional or a fundamentalist attitude. This dynamic implies a faith that translates into an orderly and demanding life, at the heart of a community that speaks of and shares its experience. In addition, this faith is manifested in works that provide a testimony of a vitality that goes beyond the simple human effort of the teacher because it gives an account of the work of the Spirit. Thus we underline three essential attitudes of a teacher who is capable of living this dynamic:

- a) Bearer of a reasoned faith and of a life in harmony

Almost forty years after the onset of the first Lasallian school, the Brothers gathered in a General Chapter (1718), and defined the purpose of their institute in these terms:

The purpose of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children, and it is for this purpose the Brothers conduct schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening, these teachers may be able to teach them to live a good life by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and inspiring them with Christian maxims, and so give them a suitable education (RC 1,3).

Associated and committed to remaining stable to ensure a free educational service for the poor of their time, they deemed it necessary to be faithful to a single school process and one community organization. Thus, they could move from one school to another or from one city to another, without undermining the institutional continuity. The pressure for uniformity that can be perceived in foundational documents must be read based on this intentionality⁴⁰; it is so expressed in the Preface of the *Conduct of Schools*:

⁴⁰ “The uniformity in the manner of guiding children is reinforced by the community life of teachers. This community life allows them a livelihood at a lower cost than if they were supported by a family.

... will proceed in such a way that teachers observe exactly all the practices that are prescribed for them, even the least in order to procure by this means great order in the schools, a well regulated and uniform conduct on the part of the teachers who will be in charge of them, and a very considerable benefit for the children who will be taught there (GE 0,0,5).

How could they maintain the tension between loyalty to the community and loyalty to themselves? To this effect, faith plays a fundamental role. But a faith imbued of reasons, criteria for life, action. It is with this spirit of faith that the teacher accepts, understands and takes up an association with other teachers to live a common mission and life.

b) In search for God's will

Also in the *Preface to the Conduct of Schools*, its authors clearly stated that their manual was the result of a community effort of dialogue in which the experience of the oldest had been put to the test to draft a document at the service of all, for the formation of teachers:

This guide has been prepared and put in order only after a great number of conferences between the oldest Brothers of the Institute and those most capable of running a school well, and after several years of experience. Nothing has been added that has not been thoroughly deliberated and well tested, nothing of which the advantages and disadvantages have not been weighed and, as far as possible, of which the good or bad consequences have not been foreseen (GE 0,0,2).

Consequently, their work did not only respond to a desire for effectiveness in their service, while being attentive to the social and ecclesiastical responsibility they had toward the families of their students, rather and in addition, it was an answer to the search for God's will, that drove them to always look farther and better and to be more demanding of themselves. La Salle expressed it in *Meditation for Palm Sunday*, as he

In the context of that time, this is an indispensable condition for the school to be free of cost without forcing parishes or municipalities to cover excessive costs. This community life has psychological and pedagogical values. It provides each teacher with the elements of a social life that the family, absent, does not provide. Therefore, they benefit from, in its absence, mutual support and sharing of pedagogical experiences. These experiences along with those of Adrian Nyel, compared to the eighteen years of teaching of Jacques de Batencour described in *L'École paroissiale (1654...)* allow the preparation of the *Conduct of Christian Schools* by J.B. de La Salle (1705...)” (Poutet, 1995, pp. 92-93).

affirmed the need to look at Jesus Christ to be faithful to the mission received:

So that Jesus Christ may reign over your souls, you must pay him the tribute of your actions. All of them must be consecrated to him; in them there should be nothing that is not pleasing to him; they should have no other intention than to accomplish his holy will, which should direct all of them so that there may be nothing human in them. Since the reign of Jesus Christ is divine, all that has any connection with it must be either divine in itself or divinized by the relationship that it has with Jesus Christ. The main purpose he had in this world was to accomplish his Father's will [Mt 26,42], as he declares in several passages in the Gospel. He also wishes that you are his members and his servants should be united with him, and should have this same purpose in your actions. Examine if this is what you actually intend (MD 22,1,2).

c) A life in the Spirit

Being communally faithful – in short, to grow together – implies for teachers to maintain a life open to the Spirit of the Lord. Without Him, it is not possible to live the vocation of a teacher with authenticity. Without Him, faith would be a devotional fantasy or an ideology. It is the Spirit that helps the teacher to discern, alone and in a community, his life and mission, day after day. La Salle expresses it in the following terms in his Meditation for the Day of the Pentecost:

You need the fullness of the Spirit of God in your state, for you should live and be guided only according to the spirit and the light of faith; it is only the Spirit of God who can give you this disposition (MD 43,2,2).

You carry out a work that requires you to touch hearts, but this you cannot do except by the Spirit of God. Pray to him to give you today the same grace he gave the holy apostles, and ask him that, after filling you with his Holy Spirit to sanctify yourselves, he also communicate himself to you in order to procure the salvation of others (MD 43,3,2).

CONCLUSION

John Baptist de La Salle promoted along with the community of Brothers of the Christian Schools, an innovative model of Christian teacher:

- Innovative in his desire to integrate his life and mission in a com-

mon project. More than teachers, they decided to call each other Brothers among them and Brothers for their students. This educational fraternity, founded on Jesus Christ, gradually configured them as ministers of the Gospel in school. They made it possible *to dignify the person of the Christian teacher* in the French context of the time.

- Innovative because each one and the community as a whole began living a permanent dynamic of formation and self-evaluation based on evangelical criteria. The criteria were not easy from the beginning: educating by example, watching over yourself and the others, love for the poor, foolproof gratuity, acceptance of the cross and the sacrifice, efficiency and order to provide evangelically credible answers. The teacher little by little became aware that his life and mission were being configured based on a *transcendent pedagogical realism* capable of giving meaning to his everyday experience and his project for the future.
- Innovative because their faith led them to take up an educational service with zeal in a stable fashion, throughout life. This continuity was fundamental to establishing a community capable of generating future, not just through the presence of its members but also in light of the desire to train them and dare with them to give continuity to the project. As associates in the educational service of the poor, they could develop a teacher project with future perspectives, relying on God's plan who wants all men to be saved and to reach full knowledge of the truth.

Based on this model, we affirm that the Lasallian model of Teacher continues being an invitation for all those men and women who today wish to live their profession as a service from communities of educators open to transcendence and responsible for building humanizing educational projects in line with the Gospel.

The First Definition of Lasallian Pedagogy

Synthesis of First Part

Pedro María Gil fsc

The previous five chapters have had to explain our initial proposal about Lasallian Pedagogy. If at that point we were presenting it as the way of living the education relation proper to the Institute as it is reflected in the itinerary of the origins, we can now see in it the initial nuances, implicit and emphasised, which allow us to understand it in a more integrated manner. In a certain sense we can say that we are passing from the foundational itinerary to the system or that we are including the former in the latter as its soul.

We have tried to see more closely the content of concepts such as ‘the Poor’ or ‘Marginalisation’, ‘Method’ and ‘procedures’, ‘the Program’ or the contents and final objectives of the school. We have also taken a look at the complexities of the models of Teacher and Community as well as of Faith and Transcendence. From consideration of these we hope to be able to verify the general proposal, with the corresponding corrections and nuances.

Along this path we have been noticing that we looking at a small interactive universe. Thus, just as in the structure of the material we know that one thing is the series of its components and another is the interplay of forces which coordinates them, in Lasallian Pedagogy we have been finding that the specific is not so much the set of its elements as the manner in which they interact in the animation of the education projects.

1.

As with many other institutional realities, Lasallian Pedagogy is a living system: it is animated, advances or creates according to the equilibrium of its diverse components and breaks down or dies when one of these com-

ponents dries up, overrides others or loses its relationship with the rest of the ensemble.

In this line of reflection we have had, first of all, to let ourselves perceive the mutual influence between the three central points or components of a more operative character and the other two which are more personal.

It is simply impossible to do things over a period of twenty years in the way we have evoked and not go on in a certain way. The way of doing marks the way of being and vice-versa. This helps us to understand the scope of our initial definition about the way of living, more that the way doing. It is obvious that in operational terms a system of action is required in order to be able to speak of Lasallian Pedagogy, but the relation between the ensemble of the five central points has shown us that we were dealing with people acting from their integral identity and that at the same time they were building or living it in dialogue with their actions. Clearly: Lasallian Pedagogy is more than a list of procedures. It is a way of living education.

Along this same path the discourse has made us show that we are faced with processes more than syntheses. What we call Lasallian pedagogy is one of the dimensions - the educational - of the fidelity which defines a person.

If we take as given, this relationship between being and doing (structure), we should also do so with that between experience and synthesis (duration), between the present moment of commitment and the biographical vision of the ministry of educator. If, furthermore, it is a question of collective, participative situations, then this observation is the definitive one for understanding what we are talking about. The two, experience and synthesis, ought to be always open, in both the personal and the collective.

So it is a game that is usually kept up through various generations, unless there is a substantial change in the social or cultural conditions of the context, in such a way that meanwhile nothing is definitively established. If this change appears, we will be able to close a period and then speak of synthesis, at least in part. Also in this case: Lasallian Pedagogy is a concept definable in terms of epoch or history rather than in limited

chronologies of personalities or concrete actions. It expresses the way of living of an educational institution.

Thus the first conclusion we reach in the definition of Lasallian Pedagogy is that we are talking about a system relative to the persons and the living project of the Institution. Even though the person of the teacher and his educational procedures differ, they are inseparable and are mutually configured. It is therefore a personalized pedagogical model, both in the individuals and in the network or association of educational establishments.

It is obvious that this living and 'processive' character, both in the personal and in the shared, should stand on concrete, verifiable realities and the previous chapters have been revealing this. So we have been able to record procedures for teacher formation, systems for establishing the schools economically, ways of organising the daily timetable, simultaneousness of learning, techniques for ensuring order and discipline, design of both school supplies and classroom layout, relations with matters outside the school, etc.

All this is set up in a relatively stable and harmonious ensemble which shows its configuration around lines of strength which support the ensemble in a homogeneous and even uniform way. As in every experience which is durable, personal or collective, in the configuration of the Lasallian we came across certain frames of content, processes, attitudes, experiences, decisions, etc. which configure what we might call its genetic patent.

The previous five chapters have been revealing, by means of transversal forces, characteristics of the institution. We will identify these later. We are dealing with three constants which advance and retreat, show themselves or keep silent, with each one constituting itself and at the same time shaping a very precise synthesis. They are the basis of what, a hundred years later, will be the system: Lasallian pedagogy properly so-called.

2.

First: we are looking at a pedagogical model born for and from the Poor.

It was the arrival of the Poor through the school which changed the life of La Salle and caused everything to start. From the first meeting with Nyel in Reims, his life and that of his community would go along unforeseen roads. Thus Lasallian Pedagogy was building itself according to the educational attention needed by the socially marginalized. In its roots is the constant dialogue between lacking and possessing, marginalization and having work, subjugation and autonomy. Everything is being built to pass from one to the other.

The poor are at the heart of the Lasallian Education model: it is certain that we cannot pin down this fact by extracting it from its specific context at the beginning of the 18th Century, but we cannot in any way underestimate it.

Lasallian Pedagogy was born in a context of social poverty which we have difficulty imagining: both from the point of view of the destitution of the people and the shortages in the institutions of society we are looking at a situation peculiar to a particular period. Formed with the characteristics of the first Lasallian generation it would last more or less for a century but then would transform itself into something else: up to the beginning of the 19th Century the reality of social classes did not settle in, a reality with which the Poor would take on another meaning (which I will not point out at present) but in addition, starting out from this date a Ministry of Education would appear with the resulting creation of the function of teacher. A century later these two factors would change the concept of the Poverty or Marginalization which we would meet in the first generations of Lasallians.

The reflection of Br. Bruno Alago has shown this very clearly: with the first Lasallian School we are facing a human group with an imperious and concrete situation and need, in a concrete context of marginalization. Thus through the Poor we meet the Social Realism of the Lasallian project.

Its understanding is what constitutes the soul of the *Conduct of Schools* in that it is a first, immediate response and is a reference maintained for another fifty or hundred years. It is the contribution that we receive from the first specialist in the theme, Br. Leon Lauraire. From the first defini-

tions up to those we can contemplate in the second part of this study, it lets us see a constant: order and organisation as an environment and logic as the content of the program. This emphasis on the strictest and barest logic is due to the part played by the Poor of the 18th Century in Lasallian Pedagogy. Although it responds in itself to the historic fact of nascent Modernism, its way of being lived in those schools – its mode of shedding all content and its way of presenting itself as strict instrumental logic – is characteristic of the school of the Poor.

For this reason the Lasallian School is directed to and from social insertion through decent work. Properly speaking it is not science or knowledge which is directing them as if mastering this was their fundamental objective. No. It claims to read knowledge on the basis of the society in which these concrete pupils are living and will live. If because of this they must redefine schools, they will. This is what is moving in the background of the reflection of Br. Edgard Hengemüle. So we understand that when, after two generations, they see themselves facing the challenge of secondary education, once again they veer away from the *Ratio Studiorum* of the Jesuits or the Rollin's Treaty of Studies (*Traité des Études*), which they doubtless know about: they will make of all this a clearly bourgeois reading, that is to say, according to the enterprise and business of the circles which await the group of students they are facing in their seven or eight middle school establishments.

3.

The second line of strength is the will to build a network or association of schools.

It refers to what we find right away when we are going from one of these schools to another: they are not built up each one on its own but are all in a system. This system or network soon becomes the ultimate concern: its value results in the whole being greater than the mere addition of little educational actions so that the quality of each one depends on the life which flows between them. They do not claim to create schools or even Christian schools; they claim to establish what they call the *Society of Christian Schools*.

What can this mean when we are asking about Lasallian Pedagogy?

The fundamental answer lies in the reflection of Br. Gerard Rummery. Given the context and especially those at whom the commitment of this 'society' is aimed, it is easy to understand that this line plays a much more important part than it does in other institutions or at other historical periods. In its case we do not find either programs or economic guarantees or administrative structures suited to the nature of the work. And, given the administrative structure of the country, the problem makes them logically more and more complex as the volume of the network of institutions grows.

What they are seeking is not in any way to establish a handful of autonomous schools, but rather a network with its own identity. They know that the first is only guaranteed by the second. They wish to combine a network of more or less religious communities at least in their appearance, with another of educational establishments. But this is a reality which the society of their time hardly knows. If there exists a network of communities, one cannot say the same with regard to the establishments of social commitment which are ultimately its schools: each one of the two networks exists or can exist separately; when they claim to unite something it will break either on the side of social insertion or on that of belonging to a network of institution.

On this matter it is very symptomatic and we need to remember the root of the big crisis of the last years of the life of La Salle: his schools were never in danger (at least in the short term) but his association in an autonomous network as such, was. The bishops and parish priests were disposed to take on the new operative formula assumed for these almost charity schools, but they did not understand that they would constitute an autonomous ensemble. Doubtless, this is what was intended, what was justifying all their processes of didactic and organizational improvement, their experiences in initial and ongoing formation, their 'stuttering' some years later in shaping specialized school textbooks.

Thus, what in principle seemed a local and strictly work project, was quickly perceived as institutional, shared and corporate. What in the beginning was merely a call to work was converted little by little into a

call to membership: they were all within an ensemble, network or association, which transcends the personal biography and is making them part of something which could even outlast them. This carried with it the necessity of increasing the guarantee and the stability of the work of the schools.

This situation leads to the reinforcement of the resources which secure the achievements, the constant checking of structures and the theoretical setting up of institutions. Thus appears the legitimizing discourse in its three main forms: the *Conduct of Schools*, the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and the *Rules of the Community*. Each one of these had a specific predominant character but none does things exclusively. In its ensemble we find references to the spiritual where we would expect purely didactic or pedagogy where we would expect only the organization of a human group, as we understand in the text of Br. Gerard Rummery, especially when we go over it in the light of the contribution of Br. Diego Muñoz.

Brothers in the beginnings know that the establishment of their Society of schools depends on the uniformity of their pedagogical models and vice-versa. Therefore also in this case we can establish a fundamental affirmation: **Lasallian Pedagogy is the expression of the commitment and faith of an institution.**

When this pedagogy is converted into a guide for the formation of new teachers (and this happens often), it adopts a new function which can only be appreciated clearly several centuries later: a capacity for action, of course, but it lays the foundation of the institution. So, as the experts have taught us in recent years, the instrument is more than an instrument: it authenticates the existence of the institution. The latter knows that without being invented, consolidated and spreading an operative system, its entire existence is devoid of meaning. Not only will its schools be ineffective but they will feel their lives to be a deception or a fraud⁴¹.

⁴¹ It is the profound message of the first setting up of the Novitiate in Vaugirard. The Founder knows he needs to settle both the persons and the nascent society. The contents of that formation – the *Method of Mental Prayer* and the *Conduct of Schools* basically – have a personal dimension; but the institution itself of formation was above all collective, corporate, foundational and with a sense of Association.

And on this same line of thought we understand, that if at some moment its operating resources lose their spirit, they will cease to be the authenticators of the community and will convert themselves into a theological refuge. We will come across this later in the course of its history, with total clarity: when they lose educational realism, when they lose orientation from the socio-labour insertion of the Poor, then their pedagogy atrophies and contorts, incapable of adaptation. It can then seem strong and powerful because it is full of many things, but it is dead, incapable of having a future.

For the moment, as a part of what we can call the Lasallian Pedagogy of the beginnings, we will point out relationship by means of letters between all the members of the society and the ultimate Superior and his assistants, because the administrative organization of the ensemble also forms part of the Pedagogy of the beginnings by always keeping open the paths of awareness and formation in addition to the transfer of persons and sharing experiences.

With this we arrive at a characteristic of Lasallian Pedagogy (that otherwise might seem misappropriation): constant self-criticism. It is obvious, from the institutional or foundational point of view, that the whole Lasallian Institute would only be viable by maintaining the self-critical and purposeful spirit built by the *Conduct*. Thus, although through the law of life this mood for self-criticism should have died away a little after the second generation, by 1750, it would come back to arise with all its strength in the following one, already on the verge of the Revolution.

This is how it is vouched for by the process of revision of the *Conduct* in the 80s of that century and the setting up of a space for a second professional formation, in accordance with the new needs of society, which they called the 'Scholasticate', an indisputable Higher Training College (both realities which we will come back to in the second part of this study).

4.

The third line is the understanding of the life of relationship, educational and personal, as the mediation and the place of pedagogy.

As in many others, in the Lasallian Pedagogy of the *Conduct of Schools*, the pupil does not exist but rather the persona of the pupil. By 'pupil' we could understand someone who is in the target group for some knowledge, someone on whom we are counting for some results and not on the meaning of his life. By 'the person of the pupil' on the other hand, we situate the knowledge as the instrument for reaching what is definitively important. However: in considering in this way the educational relationship between the teacher and the pupil and between the school and the network of schools, they find themselves embarked on a process which leads them beyond the strictly operational. Little by little all discover that the world of resources and procedures constantly invites towards efficiency and at the same time towards transcending efficiency.

Thus we arrive at the world of the call and of responsibility, the heart of the authorizing system which supports the previous line. Rightly we find this theme in the 'gateway' of the great monument of Lasallian legitimation: the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.

It is a process easily understood. It begins by situating itself in front of the pupil as someone who has some responsibility towards him. The teacher must feel that the present and future of his pupil, is, at least in a certain way, in his hands. Therefore the relationship which he lives with him cannot be indifferent to him. It commits him, it obliges him.

The next step or stage is the response resulting from this point of departure: creation, responsibility, efficiency, results. This, first of all, feeds on programming as well as resources which are put into practice and will have positive results. The educational relationship thus goes on leaving at both ends a satisfactory experience which makes both feel part of a mission which goes beyond them. This experience, in the case of the teacher, leads him to find within his task a door to something else, to another world, in which appears the Mystery, God.

The experience of pedagogical success is the doorway of God, as Br. Diego Muñoz reminded us. If the teacher passes through it, he will find, first of all, a link in his person, which he did not know about up till then. He will feel himself belonging to a plan which transcends him and supports him way beyond what he is capable of understanding. Since, fur-

thermore, this experience is shared or at least in common with other teachers, the result is that every educational community and organization is founded in it.

Educational organization is thus transcended, in its purely operational dimension, into the fount of life which both sides share. It is converted, specifically, into an occasion for resources and procedures of new fecundity. Above all, it is the place from which he again receives the call of the student, the occasion for renewing the experience of responsibility. School organization, thus converted into a school community, is the place where educational sensitivity is daily renewed as well as the capacity for detecting needs and responses, relations and resources, procedures and structures...

Thus the process again begins, inevitably, each time on a higher or deeper plane. It is the sense of the very nuanced third part of the *Conduct*, with its typology of the educator, his weak points and his strong points plus the attention of the formators or inspectors to all this: they know very well that the good teacher is the soul of the good school and therefore they pay attention to all aspects of his behaviour in such a way that, accustomed to it, they can go on living the harmony which we have just described. This is precisely the content and the intention of what they call the 'twelve virtues of the good teacher', as we have seen them commented on at the end of that first period of Lasallian Pedagogy by Br. Agathon.

The institutional result of that process is the conversion of educational organization into something else: **it goes on from a medium to sign**. It is understandable because when society notices in the work of the school, links which are beyond the contract, when it finds an institutional fruitfulness which goes beyond what was programmed, it feels surprised and begins to see in the school something which it had not expected. The school had been changed and really functions as a sign of something else (a perspective which up to now has not been much exploited so that it can appear novel but is not at all so)⁴².

⁴² Most notably this perspective is not sufficiently developed in the Theology of Consecration or in the theological understanding of the religious educator. There is still present, however, the initial position

First of all the sign refers to the mission of the school now and so transcends the effectiveness of its work. The school itself has gone beyond its strictly work mission and taken on a social aim, something which is measured not in the degrees and certificates which it gives to its people but rather in the hope that it awakens. The school thus changes into a social institution and not simply an instructive one and so surprising itself, finds that its pedagogical horizon has changed: now its project is directed not from the school viewpoint but from the social.

In a parallel manner, in offering the other reading of this process of belonging or relationship, the Christian discourse also changes the scope: from words and contents it moves to the institutional sign of what is beyond. The school thus arrives at another level in the discourse of evangelization: relationship and belonging situates it more within the field of testimony than that of instruction. This again leads it to discover that the horizon of its pedagogical creativity has changed: we have passed from action, from efficiency to accompanying, transparency and evocation: definitively another pedagogical model.

5.

In the end one can say that **Lasallian Pedagogy exists more as a spirit than as a system of procedures.**

If we consider it carefully, this affirmation should not surprise us: it is something proper to all the social movements of any significance. The Lasallian movement is so, in that it innovated structurally at the time of its beginning and diversified across its base over the following hundred years. For the beginning of the 20th Century, in fact, it is undeniable that the Lasallian is a social movement or institution of relevance. Not only has it inaugurated a formula but has spread it and has caused the appearance of similar institutions.

that consecration is a means towards apostolic commitment, which necessarily leads to the absurd, both personal and institutional. It is enough to see the point of this fact: in the beginning looking at the school of the Brothers people were looking above all at their school; then they were looking more at its persons, its community. What does this mean for the definition of religious consecration?

The three periods of its history are formation, diversification and apogee, each one approximately a century. And they are the same for its Pedagogy. Today, in the final period of the third or at the dawn of an absolutely unknown period, we see it with clarity and it cannot surprise us: what matters, both in the integrity of the Lasallian Institute and in its pedagogy is its spirit, the interior attitude which has made it capable of operational or institutional gestures of historical relevance, as we see in this first part and will evoke later.

This spirit has many names, depending on the point of view of your consideration. In our reflection we are keeping to two, as two sides of the same coin: **fidelity and realism**. Fidelity refers to a system of vocabulary more orientated towards the personal, or included in the spiritual. Realism refers to one which is more operative, immediate and empirical. But both speak of a responsible education system, that is to say, obligated by these concrete persons, in this social environment and at this concrete historical moment. They are both based on knowledge of the real and its limitations and on constant verification of the educational response.

By the three dimensions or lines of strength which we find in its initial definition, we can distinguish **fidelity/social, personal and transcendental realism**. They constitute the system which definitively allows us to speak of Lasallian Pedagogy.

Just as we see it being born and consolidated over a period of 200 years, there is no doubt that Lasallian Pedagogy is characterized by social realism, in the sense that it is committed to a social field that in terms of educational effectiveness is allowed almost nothing long term. From this was born its specific reading of the contents in the programs and objectives in social insertion. Also born, particularly, was the design of its school establishments, always marked by simplicity (up to passing more than once the tolerable limits of the rudimentary). And it shows, definitively, in the talent of its teachers, almost always a reflection of the evangelical sense of poverty (up to also passing more than once the limits of poverty and ignorance).

Lasallian Pedagogy is equally realistic in the area of relations, that is to say, in the consideration of persons, both teacher-pupil and teacher-teacher.

We have seen this in the play between the precision of school catalogues and the precept of tenderly loving one's pupils. Both perspectives encompass what we understand by realism or fidelity in the personal; others call us to account and will be our judges before God and before history, but are also the occasion of faith and relations with God. With neither of these two perspectives do we joke, imagining things which are not.

Perhaps thus, the definitive criterion of Lasallian realism lies in its transcendental character or in the incarnation and the immediacy of God. The God who calls has his Plan of Salvation since before the creation of the world, but the components of the society of the Christian schools lives in the heart of this world and are the face of God in the school of the Poor. For this reason its pedagogical commitment ought to be and can be creative.

In this way we understand that Lasallian Pedagogy always presupposes a configuration relating to the moment, that is to say, something whose soul is not organizational logic (which it has) but rather fidelity, the true architect of the resulting system. Therefore we can enumerate instrumental features, for example, of Lasallian Pedagogy in the first half of the 18th Century which we in no way find in the first half of the 20th. But this does not mean that we stop speaking of the same pedagogy.

The observation is very pertinent even today or during the last half century, when knowledge and educational procedures have advanced so much and have been spread so much: we cannot – just because of a lack of differentiation in so many procedures – say that the days of a pedagogy such as the Lasallian or any other with its own character, have gone. If we reflect a little we will notice right away that it is the spirit or what we have called pedagogical realism which nowadays directs us in the selection and the articulation of the operational system and in the elaboration of diversifications within models increasingly more universal or intercultural.

Today, as in the beginning, it is a question of living the dialectic relation between procedure and spirit, avoiding the double ingenuousness of both having been fully defined prior to its articulation in the Lasallian Pedagogical system. Not only are principles and procedures nothing with-

out their reciprocity but this very reciprocity models and configures in a way that is constantly new in each one of its two axes.

Therefore we can say, considering for example the generations of its first definition, that, in the end, **Lasallian Pedagogy is what it has always been and not something else which has finally arrived.** It is a present continuous and not a past present. Therefore, strictly speaking, there is no end just as over 200 years there was no definitive edition of the *Conduct of Schools* nor is there a unique way of living the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.

In this way we arrive at a paradoxical affirmation: if in order to speak of Lasallian Pedagogy we have to speak of something characteristic, specific, distinct, we will probably remain a bit disappointed. They did not bother to distinguish themselves, to make themselves specific; they wanted to be faithful. What we call Lasallian Pedagogy is the chronicle of a concrete fidelity, with its highs and its lows, in the educational service of the Poor of the 18th Century.

2.



A living project

...But the Lasallian tradition is part of a process in world history. It began when one process was ending and another was beginning. Since then, like all social institutions, it had to adapt its first definitions to the new things that were happening.

It was not always easy, and we didn't always get it right. Remembering some of the challenges of its three centuries of history can help, to understand the meaning of "Lasallian education" as it faces new times.

2.

A living project

Pedro María Gil fsc

Let us go back for a moment in order to understand better what lies in front of us.

As seen in the previous section, Lasallian education is the daughter of a moment in Western history. It belongs to the beginning of what we call Modernity, according to the parameters of 17th century Europe. In the circumstances that made it possible and that saw it come into being, we find the convergence of a world that is going to begin a new phase in its history and the Christian institution that also wants to recover evangelization after several centuries of notable imbalance.

So on the one hand there is the world that follows the European Renaissance and Baroque periods. On the other hand, there are the Christian churches of Europe who are experiencing the trauma of their fragmentation and who want to commit themselves to a new movement

of Christianizing society. The so called Thirty Years' War had ended. We are in the Europe of Westphalia (1648). Galileo had died a short time before; Vincent de Paul had just set up his work; De La Salle would be born within three years.

1.

Lasallian education is the result of the convergence of the modernity of reason and secularization on the one hand and the huge effort of the Christian churches to be reunited in a Europe that looked different on the other. It is here, between Calasanz and Comenio, between P. Bayle and Colbert, between Newton and Hume, in the days of Pascal and Fenelon, that the institution of the Christian Schools came into being.

It was not born out of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation (and this is an important observation for those today who are looking to contextualize the Lasallian Project which would remain similar and faithful to its principles). It was born a century later, when everyone in Europe began to realize that they were living in a different time.

Beneath the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, there was something bigger than the changes in the Western Christian world. In the background, what made that entire Christian movement possible was the emergence of a new way of considering what is human, something between the Renaissance and the Revolutions of the 18th century. That deep spirit was the driving force of the evangelizing will, along with the mediation component of education. Throughout the 17th century, in fact, the school was looked upon differently: never until that time was it considered key in evangelization and socialization. That is how Church movements emerged that would unite both things and create specialized institutions.

The Modernity to which we refer was born a century before and it ended up giving birth to the days of Descartes and Spinoza (1650-1680). This era was consolidated during the next one-hundred years and it reached its historical "maturity" during the thirty years from the American Revolution to the French Revolution (1770-1800). Modernity then saw

its greatest days in the next century, when Europe converted all that innovation into an instrument of colonization of the rest of the world. And then it disintegrated little by little during the second third of the 20th century (1940-1970).

Afterwards, that is to say, from then until now, those three or four centuries are already history. Back at that time, this was all about something new; among other things it created a new teaching model. For us, on the other hand, it is a time that has passed.

We must remember this in order to realize again and again that we are talking about something that was born in an historical time that no longer exists. So a question is raised that we cannot avoid: as the daughter of a specific historical time, can it be said that Lasallian education has disappeared along with that time?

To respond to this crucial question it is helpful to realize that nothing exists apart from its context, so that concepts, systems or institutions have no meaning if they attempt to be autonomous and they ignore that they are the result of a dialogue: in our case it is the dialogue between an educational program and the social moments in which it was born.

2.

The initial model or institutional framework in which Lasallian education was born was the gratuitous Christian school for children of the poor, as it was conceived of in the second half of the 17th century. The studies in Part One have reminded us of this.

These were no longer the times of the previous one-hundred years. Certainly Modernity had not been blunted, but things seemed more like a new beginning rather than the first movements of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The France of Henry of Navarre (1600) was not that of Louis XIV (1700). Even though in the two reigns religion did play an important role, it will be in the second reign where we will find what scholars call the change of consciousness in Europe, a clear step towards Modernity.

This meant that already in the very beginning (1700) there was a risk of schizophrenia proper to all dynamic institutions in society: to believe that the institution was following one model, when in reality it was anticipating another one.

It is a constant that we find in all the challenges facing Lasallian education over the course of three centuries. It has always tried to get ahead of the practice that was inherited, but normally is supported by more situational or opportunistic reasons than by fundamental ones. It is believed to be one thing while it is already becoming something else. This is what usually happens in transformations, but not always in the awareness or understanding of what is being adapted.

3.

The deep meaning of this paradox is that the configuration of institutions is always ahead of the awareness of its members.

We find this again and again, but the cause is always the same: institutions are the result of the passage of history, rather than the planning of scholars, technicians or the organizations themselves.

This gives us a better understanding of the relationship between the five axes that we proposed in our section on content in the previous section: the first three parts were of an operational nature which is not possible without the other two parts that speak about belonging. Therefore we can state that Lasallian education is not the result of one human group that plans its work but of a community that belongs to God and his people at a determined historic and social time which they interpret as a call to fidelity and to community commitment.

If we read this fact in a positive way, we find that it is no stranger to the survival of the education program throughout all that was to happen in the subsequent centuries. But neither is it a stranger as regards difficulty in receiving certain innovations that might seem threatening to the institution.

So the challenges facing Lasallian education are the operative side of what

clashes with the institution and the community as we shall see in this second part of our study.

4.

The great challenge of Lasallian education came with its own success: it was so adapted to the new society that it was difficult to sense the scope of what it had achieved.

This situation always leads to true entrenchment or repeating what had already been experienced, cultivating routine more than creation.

So we see this situation, above all, in the development of content or programs, after one-hundred years of the inadequacy of the primary schools and the ways they were run. This situation would assume a specific understanding of the new content, encouraged not by its memorized reproduction but by the promotion of reason that had been its strength up to that time.

Along with this situation, little by little they found a new kind of presence in the social Administration within the world of the primary school. The Administration, in fact, would duplicate the organization they had been using for at least the last fifty years of the 18th century, applying an overall vision of the need for the new society and its ability to respond. As a result, the Ministry of Education (the "Imperial University," as they called it) seemed more like the Lasallian organization of Brother Agathon (1770 - 1800) than like any previous educational institution.

Starting from this fact, Lasallians would need to define their place in the overall structure of the leadership of society in a different way, honing the design of the school itself to be able to propose to the people some new specific profile or value. This would be the proper time to reconsider their teaching model.

5.

Faced with the development of the programs required by new social con-

ditions, a new alternative seemed logical: re-create the programs according to their way of promoting reason and experimentation or of enabling generative memory.

Central to this choice was their (the Lasallians') ability to adopt one or the other, so that the social alternative made them redefine their own training. They saw this right away and attended to it in part, but it took a century to move from awareness to renewal. It is logical to assume that this would represent an important shortfall in their teaching vitality.

Their best response, in this sense, was the articulation of a detailed ongoing formation, even though it was encumbered by a clear lack of initial formation. New Lasallians would be able to find, throughout their professional career, what they did not have when they began it.

In this area, the main task fell to their secondary schools: they concentrated their best personnel in them, in order to respond directly to the needs of a few establishments and of the whole network at the same time. They controlled this second aspect by different methods: directly targeted formation and enhanced awareness in the institution as a whole.

6.

The other aspect of the challenge was to bring them to many more situations that were unpleasant in themselves and in their consequences, from our point of view.

Throughout the 19th century, relations with the French Administration were often difficult. And when they were not they, they were not especially fruitful.

From the beginning of the century, notwithstanding the lack of institutions for training teachers, they were more committed to maintaining their acquired right and merits than in profound renewal. They managed to do it, because they were numerous and the society appreciated them, but they preferred to pay the price of specializing in primary schools, where they certainly were the dominant force.

They could have gone into a different relationship with the network directly administered by the State, but they did not. Instead it offered to the people and to history a mixture of solidity and conservatism that worked where there was not too much competence.

Thus we find ourselves at the end of the century faced with both firmness and creativity. Protest literature within the Lasallian institution attests to this and the multiple awards for their teaching value at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris.

7.

Both of these sides would converge in Lasallian education of the 20th century.

Hand in hand with globalization, both inside and outside of the Lasallian institution in overall world dynamics, the diversification of institutional relations and the specialization of educational processes made for the synthesis of inherited teaching practices to look upon totally unknown situations.

But this belongs to the third part of this study.

In this second part we have included some – four - of the episodes that exemplify the historicity of Lasallian education. They are not all the episodes nor perhaps do they include the one you would like to find. They seemed sufficient to us and in any case they are complemented by the list found in the Annex. Our objective was neither to study all of them nor to study each one exhaustively. As presented below, they are valuable contributions to the definition of Lasallian education: they help one to understand not only the result of a stance taken before society but that the same stance is part of the resulting education.

It would be good to read them with a dual guide: each one, within the set, in order to let it say more than it seems to say; and the set overall, from the perspective of the three final axes of the first part so that our objective of asking ourselves for the definition and the current situation of Lasallian education is maintained.

Chapter 6 - BROTHER AGATHON THE EXPERIENCE OF A CENTURY OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY FIDELITY AND ADAPTATION

Francis Ricousse fsc

PREPARATION: COMMITMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT

When the General Chapter of 1777 accepted the resignation of Brother Florence and chose Brother Agathon to take on the role of fifth successor of St Jean-Baptiste de la Salle at the head of the Institute (from 1777 to 1789), he was a mature man of 46. The human and spiritual qualities that they saw in him at that time were the fruit of thirty years of varied commitments, starting with his entrance into the novitiate of Saint-Yon in 1847, at the age of 16 years 6 months. It is worth while going through his *curriculum vitae*, which was so rich in a variety of experiences calculated to affirm his personality and broaden his range of abilities.

The year of the Novitiate showed him to have a clear and open mind, and his short period as a Scholastic in the same house allowed him to complete programmes of study well beyond those ordinarily considered sufficient for work in primary schools. The teaching duties that he subsequently carried out showed that he had achieved a high level of competence in mathematics and sciences.

His first teaching post was in the town of Brest, the French port for the New World and a place of intense commercial and military activity with an atmosphere of adventure. The Brothers adapted themselves to the local needs and contributed to the general provision of maritime studies. Brother Agathon was not content simply to fulfill the role assigned to the Brothers of training clerks for the navy. He was one of those who studied and taught the science of navigation. While his colleagues taught the naval apprentices the art of writing, he gave lessons in arithmetic, geometry and oceanography and had the reputation of being an excellent teacher.

Brother Agathon's reputation led to his being appointed, when still comparatively young, as Director St Yon in charge of boarders. This position qualified him for election as a delegate to the General Chapter of 1761 as the Director of a Community of more than seven Brothers.

It was a period of great ferment. A wide range of theories of education were being propounded, some of which stressed the current principles of 'tolerance', and tended to undermine the values and principles of a lowly congregation teaching poor children. During this period Brother Agathon carried out valuable work by combining his supervision of the boarders with the teaching of maths and accountancy. His *Traité d'arithmétique*, published in Rouen in 1787, was the outcome of this teaching activity.

At the same time, Brother Agathon's qualities as a negotiator, combining tact and skillfulness, had occasion to reveal themselves in the mission with which he was charged in Beauvais where people were making insistent demands for Brothers.

Next Brother Agathon was sent to the sea port town of Vannes in Basse-Bretagne, where he was to be Director of a Community of six Brothers, founded twenty years previously. The good reputation rapidly acquired by the school was due to his ability to organise courses in maths and oceanography for the more advanced pupils, not hesitating to take the students on board a ship for practical experience in navigation. An administrative report dating from 1788 states: «Their school of oceanography provides a great service to the navy within a radius of ten leagues; it turns out on a daily basis students of high quality, and it would be hardly possible to find schools better organised than those of the Brothers.

Called for the second time to participate in the General Chapter of 1767, this young capitulant of rare maturity caught the attention of Brother Florence, the new Superior, and Brother Agathon shortly received an obedience as Director of the large Community in Angers. The Brothers there had been given the responsibility for educating regular boarders and those who were forcibly committed, in a single building, badly situated in an unhealthy area outside the town, hard to get to, cramped for space, lacking in facilities for hygiene and good organisation. Brother Agathon immediately undertook to change things, and in spite of opposition and

many delays, his efforts were rewarded a few years later by the Institute's acquisition of the magnificent boarding establishment of Rossignolerie, in the centre of the town. By the eve of the Revolution it had become a first class establishment.

This further experience, crowned with success, drew Brother Agathon even more to the attention of the Superiors, and they called him to Paris where the Mother House was then situated. He was asked to make a study of the organisation and administration of the Institute, especially the general system of financial accounts. While he was busy with this task, he was elected to take part in the General Chapter 1777. Brother Agathon was then 46 years old, and he brought with him a wealth of experience and a record of successes which were due to his human and intellectual abilities and to his religious spirit which endowed him with humility, perseverance, evenness of temperament, tact and courtesy. Consequently, the capitulants had no hesitation in choosing him to be the successor to Brother Florence.

FIDELITY IN TROUBLED TIMES: THE WORK OF BROTHER AGATHON

The Circular of Convocation of the Chapter of the May 1777 announced that the goal was to “establish on a firm basis a unity of thinking regarding the extent of the obligations imposed on us by the vows”⁴³. As a matter of fact, as it approached its first centenary, the Institute was still united, and the direction of its inspiration and action remained that of M. De La Salle and his first disciples. The Brothers continued to find their essential guidelines in the original *Rule*, in the *Conduite des écoles* (Conduct of Schools) and in the *Meditations* of the Founder. The actions of the new Superior would consist in affirming all this, especially through major Circulars on a variety of topics addressed either to the Brothers Directors or to the Brothers in general.

Having informed the Pope of his appointment and of the results of the Chapter, Brother Agathon settled down to his task in characteristic man-

⁴³ Circulaire imprimée du Fr. Florence, Supérieur Général, 20 mai 1777, page 1 (AMG – CD 260.1.3).

ner as a man of clear and broad vision, anxious to communicate his own dynamism to others, with a close relationship to people and totally committed, with all the necessary energy. The Chapter discussions had produced 91 decisions and the new Superior was responsible for publishing them. To do this he introduced the new practice of issuing a printed booklet so as to reach all the Communities more easily. Other printed circulars followed, and at the same time Brother Agathon organised a programme of visits to all the houses of the Institute, which was an innovation for the Brothers.

These circulars, along with his personal letters which have been preserved, clearly express his constant concern to maintain the quality of life of the Brothers in terms of their community living, their spiritual life, the fulfillment of their duties of employment, and their fidelity to the commitments they had made. This accounts for the importance he attached to the process of admission to the Novitiate and to vows « It is the Brothers who are most imbued with the spirit of their state of life who will be its strength, honour and glory. Consequently, it should be our policy never to associate individuals with us by vows unless we see that they deserve our vote by their qualities of heart and mind, and the skills appropriate to the work they will have to undertake, at least by showing an aptitude for acquiring those skills»⁴⁴.

He frequently reminds the Brothers Directors of their duties vis-à-vis the Brothers of their Communities: «They are the soul of regularity which lacks vitality they do not inspire it by the practice of all the religious virtues ... words have little effect if they are not based on actions». As for the Brothers themselves, they must first of all develop « a love for their Brothers, simplicity in obedience and a fervent spirit»⁴⁵.

The plan to transfer the Mother House to Melun, begun by his predecessor, was implemented right at the start of his term of office. The move to a new location called for major arrangements during which Brother

⁴⁴ Circulaire imprimée du F. Agathon, Supérieur Général, 20 février 1778, page 3 (AMG – CD 260.1.9).

⁴⁵ Circulaire imprimée du F. Agathon, Supérieur Général, 19 octobre 1777, page 2 (AMG – CD 260.1.5).

Agathon showed his skill for making use of the abilities of qualified Brothers.

The process of obtaining *Lettres patentes* for the schools to give them civil recognition was usually lengthy, especially when they had to be registered by different local *Parlements*. Brother Agathon's tact and perseverance enabled him to achieve success in a number of cases. As for the conditions of daily life in the schools and communities, Brother Agathon made sure of obtaining first-hand knowledge by a planned programme of visits, with a view to taking action on the spot to obtain the necessary resources.

There was no doubting that the man who had left behind in Brest, Saint-Yon, Vannes and Angers the reputation of being an excellent teacher and educator would show an interest in the authors of the time who were taking a new look at questions relating to the education of young people, writers like Locke, Fénelon and Rollin. It is noticeable that Brother Agathon was able to draw inspiration from what they had to say that was useful and practical in terms of the pedagogical training of the young Brothers, while remaining faithful to the Lasallian method and pedagogy with its apostolic goals joined to a concern for efficiency. On the other hand, the notes that he left, the establishments he set up and organised, his publication of *Conseils aux Formateurs* (Advice to Formators), his new edition of the *Conduite des Écoles* and above all his *Douze Vertus d'un Bon Teacher* (Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher) reveal the importance he attached to the professional training of the Brothers. In those turbulent years, when the seeds of a terrible revolution were clearly being sown, we can but wonder how he was able to take forward so much administrative work allied to a very active life as a prolific and sound writer.

THE WORK IN SCHOOLS

Gratuitous Schools

In his concern for efficiency and maximum high performance, Brother Agathon took equal care over both gratuitous schools and boarding schools. This desire for quality explains the limited number of new school openings, of which there were only six between 1777 and 1787. He want-

ed the Brothers to have sufficient well-being and conditions favourable to their work, and for this he insisted on suitable and regular resources. Neither would he undertake new openings unless he had teachers available who were properly prepared. However, when a growing school needed more staff, the Brother Superior listened gladly to the requests. While remaining a stout defender of the gratuity of the parish schools, he still managed to improve their material situation and to allow for their increasingly prosperous growth.

Boarding Schools

After the boarding section in Saint-Yon, which was needed to meet the financial costs of the training of the young Brothers and the care of the elderly, more boarding schools were opened, twelve in the course of the 18th century. For this work, some Brothers became trained in other disciplines which opened up new fields of professional careers for the students. Brother Agathon only opened one such establishment, in Charlemagne near Carcassonne, with ambitious plans that were thwarted by the Revolution. Similar establishments were opened in the 19th century, not offering studies in classical literature but promoting specialisation in arts and crafts, and they marked the birth of modern secondary education and the teaching of technology.

Although the spirit of the age nourished an ever greater and more unjust opposition to the Brothers and their model of education, Brother Agathon appeared as the man sent by Providence to take the helm and be a model for the others. Having benefited from an education more advanced than usual, and having developed his skills in a variety of functions (teacher, prefect of discipline, Director, Visitor), he showed himself to be particularly apt in directing, counseling and promoting a culture among the Brothers that was religious, intellectual and pedagogical. He reorganised the boarding schools by giving them a uniform set of rules and was able to adapt the programmes of study to suit the local regions.

Looking at the results obtained over two decades by the perseverance and farsightedness of Brother Agathon in an adverse political and social climate, we can only speculate about what he might have achieved had the times been more favourable and peaceful.

PEDAGOGICAL WORK

Scholasticates

The only Scholasticate that existed at the time with a staff of select Brothers as teachers was annexed to the boarding section in Saint-Yon. Major developments were soon made to it by the new Superior to improve its good order and hygiene. Brother Agathon's enthusiasm did not stop there, because he wanted to improve the training of the young Brothers everywhere. Scholasticates were set up in Marseilles, Paris and Melun. They offered training in a great variety of areas. In Marseilles, for example, they were trained not only in the teaching of writing, arithmetic, spelling, catechism and grammar, but also pedagogy, direction and administration. In a brochure on *Les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts* (Marseille, 1789), we read: «Pupils from all parts of Europe and even from America flock to this famous boarding establishment; their families value the teaching given there, and its magnificent library shows the strength of the studies and the knowledge of the teachers» (Vincent, cited by Fredebert-Marie, 1958, p. 77). The titles of some of the books listed in the accounts give an idea of this knowledge: *Traité de la Sphère*, *Onze Volumes de la Physique de Nollet*, *Traité de Perspective*, *Anatomie en sept cahiers*, *Application de l'Algèbre à la Géométrie*, *Observations critiques sur la Physique la Newton*, *Traité de Trigonométrie rectiligne et sphérique*, *Éléments de Calcul intégral de Bougainville*, *le Calcul différentiel de Desdier*, *Traité analytique des Sections coniques*, *Éléments de l'Architecture navale*, etc.

Shortly afterwards, Brother Agathon opened the scholasticates of Maréville and Angers, where the Brothers were distinguished for their knowledge and pedagogical skills as mathematicians and in technical drawing. Their publications included works such as: *Traité de mathématiques élémentaires*, *Traité de navigation* (Br. Guiltheume de Jesus), *Dictionnaire pratique de la langue française* (Br. Généreux). We also know that Brother Charles Borromée was an outstanding teacher of geometry, surveying and elevation. However, the Revolution would put an end to all these well-founded hopes.

Writings on Pedagogy

A number of Brother Agathon's writings on pedagogy have been preserved some in draft form others in completed form. The earliest are no more than pedagogical injunctions drawn from the writings of J.B. de La Salle. Agathon himself grouped them as follows:

- 1° Very serious faults which must be avoided in school
- 2° Advice by M. De La Salle for training oneself to work in school
- 3° Faults to be avoided in teaching catechism
- 4° Virtues that must be practiced
- 5° Advice on how to teach catechism usefully
- 6° Extracts from the customary practices of the Brothers of the Christian Schools
- 7° Passages that should often be referred to by the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Another manuscript is in the form of a short summary of all that a well educated child should know and do in order to be presentable in society as a gentleman and a convinced Christian. These pages may offer nothing that is original, but they show their author to be one who is keen to improve and to profit from the experience of others.

The Conduct of Schools

The Chapter of 1777 asked for the *Conduite des Écoles* to be reprinted. Brother Agathon wanted it to take into account the light of new experience. To that end, he asked for the opinions of all the competent Brothers and then personally devised a plan for the new *Conduite des Écoles*. The Institute archives have three drafts of this, drawn up by three different authors, unknown.

The first of these drafts comprises 120 pages with 11 Chapters containing a clear didactic presentation, preceded by a chapter on «What a Brother should think about his employment and position». A second text has 353 pages and is the most voluminous; it is clearly influenced by Rollin and does not follow the plan of the *Conduite* of J.B. de La Salle.

However, it contains many judicious observations and devotes twenty-four pages to the training of new teachers.

A third version, apparently influenced by the others, is from the hand of Brother Agathon. A sentence in the Preface indicates the Superior's disappointment at the small number of the notes sent in. «The Brothers did not submit any observations or opinions, as they were asked, in order to assist in the composition of this work, so they cannot rightly complain if it does not conform to their wishes, which they did not see fit to communicate». Then he adds in a further note: «Apart from five or six Brothers, the others provided nothing»⁴⁶.

The author takes as the basis for his work the *Conduite* of 1720, but he made major modifications to it. The 200 pages of the text contain 226 articles. In addition to the handwriting, the style of the preface and a written certification by Brother Agathon himself at the end of the volume allow us to be certain that the work really is that of the Superior in person. The new edition was to contain two more sections than that of 1720 by the Founder. One was on the training of young teachers and another was on the administration of boarding establishments.

The author proceeds to explain his choice of a plan he believed to be the most logical. The first part is very long and goes back to origins of the Congregation. It is a collection of the rules and customs that had always been followed and advised in the Institute. It would have been issued in printed form sooner, says the Brother Superior, were it not for the fact that it was intended for trainers and inspectors, and the small number of these meant that handwritten copies were sufficient to serve the needs. However, since the errors introduced by copyists could be a source of changes and differences, a printed version is being made to avoid such a problem.

The former Director of boarders in Saint-Yon and Angers took a special interest in writing at length in the fourth part: «*On the Administration of Boarding Schools*». He seems to be putting the case for boarding schools

⁴⁶ Projet de Conduite par F. Agathon, manuscrit 45. Préface (AMG – BM 651.3.4).

«which offer the teacher more means to turn the pupils into true Christian gentlemen, honest, upright, just and reliable»⁴⁷. Boarding makes it easier for the teacher to study and to get to know the pupils, because the relationship is continual and the use of sanctions more effective. These things favour the aims set by the good educator: *to make himself loved, feared, respected and sought after*. Without damaging the family spirit, which should be fostered by regular correspondence, a boarding department directed by religious anxious to remain up-to-date shelters the children from the distractions and the dangerous amusements of the world, so harmful for intellectual work and virtue; it also gives the teachers a more durable influence.

A reading of the Preface enables us to understand the new order of the contents adopted by the Superior. Thus we can accept that the section on the training of teachers, never previously printed, should occupy the first place in the revised plan. As for the section inspired by the corresponding ones in the *Conduite* of 1720, the modifications adopted in them can also be understood. An examination of the changes introduced would require a detailed table of comparisons. Brother Agathon's manuscript leaves twenty-eight pages blank, which he would have completed with chapters on prayer, the Mass and departure time after school.

Part Four «*Regarding the Boarders*», is an innovation by Brother Agathon and deserves a more detailed study. The first chapter sets out the kind of teaching and behavioural education to be given to the boarders. «The principal aim of the boarding masters is to instruct their pupils properly in the Christian and Catholic religion, to train them in virtue and in good behaviour, to inspire them by continuous teaching to acquire and preserve the spirit and the habit of religion. They will also teach them the rules of politeness and civility common to honest people; how to read both handwriting and printed works; good handwriting, general calculus and foreign exchange; how to keep account books, the theory of commerce, spelling, French grammar, drawing, the elements of mathematics, geography, oceanography and history. The teachers will work even hard-

⁴⁷ Projet de Conduite par F. Agathon, manuscrit 45. Préface (AMG – BM 651.3.4).

er to train their spirit, character and judgment, to the extent that pupils show potential for this, and if the length of their time as boarders is sufficient to allow it »⁴⁸.

Chapter II is on the Prefect, «*the one who is the main driving force in a boarding section, ever-present and active*». He is the one who welcomes the boarders when they come, interviewing them and placing them in the right places. His extensive powers do not exempt him from being answerable to the Brother Director and making reports to him or from the duty to maintain good relations with his colleagues.

Chapter III emphasises the union the Brothers should have with the prefect and with their colleagues. It also indicates the age-range (8 to 15) within which children are to be accepted. If they were younger than this, they would require too much special attention; if they were older, they would be less inclined to accept the discipline of a boarding school. There then follow various recommendations and rules which still retain their pedagogical value.

A century of experience in the Lasallian method is condensed into this fourth part. Most of the directives it contains are also found in that vademecum of the religious educator, the *Douze Vertus d'un Bon Maître* (Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher).

This version of the *Conduite* was never completed. It stops at Chapter VII, which gives only a part of the *Règlement des pensionnaires* (Rules for Boarders). The unfinished parts remain only in outline, so it is hard to say what the final version would have been like. It would no doubt logically have taken the opportunity to make substantial changes to the edition of 1720.

THE TWELVE QUALITIES OF A GOOD TEACHER

In 1785, Brother Agathon published in Melun his principal educational work, *Douze Vertus d'un bon Maître*, in which he presents the qualities of a teacher in the order in which J.B. de La Salle placed them at the end of

⁴⁸ Idem.

the *Conduite des Écoles*. In the Preface, the author states that he composed the treatise following the principles and maxims of J.B. de La Salle and of the most respected authors. He frequently quotes Holy Scripture and the fathers of the Church. He is also influenced by the educational writings of his time, especially the *Traité des Études* of Rollin.

The work, however, is essentially the fruit of Agathon's own experience. The plan of the work is simple: «We will develop the true character of each virtue, the particular traits that go with it and those that are contrary to it»⁴⁹. The twelve virtues or qualities are: gravity, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, reserve, gentleness, zeal, vigilance, piety, generosity.

Gravity is not a synonym for arrogance or rudeness; it does not exclude kindness but it discourages familiarity. By this virtue, the teacher «in all his outward behaviour shows restraint and decorum which are the fruit of his mature mind, his piety and wisdom; above all, he is careful to maintain calmness and evenness of temperament and humour».

Silence «means that a teacher is silent when he does not have to speak but speaks when he should not remain silent». By this double obligation, Agathon ensures good order, attention and the progress of the pupils, while at the same time preserving the teacher's own health. One would be inclined to question whether the lesson that is continually interrupted by 'signals' might not lose its vitality; and whether the teacher who habitually speaks as little as possible would actually give all the explanations needed by the less bright pupils, and whether he would go over things again when he has not been understood. Agathon foresees this objection, and so he recommends that the teacher «avoid saying badly the things he needs to say through a failure to think the matter out beforehand and to foresee the need, the suitable moment, the circumstances, the good or bad results that might follow, or through a failure to express himself with force, precision, appropriateness, hesitating to find the right words, not knowing what he is saying, speaking diffusely and at random».

⁴⁹ For all the references of this paragraph see the original document: cf. F. Agathon, 1785 (AMG – CD 256).

The competent teacher, who knows his pupils and prepares his lessons conscientiously, saves a lot of time and makes himself understood more quickly by all the pupils who are accustomed to silence and therefore more attentive. The Socratic method recommended by the Founder for the revision of lessons serves as a control to see if further explanation is needed.

The third virtue is **humility** which must not be confused with timidity. This virtue has a real attraction for children: it fills them with respect, warm feelings and friendship. Instinctively, their simple and direct natures reject self-sufficiency and pride, vain glory, ambition, egoism, affectation, excessive confidence in oneself.

In discussing the fourth virtue, **prudence**, Agathon refers to all the features of a teacher: his meekness, his adroitness, his foresight, his circumspection. It is a matter of simple good sense. The teacher who develops it fully avoids a lot of mistakes and exercises a profound influence.

Next comes **wisdom**, which helps to make «enlightened decisions, arranging everything with gravity and measure». Then **patience** continues, so necessary for an educator because it preserves him from hastiness, discouragement, outbursts of temper and its consequences. Then comes **restraint**. This chapter is swarming with remarks that are full of subtlety and very practical advice.

The seventh virtue, **gentleness**, occupies almost one third of the volume. It gave Brother Agathon the chance to develop some rich, psychological ideas that are still valid today. Modern education favours the child and the development of initiative, but it has found nothing to improve on the respect Agathon shows for the dignity of the pupil's personality.

Brother Agathon does not hesitate to proclaim as an axiom of education that love is bought with love, that the teacher must have the feelings of a father for his pupils. «He will therefore make good use of praise, judiciously and appropriately, because, of all the motives likely to touch a rational mind, there are none as powerful as humour and shame». He condemns those teachers who rely on harshness, who command things that are above the pupils' ability, who punish with excessive severity, who command in an arrogant way or when the children are ill-disposed or

incapable of benefitting from the discipline, who do not distinguish levels of gravity in faults, who do not listen to the excuses of the pupils and always refuse to forgive them, even for faults due to thoughtlessness or forgetfulness, etc.

The study of the topic of gentleness gives him the chance to define authority, «superiority which inspires respect and obedience», and the means of establishing it. The paragraph on authority has a natural complement in the one on correction. This latter requires three conditions if it is to be of benefit for the one who receives it. It must be voluntary, respectful and silent. We can say that this chapter, which finishes by listing the defects contrary to gentleness, reveals a perfect knowledge of the hearts of children.

Next comes the virtue of **zeal** which procures the glory of God with great affection; then **vigilance** «which prevents evil rather than punishing it and is never worried, suspicious, or embarrassed». The work concludes with two virtues that seem natural for the religious educator: **piety** and **generosity**, two virtues constantly stimulated by two dominant ideas: the glory of God and the salvation of the pupils.

This little book is still a treasure for the Christian educator. The brief analysis above gives a hint of its richness. This richness explains the twenty or so editions in the course of the XIX century alone, and the great number of translations that have continued up to this day. Lay teachers have also adopted it, as for example in Belgium where it appears under the title *L'Instituteur parfait ou les Douze Vertus d'un Bon Maître* (The Perfect Teacher or the Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher), at Liège, 1829 and 1842.

A famous master of the Université française has said that to acquire an outstanding reputation, he would need no more than the claim to be the author of the *Douze Vertus d'un Bon Maître*. M. Ferdinand Buisson, a French politician who cannot be suspected of clericalism, quotes in his *Dictionnaire de Pédagogie* the following words of a member of the University: «This volume contains the wisest and most moving things that have been written or thought since the Imitation of Christ. The finest observations are presented there in simplicity of outstanding merit» (Buisson, 1887, p. 29).

OTHER WORKS

In 1786, a circular appeared carrying the title: «*Remarks by Brother Agathon, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, regarding the public repetitions that are carried out at the end of the school year in the various establishments of the congregation*». These repetitions were veritable examinations, recapitulatory and public, of the work for the whole school year. The Superior was of the opinion they would contained nothing that was not «praiseworthy and in line with the spirit of the Institute, if only they had been kept within proper bounds».

In a detailed presentation of arguments, Brother Agathon shows how these *repetitions*, with the award of prizes, prevented the teacher from fulfilling the principal duties of his position by obliging him to pay more attention to the most gifted and popular pupils to the detriment of the others. In addition, they could compromise the health of the teachers and their fulfillment of religious exercises. Besides, since these examinations included public speaking, recitations and songs to please the audience, they had the big disadvantage of giving greater value to the cultivation of memory rather than of intelligence.

The author admits that a review exam made it possible to award well-deserved prizes, but only on the condition that all the pupils had the same preparation and participated in written exams to determine the most deserving in each subject area. These are the kind of exams that should replace the public *repetitions*.

As for prizes for wisdom, piety, diligence and assiduity, a vote by the pupils would show who should receive them. Given these conditions, the *repetitions* would keep their educational role without harm to the pupils or to the teachers.

Besides these works, which were essentially educational, the archives of the Institute also possess a timetable for the infirmary in Angers written in the hand of Brother Agathon. Two letters of Brother Frumence mention a book on arithmetic by Brother Agathon. According to the *Annales*, it was his *Traité d'Arithmétique à l'usage des Pensionnats et des Écoliers des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, (Treatise on Arithmetic for the use of Boarders

and Pupils of the Brothers of the Christian Schools), a work by Brother Maur revised by Brothers Albéric and Agathon. The course given by Brother Agathon in Saint-Yon on the *Tenue des Livres de Comptes en Parties simple et double* (Keeping Account Books in simple and double entries) has not survived.

From this period, the Institute archives also possess the following works in manuscript form: dating from 1779, a *Traité d'Arithmétique concernant le Négoce et la Finance*, (Treatise of Arithmetic for Commerce and Finance), 670 pages in a beautiful, cursive hand and dated from Saint-Yon; in the same year Brother Primaël composed *Catéchisme nouveau* (New Catechism) to give instructions to the catechists and people assigned to teach the truths of our holy religion, 642 pages, in two volumes; in 1782, Brother Olivier, of Saint-Yon, wrote an *Abrégé des Éléments de la Rhétorique* (Summary of the Elements of Rhetoric), 190 pages; in 1783, again in Saint-Yon, there appeared *Abrégé des principes de la grammaire française à l'usage of the Écoles chrétiennes* (Summary of the Principles of French Grammar for use in the Christian Schools); in 1788, the boarding school in Marseille was authorised to print a book on Geometry; in 1789, Brother Primaël wrote a *Catéchisme selon the Méthode des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes* (Catechism according to the Method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools); finally from 1790, we have a course in commerce and accountancy entitled *Mémorial ou Brouillard à Parties doubles* (Memorandum or Outline for Double Entry).

At a time when the disturbing signs of the coming Revolution were becoming more and more frequent, all these works testify to the great intellectual and educational activity of this body of around 900 religious teachers in a hundred or so schools of different sizes.

Chapter 7 - THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF 1834

Alain Houry fsc

“SOME FRAGMENTS FROM OLD EXERCISE BOOKS FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES”

The educational structure put in place by Brother Agathon had been swept away by the Revolution; and the restoration of the Institute took place under the authority of the *Université*, a body acting with national authority, which gave the Church more or less room in education according to the whims of the different political regimes. The government wanted to reserve “secondary education” to itself in order to prepare the leaders of the Nation. The Brothers now only had their boarding schools as places where they could do educational research and give intellectual training to the young Brothers. In practice, the State left it to the Institute to carry out elementary education (cf. Gil, 1999, p. 154).

In a letter of 15 September 1810, Brother Gerbaud, the 6th Superior General (1810-1822), urged the Brothers to follow the programme determined by the Chapter which had elected him and **to stick to what was written:**

The way is marked out for us, my very dear Brothers, the footprints of our predecessors are marked out with flowers of high reputation; it is to them that we owe the warm welcome that we receive everywhere. All we have to do is follow them as closely as we can. [...] Let us hold to that, and not be wiser than our fathers. Let us leave to our successors, whole and entire, the deposit that was handed down to us as a precious heritage (*Pensées du Vénérable de La Salle, suivies de quelques Lettres circulaires des Supérieurs de the Institute des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, Beau Jeune, Versailles 1853, p. 152-153) [Thoughts of the Venerable De La Salle, with some Circular Letters of the Superiors of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools].

In 1811, the Superior published in Lyons the 3rd edition of the *Conduite des Écoles chrétiennes, divisée in deux parties*. He made an addition to the first edition (1720) in the form of *Conduite des Formateurs des jeunes maîtres et Inspecteurs des Écoles* [Conduct of the Trainers of Young Teachers and Inspectors of Schools], which remained in manuscript form and was referred to in the Table of Contents as “The 3rd Part”. In a note *Aux Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, he assured the Brothers that the *Conduite* remained unchanged:

We have touched none of it. [However] we have added a few fragments from old exercise books found in our archives [...]. In order to bring our educational practice into line with the gentleness in vogue today, we have suppressed or modified everything referring to corporal correction, and replaced it (to advantage) partly with a system of good points, credits and rewards, and partly with one of bad points, forfeits and impositions (CE, 1811, pp. 6-7).

“The gentleness in vogue today”: although public opinion was still blind to the living and working conditions of the working class people and their children, it no longer found corporal punishment acceptable in schools!

Does fidelity to the Founder mean looking to the past for elements for the present? Is educational research still possible?

Several more editions of the *Conduite* were needed (1819, 1823 and 1828) because between 1820 and 1830 the number of the Brothers' schools doubled, and it was necessary to train the young teachers who wanted to work in them. The 6th edition (1828) introduced decimal calculation and the metric system into the teaching of arithmetic (pp. 74-75). A very small change in fact!

The events of 1830 and the Guizot law of 1833 called for more important modifications. Would the Institute be able to innovate and remain faithful to its traditions?

NEW TIMES FOR THE SCHOOLS OF THE BROTHERS

In March 1828, Brother Guillaume-de-Jesus, the 7th Superior General since 1822, calculated that the Institute had 1,717 Brothers, of whom 408 were in final profession, plus 200 novices. This was more than the num-

bers just before the Revolution (Bédel, 2003, p. 50) and the increased numbers of teaching Brothers meant it was possible to respond to the many requests by opening more and more gratuitous schools. In Paris, the Brothers were running 29 such schools, and before the July Revolution Brother Philippe, Director of Saint-Nicolas des Champs, ran evening classes for workers⁵⁰ who wanted to learn the basics of their trade or to improve their knowledge. This is similar to the action of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle with his Sunday schools. Is this repetition or innovation?

In July 1830, antireligious passions broke out in many large towns and cities in France. Brothers were obliged to assume civil dress and even to disperse. In 1831, the centre of Lyons was occupied for some days by 80,000 workers waving the black flag (Rigault, 1945, p. 6). It took some time for feelings to cool down. Civil order returned. The partisans of the 'Mutual Schools' hoped to replace the Christian Schools, which had been either suppressed or had found their public funding largely reduced. However, the parents opted in great numbers for the teaching of the Brothers.

The Guizot law of 28 June 1833 on freedom and the organisation of primary school teaching for boys (teaching for girls was not organised for financial reasons!) gave the municipalities freedom to choose between lay teachers and those from religious congregations⁵¹. This gave more power to the town authorities, and they demanded the introduction of the

⁵⁰ When Brother Philippe was elected Assistant in 1830, his own brother, Brother Arthème, developed these evening classes. Other courses for workers were begun in 1831-1832 by the schools of the Brothers in Paris: Saint-Roche, Sainte-Marguerite and Saint-Philippe du Roule. Every evening until 10.30, Brothers took on the extra work of teaching "reading, writing, mental arithmetic, grammar, geometry, drawing, singing and music, even French composition and commercial book-keeping." (Rigault, 1945, p. 130) Similar evening courses existed in Saint-Omer, Toulouse, Rouen and Orleans. (*id.*, p. 132).

⁵¹ "When François Guizot decided, in 1833, to create public primary schools, in opposition to the parish schools, he opted, paradoxically, for a teaching method that had been perfected by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Rather than bringing pupils of different ages together in the same class, which was normally the case before that time, it became the practice to teach the same subject matter to all the pupils who were on a particular level." (Yves Gaulupeau, Director of the *Musée national de l'éducation*, Rouen – in *La Croix*, 22/08/2011).

When presenting his bill to parliament, Guizot cited the disciples of Monsieur De La Salle, referring to them as *Frères de la Doctrine chrétienne* (Brothers of Christian Doctrine) as the Administration frequently did. "There is an example known to all, namely the *Frères de la Doctrine chrétienne*, and it impossible to deny that they have become very numerous and done a great deal of good, using the

optional subjects envisaged for the upper primary classes in the Ministerial circular:

Elements of geometry and its usual applications, especially geometrical drawing and elevation; notions of physical sciences and natural history applicable to daily living; singing; elements of the history and geography of France.

The Brothers had not waited for the law of 1833 to explore (in particular places and classes) these areas of teaching not mentioned by the *Conduite*⁵². Moreover, some Brothers were very keen on these subjects, to the detriment of the obligatory curriculum. What place should be given to them in the teaching of the Brothers and what methodology should be used? How could these innovations be regulated when introducing them into the *Conduite*?

best methods. In a word, they have played an important role in the development of education” (Cited par Rigault, 1945, p. 87).

The Brothers were well aware of the influence of their tradition in education. Their “method was recommended by a decree of 1816 which, so to speak, created primary education in France, and many educators introduced it into their schools.” (CE, 1838, p. IV).

A dozen Congregations of Teaching Brothers were founded during this period, inspired largely by the method of the Brothers of the Christian Schools but looking to provide schools where the Brothers were not present, notably in the countryside and on the outskirts of towns (Cf. Bédel, p. 69-78).

⁵² A *Prospectus General de l’Enseignement du DESSIN* (General Prospectus of the Teaching of Drawing, 1901, Paris, Procure Générale) sums up the place of this subject among the Brothers as follows. “The rules of our boarding schools founded before the Revolution included geometrical drawing among the subjects to be taught. When the Institute was legally re-established in France in 1803, drawing immediately resumed its place in the syllabus. The law on schools of 28 June 1833 did not include drawing among the subjects to be taught in primary-elementary schools. The Institute asked for and obtained leave to continue teaching it in its own schools (Ministerial Circular of 17 December 1833). [...] The courses for adults, which were started around 1832, were chiefly attended by workers who asked to be taught geometrical drawing and copy drawing, so useful in their various trades ...”

In 1831, Brother Philippe (Director of the parish school of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs since 1823 and then Assistant in 1830) published his *Abrégé de géométrie pratique appliquée au dessin linéaire, au toisé et au lever des plans, suivi des principes de l’architecture et de la perspective* [Summary of practical geometry applied to drawing, measuring and plan elevation, according to the principles of architecture and perspective]. In Circular 65 of 21 July 1831, the Superior General informed the Brothers that the Institute was about to publish a *Traité de dessin linéaire* [Treatise on Geometrical Drawing]. Circular 66 of 26 October 1831 explained it further. Circular 67 called for discernment before allowing it for pupils: one should first be sure they have enough knowledge of the basic subjects.

In 1832 there appeared an *Abrégé de géographie commerciale et historique* [Summary of Commercial and Historical Geography]. The above two works are signed L.C. and F.P., namely Louis Constantin (Brother Anaclét) and Frère Philippe.

A GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR THE REVISION OF THE CONDUITE

Brother Anaclet, the 8th Superior General (1830-1838), was the first Superior General from among those who had become Brothers after the Revolution (he entered the novitiate in Lyons in 1805-1806). Although the Brothers were opposed to the *méthode mutuelle* [the monitor system], the new Superior, while refusing to adopt it in place of the simultaneous method, invited the Brothers to introduce some aspects of the *méthode mutuelle* into their teaching, in order to avoid a waste of time for the pupils⁵³. In Circular 77 (17/12/1833), he launched a consultation among the Brothers before reprinting the *Conduite*. In Circular 80a (07/08/1834), he consulted the Institute more formally by convening a General Committee⁵⁴ to evaluate the changes made to the *Conduite*, and to submit its conclusions to the next General Chapter (1837)⁵⁵.

The Mother House had been in Paris, in the Faubourg Saint-Martin, since 1821, and that was where the General Committee met “on

⁵³ On 1 June 1831, Circular 64 states: “I noticed that the lower class [for beginners] had a number of sections, and the teacher only exercised one section at a time in reading; this resulted in a waste of time for the children. To overcome this, I made arrangements for reading sheets to be printed and displayed around the classroom, as is done in schools using the Monitor Method, with pupils appointed to get their smaller comrades to read without interfering with the lesson given by the teacher. In this way, there were no longer any idle pupils.” (Cited by Rigault 1945, p. 12).

⁵⁴ “The Assembly of the principal Brothers”, which met for a few days in order to legislate for the whole Institute and if need be to elect a Superior and Assistants, was referred to as “the General Chapter” in the *Bull of Approbation* (1725), and the term was adopted by the Brothers in 1734. Its membership included the Superior General, his Assistants and delegated Brothers, whose numbers would increase as the Institute grew in size. The General Chapter met normally every 10 years, according to the *Bull* (13°). The 10th General Chapter (1787), convoked by Brother Agathon, envisaged the possibility of having recourse to a smaller Assembly called “the General Committee”, whose decisions would be provisory until they were considered by the following General Chapter (LVIII). The first General Committee was that of 1834.

⁵⁵ Why did the process take so long, seeing that the previous editions were out of print? Brother Pedro Gil explains this by the fact that to change the *Conduite* in this way was to touch the very roots of the Institute, and therefore the matter had to be officially approved by the highest authority. “To modify [the *Conduite*], when the intention in 1811 had initially been to reproduce the original text, was a very bold step which the Institute could not venture to undertake without some serious guarantees. The Government of the Society [the Brothers] was well aware of the significance of it. In reality, this edition would mark the change from schools based on structures to schools based on contents.” (Gil, 1999, p. 197).

Wednesday 15 October, 1834, the feast of Saint Thérèse. On that day, all the houses of the Institute had a Mass of the Holy Spirit said, at which all the Brothers communicated, to ask for the light of the Spirit on the assembly” (Circ. 80a).

The 19 members of the General Committee⁵⁶ were made up by the members by right (the Superior General, the 4 Assistants, the Procurator General and the Secretary of the *Régime*) plus twelve elected members: 6 Brothers Directors of principal communities (from the 71 communities of seven or more ‘foundation’ Brothers) and 6 Senior Brothers (from the 51 Brothers with at least 15 years of perpetual profession. Those eligible to vote were the school Brothers with perpetual profession. There were around 600 of these professed Brothers, and consequently two thirds of the 1,850 Brothers had no ‘voice in the Chapter’! The voice of the Institute was authentically expressed through those who had committed themselves for life “to keep together and by association gratuitous schools” (*The Formula of Vows* – which kept the phrase ‘gratuitous schools’ until 1901)⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ The 7 members by right were:

Brother Anaclét Constantin (1788-1838), from the Jura, aged 46, Assistant in 1822-30, Superior;
 Brother Éloi Lafargue (1771-1847), Bordelais, aged 63, Assistant (1816-47);
 Brother Philippe Bransiet (1792-1874), born in Haute-Loire, aged 42, Assistant (1830-38), future Superior;
 Brother Abdon Dangien (1791-1858), born in Haute-Marne, aged 43, Assistant (1830-58);
 Brother Jean-Chrysostome Rotival (1776-1855), born in le Rhône, aged 57, Assistant (1830-44);
 Brother Nicolas Sarrasin (1789-1857), Marseillais, aged 45, Procurator (1822-36), Assistant (1837-57);
 Brother Maurille* Roux (1786-1835), born in les Hautes-Alpes, aged 48, Secretary to the *Régime*.
 The 6 Brothers Directors of Principal Houses, no doubt in the order of the number of votes received:
 Brother Alphonse Goudet (1791-1876), aged 43, Director in Bordeaux (1817-75)
 Brother Calixte Leduc (1797-1874), aged 37, Director in Rouen (*École normale*) 1829-37;
 Brother Euloge Guyonneau (1784-1848), aged 50, Director in Orleans;
 Brother Apollinaire Céré (1786-1845), aged 48, Director in Toulouse (1814-34);
 Brother Lambert Rouit-Ribeyre (1791-1859), aged 43, Director in Lyons (1830-34);
 Brother Claude Boutheau (1783-1862), aged 51, Director in Namur (1831-35).
 Les 6 Older Brothers, with their residence as of 1834 :

Brother Augustin Gambert (1778-1871), the 1st novice from Lyons, aged 56, Visitor in Toulon;
 Brother Brother Conteste* Topin (1758-1840), aged 81, entered the Institute in 1775, residing in Paris,
 Brother Fortuné Soclet (1787-1848), aged 47, novice from Bordeaux, Directeur in le Havre (1830-37);
 Brother Marie Bosquet (1784-1866), aged 50, Directeur of the Novitiate in Lyons (1831-39);
 Brother Joseph-Marie* Padovani (1772-1847), born near Rome, aged 62, Visitor in Corsica;
 Brother Norbert Genevrier (1789-1842), born in la Loire, aged 46, residing in Paris.
 (*The 3 Brothers marked with an asterisk * had not been members of the Chapter of 1837*)

⁵⁷ N.E. And, even more, until 1966 at least.

Rigault (1945, p. 138) presents this Assembly of 1834 as being made up of those Brothers who formed the bridge between the period before the Revolution and the new generation. They included Brother Frumence, Vicar General who was appointed by the Pope in 1795 on the death of Brother Agathon, and who had been in Lyons since 1804; and Brother Gerbaud, 6th Superior General (1810-1822) elected by the Chapter following the death of Brother Frumence. Rigault's assessment of this assembly of 19 Brothers seems on the whole well-founded:

It really included the intellectual élite as well as those with the highest moral authority in the Society [...] Apart from Brother Conteste, a veteran of the heroic years, they included, all in all, the best examples of the next generation in Brothers Frumence and Gerbaud. The *lyonnaise* tradition of Brother Pigménion was embodied in Brother Augustin; the Toulouse tradition of Brother Bernardin was found in Brother Joseph-Marie⁵⁸; Brother Claude and Brother Apollinaire already had long and fine records of service; Brother Alphonse had acquired a reputation in Guyenne which would only increase. Brother Calixte, Director of the training college of Rouen, was well cut out to bring plenty of light to the discussions and then to sum up the debates in sound formulations. Right from the opening session on 25 October, he held the position of secretary. The greatest influence in this gathering belonged to Brother Philippe, whom Brother Anaclet regarded as his alter ego. Between the Superior and the Assistant there was, in fact, not only almost exact parity of age, but also an equality of talents, harmony in qualities and characters, similar directness in thinking and breadth of vision. In addition, Mathieu Bransiet possessed a certain presence. His fundamental simplicity and his country looks could not fail to have the power to attract (Rigault, 1945, p. 138).

The revision of the *Conduite* took 32 sessions⁵⁹ to rework the draft text produced by Brother Anaclet and his Assistants. The results of the work

⁵⁸ He was actually Fratello Giuseppe Maria who represented the experience of the Brothers in Italy and Corsica. His name is here given a French form. In 1836, he would be sent to Rome as *Vicar General* for the Brothers in the Papal States. Rigault thought it referred to another Joseph-Marie, Joseph Bardou, but he died 20/10/1829.

⁵⁹ We learn this from the *Notice nécrologique* of Brother Alphonse. We do not know if the Brothers in the Committee discussed the events of the week of April 9 – 15, 1834, when the silk workers (the *canuts*) occupied the city centre of Lyons and defended it against the army. The proposed law on asso-

were published in 1837⁶⁰, in a small number of copies which appear to have been intended for the 39 members of the General Chapter of July 1837 (of whom seventeen had been members of the Committee of 1834). The first decision of the Chapter (10-18 July 1837) was as follows:

The Chapter approves the decisions taken by the Committee held in October 1834, regarding the introduction of technical drawing, history and geography into our schools. It also approves the new edition of the *Conduite des Écoles*, but it makes some modifications to the daily timetable contained in that work. Likewise, it approves the other recommendations of the Committee (*Chapitres généraux de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes; Historique et décisions*. Paris 1902, p. 75).

The edition of 1838 was reprinted without modification in 1849, 1850, 1852, 1853 and 1856 (plus 2 other undated editions) In view of this longevity; it is worthwhile dwelling a little on the Preface and the innovations it made.

PEDAGOGICAL PROGRESS THROUGH THE STRENGTH OF ASSOCIATION

“One of the most useful discoveries of the human mind”

ciations forbade them gathering to argue with their employer about a decent living wage for themselves and their families. The workers of Paris demonstrated in their turn and provoked a brutal act of repression by the army, “blotted” by the massacre of the rue Transnonain on April 14, immortalised by a painting which now appears in school textbooks on French History. Undoubtedly, the 19 members of the Committee did not meet in order to discuss these things, but was it possible for education to be isolated from this sign that a new kind of poor now existed? These were the “sub-proletariates” of the big towns and cities at the start of industrialisation (cf. Six Jean-François, Un prêtre, Antoine Chevrier, fondateur du Prado [Antoine Chevrier, priest, founder of the Prado] Seuil, Paris, 1965, pp. 24-25).

⁶⁰ It is only when we compare it with the 1838 edition that we discover that the edition of 1837 was the work of the General Committee of 1834 (the two editions are with Jh. Moronval, Paris). There is hardly any difference in the text of the *Conduite* in the editions of 1837 and 1838.

Strangely enough, in his study of the editions of the *Conduite des Écoles* from 1720 to 1965, Brother Secondino Scaglione (*Rivista lasalliana*, anno LVIII, 1991, N. 3, p. 162) says of the 1837 edition: “It reproduces that of 1828 with some slight modifications and corrections, hinted at in the title and justified in the Preface, which precedes the text and gives the reasons why the changes were introduced.” In the copy that I have, the Preface repeats that of 1720 and does not mention any modifications. What the article says about the modifications made in 1838 would apply fully to my copy from 1837. Could there have been two different editions in 1837?

Up until then, the various editions of the *Conduite* were content to reproduce, with hardly any change, the author's Preface of 1720. However, the **Preface of 1838** is quite different in the way it affirms the historic role of the Brothers' Founder (even if he was not the first to use the simultaneous method, he was the one who applied it to elementary education). The Preface also includes an expression of faith in the **power of association**:

His dedicated thinking and the force of his genius led him [M. de La Salle] to invent the SIMULTANEOUS METHOD, which will always remain one of the most useful discoveries of the human mind. The disciples of M. De La Salle [...] have done everything to improve on their method of teaching. Acting as one body and having one goal in view, they took care to communicate to one another the discoveries they made through the practice of their employment. These discoveries were submitted to further testing and were then inserted into subsequent editions of the *Conduite*, which in the end came to be the most complete survey of the SIMULTANEOUS method in elementary education (pp. II-III).

The note on p. II underlines **the reason for the originality and the value of the Brothers' method**:

Four methods currently compete in the area of primary education: the Individual, the Simultaneous, the Mutual and the Simultaneous-Mutual. [...] The latter method has the advantages of the purely simultaneous method plus the advantage of keeping the pupils more fully and usefully occupied. It can produce very good results, and it is the method indicated by the present *Conduite* for all the lessons which lend themselves to it.

Presentation of **the work of the General Committee**:

Since developments in primary education in France have introduced new specialties into primary education, the principal Brothers of the Institute were gathered together in General Committee in August 1834, to deliberate the question as to whether the Institute should adopt the teaching of these new branches of knowledge.

The Committee decided that the teaching of these new specialties should be introduced into the classes, and the method of teaching them should be incorporated into the new edition of the *Conduite* to be examined by the Régime.

The General Chapter of July 1837 approved this decision of the Committee and adopted the work of the Régime, with some slight modifications.

It is this new edition, revised, corrected and approved by the Chapter that we are publishing today [...] (pp. III-IV).

“So that the Christian Schools will be in no way inferior to the others”

The allocation of time to various subject areas, prescribed in 1834 for schools of two classes, was modified by the Chapter of 1837 to apply to those of three classes (*Règlement journalier*), as was done in the edition of 1828, but with the introduction of new subjects. People were reminded that these new subjects were only suitable for **children who were sufficiently advanced in the other branches that were taught**. This led to a discussion on pupils in the “Honours Section”.

In the upper classes [those containing older pupils], a fourth section will be created called the “Honours Section”, which will be for the more capable pupils (at the bottom of p. 19).

With regard to the contents of the *Conduite*, the new elements involved firstly its plan of organisation, starting with Chapter IV *Objets de l'Enseignement*, [Matters to be taught] which no longer **limited the Brothers to basic skills**:

Besides knowledge of things in everyday life, such as reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, they will also teach geography and geometrical drawing to the children who are sufficiently advanced in the other branches of study, especially in the localities where the authorities ask for this, so that the Christian Schools will be in no way inferior to the others (p. 15).

That the Christian Schools be in no way inferior to the others. This goal of **excellence** would prove heavy in the years to come, bringing with it the risks that go with competition between establishments. *Where the authorities ask for it.* This marks the beginning of the role played by public administration in the schools.

The Committee wrote nothing about *Notions of physical sciences and natural history applicable to daily life*, which were mentioned among the optional subjects. Inductive methods had not yet been invented.

We should note that the *singing*, referred to in the circulars applying the Guizot law is not mentioned in the *Conduite* approved in 1837, even

though singing lessons were part of the basic curriculum which gave the schools their reputation. For example, the *Manuel des Institutions and Œuvres de Charité de Paris*. Paris, Poussielgue-Rusand, rue Hautefeuille, n. 9 (second edition), indicates that in the “Christian Schools of the Brothers”, there is “a singing lesson in every school of the *quartier*”, with “singing lessons 3 times per week” (pp. 29-42). In the *Conduite* of 1837, as in that of 1828, singing figured only **in connection with catechism**:

Since most children like to sing and repeat the tunes they have heard, they should be taught religious songs which, by giving them the satisfaction of singing, will teach them the truths of religion and inspire in them a great dislike for impure songs (Article VII : *The Singing of Hymns*, p. 104).

Already in the XVI century, Calvin was convinced that “music was suitable for moving and inspiring the human heart”, and he insisted on the usefulness of religious songs “to combat crude and bawdy songs” (cited in *Chants du Pèlerin* N° 10. Genève 2001, p. 21).

As Brother Pedro Gil says (1999, p. 199), with the exception of Brother Calixte, who was Director of the public training college of Seine-Inférieure in Rouen since 1829 (where he also taught the mutual method), the members of the Committee of 1834 had only worked in elementary education, because they were restricted to it by their incorporation into the *Université*. The timid beginnings of the Boarding School of Béziers (founded in 1831 with 18 pupils) had not yet reactivated the development of boarding schools that would be seen later the Institute. The General Committee, therefore, only dealt with primary education, although it did not confine itself to contents and methods. The third part of the *Conduite* required them to revise what was said about the training of young teachers. The Committee lightened this section somewhat, in order to make the training more workable. At that time, training was done essentially during the Novitiate (there were twelve novitiates in 1833, and the formation they gave was as much pedagogical as spiritual).

In particular, the Committee saw the need to find new recruits by accepting younger candidates and thereby lengthening the period of **initial formation of the Brothers**. The future of Lasallian schools depended on the

training of teachers for them, even prior to the novitiate. The resolution reads as follows:

X. The Committee agreed unanimously that pre-novitiate schools should be established in various houses of the Institute, where young people who show some signs of a vocation to the religious life can be received from the age of thirteen onwards. After spending two years there, they will be admitted to the regular Novitiate. Rules for these Junior Novitiates will be drawn up (*Chapitres généraux de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrésiennes ; Historique et d'écisions*. Paris, 1902, p. 73).

Without waiting for the approval of the General Chapter of 1837, Brother Anaclel, opened a Junior Novitiate in the Mother House in the Faubourg Saint-Martin in 1835. The Chapter of 1837 took this concern for training even further. It wanted to see the creation of houses of study, like the Scholasticates before the Revolution, so that the Brevet examinations, which were now obligatory in all schools, could be extended to all subject areas including music (Resolution IV).

“The Teacher can make observations by way of explanation”

It is time now to consider the manner of teaching the new specialties, which were still “memory lessons” (chapter V). The title the Conduite of 1837 gives to this question in article IV is significant: “The Need to explain the Lessons, and how to do this”:

Most children are gifted with a good memory, and a good teacher should get them to cultivate it by the daily study of various branches of knowledge. However, since the mere reading of a text would be useless to children who are not accustomed to thinking, it would be very good if the teacher, when setting the monthly work, were to give them some explanations, on which he could elaborate in more detail subsequently in the study for each day (CE, 1837, pp. 22-23).

⁶¹ Brother Pedro Gil notes how this introduces something new. “We shall simply mention one other consequence of the change, also in the domain of education, namely: the importance that will henceforth be attached to verbal explanations by the teacher and the difference it made to the kind of work the pupils did. To understand this, it suffices to recall that in the previous system the Brother was hardly supposed to speak at all in class. His main work was to keep the children attentive, getting them to focus step by step on learning the structured elements of the lesson. Rather than explain things, he maintained good order. Now he would also be expected to spend additional time in explaining the contents of the new ‘disciplines’” (Gil, 1999, p. 198).

This method of teaching was in fact quite new⁶¹, even though the term had been previously used (CE 4,10,4; 9,4,7) in relation to simple explanations of words. The same is true as regards the pupils' ability to consult their manuals for **“clarification of certain facts they want to know more about.”** It is hard for us to realise how big a change this meant for teaching methods. To avoid mere parrot-like repetition⁶², the teacher had to explain the lessons, and the pupils were then asked to consult their books. Maybe they were not full-blown courses, but the explanations could still be well organised:

Explanations in History [...] First the children will learn by heart the *Abrégé of l'Histoire Sainte*, [Summary of Sacred History] and then the summary of the *Histoire of France* [added in 1838], provided they are sufficiently advanced in the other branches of instruction which should come first. They can read the other sections of the book to obtain clarification of any facts they wish to know in greater detail. On Fridays they will, read the monthly lesson appointed for recitation by the pupils in the third and fourth sections, and the teacher can add some comments by way of explanation (CE, 1837, pp. 25-26).

Explanations in Geometrical Drawing. On Tuesday afternoon, instead of doing arithmetic, they shall explain the principles of geometry and geometrical drawing. For this purpose, those pupils who have to recite this monthly lesson will stand at the blackboard in order of their ability, and the teacher will explain the shapes which are the subject of the lesson. The shapes must be drawn on the board in advance of the lesson (id., p. 26).

There will also be tests in the form of groups of questions which the pupils will ask one another. This practice involved *“répétiteurs”* (class assistants). They could not be called *“monitors”*, since that term was used in the mutual method!

One addition to the second part of the *Conduite* of 1837 is significant in connection with this, and it concerns *Du soin que le Maître doit avoir de faire observer l'ordre et le silence dans la Classe* [On the care the teacher should have to maintain order and silence in class] in article IV, which reads as follows. “The teacher will normally speak only on four occasions: 1° during the reading lesson, when he has signaled to a number of pupils to correct what the reader has said wrong and none of them have been able to do so; 2° during catechism lessons; 3° during the examination of conscience and the reflections that are part of the prayers; 4° [and this is the addition] in those lessons where explanations are required.” (CE 11,3,9)

⁶² N.B. It refers to a method of education based only on the exercise of the verbal memory.

Remarks. During this time, the *répétiteurs* will exercise the pupils (who will not have to recite geography or the principles of geometry) in answering the test questions placed after geography and geometry as applied to geometrical drawing as practiced in the Christian Schools. The geographical maps and the illustrations of the first shapes in geometry will be placed in alternation before these pupils (*id.*, p. 27).

In the revision of the General Committee of 1834, the *Conduite* not only called for the use of the decimal system of calculation; it also insisted on **public lessons on the metric system.**

From time to time, the teacher will give public lessons on the metric system, explaining its structure and teaching the values and meanings of the words *déci*, *centi*, *milli*, in descending order and of the words *déca*, *hecto*, *kilo*, *myria*, in ascending order (*id.*, p. 61-62).

SOME ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

“Emulation is the driving force of advancement”

The 1837 edition of the *Conduite* introduces Chapter XIII “On emulation”. It begins as follows:

Emulation is the driving force of advancement; without it everything in a class languishes, and the most cheerful spirits become useless. It alone makes progress palpable, and it makes up for the shortage of time one has to educate the children in the knowledge they need. Care will be taken to use all the means suggested by zeal and experience to encourage it in the pupils, without however provoking them to either in jealousy or pride (CE, 1837 pp. 64-65).

Without provoking them to either in jealousy or pride. The members of the Committee wanted to stop emulation turning into rivalry. Similarly, they wanted to reduce the need for punishment by a judicious use of fixed rewards. Consequently Chapter XIV, *Des récompenses*, fills out the ideas on “*Privileges*”, which figured in the edition of 1828.

How many punishments will be avoided in this way! How many well-behaved children forget themselves for a moment in relation to a general prohibition! Justice imposes the right punishment on them, but it is not in the least infringed if such pupils, whom one punishes with regret, are

simply deprived of some of their privileges and make satisfaction for their faults in that way.

[And they add further.] How useful can they (privileges) be in arousing a noble emulation among the children, in which the parents also will take an interest (CE, 1837 p. 77).

There is an echo of this at the end of article IV on *Pensums* (impositions):

Moreover, the teacher's whole attention should not be concentrated on removing the faults of his pupils; he should apply himself even more to rewarding them when they deserve it. He has so many ways of doing this! A simple glance of approval gives encouragement and produces more good in a school than any number of punishments and sanctions. A word of encouragement brings great joy to sensitive hearts, which would be made depressed and downcast by rejection. What a pleasure it is for a good soul to find it so easy to avoid punishing them and to get them to do their work at the same time! (CE, 1837 p. 149).

This insistence on emulation and impositions must be paralleled with the concern to have a **great reduction in corporal punishments**. This was no doubt due to the influence of Brother Philippe who, throughout his time as Superior General, worked hard to put an end to such chastisements. The edition of 1837 does not use the term "ferule", although it does describe the use of it as being reserved for cases where all other means have failed to get the children to behave as they should. In the 2nd part of the *Conduite*, "Chapitre IV, *Moyens disciplinaires*" [Means of Discipline] introduces a perspective that is meant to be a sharing of best practice by good educators.

Experience supplies a number of very effective means for diminishing the need for occasions of corporal punishment. A good teacher will study them carefully and use them to advantage. By using these methods, a great number of teachers, even in the younger classes, have entirely done away with corrections of this sort (CE, 1837 p. 139).

"Turn them into people who know how to live honourably"

Lasallian education is not just a matter of teaching and ensuring a school life of high quality. The second part of the *Conduite* also introduces Chapter XVIII, *Du soin que les Maîtres doivent avoir d'enseigner l'honnêteté et la civilité aux enfants* [The care teachers should take to impart honesty

and civility to the children], p. 104. Up until then, “civility” was only mentioned in connection with reading lessons (CE 3,9), with a view to learning to read handwritten texts. It was not part of education in the strict sense. At the same time, care was taken to see that the children were well behaved in the street (CE 1,1,4). Now we find that permanent attention is paid to the way one should behave in society. We meet the same problems in education today in the form of rowdy behaviour, graffiti, etc.

A zealous teacher will take great care to train his pupils in the practice of Christian politeness, not just to teach them how to live in the world, but to turn them into people who know how to live honourably and be respected in society. He will correct whatever is reprehensible in their manners, teaching them how to greet people, how to ask questions and answer them, etc. He will do this more by his behaviour than by explanations, being content to correct them whenever they commit a fault of impoliteness.

He will try to act as a model for them; he will insist, in a friendly way, that the pupils give him a greeting every time they pass near him, and that they always stand up when talking to him and remove their hats, and that they speak respectfully. He will make them show the same respect for the Brothers and other people they have to deal with.

[...] Since children are naturally inclined to quarrel, to call each other by nicknames and to insult passers-by, they must be taught to leave aside all these rough manners, and not to write or draw figures on windows, doors or walls, etc., either in school or anywhere else (p. 105-106)⁶³.

LIMITATIONS IN THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION

“What can we see in it [the world] that is not a cause of relapse and scandal?”

While directions in education were able to take into account many aspects of the life of the world, the same cannot be said about the spiri-

⁶³ The teacher should know how to go into details. “Teachers should strongly advise their pupils never to relieve themselves in the street, and even less in the vicinity of churches, because this is something contrary to decorum and modesty. They should advise them to do this in places where they cannot be seen” (p. 106-107). It is decorum that is invoked, not hygiene or respect for others or the environment!

tual life proposed to the Brothers. The circular of 28 December 1838, published shortly after the death of Brother Anacleto, deals largely with the *principal duties of the religious state*. There is no mention of the ministry of the Brothers except in a reference to the ‘employment’ that they have to carry out. But the Superior does insist on modesty of the eyes:

What is there for us to look at in this world that could lead us to God? Or rather, what can we see in it other than what may be a cause of failure and scandal for us? Woe to the unfortunate religious who is so rash as to look at all kinds of things (Circular 28/12/1838, p. 158).

The Brothers should “understand that the world is not the place of God’s revelation” (Gil, 1999, p. 205). Certainly, the “world” that the Circular speaks of is understood in a different sense from that studied in the sciences. But it must be noted that the open mind of the General Committee of 1834 in educational matters was not matched by a similar openness in the spiritual domain. In the long term, **this discrepancy could be harmful for the integrated life** of a Lasallian educator. For the Brothers of the first half of the XIX century, the damage seems not to have been too serious. Their style of life was just as modest, if not poorer, than that of the children they accepted into their free schools. This enabled them to understand the needs of the ordinary people of the towns and to respond to them in a co-ordinated way because of their association.

CONCLUSION

Did the General Committee mark “the beginning of a new era” as Georges Rigault says? (1945, p. 137). To this we can answer ‘yes’, in the sense that it expanded the areas of work for those Brothers who taught in the higher classes and in the ‘honours’ section. These were the ones who would soon be the herbalists collecting plants for the school museum. However, there was no development in the contents or methodology of teaching in the lower classes.

At the same time, they were affected at all levels by the concern for a proper use of emulation, by the appeal to abandon corporal punishment, by the development of education in politeness and by the way some features were borrowed from the mutual method. Time was needed, especially

time spent in the boarding schools, before the pursuit of studies and the example of the more experienced Brothers could open their minds to new horizons and make them ready to take on more responsibilities. Often it was those Brothers who left to work abroad who showed an ability to adapt, rather than those who remained in France.

It is also to be regretted that the Committee, which did improve the structure for teaching catechism, did not also envisage new ways of teaching the faith. There was an addition made in 1828 concerning the care to be taken in teaching the pupils how to make a confession (p. 10); and in the *Mémorial* (pp. 101-103) there is mention of a notebook in which the Brother would keep a regular record of the level of knowledge each pupil possessed regarding the principle truths of the Christian faith and of the quality of his behaviour. “In this way, a teacher can verify at any time the spiritual state of his flock” (p. 103).

Fundamentally, the main contribution of this Committee in educational terms was the well founded perception that, thanks to the networking of the Brothers’ experience, the Institute was in possession of a method which would soon be recognised as the best. It would contribute to their cohesion in the years to come and prove an important factor in the Institute’s capacity to embark on a phase of great expansion.

However, as we have noted, the thoughts of the Brothers were hardly directed towards the search for signs of God in this world, and this was due to the lack – common enough among their contemporaries – of a theology of the Incarnation, which would enable them to be aware of the appearance of a new humanity on the fringes of the Church.

Chapter 8 - LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY AND THE *LATIN QUESTION*: WHEN LAW DOES NOT FIT LIFE

Peter Killeen fsc

This essay is a reflection on a controversial episode in the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the United States of America which came to be named *The Latin Question*. The controversy first began in 1853 and lasted until 1923. In order to set the context for the story of *The Latin Question*, it is necessary to first share some information about the status of the Latin language in the early Institute. From here the essay recounts significant moments in the decades-long drama of *The Latin Question* and then concludes with a reflection on connections between The Latin Question and Lasallian pedagogy.

Three aspects of Lasallian pedagogy - its addressees, its program, and the Brothers' community - are especially poignant in connection to *The Latin Question*. Consideration of *The Latin Question* will hopefully stimulate reflection on contemporary Lasallian pedagogy, which ever-seeks to renew itself in service to the young people of the Church and of the world.

THE EARLY INSTITUTE AND LATIN

In 1690 De La Salle sent Br. Henri L'Heureux to the Sorbonne in Paris to study for the priesthood in hopes that Br. Henri would one day serve as superior of the fledgling Institute. When Br. Henri L'Heureux died after a short time before he was to be ordained a priest, De La Salle took this as a sign that God intended the Institute to be composed solely of lay religious Brothers, never to permit a priest to enter its ranks nor to allow the Brothers to receive priestly ordination.⁶⁴ Because of the intimate connec-

⁶⁴ The Church, the People of God, is comprised of the hierarchy, the laity, and the consecrated. The hierarchy consists of those who are ordained - deacons, priests, and bishops - and the hierarchy is charged with the task of teaching, sanctifying, and governing the Church in Jesus' name and by Jesus'

tion between the Latin language and the priesthood, our Founder included the following proscriptions against Latin in the Brothers' *Rule*.

The Brothers who have learned the Latin language will make no use of it after entering the Society and will act as if they did not know it; also, no Brother will be allowed to teach Latin to any person whatever within or outside the house. It will not even be allowed for anyone to read any Latin book or to speak a single word of Latin without an absolute and indispensable necessity and by order of the Brother Director when, for example, an occasion presents itself to speak to a stranger who does not know the vernacular and knows Latin. There will not be any exclusively Latin book in any of the houses of the Institute except the Office books. There will also not be any that might serve to learn the Latin language, and if there are any Latin books translated into the vernacular, having Latin on one side and the vernacular on the other, it will not be permitted to read them (unless in a public reading) except by those who are thirty years of age and in whom no liking for Latin has been noticed, and they will read the vernacular only (RFD, 2002, p. 96; cf. CL 25, p. 93).

The reasoning this proscription was enshrined in the Rule was three-fold. De La Salle and the early Brothers thought that classical studies, of which Latin was a part, were (1) unnecessary in their vocation as elementary school teachers, (2) a possible temptation toward the priesthood, and (3) a distraction to their communal prayer life and to classroom preparation⁶⁵.

For a person to have a true understanding of the role of Latin in the early life of the Institute it is important to point out that, despite the strong

power. The laity shares in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ and is charged with bringing the Gospel to the "marketplace" (i.e. the secular world). Consecrated life is composed of those who profess the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and attracts members from both the hierarchy (the ordained) and the laity (non-ordained). While belonging to the designation "consecrated life," the Brothers of the Christian Schools does not accept members from both the hierarchy and laity, but only from the laity. The Brothers have no members who belong to the hierarchy: no deacons, no priests, and no bishops. It is in this vein that the Brothers are known as "lay religious" ("religious" coming from "religious life" which is numerically the largest type of consecrated life). See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 873.

⁶⁵ John Baptist de La Salle, "Memorandum on the Habit" in *Rule and Foundational Documents* (Landover, Maryland: Lasallian Publications, 2002), 183. (*Cahiers lasalliens* 11, 349-354; Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, 1962.)

language of the aforementioned articles in the Rule, Latin was not completely forbidden to the early Brothers. This would be impossible, for Latin was the language of the Mass and the language of many of the Brothers' communal prayers. We read in the Rule of 1705 that the Brothers might study Latin after having attended morning Mass:

From 6:00 until 7:15 they will assist at Holy Mass and occupy themselves in writing or reading French, Latin, or letters written by hand to become proficient therein as regulated by the Brother Director and according to the order he has received from the Brother Superior of the Institute (RFD 27.9, p. 98).

Despite this prescription's lack of absolute clarity in regard to the role of Latin after Mass, it is certain that the Brothers' study of Latin was limited to reading comprehension, so as to help the Brothers participate well in Mass and in their communal prayers. They did not need any more proficiency with Latin than basic reading comprehension of the texts for Mass and communal prayer.

The *Rule of 1705* shows that the Brothers were not completely forbidden to teach Latin, either. The Brothers taught those students who had already mastered French how to read Latin well enough to facilitate their participation at Church services.⁶⁶ The *Rule of 1705* states this: "They will teach their pupils to read, first, French; second, Latin; third, letters written by hand" (RDF, 7.4, p. 36).

Despite the fact that the Brothers were permitted to study and teach Latin to a limited degree, the truth remains that the Institute purposely kept the profile of Latin to a minimum. Thus, Lasallian pedagogy, our "way" of conducting schools, was partially defined by the limited role that Latin played in our educational institutions⁶⁷. The strong proscriptions against

⁶⁶ Cf. Notes to the Introduction in *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, 1996, p. 272.

⁶⁷ Our self-created prohibition against teaching Latin caused the development of a Lasallian pedagogical program that was different from traditional liberal education. For example, in France the Institute produced the first systematic teaching of agriculture and viticulture. In Belgium Lasallian pedagogy contributed to the flourishing of the St. Luke Schools, where architects and artisans were trained in the construction and decoration of Gothic churches. In Germany we can cite the contribution of Lasallian pedagogy to the flourishing of commercial methods. I am grateful to Br. Gerard Rummery for this insight.

Latin remained in our Rule for over two hundred years, until 1923 when Pope Pius XI requested an alteration to our custom. This papally-inspired change was precipitated by a dramatic period of Institute history involving what is called the *Latin Question*.

UNFOLDING OF A DRAMA

The Latin Question was a drama in the truest sense. It pitted many American Brothers and much of the American Episcopate against the Brothers' French superiors and the Holy See⁶⁸. It warranted the attention of several General Chapters. It garnered the attention of prominent American and European newspapers, the United States Department of Education, and the United States' Secretary of State. It spurred a rivalry between the American branch of the Institute and the Society of Jesus. It led to the exile of a number of prominent American Brothers. Furthermore, it was only settled by an act of the Holy Father.

At root, *the Latin Question* was a controversy centered - predominantly but not exclusively - over how to best preserve and promote a perennial aspect of Lasallian pedagogy, namely that of directing our educational efforts toward the poor and working class. In Europe the study of the classics - the literature and languages of Latin and Greek - was associated with higher education, was regarded as the domain of high scholarship, and was particularly connected with schools for the upper class. The Superior General of the Brothers - all of whom were French until 1966 - and his assistants in Paris rightfully wanted to foster unity among the Brothers. They thought that by teaching Latin, the Brothers in the United States were fostering a division in the Institute between highly specialized classicists on the one hand and Brothers who taught ordinary common subjects in parochial grade schools on the other hand. At the time of *The Latin Question* our French superiors were concerned that in the teaching of Latin and the development of institutions of higher learning in the

⁶⁸ All the Superiors General of the Brothers were French until 1966. The Generalate (administrative headquarters) of the Brothers was located in Paris until it moved to Lembecq-les-Hal, Belgium in the early twentieth century. The Generalate remained in Belgium until 1937 when it moved to Rome, where it remains to this day.

United States would draw the American Brothers away from directing their educational efforts to the poor and working class.

For their part, the American Brothers argued that the teaching of Latin would not endanger our mission to the poor and working class. The American Brothers pointed out that in the United States the study of Latin was not reserved to the schools of the wealthy, nor was the study of the classics in the United States thought to be something exclusive and highfalutin. The colleges (degree-granting) and academies (non-degree-granting) of the Brothers in the United States where Latin was taught were a small part of the Brothers' overall mission. In 1897 the Brothers were entrusted with the care of approximately 20,000 students in parish elementary schools, 4,000 orphans, and only 1,000 students in the colleges and academies where the classics were taught (Battersby, 1967, p. 79). The American Brothers thought that their institutions of higher learning, which required a modest tuition, were comparable to the fee-paying technical boarding schools conducted by the Brothers in Europe. Both types of schools served the middle classes and brought numerous benefits to the Brothers' overall mission.

The situation began in 1853 when the archbishop of St. Louis requested that the Brothers' academy in his city include Latin and Greek in its curriculum so that some young men who had expressed interest in the priesthood could be prepared to enter the seminary. The headmaster, Br. Patrick, acceded to the Archbishop's request. In 1854 the same Br. Patrick, now a delegate to the General Chapter, explained to the capitulants at the Chapter the particular circumstances which led to the adoption of Latin and Greek in his school in St. Louis and in a few other apostolates of the Brothers in the United States: namely, fostering priestly and religious vocations and preparing immigrant Catholics to serve American society in roles of leadership (Battersby, 1967, pp. 12-13).

Fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life was supremely important for the Church in the United States, which was a majority Protestant country. Until 1908 the Church considered the United States to be "mission territory" and the number of priests was insufficient to serve the burgeoning immigrant Catholic population. Lacking the priest-

ly manpower to staff minor seminaries, a number of bishops asked the Brothers to prepare potential candidates for the seminary by offering these young men a classical education in our colleges (Battersby, 1967, p. 13).

Through a voice vote the Capitulants to the General Chapter of 1854 granted the Institute in the United States a dispensation from the prohibition in the *Rule* against teaching Latin. Over the next forty years, the classics were introduced into all nine of the Brothers' colleges (degree-granting institutions) and into about twenty of our academies (non-degree-granting; cf. Battersby, 1967, p. 5). The education offered in the Brothers' colleges and classical academies of the United States added a new twist to the programmatic aspect of Lasallian pedagogy. The academic programs in these schools were quite different than, for example, the technically-oriented boarding schools conducted by the Brothers in Europe. Christian Brothers College in St. Louis required a Latin and Greek curriculum that was typical of most of Brothers' colleges (cf. Battersby, 1967, pp. 383-385).

Introduction of Latin and Greek into these apostolates led "outsiders" on a number of occasions to bring charges of irregularity against the Brothers. For example, in 1858 the Jesuits in St. Louis, Missouri, concerned over losing students to the Brothers' college, complained to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda (as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples was then called) about the Brothers teaching the classics.⁶⁹ As a result, the Bishop of America's primatial diocese, Baltimore, was sent to investigate our college in St. Louis. His verdict was that the Brothers "should be left alone" (Gabriel, 1948, p. 485). Eight years later the Jesuits lodged another complaint against the Brothers with the hierarchy of the United States. Prominent Brothers were summoned to the Second Plenary Council of American Bishops to explain the situation. Satisfied with the Brothers' explanations, the bishops encouraged the Brothers to continue just as they were doing (Gabriel, 1948, p. 485)⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Further examples of the rivalry between the Jesuits and the Christian Brothers are found in Battersby, 1967, pp. 46-50.

⁷⁰ Cf. Document #3 in the dossier of Br. Maurelian.

Many Bishops encouraged the Brothers to continue teaching the classics even in those cities where the Jesuits already conducted classical colleges. The main reason behind this encouragement was that a number of American Bishops preferred to have their potential seminarians trained by the Brothers rather than by the Jesuits, in hope of safeguarding the vocation of their young seminarians to the diocesan priesthood. In those American cities where the Brothers' academy or college was the only school in town that taught the classics (Memphis, Tennessee for example), these works were thought to be indispensable⁷¹.

The spread of Latin and Greek in the apostolates of the Institute in the United States led to broad discussion of this subject by a number of General Chapters. For example, the minutes of the General Chapter of 1873 report that it took up "the subject of the teaching of Latin in certain of our houses in America." This Chapter regranted the Brothers of the United States permission to include Latin as part of the curriculum of their apostolates, but stipulated that such teaching was to be carried out by "professors from outside our congregation." The minutes of the Chapter gave the following explanation for this affirmative decision:

(1) that it is at the request of the ordinaries themselves that this [request] has been made; (2) that a considerable number of pupils, having studied Latin in our boarding schools, have consecrated themselves to the service of God both in the ecclesiastical state and in our Institute; (3) that it was necessary to have some institutions of this kind in order to possess real estate in common; (4) that our ordinary schools profit by the above-mentioned rights, because they are reckoned annexes of the boarding schools, and because the reputation of the latter reflects on them and raises them in public estimation. The great weight of these motives and the exceptional situation in many parts of America where public schools are in general entrusted to teachers who are not Catholics, appear to the Chapter to justify the essay in question, and that it may be continued as long as circumstances require, but with this double reserve: that these lessons be given by professors from outside our Congregation, and that this be no

⁷¹ The Brothers' College in Memphis, Tennessee was the only Catholic college in the entirety of the states of Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi (cf. Battersby, 1967, p. 33).

precedent for countries where similar motives do not exist (Battersby, 1967, p. 23; cf. Chapter Register, p. 439).

These last two decisions were not printed in the circular that was published after the Chapter and distributed to all the sectors of the Institute. This seemingly odd omission happened because, in the words of a later Superior General, these two decisions “had reference to one particular country, the irregular situation of which it was not desired to make known to the whole Institute” (Circ. 101, p. 5). The American capitulants to the Chapter could not have agreed very strongly with the stipulation that Latin be taught only by “professors from outside our congregation” because some American Brothers continued to teach the classics, which was expressly contrary to the stipulations of the special permission.

The question of Latin reared itself again at the General Chapters of 1882, 1884, and 1894. These General Chapters issued decrees meant to curtail the teaching of Latin, but because the decrees had reference only to the United States and because our Superiors did not want the irregular situation in the States known to the rest of the Institute, these decrees were never officially communicated in an official circular.

Two appeals against the anti-Latin decrees of the aforementioned General Chapters were made to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda: one in 1894 by the Bishop of Halifax in Canada and another in 1895 by four American Archbishops. They even suggested that the American Brothers might need to sever connections with the Institute in Europe:

So profound, Most Holy Father, is our conviction that disastrous results would follow if the policy of the French superiors were forced upon this country, that, if there were no other remedy, we should feel it our duty to petition Your Holiness to permit the Christian Brothers in the United States to sever their connection with the French Superiors and to form themselves into a separate community (Battersby, 1967, p. 57).

Naturally, a portion of the Brothers were in agreement with the feelings of the four Archbishops. Secular newspapers like *The Washington Times*, the *Chicago Daily News* and the *St. Louis Republic* even reported separation as a possibility! *The Washington Times* included the following as part of an article that was published in 1900:

Every friend of higher education in America will feel regret at the decision which has been reached in Rome that the Society of Christian Brothers in this country must at once and forever abandon their practice of giving instruction in the sciences and in the classics, and confine their labors to elementary parish school work. Ordinarily the relations between the various religious orders of the Catholic Church in America and their supreme control in Europe are of no public concern. But the case of the Christian Brothers is exceptional for several reasons, and the action which has been decided upon by the papal authorities will be not only deplored but very generally resented throughout the union... Many of the Brothers and priests, and some of the Bishops of the United States are in favor of the Brothers divorcing themselves from the Mother House in Paris ... and establishing a separate and distinct order of their own (Battersby, 1967, pp. 178-179).

Thankfully, the Brothers in the United States never splintered from the body of the Institute over the conflict with their French superiors regarding the teaching of Latin. The fact that the American Brothers did not separate from the body of the Institute gives example of the American Brothers trust in divine Providence and in fidelity to their vow of stability.⁷² This fact is highly significant because the Brothers' community itself is an important element of Lasallian pedagogy. The Brothers aspire to perform their ministry "together and by association." Part of the teaching and learning process for students in Lasallian institutions is that, hopefully, they are exposed to a group of religious men who have consecrated their lives to almighty God in the communion of the Church and in service to young people. The communion of heart and mind which the Brothers seek to foster among themselves and among those who comprise the Lasallian institution is meant to be a leaven for the communion of the Church and, ultimately, for the communion of the entire human family with the Blessed Trinity.

⁷² In addition to the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, the Brothers of the Christian Schools make two additional vows, "association" and "stability." Part of article 42 of the Brothers' *Rule* defines the vow of stability: "By this vow they commit themselves to remain in the Institute in order to accomplish its specific mission and to live in fraternal and apostolic communion with their Brothers. They remain faithful to the Institute and to its spirit, to their Brothers, and to those they serve in their ministry".

In response to the appeals of 1894 and 1895, the Superior General of the Institute, Br. Joseph, wrote to the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda and defended the decrees of the General Chapter of 1894 along the following lines.

- (1) The *Rule* which forbids the Brothers to teach Latin is clear and categorical.
- (2) De La Salle forbade Latin for good reason.
- (3) The Bull of Approbation indirectly sanctioned the *Rule* of Blessed de La Salle by forbidding the Brothers to aspire to the priesthood.
- (4) For two hundred years that Institute has always looked upon the rule which forbids the Brothers to teach Latin as fundamental and essential in order that they may preserve the spirit of their vocation and not depart from their end.
- (5) That the Institute has always kept boarding schools and colleges for the rising middle class, but that these schools, in obedience to our tradition, have always offered technical education, not the classics.
- (6) That the General Chapter of 1894 decreed: "All the prescriptions of Chapter XXVIII of the *Common Rules* are maintained in their force and vigor for all our establishments." Chapter XXVIII forbids the Brothers to study and teach Latin.
- (7) A dispensation from the rule against teaching Latin would open itself to many other such requests in other parts of the world.
- (8) A large number of religious congregations have as their object colleges in which the classics are taught. The conduct of such establishments should be confided to them (Circ. 81, pp. 35-41).

The death of the Superior General, Br. Joseph, in 1897, necessitated a new General Chapter. The Chapter elected Br. Gabriel-Marie as the new Superior, a man firmly against the American position on the permissibility of teaching Latin. Br. Gabriel-Marie was convinced that the Institute's spirit and providential end, its tradition of working to benefit the poor and working classes, would be weakened if it was permissible to teach Latin. He warned that Brothers who taught Latin might become filled with pride and ambition. He even suggested that if these things came to pass God might raise up another religious congregation in the Church to take the place of an Institute that had lost its way. He spoke thus at the General Chapter of 1897:

If our Institute, contrary to our Rule, were to admit the teaching of the classics in its establishments, it would in short time result in a complete deviation from its spirit and providential end. It would allow itself to be

invaded by ideas of pride and ambition which would be fatal to it; it would rapidly depart from its road, and soon the Institute of Blessed La Salle would be no longer recognized in it. It would be the sign of decadence, and doubtless the hour would have come in which God would substitute for it another religious family in order to fill the void left in the army of the Church (Circ. 75, 1897, pp. 67-68).

Along with electing a superior who was deadset against the American position, the General Chapter of 1897 rectified any lack of clarity about the teaching of Latin in the Institute by communicating its decrees to the entire Institute. Br. Gabriel-Marie explained the facts of this situation in circular 101:

The General Chapters of 1882, 1884, 1894, and 1897 passed decrees more or less precise and accentuated in order to arrest the extension of the dangerous system followed in the States, gradually to restrict the abuses that had been point out, and eventually to arrive at the complete suppression of Latin in our Institutions; but, as in 1873, and for the same motives and causes, the decrees of the Chapters of 1882, 1884, and 1894 were not published, and they had no useful effect. It was necessary to put an end to such a state of things, for the decisions of 1894 had become sufficiently known in the United States to excite some venturous minds, and they were too badly presented and too little supported by those who spoke them, to bring about any reforms; besides the irregular situation of these houses in America happened to become more or less known everywhere, and to lead to imitation, above all, at points remote from the center of the Institute. From these motives and for other grave reasons, the decrees of the General Chapter of 1897 were communicated to all the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Circ. 101, p. 5).

A third appeal to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda in favor of the American position was made in 1899 in the name of almost half of the American hierarchy. A decision on this appeal by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, confirmed by the Holy Father and communicated to the Superior General on January 11, 1900, purported to settle the Latin Question. The Sacred Congregation responded to the appeal with the grandiose and definitive phrase, *negative et amplius* (Circular 91, pp. 5-6). The teaching of Latin and Greek was only to be tolerated until the end of that academic year and no further appeals were

allowed (Circular 91, p. 2). Thus, after teaching Latin for over forty years, the Institute in the United States was forced to change its course.

EFFECTS OF THE BAN

The definitive ban of the Holy See on the teaching of Latin in the apostolates of the Institute had considerable effect on the work of the Brothers in the United States. In April of 1901, Superior General Br. Gabriel-Marie issued a circular entitled “Consequences of the Suppression of the Teaching of Latin” where he tried to frame the situation in a positive light. The reality was that the suppression of Latin led to a foreseeable decline in enrollment and to much trial and hardship as the Brothers in the United States focused on transforming their colleges into institutions that specialized in the physical sciences, engineering, and industrial training (Battersby, 1967, p. 197). An example typical of the other colleges would be La Salle College, Philadelphia, which went from 150 students before the decree to only 96 students the year after the decree. The Jesuit College in Philadelphia doubled its student population during this same time (Battersby, 1967, p. 200). In cities where the only Catholic college was conducted by the Brothers, Catholic youths would now have to enter non-Catholic institutions in order to study the classics. Of the nine degree-granting institutions that the Brothers conducted in the United States in the year 1900, only four persist as institutions of tertiary education to this day (Manhattan - New York City, La Salle - Philadelphia, St. Mary’s - California, Christian Brothers - Memphis). Three of the nine colleges eventually changed their charters and became high schools because without the classics they could not survive as colleges (Calvert Hall - Baltimore, Christian Brothers - St. Louis, St. John’s - Washington). As a result of the ban on Latin, the Brothers in the United States lost a foothold in the world of tertiary education.

It must also be mentioned that between 1898 and 1901 the Superior General exiled thirteen American Brothers, mostly to Europe but also to Egypt and Sri Lanka (Battersby, 1967, p. 395). Not surprisingly, these thirteen Brothers were the key supporters and promoters of the American position; they were District leaders and heads of the institutions in ques-

tion. We can be edified by the fact that the majority of the exiles suffered their situation in a spirit of religious obedience.

AMERICANISM

The eminent Institute historian Br. William Battersby maintained that the European attitude toward the *Latin Question* must be viewed in terms of the anti-Americanism present in Europe during the 1890s (Battersby, 1967, p. xvi). “Americanism” is the label that was given to describe the quasi-heretical attitude of those who suggested that the Catholic Church should adapt itself to the American mentality and to its republican form of government. The Brothers in the United States appeared to hold this quasi-heretical attitude for they believed that the different cultural circumstances of America made it appropriate for them to teach Latin. Furthermore, the United States was unpopular in Europe at this time because of the war it was waging against Spain. This war caused many Church officials in Europe to be further disinclined toward anything American (Battersby, 1967, p. xvi). Institute historian Ronald Isetti summarized this anti-American sentiment:

In 1854, the French delegates who controlled the General Chapter held in that year granted the American Brothers permission to teach Latin in their schools partly on nationalistic grounds... However, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, developments in Europe and America turned the French Brothers against their American confreres... American political principles made European Catholics wary as well. For the French Brothers, the United States was the embodiment of Enlightenment ideals that they had set themselves against since 1789. American institutions like separation of church and state, non-sectarian public education, and republican government were detested.

Liberal bishops in America fell under the suspicion of ecclesiastical authorities in Rome when they began extolling America’s democratic government, dialoguing with Protestants, and stressing the need to cultivate the virtues of independence and innovation... There is a direct connection between Leo XIII’s letter from 1899, *Testem Benevolentiae*, which condemned the so-called heresy of Americanism, and the edict given out at the end of the same year by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, snubbing the appeals of the American hierarchy. What links

these two documents is not only their anti-American bias but also the conviction that the Church should be cautious in adapting itself to changing historical circumstances (Isetti, 1979, pp. 18-19).

CLASSICS RESTORED

Occasional unofficial petitioning to allow the teaching of Latin persisted during the first two decades of the twentieth century, but would not bear fruit for almost a quarter of a century. Circumstances were such that in 1923 Pope Pius XI lifted the ban. Among the many reasons for this change was the fact that the progress of the largely immigrant Church in the United States was greatly hampered by American Brothers' inability to teach the classics. Nine days before the opening of the Brothers' General Chapter, the Vatican Secretary of State addressed the following in a letter to the Superior General in the name of the Holy Father:

Most Honorable Brother, Several times the members of the Episcopacy, especially the bishops of the United States of America, have solicited the Holy See to permit the Brothers of the Christian Schools to teach the Latin language in their schools... With the laudable intention of maintaining the Institute in the greatest fidelity to the Rule of its holy Founder, we [the Holy See] have been unwilling until now, to modify on this point its traditional observance, except in some particular cases and with opportune restrictions. Nevertheless, in presence of an ever-growing and urgent want felt in different countries, and in consideration of the far reaching changes which modern times have made in educational programs and statues, and also in view of the larger participation of all classes of society in all kinds of studies, His Holiness judges that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools ought, henceforth, to extend its teaching to classical studies, as it has already done with success to the higher educational sciences, even in behalf of the well-to-do class. Pietro Cardinal Gasparri (Circ. 236, pp. 56-58).

Naturally, the American Brothers felt vindicated by this change, and thus began a new chapter in the life of the Institute. From 1680 until 1923 the programmatic or curriculum aspect of Lasallian pedagogy was significantly shaped by the fact that Latin could not figure into the course of studies of our schools. With the papal decree of 1923 a new chapter opened in the "book" of Lasallian pedagogy.

The famous French intellectual Jacques Maritain commented on the pro-Latin decree of Pope Pius XI in a convocation address at Manhattan College in 1951. Maritain was of the opinion that the Christian Brothers of the United States were precursors of things to come by bringing the gift of a liberal arts education to young people of all walks of life and not just to sons of the wealthy. Maritain's address included these words:

I observe that in the recommendation made by Cardinal Gasparri it is stated that this extension of the Christian Brothers' teaching of the classics should change nothing whatever in the nature of their Institute, whose principal end must be in the future as in the past, the school for the poor. Thus we have the school for the poor and the teaching of the classics brought together... We might also submit that if the teaching of the classics and the school for the poor are to be brought together, this means finally that the cultural and intellectual heritage of mankind has to be made available, as American education seeks to do, to young people from all walks of life. In this perspective the particular occurrence I am now discussing, the task assumed by the Christian Brothers in liberal education under the incentive of the American bishops, appears as a token of that liberal education for all, which is to be expected, I believe, from the future of our civilization. I take pleasure in thinking that in this connection the age-old experience of the Christian Brothers will prove particularly helpful, and that they will play now as their Founder did in the 17th century, the part of precursors (Battersby, 1967, págs. 358-359).

CONTEMPORARY LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY AND THE LATIN QUESTION

The Latin Question gives us pause to reflect on the role of uniformity in Lasallian pedagogy. It should be obvious that uniformity was highly valued by the leadership of the Institute at the end of the nineteenth century. In our post-Vatican II era a case could be made that the opposite is in vogue; that ideas like adaptation, subsidiarity, and diversity are esteemed in a way that uniformity in religious life once was. In light of this, we might ask, "What should be uniformly present or not present in Lasallian pedagogy throughout the world?"

The Latin Question also gives us pause to reflect on the perennial mandate to direct the Lasallian educational mission to the poor and working class. How do the Districts and Regions of the Institute prioritize this? How are Brothers and Lasallian colleagues educated and equipped to struggle against the natural human tendency to work with a student population that is considered more gifted, more refined, and more prestigious?

I am not aware of any contemporary situation in the Institute that parallels the *Latin Question* in the strict sense. While governments here and there certainly put limits on what the Institute can and cannot offer to young people, neither the Church nor the Institute itself bans outright the presentation of entire academic subjects. While the prohibition against Latin no longer remains, the imperative of Lasallian pedagogy over which the *Latin Question* was largely though mistakenly fought does remain: to direct our mission to the poor and working class. Prescription fourteen from the Brothers' *Rule* reflects this imperative and has profound ramifications for Lasallian pedagogy.

The Brothers are entrusted with their mission by the Institute, a mission especially to the poor. As a community they become increasingly conscious of the reasons for the poverty that surrounds them and so become earnestly involved in the promotion of justice and human dignity through the educational service they provide. This concern of the Brothers for the poor serves also to motivate their activities when they deal with people in a more favorable social environment, urging these to become more sensitive to unjust situations of which the poor are so often the victims (RC 14).

Lasallian pedagogy demands that we, Brothers and Lasallians, prioritize the promotion of justice and human dignity in the curriculum and ethos of our schools. This means that in our schools that serve a more favorable social class we work to sensitize students to causes of injustice. The Founder would be so pleased if when Catholic educators asked the question "Where can we find the social teaching of the Church brought to life for young people?" that the answer was, "Go to the Lasallian School." The promotion of justice and human dignity, alongside the appropriate promotion of our Catholic faith, must be perennial axes of Lasallian pedagogy.

Chapter 9 - THE REVISION OF THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS TOWARDS A WORLD-WIDE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

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From the beginning, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools has always chosen to function as a network based on a spirit of association, a network which transcends the boundaries of parishes, of dioceses and of countries. This characteristic distinguished it clearly from the kinds of popular schools in operation under the *Ancien Régime* in France.

The Institute developed in this spirit, while the circumstances of the social, political and educational contexts changed around it. Fortunately, the means of analysis, discernment and decision which had been put in place in 1694 made it possible to adapt and to bring up-to-date the main lines of the Lasallian Educational Project. This was especially so in 1717, 1787, 1811, 1838 and 1860, as we can see from the various editions of the *Conduite des Écoles*.

The last quarter of the XIX century was also one of those delicate periods calling for a serious re-examination of the way the schools of the network functioned. The reasons for this were varied and complicated. We shall underline three principal causes.

THREE FACTORS OF CHANGE

During the second half of the XIX century, in spite of its extension to different countries, the Institute remained French in numerical terms. The statistics we possess give ample witness to this fact. However, its survival in France was no longer an easy matter.

Laws of exclusion

At the start of the XIX century, in the reform of education undertaken during the First Empire, the Institute had been integrated into the state school system, and this had enabled it to preserve, in particular, its ideal

of gratuitous schools, considered to be «essential to the Institute» ever since the days of De La Salle. All the difficulties had not vanished, as we know from the history of gratuity, but the Brothers were able to pride themselves on a number of positive contributions they had made to teaching methods, programmes and to the school system. Because of the large number of their schools, they were taken into account by the Ministry of Education at the highest level. This is shown by the relations between the Ministers of Education (*Instruction Publique*) with the Superiors General of the Institute, particularly Brother Philippe, whose long term of office covered several political regimes in succession: the July Monarchy, the Revolution of 1848 and the Second Republic, the Second Empire and the beginnings of the Third Republic.

Brother Philippe did not live to see the trouble caused by the partisans of a radical Republic. It was only in 1876, when the radical republicans gained a majority in the National Assembly and the Senate, that policies of education hostile to the teaching Congregations began to be introduced. These republicans saw themselves as the distant inheritors of the ideas of the Revolution of 1789, which they wanted to implement. In particular, it was a matter of three general principles: compulsory schooling, gratuity of education, and secularism or the religious neutrality of teaching and of teachers. They wanted to achieve the fulfilment of the programme which the first revolution had not been able to put into effect.

To illustrate this, it suffices to recall the principal laws passed by parliament during the 1880's, laws which aimed at the political exclusion of religious orders:

- 1881: Law of 16 June, which established the general gratuity of public education.
- 1881: Law requiring the Certificate of Competence for all primary education teachers. Letters of obedience were no longer sufficient.
- 1882: Law of 29 March, introducing compulsory schooling for ages 7 to 13. At the same time, public education was declared to be 'neutral'. Ministers of religion were no longer allowed access to state school premises.

- 1884: Law making it compulsory to remove all religious symbols from public schools.
- 1886: Law of 30 October, according to which all teaching in public schools was entrusted exclusively to lay staff.
- 1889: A military law, withdrawing the privilege of exemption from military service for schoolmasters and seminarians.

There was some delay in putting these laws into practice, but it was clear nonetheless that the Brothers were being inexorably relegated to private schools. These had been in existence since the beginning of the XIX century, parallel to the public schools. There is a clear paradox in the fact that the Brothers, who had fought to maintain gratuity were now forced to ask for fees, while the state schools, which had begun by charging fees, would now have the advantage of being free.

To complete the picture, we must add that this orientation was due to continue in the years ahead, and would even be strengthened in the early years of the XX century by the laws of 7 July 1904 suppressing the teaching Orders, first the unauthorized ones then those that were authorized, which included the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Religious were obliged to withdraw from all their schools within a period of ten years. This was the climax of the anticlerical process of laicisation which had been developing over twenty-five years.

This progressive exclusion from the system of public schools inevitably created many difficult problems for those in charge of the Institute. They had to rethink and reorganise the whole Lasallian network in France. They had to work out how to function autonomously as best they could in the service of children and young people. It was in this period, during the General Chapters of 1882, 1884, 1894, 1897 and 1901 and through the work of various Commissions and the Circulars of the Superiors General, that the profile of an independent Lasallian network of schools emerged. Its configuration and organisation included a number of permanent features to which we shall return.

The Contribution made by Educational Studies

The closing decades of the XIX century also marked a vital stage in the

history of educational theory. Human sciences made their first appearance on the cultural landscape and began to provide ideas for teachers and educators. General psychology, child psychology, adolescent psychology, sociology and psychoanalysis, presented their findings, their advice or their solutions to the pedagogical situations. They also claimed, not without foundation, to provide solutions to the problem of dealing with difficult children. Initially they were looked on with a certain amount of mistrust, but soon they began to make their contribution to the Brothers' schools. The Superiors, first Gabriel Marie and then Imier de Jesus, recommended them to the Brothers, while at the same time calling for prudence and discernment, since not everything in these new disciplines was considered acceptable. Two interesting examples of this can be seen in Circular 129 by Brother Gabriel Marie in 1903 and Circular 194 by Brother Imier de Jesus in 1914 (non published because of the First World War).

However, at the beginning of the XX century, these human sciences were only in their infancy, although it was clear that they would have a lot to contribute, and this was borne out during the rest of the century. It was still necessary to be able to distinguish what was really well founded in all the writings being produced and what might lead teaching practitioners astray.

The Internationalisation of the Institute

The Institute was always open to the universal Church, as is shown by certain decisions of Saint Jean Baptiste De La Salle and in some of his writings, and the Brothers had not been slow to go beyond the frontiers of France. The sending of two Brothers to Rome in 1702 was the first example of this. At the end of the XIX century, Brothers' schools were to be found in thirty countries. In provoking the departure from France of more than three thousand Brothers, the law of July 1904 contributed to the internationalisation of the Institute. By the end of the ten years allowed for implementation of the law, the Lasallian network was spread across the five continents.

Even though the French delegates to the General Chapters were still in the majority at the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX

century, awareness of the great diversity was gradually emerging. The French school system could no longer be the only standard for dealing with questions relating to schools or pastoral work, and the text of the *Conduite des Écoles* could no longer be the same for all. A new edition, fairly drastically reworked, was produced in 1903. It was an edition that was long awaited and called for during the forty plus years between 1860 and 1903, when no significant changes were made. The Government of the Institute had taken its time, because it wanted the text to include the results of studies in education. It was reissued without much change in 1916, no doubt because circumstances relating to the First World War did not allow the usual process of updating or replacing the text with something more suitable.

The internationalisation of the Institute would entail a change in the style of leadership especially in the sphere of education which was at the heart of the Institute's apostolic commitment. The new situation presented a twofold challenge:

- To remain faithful in an environment that was changing continually and rapidly; and,
- to preserve unity of inspiration in what was becoming more and more varied.

Moreover, in the *Preface* to the *Conduite* of 1903, Brother Gabriel Marie insisted on the need for fidelity. After recalling succinctly the principal editions of the *Conduite* since the beginnings, he adds: «today, our new experiences, the progress in methodology and the prescriptions of legislation, have led us to modify the text of 1877». But he continued:

In carrying out this revision, we have kept to the general plan of the traditional *Conduite*, preserving the principles and customs of our Institute in matters relating to Christian education, and also the very judicious counsel bequeathed to us by the experience of our predecessors. The edition we now offer you is no more definitive than were the preceding editions, but it does seem to us to respond to the current demands in teaching, although our successors will no doubt find that they are obliged to improve on it in their turn according to changes in circumstances and in educational programmes (CE, 1903, p. 6).

A WORLD-WIDE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

Excluded from the French public school system by the above mentioned laws, the Brothers' Institute had to reorganise its contribution to the national work of educating young people. The task was undertaken step by step in the eight General Chapters that were held between 1874 and 1905. The process emerging from the decisions taken during that period can be seen as the construction of a Lasallian network of education on a global scale. The urgency of the particular problems that had to be resolved no doubt largely explains the delay over the production of a new version of the *Conduite des Écoles*, in spite of the impatience of the Brothers at the delay.

This Lasallian network was still led essentially by the Brothers. If occasional use had to be made of lay collaborators, it was always on a temporary basis and reluctantly. They were tolerated rather than appreciated. According to the General Chapter of 1897, it was preferable to make use of «young people produced by our schools». This indicates a desire to maintain homogeneity of thinking and of attitudes and pedagogical practice. You were supposed to copy what you had seen done by your own teachers. This Lasallian educational network was characterised by six essential features:

- The quality and the contents of the training of the Brothers.
- The production and the publication pedagogical and didactic tools.
- Texts to give inspiration and advice, e.g. the Circulars of the Superiors.
- Publications in pedagogy, those were special and new in the Institute.
- New means of emulation and evaluation.
- Two summary works to guide the teachers: the *Directoire Pédagogique* and the *Conduite des Écoles* of 1903.

The Studies and the Training of the Brothers

Since the time of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, the Institute has always been

a pioneer in the domain of the initial training of teachers. That remained true at the close of the XIX century. We find evidence of this in various instances.

- In 1875, during the 25th General Chapter a major report was presented on «The Instruction and Education of the Brothers». Among the things it asked for, we find mention of a methodological work on the teaching of politeness. It was to be a simplified version of the *Rules of Good Behaviour and Christian Politeness* of the Founder. Besides being of use to the pupils, it would be part of the training of their teachers.
- In 1882, the General Chapter dedicated a major session to the studies of the Brothers and it stated that great efforts were being made in this respect. The urgency was so much the greater because the first laws on education were already promulgated. The question was taken up again at greater length in the Circular of 3 January 1883, which gave an account of the proceedings of the Chapter. Five pages are spent on teacher training: «It has no doubt always been important in our Institute, but we can say that nowadays it has become extremely important» (p. 17). The same document also talks of continued formation, «throughout the whole of one's life». Next it is stated very concretely that teacher training starts right from the Juniorate.
- Two years later in 1884, the 27th General Chapter returned to the same subject. For example we read that: «one capitulant asked that the report should include the following notes: 1° The Brothers, by assiduous study of the *Conduct of Christian Schools*, should become more and more imbued with the *Twelve Virtues of a good teacher* and the *Treatises on Pedagogy*, and understand the importance of the duties incumbent on a teacher of young people. 2° Our studies of teaching and methodology should be kept abreast of the present day circumstances and needs, especially in the Scholasticates. The courses must be both theoretical and practical. 3° The Brothers Directors will make use of their conferences on pedagogy to give the Brothers practical lessons in the different disciplines» (Registre C, p. 223).

- Ten years later, in the Circular of 21th November 1894, Brother Joseph, Superior General, stressed the following ideas. «Today, pedagogy is a real science. Would it be too bold to assert that this science, at least as far as concerns primary education, owes its development in large part to the Blessed De La Salle, and that his *Conduct of the Christian Schools* lays down all the main principles and even indicates precise details on several points? Whatever the case may be, it is certain that a teaching Institute must have at its heart a culture of the science of education. We are religious and teachers, the Brothers of the Christian Schools. We owe it to the honour of our Congregation and of the Holy Church, which gives us a mission to Children, to take all the means in our power to ensure that our schools should be among those of first class, however humble their situation» (p. 23).
- Brother Gabriel Marie in turn wrote at length on the training of Brothers. The Chapter of 1897, which elected him, voted several recommendations concerning «intellectual and pedagogical training». «These studies, while enabling them to obtain the diplomas that are indispensable for them, will help to ensure that our schools hold a place of honour in the struggle for Christian education» (p. 31). We could extend to great length this list of quotes on such an important topic. The major work on training by Brother Gabriel Marie is the long Circular of 3 December 1903, which is almost entirely devoted to the subject.

The Production of Tools for Teaching

We know that a number of the writings of Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle were used in the schools during his lifetime, especially for the teaching of reading (*The Duties of a Christian, The Rules of Good Conduct and Christian Politeness*) or for Christian education (the *Abrégés*, the Exercises of Piety). In the course of the XVIII century and right up to the French Revolution of 1789, the Brothers published various textbooks for their schools or boarding establishments. This tradition was taken up again in the XIX century even before 1830, and it continued throughout the Generalate of Brother Philippe. During that period, working commis-

sions began to be set up to produce teaching materials. They met periodically, especially in the vacation times, to produce works jointly, and although these did not bear the words *By a committee of teachers*, they corresponded to that ascription which later became the official signature for Institute textbooks.

This work continued during the brief Generalate of Brother Jean Olympe (1874-1875), as is attested by various documents of that year. It was a pedagogical development which was well established, and which would continue in France for more than a century and which also showed vigorous signs of life in other countries such as Canada, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Equator, etc. Before he was elected Superior General, Brother Gabriel Marie had for some time been coordinator of these working commissions. We know that he was himself the author of voluminous, learned works on mathematics, which have recently been re-edited, such is their remarkable quality. We can also cite the names of other major contributors to this work of pedagogical publishing. Brother Justinus was a great Secretary General of the Institute and from 1891 to 1910 he edited *L'Éducation Chrétienne*, a weekly educational review of the Institute. He also planned the Institute's participation in the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1900. Brother Alexis, a Belgian, became famous for his remarkable work in geography which earned him admiration and praise within and beyond the Institute. Brother Paul Joseph was responsible for coordinating preparations for the work *Éléments de Pédagogie pratique (2 volumes, 1901 and 1902)* and for revising the text of the *Conduite des Écoles* for the edition of 1903.

Following Brother Jean Olympe as Superior General, Brother Irlide (1875-1883) did not slow down the publishing of school texts. In the Circular of 1st August 1875, he reminded people that the first wish of the recent General Chapter had been concerned with the revision of the standard books and the composition of studies that were still lacking. Some years later, in the Circular of 26 June 1880, he returned at length to the question of school books. The general situation of the private schools had deteriorated. There was a noticeable increase in the rivalry between them and the public schools. The steps taken by the Ministry of Education also concerned «the books recognised as suitable for use in the schools». It was

possible to use books other than those on the Ministerial list, but you had to justify your choice. Consequently, Brother Irlide's Circular gave advice about choosing, and it put forward a list of works to be used in the Christian Schools. All this encouraged the authors of the manuals to produce works of quality. They obviously succeeded, because the General Chapter of 1882 congratulated them, and Brother Joseph repeated the compliments in the Circular of 21th November 1894. Brother Gabriel Marie in turn encouraged them with the following words: «It is necessary to keep abreast of all the developments around us so as not to be left behind by our competitors, and to satisfy as far as possible the demands of the different categories of classes and pupils» (Circular of 26th April, 1897, p. 63).

The Chapter of 1897 insisted on highlighting the merits of the authors, saying that it wished to «represent the general recognition given to these devoted religious who consecrate months and years in obscure, long-term work that often goes unrecognized and even attracts more criticism than praise from people who are otherwise well-intentioned» (Circular of 26th April 1897, pp. 63-64).

In order to complement the contribution made by the school textbooks, the same Circular recommended the setting up of good community libraries. These should be a matter of *special care* on the part of the Brothers Directors, and they would contain books for spiritual reading and for intellectual and pedagogical improvement. This concern also manifested itself in the publication by the General Procure of a list of quality works «as complete as possible».

The above quotations show the extent to which concern over the formation of the Brothers was present in the government and leadership of the Institute, and also the extent to which this formation was meant to be specifically adapted to the network. We can also mention the decisions of the Chapters concerning the need for all the Brothers to learn a second language, the opening of Scholasticates and in particular a «Higher Scholasticate » for university studies, and the studies for the new diplomas (*Brevet Supérieur, Baccalauréat, Licence*).

Encouragement and Accompaniment

Given the increased number of Brothers and their geographic dispersion, they could no longer be individually known or accompanied by the Superiors, as had been the case since the time of Jean-Baptiste of the Salle. In 1875 there were 11,000 Brothers and more than 15,000 in 1901. As a result, individual relationships were replaced by collective communication. At the end of the XIX century, accompaniment and advice were delivered quite naturally through the Reports of General Chapters, Instructive and Administrative Circulars, the *Revues* of the Institute, the *Bulletin* of the Christian Schools and the *Conduite des Écoles*. The tradition of producing Circulars goes back to the origins of the Institute, but they took on a much greater importance in the XIX century. Successive Superiors used them, each in his own way, as events dictated. The Circulars written in the period we are dealing with were noticeably prolix. We shall look at a few examples of passages relating to the Lasallian educational network.

- The 26th General Chapter in 1882 led Brother Irlide to write a long Circular in which he spoke of «the training of teachers, programmes, books and methodologies for our schools, in other words everything related to the external goal of our Institute or the exercise of charity towards our neighbour». In the Circular reporting the acts of that Chapter, teacher training occupies five pages.
- In the General Chapter of 1894, five Commissions out of eight worked on questions relating to schools or education: the religious formation of the Brothers, intellectual and pedagogical training, schools and boarding establishments, works relating to young people and the standard textbooks. In the Circular of 21 November of the same year, Brother Joseph gives an account of all these works and adds some remarks on the *Revue Pédagogique* published by the Institute. «For a long time, a need was felt in the Institute for a *Revue Pédagogique* to give our Brothers guidance on educational practice. The *Revue* was created some years ago, under the title *Éducation Chrétienne*, and we are happy to be able to say that it is among the best of its kind. The Chapter readily expressed its satisfaction for the good results it has already produced in the peda-

gological training of our Brothers and for the guidance given to our teaching at all levels».

- Both before his election as Superior and during his Generalate (1897-1913), Brother Gabriel Marie showed a particular interest in educational matters. This is evident in two long Circulars: that of 22 September 1901 on the «method of teaching religion» and that of 3 December 1903, devoted essentially to the Brothers' studies, on the occasion of the publication of the new *Conduite des Écoles*.
- In the 32nd General Chapter of 1907, during a dramatic period for the Institute, the same Brother Gabriel Marie reminded the Capitulants of the recent publications of the Institute, which gave witness to the vitality of the reflection on education. He mentioned in turn: the recent Circulars, the Bulletin of the Christian Schools, the works special to the Institute and the school textbooks. Despite the serious problems of the period, the Chapter discussed the instruction of the Brothers and the propositions of its «Commission on Schools and Boarding Establishment», refusing to give way to discouragement.
- During the ten years when he was Superior (1913-1923), Brother Imier of Jesus was noted for the depth and length of the Circulars he wrote to the Brothers. They generally exceeded one hundred pages and dealt with the main aspects of the life of the Brother. We can note especially the «draft Circular» which would have borne the date the date 15 August 1914. The text is in the Archives of the Generalate, but it could not be issued because of the start of the First World War. It deals with the plan for a new educational review for the Institute and with the training of the Brothers.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Ever since 1706, the General Chapters regularly undertook to update the *Conduite*, without indicating the reasons for the changes. In 1894, the 28th General Chapter discussed the publication *Revue Pédagogique* and

created a Commission on intellectual and pedagogical training with the brief of preparing a *Traité de Pédagogie chrétienne* (Treatise on Christian Pedagogy) based on the principles of the Founder. It was also given the task of producing a new edition of the *Conduite*. With regard to the *Traité*, *Registre C* of the General Chapter states: «Implementation of the work has already begun. It will be divided into five parts: Education, Child, Teacher, Teaching and School. The plan includes all the questions raised by the needs of today. Each Chapter will give a development, a summary and a synoptic table. It will preserve entirely the spirit and the methods which have ensured the prosperity of the Christian Schools over two centuries» (*Registre C*, p. 291-292). Some days later, on Saturday 27 October 1894, a first draft of the work was distributed to the capitulants, with a public reading accompanied by commentaries and explanations by the Secretary General. The work appeared in 1897, at the Procure General of the Brothers. These *Notes on Christian Pedagogy* had the explicit goal of «helping in the preparation of a new edition of the *Conduite*». At the same time the experience of collaborative work which characterised the production of the *Conduite* of 1706 was repeated.

The general orientation of the work is briefly explained in the first three paragraphs of the Introduction: «Pedagogy, according to the etymology of the word, consists in the leading of children. Pedagogy is both a science and an art. As a science, it is the reasoned knowledge of the fundamental principles of education; as an art, it is the manner of putting them into practice. Art or science, pedagogy must result in education, in the active sense of the word, that is to say in bringing the whole child to direct his faculties towards the good, towards God» (p. XIII).

«*Elements of Practical Pedagogy*»: 2 volumes, appeared in 1901 and 1902.

The editors of the next version of the *Conduite des Écoles* would therefore have at their disposal good material to work on, namely the *Notes de Pédagogie Chrétienne*. However, one other fundamental publication was in process of production. It was entitled *Elements of Practical Pedagogy* and it appeared in two volumes in 1901 and 1902. It had taken some time to complete this work. The table of contents partially repeats that of the

Notes de Pédagogie Chrétienne, but offers additional contents. The first volume is centred on education and deals in turn with the following topics:

- Christian Education in General: 2 Chapters.
- Religious Education: 4 Chapters.
- The Child: 9 Chapters.
- General Means of Education: 7 Chapters.

The second volume deals with the “Special Methodology”:

- The teaching of religion: 7 Chapters.
- The teaching of the mother tongue: 10 Chapters.
- The teaching of history and geography: 10 Chapters.

Emulation – Assessment

Before the French laws of the 1880’s, the Brothers who taught in the state schools were naturally subject to the Inspections in force in the school system. The progress of the schools was likewise assessed. All this ceased when the religious were excluded from public schools.

It is naturally easy to deceive oneself about the quality of the work being done when judging one’s own case. An external view helps to give a better assessment, and efforts to achieve higher quality can be stimulated by the prospect of prestigious recognitions. That explains the favorable attitude adopted by the Institute with regard to the Exhibitions which proliferated during the second half of the XIX century, mainly in Europe and America. The schools took part in a good number of these events and obtained many distinctions.

There already existed a system of internal assessment carried out by the Brothers Inspectors, Brothers Directors and Visitors and this had been in operation since the beginning of the Institute. Participation in the Exhibitions now allowed them to compare themselves with other schools, to face up to the judgment of neutral observers, and receive welcome marks of appreciation. The work of the pupils that was presented at the Exhibitions was a valuable test, even though it represented only a select sample.

In a Circular of 25 January 1879, Brother Irlide discussed at length their participation in the Universal Exhibition. He reproduced some of the commendations received by the work displayed by the Institute, but he also invited the Brothers themselves to take a critical view and not to forget the plans and ambitions of the Institute. It was particularly important in those difficult and challenging times to achieve a high level of quality.

Fifteen years later, the Brother Joseph spoke of the Institute's participation in the Chicago Exhibition and of the outstanding success of the work submitted. Obviously, it included not just work by French pupils but also that of pupils in England, North and South America, Spain, Italy, The Far East. It was a representative sample of the Institute's international nature.

In a Circular of 2 October 1900, Brother Gabriel Marie congratulated the *Results of the Universal Exhibition of 1900 in Paris* this took up sixteen pages of Annexes in which he recounted in detail the *Awards given by the International Juries to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. An extract from the Official Journal of August 18 of that year gives a list of the gold medals gained by the Institute: 3 *grands prix*, 13 gold medals, 21 silver medals, 14 bronze medals; a total of 48 distinctions. It was a source of comfort for the schools as they carried out their work. It was in fact a major exercise in emulation and evaluation, involving the pupils and teachers of several countries. But it could not be the only means of assessment.

That is why we must not minimise the internal assessment done within the Institute, which we have already mentioned. To this we can add what Brother Joseph said in 1894, when he spoke about the review *Éducation Chrétienne*. «Through the competitions launched in its pages, it has established a kind of centre of emulation and intellectual activity for our schools; and through the supplements that it sends out regularly it provides those in our schools who teach special subjects all they need for preparing the pupils for the various examinations. Following the wishes of the Chapter, everything will be done to enable the *Revue de l'Éducation Chrétienne* to keep itself abreast of all the best developments and to give our Brothers, as far as possible, all the information, documents and useful advice needed to keep the Christian Schools in a position of honour

and if possible in first place» (p. 25-26). It is interesting to see this search for excellence among the Superiors General of this period (Irlide, Joseph and Gabriel Marie). Emulation and even a certain rivalry can contribute to that excellence.

The «fruits» of this work

In the course of its history, the Institute has never been satisfied with just theoretical studies. It always translated its educational and pastoral goals into texts that were specific, detailed guides for teaching in action. This was particularly the case in the *Conduite des Écoles*. Looking back, we can see how fortunate the Brothers were to possess a permanent manual for putting the Educational Programme into practice. This treasure was so precious that other teachers wanted to benefit from it, including teaching Orders (male and female) and lay teachers, and some of these produced adaptations of it. Throughout the XIX century, the publication of the *Conduite* went well beyond the boundaries of the Institute.

The existence of a Lasallian educational network as outlined above naturally resulted in the production of specific publications, which we shall now present briefly in the chronological order of their publication.

NEW LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL WORKS

The Pedagogical Directory of 1903

This was an innovation. It was the first time in the history of the Institute that such a work was made available to the Brothers. It appeared shortly before the new edition of the *Conduite* in 1903. It followed the same format as the *Conduite*, and was likewise edited by the *Procure Generale* of the Brothers. It contained 256 pages and 23 Chapters, divided into five parts :

- The Christian School and its daily regulation.
- The initiation of children into Christian life.
- The organisation of teaching and the general principles teaching.
- The teaching of the various specialties in the primary programme.
- Discipline.

It was an attempt to explain to the teacher how to put these different elements into practice. The Foreword situated the work clearly in the range of publications of the time: «This new work is a kind of vademecum for the classroom». If possible, it was to be more specific than the *Conduite*, as the Foreword said: «We believe that the new *Conduite* can only be produced after several trials, serious discussions and with the collaboration of the most experienced teachers. The present Directory is one such trial run».

Since we know that the Directory appeared some months before the *Conduite*, we can understand better what the Foreword is saying: “We hope we can attain the double goal that we have given ourselves in publishing this Directory, namely to help young religious at the start of their work as teachers and to stimulate the experienced teachers to send in notes that will help in the subsequent new edition of the *Conduite des Écoles*”. In effect, by the end of 1903, the Brothers could consult both the Directory and the new version of the *Conduite*.

The Conduct of Schools of 1903

This edition had long been desired, called for and was impatiently awaited by the Brothers. There had already been talk of it in the General Chapter of 1882. Twenty years waiting! What we have said above enables us to understand why the production of this new edition took so long. In particular, it was clear that the new version should be a coherent outcome of the two underlying works on Christian pedagogy and the practice of teaching.

The new *Conduite des Écoles* finally appeared at the end of 1903. It was given a warm welcome in a major Circular of Brother Gabriel Marie, dated December 3: *The New Edition of the Conduct of Schools – the Studies of a Religious Educator*. This document is very important for understanding the whole collection of writings and publications of these years. In a rather lengthy Introduction, the Superior encouraged the Brothers to make a special study of the domain of education. That was the reason for the publication of the *Elements of Practical Pedagogy* and the *Pedagogical Directory*. The new edition of the *Conduite* had been wisely modernised and its outline plan was here explained. The first part of the Circular was

devoted to the edition of the *Conduite*, with references to the political difficulties of the preceding years.

The text had been a long time in coming, but the results made the waiting worthwhile. The general plan of the contents sought to find the balance between a profound respect for the traditional Lasallian education and a love of true progress and freedom from routine. The work is divided into four parts:

- I. Education: 7 chapters
- II. School Practices: 18 chapters
- III. School Organisation: 8 chapters
- IV. The Virtues and Qualities of the Teacher: 14 chapters

Except for the first part, which is new, the structure generally repeats that of the previous editions, whereas the contents differ noticeably. The first part is manifestly the result of contributions to thinking made by educational science. The other parts present the usual goals of the *Conduite*, which the Foreword expresses in the following terms. «*The Conduct of Christian Schools* goes back to Saint Jean-Baptiste De La Salle. Its aim is to determine precisely the methods in use in the schools directed by the Brothers and to indicate to the teachers the pedagogical procedures proven by experience, which they can use to their advantage, so as to establish uniformity in their teaching» (p. 1). This reminder is followed by a brief history of the principal editions of the *Conduite* and concludes with the reaffirmation of the need for creative fidelity: «Nowadays, new experiences, developments in methodology and legislative prescriptions, have led us to modify the text of 1877. In undertaking this revision, we have kept to the general plan of the traditional *Conduite*, to the principles and the customs of our Institute in matters of Christian education and to the judicious advice bequeathed to us by the experience of our predecessors» (p. 6-7).

The Manual of Pedagogy

The life and writings of Brother Gabriel Marie show the particular interest he had in pedagogy. No doubt that explains why he was led to write and publish his *Manuel de Pédagogie* which appeared under the pseudo-

nym Edmond Gabriel. The copy we have used is from the second edition of 1909. It is a work of 348 pages, with the same format as the *Pedagogical Directory* and the *Conduite*. The author addressed it to all the Catholic schools of France, not only those of the Brothers. So he aimed to reach a wider and more varied public. In a short Preface, he praises the mission of Christian teachers, saying that he was offering them this manual to encourage them and help them in their task.

The plan of the book largely follows what we find in the *Conduite* and in the *Directoire* of 1903. The first part deals with education and the second with teaching. It is not surprising that we find nothing about school organisation or the virtues of the teacher, because these were specific to Lasallian schools. Although it is not explicitly part of the story of the development of the *Conduite*, the Manual deserves to be mentioned for several reasons: for its author in the first place, for its contents, for the time of its publication and because it was something undoubtedly read by the Brothers.

The Conduite des Écoles of 1916

Less than one year after the appearance of the *Conduite* of 1903, the laws of 7 July 1904 were passed in France and they threatened the very existence of the Brothers' schools in that country. The Government of the Institute had to leave the house in the rue Oudinot in Paris and move to Lembecq-les-Hal in Belgium. One can imagine the inconvenience and the upset this caused the Brothers. This has all been described elsewhere, and we shall not repeat it. But we can raise the question as to whether it was still possible to think about the *Conduite des Écoles*?

In the General Chapter of 1913, Brother Gabriel Marie offered his resignation and it was accepted. He was replaced by Brother Imier of Jesus. In addition to his long Circulars on the religious life, the latter prepared another with the title *Bulletin Pédagogique et Études Pédagogiques*. It was due to appear on 15 August 1914, but did not do so because of the outbreak of war. It reveals the Superior's keen interest in educational matters. The *Bulletin Pédagogique* was to replace and update the former *Éducation Chrétienne*. The second part of the Circular returned to the subject of the *Études Pédagogiques*, and we have already spoken about that. Its presenta-

tion was given a new form and treated the “needs, advantages and possible multiple applications”. It is a pity that neither this study nor the *Bulletin* saw the light of day. The four long years of the First World War saw to that.

In spite of it all, Brother Imier’s interest in educational matters led him to have preparations made for a new edition of the *Conduite*, which came out in 1916. It was not just a repetition of the 1903 edition, but a detailed revision and enrichment. The text of 1916 contains one hundred pages more. The plan is very similar, but some new areas of teaching have been introduced by way of updating.

This was to be the last edition of the *Conduite* for the whole of the Institute. Thus ended a tradition of 210 years that went from 1706 to 1916.

CONCLUSION: THE END OF AN EPOCH

During the closing decades of the XIX century and the first years of the XX century, the Institute had to reorganise in order to continue its service of education. To achieve this, it needed to do the following:

- Ensure and improve the initial and continued training of the Brothers.
- Allow them to gain the qualifications and skills needed to guarantee quality of teaching.
- Become familiar with the useful contributions coming from the world of educational studies and integrate them into their teaching.
- Give a theoretical grounding to their choice of educational methods.
- Ensure the good running of their schools by providing them with teaching materials such as school books, teaching aids, assessment tools, and by introducing new subjects and reorganising the school buildings and the school day.
- Harmonise the educational practices in all the schools so as to produce a coherent network.

The *Directoire Pédagogique* and the *Conduite des Écoles* of 1903 represent the climax of all these efforts. But they also testify to the end of an epoch in the history of the Institute. The French laws of 7 July 1904 changed the situation radically by initiating the emigration of almost 4,000 Brothers and the retirement of as many more again. This had two immediate consequences. On the one hand, the Brothers working in France were now in the minority; and on the other hand, the Institute took root in new countries and so became completely globalised.

The diversity of civilisations and school systems was now so great that it became impossible to maintain a single, traditional model for all as embodied in the *Conduite*. The edition of 1916 proved an exception. There were no more editions, because one text no longer suited all.

That was the End of an Era, now for the New Era...

In the domain of pedagogy, the first half of the XX century seems like a period of stagnation and uncertainty in the Institute. Then along came some significant initiatives which heralded in a new era. We mention briefly the following dates :

- **1951:** The first edition of the original text of the *Conduite des Écoles* of 1706 appeared on the occasion of the tricentenary of the birth of the Founder. Anticipating the recommendations of Vatican II, the Institute initiated a 'return to the origins'. Brother Anselme d'Haese was in charge of the work for this edition, following on the work of an International Commission of Brothers appointed by the Superior General.
- **1956:** The office for *Études Lasalliennes* (Lasallian Studies) was created in Rome, and its contribution to reflection and research has been considerable and incalculable. *Cahier lasallien 24* reproduces the texts of 1706 and 1720 of the *Conduite des Écoles*. This was done, not in a spirit of educational archaeology, but as a source of inspiration for today. And that has indeed proved to be the case, when one considers the many contributions that have since appeared in the series.
- **1967:** The 39th General Chapter drew up and published the invaluable *Declaration of the Brother of the Christian Schools in the*

World Today. This is the kind of text appropriate to the international diversity of the Institute as is shown by the success it has everywhere enjoyed.

- **1987:** The Secretariat for Education was created in the Generalate in 1983, and it published *Characteristics of the Lasallian School Today*, based on the work of a Commission of Brothers from Europe. Its 52 propositions were deliberately general in nature, but its goal was to recall the essential elements of a Lasallian school, in order to stimulate the production of local Lasallian Educational Projects. This did indeed happen and is still going on.
- **2006:** The first International Assembly of the Lasallian Educational Mission took place in 2006, and a large percentage of the participants were lay people, in recognition of the actual situation in the Lasallian network today. The assembly was given a role in preparation for the General Chapter: to assess, to analyse and to make proposals, so that the Lasallian network might continue to develop educationally and pastorally in a spirit of creative fidelity. It also had to determine the best way for broadcasting the results of its work. Why not a new *Declaration*?

From Founding Journey to Pedagogical System

Synthesis of Second Part

Pedro María Gil fsc

As we move through the various stages of this second part, we realize that a hundred pages ago we were in quite a different world.

We are going through or have gone through two or three centuries of Modernity that transform all social institutions. We are no longer witnesses of the foundation of Lasallian communities and the configuration of their pedagogy. Increasingly we find a consolidated group in society, a stable institution which understands its pedagogy in its own way. This is the contribution of this second part and is a decisive factor in our study.

This conclusion invites us to reread the four chapters (and the following Annex) and to ask ourselves: what remains of that initial definition, that we formulated around the three key points as we saw them within the foundational journey: **orientation with regard to the poor, the establishment of a network of programs and people?**; what is Lasallian pedagogy like one hundred or two hundred years later?

We have written the previous chapter in order to make sense of these questions. Let us see where this set of texts has led us.

1.

There is an episode (or document) in Lasallian pedagogical history that allows us to situate ourselves clearly in reference to these questions and above all to do so in a unifying or synthesizing way. It is Circular number 21 from Br. Irlide, Superior General, dated January 6, 1881. It did not appear as one more chapter among the previous ones, even though it does relate clearly to earlier reflections in them. In this conclusion it behooves us to see the concrete visage of all this discourse about the rereading of the

system and, at the same time, to define the testimony that previous times have left to us at the outset of this 21st century.

The episode is two pronged. On the one hand we have the celebration of the Second Centenary of the Institute. Br. Irlide initially uses this as a motive for evocation and thanksgiving. Above all, he also uses it to propose to the Brothers an understanding of the context that allows them to assume the hard reality of educational policies of that time.

On the other hand we have the great event, that is, from 1880 onward, the beginning of the implantation of the educational policies of the Third Republic. Around this date we see the beginning of a quarter-century-long process that will end with the expulsion of the Lasallian Institute from the French schools in 1904. At that time in 1881 the Ministry of Instruction begins to present its objective and spirit organized around the trinity of gratuity, universality and secularity (lay state). At the beginning of that year no one had yet seen the full reach of the third term – they would from 1886 onward – but people predicted what it was based on the interpretation of the first two.

Logically, those who did not embrace this code first ought to leave the public schools, and after that the religious schools. Everything changed in the space of twelve years. In 1881 the plan still allowed for confessional, private schools, and the Brothers promptly configured their network in a new manner. The task must have been enormous since at that time more or less 90% of their installations were public. From 1886 on – when the secularity of public schools was applied not only to school programs but also to their teachers – they were given six years to leave them all and to constitute a new network, capable of sustaining itself on the margin of public financing.

When Br. Irlide writes his circular they still don't know any of this. They think that they have to update both the quality of their schools as well as their own formation. The circular deals with this, that is, the document attempts to read the situation.

2.

It is a fascinating, professional, concrete and organized text. What is more, it turned out to be effective, since in the period of a few years, this circular produced a renewal of the houses of formation. Following the model that fleetingly existed during the time of Br. Agathon a hundred years before, it had been recommended in vain by both the General Commission in 1834 and General Chapter of 1837.

The circular has four parts. The first is the general New Year greeting; the second, the evocation of the celebrations of the second centenary of the Institute and its presentation as an affirmation of the meaning of the Institute. The third and fourth are propositional and consider the accommodation and improvement of the Lasallian way of doing things, both in its concept of the school or education as well as that of the person of the educator and his formation.

The starting point, a stinging denunciation and a proposal for the future, is a reproach of the Brothers and their schools: they are neither of their time, nor of their country⁷³.

Here are some excerpts, without commentary, from Br. Superior's text, about the model of school and pedagogy. We allow ourselves such a voluminous set of excerpts because we are dealing with an which extraordinary testimonial. We rarely find something like this expresses so clearly the awareness of the pedagogy of its time. This considerably simplifies our task of interpretation:

... So then Brothers, let us be men of our times... as was our venerable Father: let us also be men of our country, as was the most Holy one, our divine Master and Model. Following his example, let us irrigate with the sweat of our brow, the portion of the field of the Father's family that Providence has entrusted to our cultivation, even though it may sometimes seem to be sterile and rebellious, despite our most solicitous care. Let us love it, uniting ourselves to it, whether it

⁷³ The possible truth of this reproach must not make us forget its maliciousness, converted into prejudice or a theme that prevents people from seeing the truth from another viewpoint: so both truth and maliciousness are present.

belongs to our country of origin, or an adopted country to which our vocation has guided us through the voice of obedience. Let no setback or persecution move us to abandon it, because perhaps part of the purpose of Providence is that our blood must be added to our sweat so that it might be fertile and make it produce a rich harvest for heaven (Circ. 21, 1881, p. 20).

.....

We have already told you that you will respond to those who accuse the Brothers of the Christian Schools of not being of their own country, only by applying yourself to the advancement of the populace, even at the cost of irrigating the furrow with the sweat of your brow, the same way in an adopted country, as you would in your own country of origin.

You will also take care that the same reproach cannot be leveled at your students or your schools. To achieve this take care that your teaching has, in some way, 'local color', as we have recommended in several of our circular letters. To that end it is necessary that your lessons and homework assignments be related to the production of agricultural or industrial goods of the region, province or, department. The geography lessons must have as their starting point the school itself and include the geographical features such as rivers, transit routes, deposits of salt, coal, oil and so forth, excavations, mines, if there are any in the location or nearby, before moving on to general study of the province, and above all, foreign countries. The school museum will facilitate this part of study, especially if, as is normally the case, it is an important place for the presentation of samples that represent the mineral riches, natural products and the various industries of the country.

History must be taught from the same perspective, first mentioning the persons and events that illustrate the department or province in greater detail than the other events of national history. We will never tire of insisting on the prudence you must exercise upon judging events, above all those communicated in a different way, according to the political opinions of different historians. Separated from these diverse opinions, concerned for an infinitely superior interest compared to those who struggle for power, respectful and submissive toward those who are entrusted by Providence with this power, you must carefully avoid the bruising of sentiments that they have absorbed in the bosom of their families, or that have been nourished in other circumstances, as long as they do not go against morality or religion.

The local administrative system, first of all, and later that of the village or of the province that you must make known in the beginning to your students, will move you to study the Civil Constitution of the country, the attributions of the different sectors of the Administration of the State and the distinction between the three powers...as well as the principal sections of these same powers.

When explaining the political institution of the area in which you live, Brothers, take care that no one is able to attribute the least sense of opposition in your words. All forms of government are, in principle, legitimate and good. In order to contribute to the prosperity of the nations, to interior peace as well as foreign relations, those that direct these nations must be capable, virtuous men of integrity, who represent them and make them function well. Any system that does not correspond to the spirit and legitimate aspiration of a country cannot last for very long; but, while it subsists, it is the duty of every good citizen to respect it... (Circ. 21, 1881, pp. 24-25).

.....

It is a wide-spread error to believe that if the students are very young or little educated, their teachers have less need of deeper knowledge. The contrary is precisely the truth: indeed, the teacher must possess whatever details he can in order to present a theme with all the desired clarity, and thus enlighten the intelligence of those not yet familiar with study.

Work arduously Brothers in the acquisition of the knowledge that you must communicate to your students, but work methodically, establishing an order and following a rationally progressive process in your studies. This will give you a double advantage: accelerating your progress and preparing yourselves to impart your lessons with greater success, the fruits of which will depend, to a great extent, on the procedures that you use.

Nevertheless, not even profound knowledge of the various courses of the program would be completely sufficient for the teacher. It is one thing to know something yourself and quite another to communicate that knowledge to others in such a way that their acquisition will be easier and the results more long-lasting. These procedures are called Method.

Every branch of teaching has a Special Method used in teaching it, notwithstanding the existence of good general principles valid to all particular methods. The set of these principles constitutes the Science of Methods or Methodology that has experienced much progress in recent

years up to now, above all in that which refers to primary teaching.

The *Conduct of Schools* and the *Explanation of the Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher* form the two parts of the *Methodology Manual* in use in our Institute. It was not only sufficient during a long time, but it also gave the Brothers who practice it superiority in *Methodology*, above and beyond the majority of the other teachers. Presently it behooves us to add another work written by one of our Brothers: *A Course of Pedagogy and Methodology*. You can find it in our *General Procure...* (Circ. 21, 1881, pp. 30-31).

3.

This was the message of Br. Irlide and the Lasallian Institute in the last decades of the 19th Century.

By recalling it we understand better that we should not attempt to evoke all significant situations related to the pedagogical journey of Lasallian history. Those we have studied ought to have left us sufficiently clear conclusions, above all if we see them from the perspective of the context of the panorama presented in the following pages of the annex.

They show us that we have moved into a world different from that of the generation of the beginnings. Each one of them reminds us that our Institute already has a century or more of life and for that very reason its educational activities must be new, at least considering the amount of time that has passed (between one and two hundred years). Located in very different social contexts, as much for its place of origin as well as many others that are new that we can only guess at. Novelty is what immediately stands out.

Nevertheless, we are also aware that we continue within the same Institute we saw being born. For example, the *Conduct of Schools* continues to be a fundamental reference, even though its different editions recognize important new situations. And even within it, when repeated ambiguities about the idea of consecration arise, the Brothers return again and again to the first definition of faith and zeal, to the ascetical and spiritual models of the *Collection* (in truth, more than those of the *Meditations*) and a

community practice that we know (even though it seems to be traditional)⁷⁴. They are the same.

For that reason, we find not only novelty in our overview of this second part. It seems evident that there is also continuity to such an extent that we are perplexed and quickly moved to ask: in what way does the institutional evolution validate or invalidate the pedagogical model of the beginnings?

So, reviewing our synthesis - the Poor, personal relationships, the constitution of a network – can allow us to move forward in the definition of Lasallian Pedagogy, following from its constitutive stage to that of its definitive formulation ('definitive', at least as long as the time of Modernity lasts, since it was born and developed during that time). Let us examine what happened.

We find that the passage of time consolidated **that initial structure at the same time that it was incarnated in categories of a different order.**

This is the general thesis that the second part puts forward: we recognize the Institute, but the days of its youth are far in the past. Let us see now if we can unpack this thesis into significant proposals about the three axes of our first definition of Lasallian Pedagogy.

4.

From journey to system

The third of the three keys is the best example of change and continuity.

⁷⁴ To understand this a bit better, using today's language we can see the journey of the Association of Lasallian network in a scenario animated by two types of educational leadership: the organizational and the transformational. In the first period of establishment, of creation, of new and daring formulations that the educational institutions lived through, the tendency is to transform the data they had and the situation they have inherited. They need to seek a new configuration of persons, methodologies to verify, professional profiles without experience. They have to cultivate the educational community as a pedagogical system and the group forms a powerful cohesion around an objective. It is transformational leadership. On the other hand, when the formula has been tested, the risks are no longer those of creation, but of disorder, the lack of conformity to the recognized model. They need to seek continuity, and in the group, organization will easily predominate over the personal assumption of the program. This is a fundamentally organizational leadership (it is perhaps more visible in this second part). Along with a kind of educational leadership, we can speak of two pedagogical models: as goes leadership, so goes pedagogy.

It refers to the association of the schools into a single network with a uniform pedagogy. Of course this is the heritage, but we easily see that in the schools of 1850 for example, 'together and by association' no longer seems quite the same as it did in the beginnings. Nevertheless, it is nominally the same network. Let us begin with this axis. What has it become after a century and a half? What is this ensemble like, what fruitfulness sustains it, how is it energized?

These four chapters have shown us that this is no longer a human group that attempts to establish a network of schools, but rather a work that begins to consolidate and occupy an accepted place or function in society. Its actions and documents show this. So we can speak of the passage from the foundation of the network to the stability of the network: between the two they speak of how the Lasallian community has had to modify its concept of professionalism. They have enriched that which had been all **vocational** in the beginning with what is equally a powerfully **organized institution**.

When we look at this passage we should ask ourselves about its possible scope with respect to the pedagogical model they claim to profess. They are two different institutional situations: living an educational program that is beginning and living an educational program that has a century and a half of tradition. One is motivated by the urgent need to create, while the other lives by administering the positive results of what has been created. It is the silent conversion of something new into something with its own identity. If the two institutional situations are different will not their pedagogy be equally different? By converting what is new into its own identity, can it maintain its capacity for creation?

In a school or in a network of schools, as in any other type of social institution, these situations reflect the dynamic that moves from inaugurating to establishment and vice versa. In the first situation the present predominates: it is being created, instituted, that is the code or the systems have not yet appeared or, at least, have not been consolidated. In the second, on the other hand, what predominates is establishment: the systems and codes are reasonably guaranteed and there does not seem to be a need to accommodate to new situations.

If though they are said to be equal, the pedagogical models of two different times are not always equal. We are dealing **with the transformation of a journey into a System**, in which the first does not always animate the second, rather, the second has at times freed itself from the first.

5.

From the Poor to the instrumentality of knowledge

Let us now examine the other two keys of that first formulation from this perspective:

- What weight does the world of the poor have in the Lasallian pedagogy of 1850 (for example)?
- What is the personal relation in the day-to-day life and the presence of the Institute among the social institutions in 1890 (for example)?

We might imagine that after a hundred years, before and after the French Revolution, the models or the concepts of poverty and relationship must have been modified. We have moved from the Monarchy to the bourgeois Restoration and the beginning of the great industrial revolution that will shake Europe. So, together with a certain improvement in the material or economic situation, we encounter a new system of social administration and the concept of law. Those three realities will mean that by 1830 the model of poverty of 1700 no longer exists, so that the animation of the ensemble of Lasallian leadership must accommodate itself to a new reality.

We are looking at the culmination of a journey begun around 1750: the movement from charity school to obligatory school. This transition will mean that together with the recipients of the educational program, the program itself and the indispensable curriculum will count much more if the poor and the artisans are to have access to social life and the exercise of their rights as citizens.

This is a very important change, or perhaps a definitive process: now they will demonstrate more clearly the instrumental character of learning in the Lasallian schools. This was certainly already contained in the peda-

gical model of the 18th Century, but it will become much more evident to the extent that different courses and branches of knowledge are introduced into the formation of the popular classes. By 1830 in the elementary school we see content together with the logical structures that characterized this pedagogy a hundred years before.

This will awaken uncertainties of which the Brothers will not always be aware, it will move them to cultivate memory at time almost irrationally, in truth, and it might make them mannered and predictable. But it will end up by teaching them the formula that the Lasallian world will inherit after the Second World War. From the Poor, they moved on to the elemental; from the elemental they ended up with the instrumental. This last piece made it necessary to transcend the dimensions of the first definition of Lasallian pedagogy.

We moved from the discourse of charity to another discourse, a more systematic one. This presupposes that what initially was built on charity is now built on system: there is factor of stability, guarantee and creation that did not exist before. This, as we can see, is equivalent to the secularization of pedagogical discourse.

Another consideration is to what extent those responsible for the animation of the Lasallian Association took this into account. This is where our discourse about the educational institution and its leadership and above all its meeting point, formation.

In effect, this silent passage from basic to instrumental knowledge might not be perceived, considering what the heritage of the poor had dissolved in the complexity of content. We may have gained in efficiency and lost in humanity. We may have forgotten the foundational reference in order to substitute it by determined levels of the programs, whether we are directed to one sector of the population or another.

Whether we perceive this or not, in this situation we would be faced with two kinds of pedagogy, both presumable Lasallian: on one hand, specialized in the didactic of basic levels of content; on the other, oriented towards a comprehension of knowledge...

It is a magnificent journey of family heritage: the poor of the 18th century are present in the Lasallian pedagogy of the 21st century in its predominantly instrumental orientation. This is what is specifically Lasallian: **the perspective from which we can come to the instrumentality of knowledge and construct a pedagogical system**, whether or not Lasallian pedagogy exists, whether the Brothers were or were not aware of this new journey, without limiting themselves to one or the other.

6.

From person to society

With the following axis of the initial system, we observe that a similar journey has taken place, at times ignored by those responsible for the animation or leadership, at times stimulated by them. Everything oscillates between the attention to transcendence that sustains personal relationships, and the obsession with operational approach, that reduces everything to organization.

We understand this when we remember the trajectory of our initial definition. Without being irreverent, we could say that in the beginning there was misery and the Church concentrated its gaze there, often powerlessly. But that misery ended up by seducing – yes, seducing – persons and groups who succeeded in combining into adequate institutional forms their social commitment and their faith perspective. That is how the Lasallian program was born.

After, with the passage of time and institutional consolidation, that initial synthesis took on different forms according to the way they understood the formula that they shaped in their earliest codes: the spirit of faith and zeal. This ‘spirit,’ both singular and double, oriented the daily lives of the Brothers.

As always happens, it is not easy to live this balance between two poles. So when the spirit of zeal predominated – as was most frequent – the dimension of transcendence of the personal relationship became less evident, at times overwhelmed by urgent matters and the effort to achieve

results or by the need to maintain institutions. Its pedagogical model was necessarily repetitious, based on memory and reactive.

When the spirit of faith predominated... in reality it was not really faith, because faith cannot precede of humanity: it gives meaning to humanity, or helps encounter it, but does not dominate it. So, when something with the aspect of faith predominated it was not so much faith as devotion. And again the personal relationship was reduced to something else. Its pedagogical model was escapist, uncommitted and mannered.

Between one model and the other, a short review of Lasallian pedagogical tradition in these four chapters (five with the important Annex) has shown us the true touchstone of this topic. It is social realism. Exactly that, social realism ... belief based. When that exists, there is Lasallian pedagogy, just as in the days of foundation.

When one's life is based on commitment, the spirit of faith does not degenerate into spiritualism or activism. On the contrary, that happens when one bases one's life on mere intimacy. The believing commitment makes us receive reality as the place that God maintains, loves and awaits. Thus everything we receive is received from God and everything that we do has meaning and success because it is done in God. God is the invisible protagonist of reality, the one who establishes its horizons and dimensions.

But this realism does not primarily reduce us to silence and distance, but rather to an identity-making commitment and to hope. This realism speaks of the radical nature of all possible models, of their connected nature, of their meaning, of their inclusion in the program greater than all social models: all are animated from it and all are surpassed by it.

Yes: the centuries that continue to pass in the Lasallian institutional and educational program now allow us to transcend the possible limitations of the last of these axes: personal relationships.

In terms of the network of schools, if we have moved from commitment to professionalism; if in terms of attention to the poor we have moved from charity to instrumental understanding... **now we also move from**

the person to the society, or to history. And again, whether or not there is Lasallian pedagogy depends on whether or not the Brothers were aware of this new journey.

This is what we mean by the term 'secularization'. It is the incarnation of transcendence in history, the human face of God. In it is the basis of the passage we now are making from personal relationship to social belonging and commitment.

The passage, or better yet, the inclusion of what is personal in what is social, it is not a specific thing of Lasallian pedagogy. This is part of any pedagogy as it part of any anthropology. Rather it is the vision of faith or of God's incarnation that is the perspective from which we make this step or this inclusion. The personalized or social focus of Lasallian pedagogy has a Christian root (and this is also not specifically Lasallian but is common to all Christian pedagogy): and is oriented toward the most radical hope in the human beings and in the human community. For this reason this cannot be possible but is necessarily utopian, radically in favor of permanence, not inconformity but hope.

The pedagogical capacity of this attitude is evident. It is important to remember this in times of change, when it becomes clear that all social structures were born later than the hopes of the people.

7.

...It was all there in the words of Br. Irlide that gathered a century and a half of experience and formulated it for immediate diffusion throughout the world. It is worth our while to reread them and find within them the concrete, daily face of our synthesis.

With them we arrive at a clear sensation of having gotten it right, of a living institution and with a clear pedagogical identity... At the same time, however, after the first impression has passed, when we are left thinking or even living through all that, we are left with a certain diffused disease. It is something constant, difficult to interpret but at the same time of great importance faced with the times we live in.

This constant has a paradoxical aspect: it begins with a sensation of discomfort, awareness of lack of adaptation in its many forms (failure, surprise, emulation, incapacity, program, overcoming, etc.); it continues with a time of clear awareness of the time and its challenges, as well the possibility of moving forward; things, actions, structures are organized as a consequence; and after a first moment of success, immediately return to the initial sensation of maladjustment, as if all our effort had not achieved the desired situation.

In the realm of this second part of our study there are more examples of this constant, but we can be satisfied with the evocation of three. The first is the restoration of the Institute in France between 1810 and 1834: we could say that the success of a generation has given the Institute the awareness that despite everything time moves on ahead, as if sufficient organizational orientations have not been achieved already. The same thing happens, also in France, in the renewal that moves from the circular letter of Br. Irlide to the Universal Exposition of 1900. It is again a situation of success combined with a profound perplexity about the adjustment of Lasallian structures with respect to the times they are trying to serve. And we probably could say the same thing about the period of time from the end of the Second World War up to the days of May '68: everything grows and diversifies and still, when it's all over, there is a clear sensation that they ought to have gone further...

It is the undeniable constant of wanting and not being able to achieve what you want. This attests to a limitation. But it is not that which turns it into a paradox. Because a paradox has within itself a contradiction, something that seems to be one color on one side and another on the other side; on one side it is the brake, on the other the accelerator; it seems to say yes and no at the same time. That is why we say that something is missing in what we have seen that would make this kind of constant a paradox. And what we would like to underscore is precisely the paradox of the limitation that can always be overcome, not the limitation itself.

Combating the error again and again converts it into success.

We could say that the measure of success in the pedagogical accommodation is in the seeking, not in the finding. Thus, the success consists in the process that seeks it, in such a way that one ends up accepting that it is unreachable in an exact way, but it is reachable as a kind of mood, as a style of seeking. In this way, pedagogical success is more about believing that it is possible, than in achieving it.

In an institution like the Lasallian Institute this depends of the character of leadership. If the leadership is shared and oriented toward awareness and fidelity, the pedagogical attitude is adequate. Therefore we find that this pedagogy – as so many other institutions in our society – is lived to the extent that its animation unites results with fidelity.

That union is what allows us to speak about paradox: everything we do is at the same time satisfactory and unsatisfactory, in education or outside of it. And the measure of possible satisfaction is exactly in the awareness of the possible dissatisfaction, as long as it is accompanied by the commitment to whatever or whoever is being served in the educational program. It is simply the paradox of hope, incomprehensible and real.

Therefore, upon finishing this second part of our study, we can say that the secret of this paradox, that which converts it into a guarantee beyond the perplexity that it might produce, is precisely the institutional or associational character of the Lasallian program. As long as there is an organization (the Institute) backing it up, Lasallian pedagogy is alive and well, and has a future, no matter how bound up it seems by its own deficiencies. As long as there is an organization backing it up, it has a guarantee of awareness about its daily practice and its contextualization in space and time.

We should not be surprised either. We are faced with... an institutional pedagogy.

Annex to the second part

EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES FROM THE INSTITUTE: ELEMENTS FOR AN OVERVIEW

Bruno Alpago fsc

While its establishment aimed at providing elementary education through free schools, “to the children of artisans and the poor”, in the lifetime of the Founder the Institute also showed its capacity to provide answers to other educational needs. The following lines are merely a list of some of those answers outside the elementary school framework. After mentioning some achievements during the 18th century, our attention will focus on the lasallian works as of the 19th century.

Detailed information is abundant in the works of Georges Rigault and Brother Alban that are quoted in the bibliography. All in all, in preparing this article, we especially took into account the works of Brother Henri Bedel, also quoted in the bibliography, of which we present herein a lean summary. We also add some information taken from some *Bulletin*, and other documents.

18th CENTURY

Some free Lasallian schools were progressing in the 18th century beyond the initial notions.

- Thus, around 1744, double entry bookkeeping was being taught in Montauban.
- As of 1753, there was a Brother teaching drawing in the parish of Saint Sulpice, in Paris.
- In Cahors, the contract stipulated that a Brother was to teach principles of architecture and surveying while another would teach mathematics, geometry and drawing.

- The program for Castres included the rule of interest and society, the square root, practical geometry and possibly double entry bookkeeping.
- It was stated that in Saint-Malo, geography, accounting, sailing and surveying were taught.
- Boulogne-sur-Mer held a commerce class.

In boarding schools, contents were broader and diversified.

- “Trade, finance, military art, architecture, mathematics, in short, anything a youngster may learn, except for Latin”, announced a perhaps incomplete description of the Saint Yon complex.
- Handwriting, arithmetic, currency exchange, double-entry book-keeping, geography were part of the program in Marseilles; it could be extended to geometry and algebra, drawing of figures and landscapes, civil architecture, sailing; and, through the employment of outside professors, music, dance, swordsmanship and foreign languages.
- Some of the boarders in San Yon, Mareville, Mirepoix and Angers were prisoners: delinquents and mentally disabled individuals...

19th CENTURY

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Institute formally existed only in the Pontifical States: two schools in Rome, one in Ferrara and one in Orvieto.

The approval signed by Napoleon Bonaparte on December 3rd, 1803, granted it a form of legal existence in France. The restored Institute exclusively engaged, for over a quarter of a century, in free primary teaching. But the passing of time would bring new developments. Some of these are presented below.

TEACHER TRAINING

The attempts by the Founder in the *Seminars for country school teachers*, were resumed with greater success in the 19th century.

Even prior to managing normal schools, the Brothers engaged in training lay people for the teaching ministry. In 1817, the Public Education authorities reported the zeal of the Brothers of Auray (France) as they engaged in preparing young Bretons who, with no intentions of becoming religious, wished to teach in their own towns. In Lyon, around the years 1822 and 1823, there were also secular candidates to teaching who were initiated into the pedagogical methods of the Brothers during a semester.

In 1829, after years of negotiation, a normal school was entrusted to the Brothers in Rouen (France). In 1836, another one was entrusted to them in Namur (Belgium), which was transferred to Malonne in 1840. It was followed by the one located in Carlsbourg in 1844.

In the years preceding 1850, the Brothers from the “province” of Turin played an important role during summer classes (which were called *method schools*), aimed at providing teachers, whether already active or barely beginning, with an official certificate for the practice of teaching.

The statistics of the Institute referring to 1873 showed normal schools in Rouen, Aurillac, Beauvais and Quimper (France), Malonne and Carlsbourg (Belgium) and Quito (Ecuador). There were, in addition, signs of normal school students in Canada and a very small number in England and Egypt.

Thirty years later, the distribution was different: the two Belgian institutes continued; however the other normal schools of the Institute were located in Waterford (Ireland), Feldkirch and Vienna-Wahring (Austria), Bogota (Colombia) and Santiago (Chile); a small group of normal schools was reported in Kotahena (Sri Lanka). There might have been others.

The geographic expansion of the Institute in the 20th Century was accompanied by a multiplication of these institutions. In 1966, there were no less than forty that engaged in teacher training: eleven in Europe, eleven in Africa, four in Asia-Oceania, fourteen in Latin America. The same trend was maintained in the 21st century.

The centres for teacher training have been multiplying and diversifying what they offer: training for the different levels of teaching, with its many

ramifications; specific training for directors, for specific ethnic groups, for special situations, etc.

The formation of catechists deserves a paragraph of its own. What may have started as an elementary orientation for students or former students committed to a certain pastoral activity began to open up in an array that included academic entities of general systematic formation, such as the *Instituto San Pio X* (Spain), or specific, such as the *Instituto Pastoral de la Adolescencia*, (Argentina). In many cases, catechist training is part of the teacher training programs.

ADOLESCENT AND YOUNG LABOURERS

As of 1825, or shortly before, in the city of Lille (France), classes were taught from eleven o'clock in the morning until one in the afternoon to adolescent or young labourers (and adults also took advantage of this opportunity) who could therefore access an instruction they had never benefitted from before.

Shortly after 1830, the existence of evening courses was reported in Paris for very young labourers (*apprentices*, in the language of the time) who were assisted by Brothers from five until seven in the evening. With some local variations, this service was extended to other cities. In other countries, this did not seem to achieve a major development, judging by the numbers indicated below.

In a hearing granted by the Pope in 1859, Brother Philippe, the Superior General, painted this picture: "In France there are a number of poor children whose parents are compelled to send them to work in their early years; since these poor children have either not attended school or attended it for a short time, they know no prayers nor catechism. Our Brothers attend to them from 7 to 9 in the evening⁷⁵ to teach them some reading, writing and especially catechism and to prepare them for their first communion; at this time we have approximately 5,800 of them".

⁷⁵ This explicitly affirmed schedule is striking, since other documents express with equal clarity a specific difference between the schedules of adolescents and adults. We may conclude that situations were different based on the time and place.

The statistics from 1873 indicated a number of 7,552 of these students in France, and only 22 in the rest of the Institute. In 1903, there were 711 and 83, respectively. Perhaps numbers do not accurately reflect reality. It is not easy to monitor the evolution of this service in more recent times.

Another form of addressing this clientele were the Sunday meetings, sometimes called “patronages”, which allowed the young a time of healthy encounter and relaxation, as well as an expansion of their religious knowledge, thanks to the lessons offered by some priests. During these meetings, the Brothers were in charge of surveillance; however, they probably did more than just that.

ADULT LABOURERS

As they took up an initiative pioneered by others, at the end of 1830, the Brothers established a night school for labourers in Paris. Their good results led to a quick expansion of this innovation.

Around the year 1836, certain *News about the Institute* referred to the “crowd of students from all ages and conditions” that attended the courses from 8 to 10 each evening; there, you found “those parents who, after working hard, came to sit at the same desks their children had occupied during the day, to meekly receive the instruction they had missed during the first years of their lives...”; and it stated that the seven schools for adults welcomed 1,280 students between the ages of 17 to 40 years old.

A statistic from 1838 reported 22 schools for adults, with 56 classes and 4,850 students, all in France. The project did not stop growing both in France and in other countries: Belgium, Piedmont and Canada among the first.

Upon expanding to other places, this service was also adjusted to variable situations. Frequency could be daily or just a few days per week; the period could be annual or from the end of autumn to mid-spring. With all these variables, in 1873 there were more than 30,000 men who took advantage of this supplementary instruction in France and 2,500 in other countries.

We can associate the work of some Brothers, in their quarters or their own schools, in favour of recruits eager to overcome their illiteracy or their very rudimentary education. Nearly 4,000 soldiers, all in France and Algeria, were attended to by the Institute in 1873.

In 1903, statistics reported 1,763 adults in France and 3,772 in other countries as students of these special courses. It is not easy to follow the development of this specifically scholastic service, nor the variety of its ramifications.

The Brothers also collaborated, firstly in Paris then in other places, with the Sunday meetings that the social Catholicism of the time had organized for labourers around 1840. They were known by the name of Societies of Saint Francis Xavier. In 1859, the Brother Superior described them before the Pope as follows: "These are groups of men of all ages that meet after the services of the parishes to spend Sunday afternoons in a useful manner. The time is spent chanting the Vespers, in useful readings or conversations and a sermon filled with interest for them. These good people are prepared to receive the sacraments when important feasts approach and, especially, for the Easter communion. These men, who in the past profoundly disliked the clergy, have now much sympathy for them; this is a major improvement in the working class [...]. We have no less than 12,000 men in France who attend these meetings". It is not easy to know what role was entrusted to Brothers in these meetings, aside from making the premises available and ensuring a kind and discreet presence.

ORPHANS

After extended negotiations, at the end of 1834, a large group of Brothers took charge of the orphanage created in Rome by Gregory XVI. Overcoming the fears of Brother Anaclæt, the Superior General at the time, reluctant to engage the Brothers "in services different from instruction", the Lasallians gave proof of capabilities and self-denial in this field of activity. In 1838, 400 orphans were housed there. Similar works multiplied in the Pontifical States; a statistic table of 1847 reported 561 orphans in that location (in addition to 120 in France). However, after the year 1848, the Brothers would be compelled to leave them.

Nevertheless, this service would be extended everywhere: Belgium (Namur 1846), Prussia (Kemperhof 1850), Modena (1852), Austria (Vienna 1857). In 1859, Brother Philippe described it to Pope Pius IX as follows: “The poor children, deprived of their parents and lacking all means for survival, deserved our compassion; that is why, with the permission and assistance of the clergy and of generous souls, we have taken charge of several establishments of this sort; we presently have ten of these, populated by approximately 2,500 children”.

In 1873, we could distinguish among the ten French orphanages the ones belonging to the Saint Nicholas project: there were 2,000 students in Paris and nearby places. Prussia and Austria had an orphanage each. Seven institutions of the same kind were reported in the United States, of which the largest one was the Catholic Protectory in Westchester, with over 1,300 children. They were also found in Italy (Biella, Vercelli), England (Liverpool), Belgium (Enghien), Ecuador and Singapore. The total came to over 5,000 children and adolescents who received basic education and, in many cases, initial professional training: workshops in different disciplines in addition to gardening, horticulture and agriculture. We know that in 1894 there was a completely free of charge orphanage in Chile which housed over 200 children. In 1902, the Brothers took up an orphanage in Lorraine, which was at the time part of the German empire.

The 1903 statistics showed at least 5 works for orphans in France (Choisinet, Fleury-Meudon, Clermont-Ferrand, Dunkerque, Grenoble), 3 in Spain (Sacred Heart and Saint Susan, in Madrid; Santa Espina), 11 in the United States and Canada (Toronto, Belmead, Eddington, Philadelphia, Albany, Halifax, Troy, Utica, Westchester, Feehanville and San Francisco), 2 in Austria (the Imperial Orphanage and “Norbertinum”, both in Vienna), 1 in Chile (Santiago), Colombia (Bogota) and Italy (Biella). In England, the Brothers had to leave several projects destined to orphaned or abandoned children, but they had undertaken the *industrial school* of Manchester with 400 boarders free of charge. In the Asian Southeast, groups of orphans were housed in Hong Kong, Mandalay, Maulmein, Penang, Singapore and Rangoon. In 1907, the Brothers took over the management of the Institute created in

Pompeii (Italy) by Blessed Bartolo Longo for the accommodation and education of boys who were the sons of prisoners.

The 1923 statistic recorded 4,217 students in the “Orphans” column; this total probably included early delinquents, the sons of prisoners. Everything seems to suggest that this figure did not accurately reflect the full picture.

After the Second World War, the Brothers in Italy were distinguished by their care of children and adolescents who had suffered some permanent physical injury during the conflict: the *mutilatini*; this service was clearly temporary because of its specific nature.

The 1966 statistics reported 4,900 “orphans”; this term also covered the deaf and dumb, the children of prisoners, disabled veterans... In all the above-mentioned cases, the institutions destined to orphans were boarding institutions. Statistics do not take into account the orphans attending other teaching centres alongside students who had parents. Certain confusion is also possible because children from various situations were all grouped under the category of “orphans”: children of deceased parents, children who could not be cared for by their parents even though they were alive, or other cases of abandonment; not excluding those who were entrusted to these institutions after judicial interventions.

PRISONERS

Following the French Revolution, the Brothers no longer maintained confinement institutions such as the ones in San Yon, Angers and other cities in the 18th century. However, they did not neglect the people in those circumstances. Let us see some examples.

From 1817 until 1832, a group of Brothers took charge of a correctional institution for minors in Paris: the “Refuge”. In 1838, the work of a Brother as teacher and catechist at the local prison was reported in Namur (Belgium); there would be more in subsequent years, until the government expelled them in 1859. In 1840, in Toulouse, seven Brothers taught and catechized inmates in two prisons; three Brothers did something similar in Nimes. From 1840 until 1882, a Lasallian community in Paris

assigned two Brothers to teach classes and catechesis on a daily basis to the inmates of the prison for minors known as *la Petite-Roquette*.

As of 1842, by request of the French government, numerous groups of Brothers were charged with directing entire prisons: Nimes, Fontevault, Melun, and Aniane⁷⁶. An unrewarding and risky task, performed with a generosity that was not denied⁷⁷. The changes caused by the 1848 revolution made the situation unbearable. From there on, the Brothers would limit themselves, in that area, to a pedagogical and catechist service which was also offered for some time in Belgium and Italy.

In 1859, the Superior General was relating this apostolate to the Pope: “In certain cities, such as Paris, Bordeaux, Reims and Versailles among others, we provide religious teaching to prisoners. This helps them endure the sentences they must serve with greater patience”.

A few of the institutions which the statistics reported as orphanages hosted and educated children and adolescents who had had issues with the law. These were numerous at some points in time and the Brothers displayed exemplary dedication in these.

A careful analysis of the 1966 statistics reveals the important development of this apostolate: nine homes in the United Kingdom, seven in the rest of the European continent, one in Australia, two in Africa, seven in America, with a population of 3,830 students.

DEAF AND DUMB

The work with the deaf and dumb began in Saint-Etienne (France) in 1845. This task was new to the Brothers and it was carefully prepared; the Superior General presented the Institute as follows: “We have made four of our Brothers attend the courses of the Royal School of Paris to enable them to offer to this category of children all the services that their mis-

⁷⁶ Those large detention centres explain the hefty number of prisoners that make up the 1847 statistics: 6,764 in total, including 100 from Belgium and 200 in Piedmont (on the same date, students in boarding schools were 3.159).

⁷⁷ Several Brothers were attacked by prisoners. In Nimes, one was murdered; the murderer was sentenced to death and executed, despite the requests for grace by the victim's companions.

fortune claims”. And before the Pope, in 1859, he stated: “We have also opened nine free classes for the deaf and dumb, not less worthy of compassion than orphans”.

In 1873, there were at least 160 deaf and dumb children cared for in Saint-Etienne, Besancon and a school in Paris. But there had to be more. Without easily determining dates, the presence of deaf and dumb was reported in Saint Nicholas of Vaugirard, Chambéry... In 1903, 4 schools were destined to the deaf and dumb in France (Besancon, Bourg-en-Bresse, Lyon and Saint-Etienne) and one nursing home for the deaf and dumb in Italy (Turin). Saigon reported a group of 33 deaf and dumb individuals who were boarders and free of charge.

We saw above that the deaf and dumb are mentioned at least until the 1966 statistics.

BOARDING SCHOOLS (“PENSIONNATS”)

After the French Revolution – as we already said – the restored Institute engaged exclusively in elementary teaching in free schools. However, they were requested to re-establish institutions such as the boarding schools they directed in the 18th century. In 1825, the Superior General⁷⁸, “who was being asked by several cities to re-establish such homes”, addressed the Holy See and obtained the Pope’s authorization to grant these requests. More extended negotiations were necessary with the French government. In fact, the first boarding facility began to operate in Beziers in 1831, followed by the one in Passy, in 1839.

In 1859, the Superior presented them to the Pope as follows: “In the example of the Venerable Founder, we have opened a number of boarding schools to give a Christian education to the young destined for industry or trade in order to keep them from the scandals they would find in other schools, especially in France. Once these youngsters return to their families, they generally behave well; they live in harmony with the clergy and religiously lead the labourers they are responsible for. Our bishops are

⁷⁸ Brother Guillaume-de-Jesus has operated long at the boarding school of Marseilles where he was an outstanding figure.

very pleased with these establishments and several of them ask us to open others in their dioceses”.

These schools will multiply rapidly. In 1873, 146 homes in France and 51 in other countries declared they housed, respectively, 11,500 and 3,550 boarders. But the same name could cover very different institutions, from the better established ones with numerous students and abundant and qualified staff, to small schools operating in unsatisfactory conditions.

The documents at times mentioned facilities referred to in French as *caméristats*, which were sometimes under the category of boarding schools, other times distinguished from them: these types of boarding schools were annexed to primary schools in regions where the population was very scattered or where the roads became impassable due to snow or rain; they could house children and prepare them the meals that their families supplied, all in exchange for a modest payment. Several General Chapters, which at the time censored a development of the boarding schools they deemed excessive, expressed themselves in favour of these *caméristats*, where they also saw good chances of vocational recruiting.

As they adjusted to the changing needs of the countries and times, boarding schools existed throughout the history of the Institute and continue to exist today.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

During the first part of the 19th century, the Brothers limited themselves, and had to limit themselves, to the most elementary education: reading, writing, basics of calculation and catechism. In France, the law Guizot (1833) imposed, in addition, notions of history, geography and drawing. The evolution of needs and gradually of legislation would drive mostly everywhere to expand the programs and levels of teaching; new areas were appearing as well: higher primary, special secondary, modern secondary, high schools with different orientations, second teaching, etc.

In order to understand the process, we must first look at the boarding schools. Their clientele required a more advanced teaching method than elementary teaching. However, based on its Rule, the Institute was for-

bidden from teaching Latin (and, implicitly, Greek), which was the basis of the classic middle school. By aligning the needs of students with the abilities of teachers, the Lasallian schools went into greater depths in teaching physical and natural science, modern languages and literatures, trade, agriculture and other areas of technical schooling. When Victor Duruy, minister of public education during the time of Napoleon III, wanted to explain to legislators and school inspectors what the “*special secondary*” he intended to set up in France consisted in, he simply guided some of them to the Lasallian school of Passy so they could see how it worked.

Some of these centres admitted, in addition to boarders, also half-boarding or totally external students; all were offered the same level of education. In addition, other schools were only intended for external or semi-external students, with the same degree of instruction as the other ones.

Although the *Rule* of the Brothers prohibited it, several schools in the United States were sort of forced to introduce the teaching of classical languages as of 1850, in circumstances that will be studied in 8th chapter. The same requirement was imposed by some schools in Italy and even in Ecuador, during the second half of the 19th Century. The long and arduous conflict that was unleashed by this “infracton” was finally resolved in 1923 when, by request of the Holy See, the Institute modified its *Rule* regarding the prohibition of Latin, opening up to classical studies as well.

Once again, the urge to respond to the needs of the various facilities and locations drove the Institute to the establishment of high schools as of the second part of the 19th century. At the end of the 20th century, over seventy Lasallian institutes in thirteen countries offered a very broad range of courses of study in universities or other third-level institutes.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL

This designation can apply to very different realities and we will have to accept few repetitions. As we previously indicated, in the 18th century some schools offered a trade course that followed elementary school. The respective program was much broader in boarding schools. Both practices

re-emerged in the 19th century. Many primary schools began to add an elementary course of accounting for their graduates which enabled many adolescents and youngsters to be rapidly employed in trading houses or small businesses. However, other institutes maintained higher level programs which led to the formation of true business experts. Training in manual labour was also very diverse, ranging from qualified labourers to technicians and engineers.

In 1826, the Brothers offered free lessons in “geometry and mechanics applied to arts and trades” to graduates from elementary classes in Orleans. There were “special classes” in favour of the more advanced students; a prelude of what would be more appropriately called technical school (Montpellier 1837; Lyon 1849) or Business schools (Paris 1843, Rouen 1846). In 1848, in Turin, a “day school” offered supplementary formation to train adolescents as skilled workers whether in business or public functions.

In orphanages and juvenile detention institutes, students were customarily offered some initiation to trades. Thus, lay teachers at the “Refuge” of Paris directed carpentry, woodwork, shoemaking and repairs and other workshops. Examples can be easily multiplied.

Some form of agricultural teaching had already been reported in 1841, in an orphanage near Clermont-Ferrand. The “Likes” in Quimper, trained farmers as of 1843, as did the facility in La Saulsaie, since 1844.

The General Chapter of 1894 noted that certain boarding schools, in addition to baccalaureate (the *modern* baccalaureate), offered students the possibility to select among alternatives industrial, business or agricultural courses. The same Chapter mentioned the art schools “Saint Luke” (Belgium) and the arts and trade schools in Lyon, Saint-Etienne, Vaugirard, Lila, Rodez, Quimper, Reims, Saint-Chamond, Rives-de-Gier, Grenoble (France); and the list was not exhaustive. The 1897 Chapter commended the activity of the arts and crafts schools.

During the second half of the 20th Century, and to satisfy the wishes of the Holy See, the Institute gave new impetus to technical training, as a means to re-christianize the labour environment; that is how the 1956

General Chapter expressed it. Spain seems to have responded more extensively to these orientations.

In 1946, the business, agricultural, professional and arts and crafts branches reported nearly 19,000 students, from courses that provided some supplementary education after elementary school, to almost university level studies. In 1966, there were over 45,000, distributed among: agricultural training (3,636), business (9,550), professional (19,890), art schools (2,664) and technical secondary school (9,449). Of these, 2,410 were also listed under the category of “orphans” or “offenders”.

In reality, the so-called technical training reached very different levels in Lasallian institutes. It may be limited to the learning of a trade, whether elementary or somewhat more advanced, to training of a competent worker; or progressing to higher degrees of mastering of skills and theoretical foundations. Often times, what had started as a humble workshop evolved to include a technical baccalaureate in a tertiary establishment.

What occurred in the “Saint Luke” art school, in Belgium, may serve as an example. It began as a Sunday school for young apprentices from the construction industry. It later added evening classes. Its success caused greater demand; the centres multiplied, specializations differed and its level was heightened to also cover higher level learning; today, it goes as far as issuing diplomas in architecture.

At present, all grades and many branches of the technical education are represented in the Lasallian educational universe.

YOUTH WORKS

This very unspecific classification can cover many activities destined to deepen the spiritual life of children and youngsters; they have worked with students or former students from lasallian schools but also other recipients; the adherence to these “works” has been extended in many cases beyond youth. We could mention here the different confraternities or pious associations that have been customarily promoted among students since past times, especially in boarding schools: *Marian Congregations* seem to be among the earliest.

The situation of adolescents who, after primary school, entered the work environment in factories, businesses and shops, concerned Brother Philippe who managed to transmit to others his zeal for the perseverance of these former students in the principles the school had attempted to instil in them. And, with that objective, he promoted the Sunday meetings he described as follows: “For a long time, we saw that once our students left the school, they were quickly spoiled by bad company. In order to remedy this serious disgrace, we attempted to gather them in a society and to invite them to our homes on Sundays and feast days to make them attend holy mass, give them some instructions and maintain them in line with the sound principles they had received when they were younger [...]”.

It was the beginning of peri- or post-schooling activities which have taken up many names and forms and that have tried to maintain contact with students and alumni beyond school, in space and time. The Brothers’ task in these activities, which the General Chapters of 1858 and 1873 defined as solely watching over the meetings, was necessarily further developed. According to statistics (data only refers to France), in 1873, nearly 25,000 people benefitted from some of the different works “of perseverance”; in 1903, these were no less than 30,000, in addition to some 40,000 members of alumni associations.

Among the youth works, we may point out the *Society of Saint Benedict Joseph Labre*, formed in Paris in 1882, and inextricably linked to the name of Brother Exuperien; its members were characterized by a high ideal of spiritual life, strong commitment to demands in everyday life and a profound formation. Among other results, the first executives of the French Christian Union proceeded from this *Society*. In fact, in 1883, Brother Hieron created in Paris a sort of employment agency for business workers, for the benefit of the young who attended his school’s *patronage*. However, this agency gradually became a meeting place. Many of those who attended the *patronage* belonged to that Society. In 1887, seventeen of them formed the Union of Business and Industrial Employees. It was a Union of employees, not labourers; it would nevertheless become the core of the *Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC)*, constituted in 1919.

Without going into details, we can affirm that the Brothers have been broadly involved in the pastoral assistance of their students beyond strictly school schedules, as well as of their alumni; they have generously participated in the promotion and animation of ecclesiastic movements, mainly of young people.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK

Several of the above-mentioned situations deserve to be defined as “at risk”; we may list many others. See the following examples.

In war times, (French-Prussian war of 1870-71, First World War) many Brothers distinguished themselves as they assisted the wounded and went so far as going to fetch them on the battlefield, amidst the conflict.

In Paris, around 1860, Brothers Hortulan and Isidorus noticed the small chimney sweeps, mostly from the area of Savoy, who were deprived of any religious assistance; moved by these circumstances, they began gathering them every afternoon to provide them with religious formation and other teachings. A “Project of instruction and perseverance for small chimney sweeps and street workers of Paris” was created in a Lasallian school of the French capital⁷⁹. Something similar was established in Piedmont to assist the young who descended from mountainous areas to clean chimneys in cities. We could also mention here the work in favour of the slaves – and after 1848, the freedmen – from La Reunion, were the names of blessed Brother Scubilion and of Brother Parasceve stand out.

The Lasallian activity in favour of individuals at risk has not stopped growing and diversifying according to the situations. To have an idea of what takes place today, we could go through the array of works scattered around the world, as indicated in issue N. 253 of the *Bulletin of the Brothers of Christian Schools*, of 2011. There, Brother David Hawke lists for the Asia-Pacific region: “La Salle House, a residential home in Sendai, Japan; professional training for disabled individuals in Nha Trang, Vietnam; educational services in the suburbs of Colombo, Sri Lanka;

⁷⁹ In 1879 the Brothers were excluded from that school which was municipal; the chimney sweepers Project could continue for some time.

juvenile centre of Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea; educational centre in Yangon, Myanmar; ‘children’s cities’ in India and Sri Lanka; rehabilitation centres for drug-addicts in Pakistan; programs of Bahay Pagasa for juvenile offenders, in the Philippines; educational centres in Thailand and Malaysia; Kids Helpline in Australia; specialized orientation in Singapore; Lasallian centre in Changjiao, China”; just “to name a few”. The *Bulletin* offers more detailed news about a number of these services.

Regarding Africa-Madagascar, the following are described: a Social Centre for female promotion in a neighbourhood of Antananarivo, Madagascar; the Akwaba Centre for street children in Abidjan, The Ivory Coast; the Mutien-Marie Centre, led by Lasallian volunteers in Mbalmayo, Cameroun, that offer comprehensive and human formation to disadvantaged youngsters; the education project of the semi nomadic Baka (Pygmies) in Lomie, Cameroun; the Rescue Centre of Santa Maria in Nyeri, Kenya.

In Latin America, we have selected: the educational centre La Salle Youth Home, of Gonzalez Catan, Argentina; the Proactive Adolescent Mothers Project, in Barrancabermeja, Colombia; the Guadeloupian Infant Boarding school, in Mexico; the Foundation Hope Home, in Santiago, Chile.

In Europe-Mediterranean, we list: a literacy centre in Cairo, Egypt; the inserted community in Scampia, Northern suburbs of Naples, Italy; the activity of the Elkarbanatuz Association (“sharing”) in Bilbao, Spain; the teaching of itinerant children (“gypsies”) in France.

In the United States and Canada, we can mention: the network of “Saint Miguel” Schools which facilitates the insertion of immigrants into the local culture and re-launches youngsters with difficulties into their studies; the “Residential Treatment Centre” at the La Salle school of Albany, New York; the program “Tides Family Services” for youngsters from families in difficulties, in the Eastern United States; the “Lasallian Centre of Saint-Michel” for immigrant children in Montreal, Canada.

We could list more actions, many more. And it would still be necessary to add some description to almost all of these names. We can add that the

Brothers are not alone in these works; and in some of these there are none: other people are leading them driven by the charism of Saint John Baptist de La Salle or, the Lasallians (lay and Brothers) collaborate with other entities in humanitarian and pastoral programs.

* * * * *

The oldest *Rule* of the Brothers was already explicit as to the contents of school teaching: Brothers “will teach their students to read, 1° French, 2° Latin, 3° handwriting; and to write. They will also teach them spelling and arithmetic [...]. They will however place their initial and main care in teaching their students the prayers [...]; the commandments of God’s Law and of the Church; the way to serve Mass; catechism, the duties of a Christian and the rules and practices that Jesus Christ our Lord has left us in the Holy Gospel” (RC 7, 4-5).

This text remained identical for over two and a half centuries. The examples quoted in this article show the many different manners of understanding the verb *educate* when the zeal for the glory of God – and “the glory of God is the living man” – makes us take on the cause of the poor and the Kingdom.

3.



Lasallian Pedagogy today

Let us now look at the present and ask ourselves if it is possible to live out the Lasallian inheritance or simply remember it. The First Part was like a “memory / remembrance of the beginnings.” The Second evoked above all the historicity of Lasallian Pedagogy and its encounters with whatever was important in those three centuries. Now, in the Third, we are better based to re-read Lasallian Pedagogy: from a panoramic height, as from a tower in the city, we see from where we come and where we are living presently.

3.

Lasallian Pedagogy today

Pedro María Gil fsc

We can accept that Lasallian Pedagogy originally consisted in a way of living out / experiencing school marked by: (1) orientation from the edges or fringes of society, the preferential object of attention, by (2) orientation towards social integration through work, and by (3) emphasis on drills and reasoning as the cross-sectional dimension of programs. We can also understand that this whole thrust was born and would target a group of people whose ties go beyond the (4) contractual or even the (5) cordial. It was our point of departure.

We can also accept that those milestones of the first journey gave place to a pedagogical system articulated on three axes / thrusts of **attention to those on the edge/fringes; the personal quality** of the relationships; and the building up of a **homogeneous network** of educational projects. This was the conclusion of the First Part.

We can interpret the passage of centuries in modern times in this system and re-express these three axes / thrusts in a new way: where we read attention and orientation from the edge / fringes of society, now read orientation of the school towards the **ability to be a productive worker (operability)**; where we read valuing of the personal in relationships, now read orientation of the school toward inclusion and **social commitment**; and where we read building up an association of schools, now read configuration of a **social network of educational projects** each with its own particular character.

These are three steps or successive reconfigurations of the same reality. It is necessary to deal with them because they show continuity and guide us. We can even, if we are indeed Lasallians, believe that this is our inheritance which has identified us throughout the history of the Modern Age.

1.

Now, between 1710 and 2010 there are about three centuries, as we proposed at the beginning of the First Part of this study.

So, we can accept our proposition of Lasallian Pedagogy, because somehow we have been able to detect it both in its original formulation as well as in its historical journey. However, reflecting on the panorama of three centuries, we wonder if all of this was not already left or lagged behind. This is the key question of this Third Section: are we talking about something past or, moreover, something present. We wonder if the concepts that underpin the system of Lasallian Pedagogy mean something today, i.e., if we can now focus our educational practice from the former/older way of looking at things to newer concepts for the future.

We understand this better if we recall the time span covering our personal journeys: without requiring too much knowledge of the dimensions of our world, all of us understand that neither institutions, nor societies, nor persons, nor programs, nor resources are the same today as they were 60 or 70 years ago. The world we encounter is very different from the one we left behind. For this reason, today we are able to better understand the whole process of the Lasallian institution. For example, it is evident that

in 1951, the tercentenary of the birth of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, continuity was much more celebrated than novelty or creativity. Perhaps, then, three centuries did not seem much to us.

Today, without anyone explaining it to us, we understand that the educational event is part of a new, different scenario: the globalization of life and the contraction or expansion of human references. All, the entire whole, is one and either larger or smaller, depending on how you look at it. Understand that, in these conditions, any of those five axes / thrusts either have no sense or bring us to something else.

As with an expression that is topical, today we know that what we have left now, is comprehensive, integral; it is not partial or sectioned, as it was perhaps until recently.

2.

Globalization has placed humanity in situations of unknown magnitude. Now, the real dimensions of economy, politics, cultural confrontations, widespread welfare, etc., have posed problems which transcend/overwhelm the ability of all our inherited institutions.

Throughout the world, this has spread a feeling of helplessness at improving something we all recognize as defective, but which, at the same time, is convenient or at least palatable to us. Thus, little by little, the feeling of powerlessness leaves room for an attitude of disengagement, of escape from responsibilities. Gradually, as writers note, this disengagement ends in masquerading as innocence, that is, the attitude of withdrawing from the challenge out of frustration and then letting others face the challenge on their own⁸⁰.

Well, this kind of universal drifting, from responsibility to disintegration, leads all social institutions organise themselves in terms of human functioning, fleeing from the personal. All of them, in fact, tend to consider the

⁸⁰ It is P. Bruckner's idea which guides his keen analysis of our days in his work *The Temptation of Innocence* (1996).

human from the perspective of operability/productive labor, from the loss of autonomous behavior, and, thus, we see imposing itself worldwide an almost impersonal style/modus operandi in animating society.

What place can a pedagogy as personal as the Lasallian one find in such a context?

3.

Alongside globalization there is an increase of information and knowledge never possessed before.

This means that it is harder than ever to maintain one's own identity based on the experience that others do not have or know. Today, as always, achievements in any area of the human race move through specialized circuits and, in this sense, globalization assumes nothing new. The novelty lies in the disappearance of time limits between the event and the information regarding it, in the renewed flow of specialized circuits and in their expansion and diversification.

The new information technologies make us instantly present in the place where things happen, where ideas arise, where proposals are formulated. Thus, the human race has more information than ever before and knows it almost as eyewitnesses/as if actually present. The dissemination of resources to access this level of information makes it possible 'everywhere' to be up to the minute and to share experiences instantly even though thousands of kilometers away.

The result of this is the standardization of procedures, expressions and social structures. Identities are not so much inherited as shared. Thus, an educational project may look at itself with almost the same sense of belonging in the society where it was born centuries ago and yet in a different tradition. Possibly, as a result of the immediacy of communications and of the abundance of information, we should speak more of the similarities rather than the differences in the life of institutions, wherever they may be.

So again we ask: where does Lasallian Pedagogy fit in such a world?

4.

The insignificance of the personal and the specific: there is an initial, obvious, immediate response to these two issues.

Lasallian Pedagogy will be all the more insignificant if it is reduced to procedures, techniques or specific resources. From this point of view it should increasingly disappear before the global push. Conversely, the more it is considered as a spirit capable of animating and producing concrete actions, so much the more will it be alive and able to apply new human dimensions in the field of pedagogy.

Therefore, presenting Lasallian Pedagogy today, and highlighting whatever resources may have been more or less successful in the recent past, can be a two-edged sword. It can lead us to the true source of all or may lead us to its denial, to the sterile reproduction of something without meaning or future. A chance accurate shot or disappearance: very risky.

Thus, to reflect upon the validity of the system called Lasallian Pedagogy, we need to check on/verify it by projecting the possible present situation of those axes/thrusts or initial dynamics of those thrusts that were born as resources at that particular moment in time. We could say that it means taking each of those constituent criteria and asking ourselves about their reality today, about their viability in terms of being able to constitute themselves as an entire set/a whole and articulating the system of Lasallian Pedagogy today. Or, ask if there are realities today that the first Lasallians and their successors, before globalization, interpreted in a unique way: the poor, the formation of productive members of the larger society, experimentation, educational community and the holistic (not only the external act of presenting knowledge but also interior self knowledge - emotional, spiritual, motivational, i.e. not the how but the who of educators).

This first encounter with globalization tells us that we must be very careful in formulating our questions. It does not deal with asking if today it is possible to transform the poor in a preferential teaching situation or if educational programs can be structured around reason and the specific issues of everyday life. No. Doing so could be misunderstanding the

specificity of the pedagogy of which we speak and would equate to not having understood the challenge of globalization to our system.

The question is rather different: in the current conditions of globalization can one continue living a particular spirit or character able to turn attention to the poor in a referenced pedagogy which structures programs... etc? Does this type of education make sense lived out/experienced today?

The question refers, mainly, to a way of being and not a way of doing: who is the one doing and not so much how things are done.

5.

With this interplay of “to be/to do” we indicate the way for a response on the current scene of Lasallian Pedagogy: it is the orientation that leads us to see more from spirit/mind than from procedure. And thus one might think that there is nothing more, that with this all has been said. But is it not like that, because as we go more deeply into it something unforeseen appears: is it possible today to become a group, an institution that lives out/experiences education from this mind-set of spirit?

We will have to verify this, but reflection on the Lasallian Pedagogical model leads us to the conclusion that what was its corporate character was what made it a fruitful and powerful reality. Indeed, one might think that this character – already alluded to in one of the five dimensions of the overall system – embraced all the others, giving them a particular/proper complexion. With this, the question about the viability of the system becomes a question regarding the viability of the group able to live out the system.

Indeed, the real challenge of globalization, for what we call Lasallian Pedagogy, is not whether it can live out each one of its axes/thrusts, not even if it can be experienced in its entirety. It is whether all of this can be experienced/lived out with others, so that its definitive guarantee would be a group identification or membership.

The shared or communal fact is the border of two possible Lasallian Pedagogical approaches: if we accept that it is an integral part of its defi-

nition, we will look at where there is or can be a Lasallian educational community or shared experience. And, if then, we conclude that either it does not or cannot exist, Lasallian Pedagogy will be history, a thing of the past, an object of memory and a timed playback. Otherwise, i.e., if we can possibly see the Lasallian educational community or shared experience, then we will be dealing with something that is alive - a living entity.

Educational community and shared experience are the source and primary destiny of Lasallian Pedagogy. They give each other life.

6.

From this perspective the most important impact of globalization in Lasallian Pedagogy is, precisely, modifying the design of the educational institution.

Lasallian Pedagogy was born and maintained itself in an educational institutional model prior to the French Revolution which the 19th century spread worldwide. Its key support base was the state ministry of education. Within this structure both the program and the profile of the teacher were designed in an autonomous manner, directed and classified in a territory with precise political boundaries. This was its field of power or presence in society.

Throughout the 19th century, especially in its final decades, the model was already crumbling due to the universal nature of bourgeois colonization, which was adapting its social models worldwide at the same time, always to its advantage or to that of the society which upheld it. When this universal process came to its climax in established business globalization, after World War II, the model burst out everywhere.

There was no longer any national or state ministry of education, except for the chapter on economic regulation of teachers. The program itself, the profile of educators as well as that of learners, the relationship between various educational projects and different educational institutions, all of this became something else. Now, it was all left behind, in the background, out of reach from any purely territorial application.

The educational institution henceforth may have resembled what it was half a century before, but its heartbeat was already something else. When at last the new information technologies also arrived in education, then the change became quite evident. “School” or “educational institution” now means something else. And, therefore, it left behind that educational community designed on the model of the Enlightenment.

Thus we finally arrive at the question, if possible, in such conditions, of whether we can continue talking about Lasallian Pedagogy: is it possible to live in an educational community and institutional design inspired by the spirit that generated it before globalization?

7.

The following texts are intended to support a positive answer to this question.

They pose as a final reference the life-profession structure expressed in the initial formula: the school needs full/complete dedication, life commitment, “a holistic person”. From that perspective, each one of them proposes a re-reading of the various axes/thrusts of the Lasallian Pedagogy content. We will then see what education and poverty, course of study, transcendence and faith, educational community and relationship with societal administration can mean today.

And we will have to reach a synthesis or overall view from the contribution of each one.

Chapter 10 - LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY IN DIALOGUE WITH TODAY'S WORLD: PLURALITY, FRATERNITY AND TRANSCEDENCE

Cledes Casagrande fsc

Education is an essential condition for the humanization of individuals, for the maintenance of human life and for the existence of societies. We only become human, in the strict sense of the term, to the extent that we go through processes of formation. Independent of sex, race, nationality or beliefs, all human beings need to be educated. That is why education is a fundamental right affirmed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*⁸¹.

The Catholic Church also recognizes that all human beings have the universal right to an education⁸². From an ecclesial perspective, all Christians are invited to participate actively in the ministry of education, always and everywhere, as a way of collaborating in the building of a more just and fraternal world.

We Lasallians have long since recognized the value of education in people's lives. We understand that it is possible, through education, to combine human development and evangelization, professional formation and formation in faith. Promoting human development is compatible with evangelizing because "to open people to life, to knowledge and to love is already to do the work of God, whose Reign is built not only by the action of the Church but also by the work of the world" (*Declaration* 41,3).

The Lasallian Education and Pedagogy, wherever they are found, have always been signs of hope, dialogue, fraternity and transcendence. At the

⁸¹ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, of the United Nations (UN), article 26, states that "all have the right to education".

⁸² "All people, of any race, status or age, possess the dignity of persons and have the inalienable right to education, in line with their own finality according to their sex, culture and national traditions, which is at the same time, open to the brotherly relationships with people of other nationalities so as to promote true unity and peace on earth" (Vatican II, *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1, pp. 323-324).

present time, Lasallian activity takes place in a world that we see as globalized, pluralistic in culture and religion and post-modern. Educators are men and women who have their own specific cultures, with different beliefs and values. Plurality and relativism have become more accentuated, so that they generate new challenges and new opportunities for Lasallians.

The new situations in culture, religion and society pose questions for us. What does it mean to be a Lasallian in a multicultural, multi-religious and post-modern context? Which challenges confront Lasallian education and the educators who are products of these new social, cultural and religious contexts? How can Lasallian education be a sign of transcendence and evangelization in a context of cultural and religious plurality? We realise that in order to reflect on these questions, we need to analyze the following aspects: a) the Lasallian educational heritage in the context of a globalized world that is pluralist and post-modern; b) dialogue and fraternity as ways of doing Lasallian education in today's world; c) the challenges and opportunities facing Lasallian educational institutions and teachers at the present time.

CURRENT SOCIETY AND THE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL HERITAGE

We can affirm, without any doubt, that Lasallian education belongs to and is indebted to the culture, the age and the society of which it is an integral part. We understand that Lasallian education combines dialectically the historical and institutional elements of its heritage (such as the inherited charisma) with elements of today's culture (such as beliefs, forms of social organization, conventions and the laws in each country).

Our culture, which in a general way we can classify as post-modern, western and capitalist, is characterised by a strong emphasis on autonomy, individuality and the ideals of liberty, democracy and well-being. In the sphere of values and beliefs, we are experiencing a revival in features such as pluralism and relativism which, quite specifically, lead to the absence of fixed points of reference, and to criticism of all forms of ideas or propositions based on metaphysics, including those of a theological or religious nature.

In terms of the traditional religions, we see the emergency of a new paradigm which we can call the post-religious or post-religion paradigm. This paradigm has its origins in the cultural transformation that is going on in our society, based on post-modernist and post-metaphysical ideas. On the one hand, it consists in a new awareness of the individual that takes precedence over the narratives, values, beliefs and organization connected with traditional religions. On the other hand, it refers to the tendency to lead a personal spiritual life with personal beliefs independent of any organization or structures of religion (Eatwot, 2012, pp. 261-300)⁸³.

Education in general and Lasallian education in particular, feels the impact of these phenomena. The crisis of culture, values and beliefs has found its way into our educational institutions, making it difficult to live and practice many elements which were dear to the Lasallian tradition. Besides all this, social conflicts and economic and political problems complicate our efforts to realize the ideals of our Founder in many places.

We perceive that, because of their social standing and their special history, Lasallian educational institutions have a specific identity, detectable in the way they think of and put into practice the processes of education, in the way they are organized and relate to society. Being Lasallian, independent of society or culture, means upholding fundamental values, especially fraternity, dialogue, participation by several contributors in the process of education, openness to others, the struggle for justice, mutual respect and solidarity. Added to that is the belief that all can learn, accompanied by research into methods of teaching and learning that lead to a better life and better conditions for all the students.

In a world of change, marked by plurality and by differences, the Lasallian School is characterized by dialogue, by a welcoming attitude and by openness to others. Cultural differences, based on beliefs and race, are daily challenges providing extra motivation to Lasallian educators. Brother Superior General referred to this idea in one of his pastoral letters to the Brothers.

⁸³ Cf. especially the text entitled *Toward a Post-religion Paradigm?*

As far as inter-religious dialogue is concerned, we have schools where the majority of students are Islamist, Buddhist, Hindu or of diverse religions. I am convinced that these schools represent the most beautiful form of the presence of the Church. In line with the Founder, we are not concerned about the conflict of ideas in these situations, but only the living dialogue through which we offer children and young people the chance for full development, so that they may have life and have it in abundance. By facilitating dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect, our schools provide an incalculable service to the world (Rodríguez Echeverría, 2009, p.19).

The differences arising from pluralism do not have to be rejected for the process of teaching and learning to be effective and the Lasallian mission to be realized. They need to be understood and assumed into a wider educational process that is open, participative and based on dialogue. In this context, dialogue and fraternity become strategies for humanizing and evangelizing, and they give living witness to the constitutive elements of a human education.

Dialogue as a Human Strategy

Human beings, although limited by history and social setting, are not isolated individuals or islands. Buber (1974) warned us that an authentic human existence is one that is full of encounters with others through dialogue and interpersonal I-you relationships. Such a relationship necessarily implies the development of a capacity for mutual understanding and for life in community.

In terms of Lasallian pedagogy, we start from the assumption that “the capacity for dialogue is a natural attribute of man” (Gadamer, 2004, p. 243). The capacity for dialogue assumes openness to the other and a gradual, mutual approximation, which enables us to reach a deeper human communion. Dialogue is a key-element in the process of humanization, cultural insertion and personal formation.

Dialogue is a constitutive element of human nature, and it can be traced historically as a pedagogical and social device in various ancient cultures, especially Greek or Judeo-Christian. In ancient Greece, the dialogues of Socrates with his disciples, as portrayed by Plato, are clear examples of the use of a communicative situation – question and answer – as a pedagog-

ical technique for mutual clarification, moral formation and the search for truth. The ideal of *Paidéia*, the model par excellence of Greek education, used interactive dialogue as its first strategy. Through question and answer and reflecting together, young people were educated intellectually and morally for the exercise of citizenship and for the assumption of responsibilities for life in the *polis*⁸⁴.

Nowadays, in terms of the insertion of diverse individuals into the world, dialogue is a fundamental element for interpretation and understanding, a mutual exercise of clarification that can be accomplished in relation to things, facts, values, beliefs or laws. By dialogue the participants in a conversation can express their way of understanding the world and at the same time listen to how others understand that same world. This enables joint reflection about the differing points of view, as well as self-reflection that leads to new ways of understanding reality (Gadamer, 2005, p. 499).

In an educational context, there exists, besides dialogue in general, a specific form of pedagogical dialogue. This is one of the most primitive forms of dialogue, and it shows itself especially as the relationship of a conversation between teacher and students in the teaching process. In pedagogical dialogue, the steps of asking, listening and giving an answer play a leading role. The question is the key to understanding, if it opens up the possibility of access to the other by means of a communicative situation. Listening implies the recognition of the other by showing openness and acceptance of their existence and the possibility that the words they say are true. Dialogue is, therefore, a means of education and learning.

The well-known Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, saw in dialogue the possibility of communion between human beings and a successful pedagogy that implied the joint construction of a world of meaning. For Freire, dialogue consists in an existential demand, revealing itself as an act of creation of self and of the world. For that reason, he affirmed that “dialogue presents itself as a way by which people achieve meaning as human

⁸⁴ For a deeper exploration of this topic, we suggest consultation of the excellent work by W. Jaeger (2001). For a more general view of the Greek *Paidéia*, see F. Cambi (1999), especially pp. 85 – 93.

beings” (Freire, 2004, p. 79). Pedagogy, when understood as the process of forming the human “I”, becomes anthropology. Viewed from this angle, dialogue, especially pedagogical dialogue, is a means of education, humanization, joint construction of self and of a common human world.

In terms of Lasallian pedagogy, we think it makes sense to affirm that the relationship of dialogue between individuals, which is implied in the process of teaching and learning, has a privileged role to play in clarifying the links between learning, understanding and dialogue. Through dialogue, it is possible to gain access to things outside ourselves, to other people, and to an historical, cultural heritage. It also enables us to overcome the dichotomies of today's world.

Fraternity as an existential and evangelical option

The Lasallian option to provide education for children, young people and adults through educational establishments organized as ‘*educational communities*’ reveals an intrinsic option for fraternity and dialogue. To state that our educational centers form ‘educational communities’ indicates a choice for organizational and pedagogical models that are participative, welcoming and open.

For Lasallians, the idea of fraternity is part of the institutional DNA, experienced existentially since the founding of the Institute. Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the first teachers formed a teaching community that guaranteed them support, cooperation, shared responsibility and a common life. The organization of teaching, the planning of methods and practices of teaching, the initial and continued formation were all guaranteed by the experience and community life of the first Brothers.

Fraternity, seen from a pedagogical point of view and lived as an experience in a concrete group of educators who plan the work of teaching, carry it out and evaluate it together, was so fundamental that it became a criterion for the validation of methodologies and practices. This is shown in the *Conduct of the Christian Schools* and the process of its successive revisions. In the preface of the edition of 1720, one reads that it was a joint work of the Brothers who were more experienced in teaching, and that it was drawn up after discussions. This leads us to believe that there

were various occasions when the Brothers met and consulted one another⁸⁵.

In the school environment of today, beside the work of teaching, we can see that the experience of fraternity leads us to co-responsibility for the good progress of the educational mission in each specific Lasallian educational center. *Association* among Lasallians really makes sense only when seen as fraternity and communal sharing⁸⁶. And this is manifested in daily practice when people own, together and communally, an educational programme that aims at transforming positively the lives of those involved (educators and students) and consequently the life of the local community.

The Lasallian option for fraternity and dialogue is a way of adopting the attitudes of the historical Jesus as pictured in the Gospels. Jesus is always attentive to others. He dialogues with them constantly, asking, listening, establishing relationships that transcend the intellectual level and challenge people's ways of being and existing, their beliefs, values and above all the meaning given to life built by the people he is talking to. In addition, Jesus formed a community with his disciples. Together they proclaimed and lived the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

There are several passages in the Gospel in which we see Jesus using dialogue in a welcoming and fraternal way. The dialogue that Jesus establishes with his disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lk 24, 13-35) is a typical example. In a time of uncertainty and anguish for the disciples after the events of the Passion, Jesus appears to the two disciples who were returning to their homes. Jesus' attitude is one of welcome, dialogue and fraternity. He listens to the anxieties of the disciples, clarifies their doubts, stays and shares bread with them. Just like a teacher dealing with beginners, Jesus walks the road together with the disciples and turns the walk into a situation of dialogue and a formative meeting par excellence.

⁸⁵ In this connection, we read in the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*: "This *Conduct* was drawn up as a regulation only after many discussions with the senior Brothers of the Institute and those who showed more ability in teaching" (GE 0,0,2).

⁸⁶ In this connection, we must emphasize that this is one of the fundamental elements of the Lasallian Association presented in Circular 461, where we read: "Association implies being a member of a community for the Mission" (Circular 461, 2010, p, 23).

Because they are attentive to the needs of society, to the inspirations of the Church and to the situation of the marginalized, Lasallians believe that they are working for universal fraternity in the whole human community. All those involved in contributing to the construction of dialogue and of fraternity must show a sincere mutual respect, prudence and charity. And at the same time, they must make the effort to find, by means of dialogue and sharing, the human and evangelical values that unite all people in building universal fraternity and a better world.

Human Individuals as Subjects of the Educational Process

Besides having an existential and evangelical option for fraternity and dialogue, Lasallian pedagogy needs to clarify the anthropological foundations on which it rests. It needs to have an idea of the human person which is not reductionist and which addresses the multiple dimensions that constitute humanity.

The post-modern theoretical movement which is characteristic of our time includes a strong critique of the concepts of 'subject' and 'human person' as developed in modern times. Critical thinkers have now developed a view of human nature as being marked by great diversity, by an absence of any benchmarks and by immanence⁸⁷. According to them, all traces of transcendence or eternity present in the understanding of human nature should be replaced by less archaic concepts that reveal the plasticity of human beings and deny continuity, and consistency, having no place for any talk of prototypes, durability or unity.

As we understand it, Lasallian pedagogy, while being in dialogue with the current anthropological ideas, has a view of the human being that is distinctive and has practical implications for its way of seeing the process of education. To state that Lasallian pedagogy is characterized by its openness to the universal community of human beings, which leads to the construction of the universal fraternity, implies that those who work from this point of view recognize and understand each human being as a creature of God and, at the same time, as an individual human person.

⁸⁷ In this critical group, we can include the works of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Marx, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Foucault, among others.

Based on current theoretical discussions and yet faithful to the historical values that it professes, Lasallian pedagogy accepts the notion of the human person as a key concept and point of reference for understanding human beings. The concept of the human person gives humanity a different 'status' systematically. It means that we affirm that each human being, regardless of beliefs and cultures, possesses a 'status' and nature that is special and transcends the objective conditions that are embedded in culture, race, creeds and values.

To understand the Lasallian Pedagogy as being centered on the human person, also implies going beyond the differences and contradictions in structures, competences and abilities inherent in humanity. By 'human person', we mean the human individual in his/her multiple dimensions, having a physical element (one's own body, in anthropologic terms), a psychological element (both conscious and unconscious) and a rational-spiritual element (that makes it possible to transcend the immediate conditions of one's being). Moreover, to attribute the designation of 'human person' to somebody means to recognize in them various capacities and potentialities, such as affection, intelligence, will power, the ability to learn, to love, to interact, to transcend self and to create meaning for one's own actions and existence⁸⁸.

In addition to these elements of an anthropological character, we cannot forget the contributions made by psychology and sociology in relation to the development and structuring of a human being. In this domain, it should be noted that the human person is structured by processes of socialization and interaction in contact with others, not to mention the internal structures, competences and abilities⁸⁹. Through cultural and social development, the individual internalizes things so as to construct a notion of the identity of the 'I' which allows for growth in autonomy and

⁸⁸ For more references on this topic, see the major work by the Brazilian Jesuit philosopher, Henrique C.L. Vaz (1995 and 2001), indicated in the bibliography.

⁸⁹ Although it is not the focus of the current text, it is worth remembering that the recognized studies on the construction of the self are found in the work of J. Piaget (2007). In addition to this, we highlight as an anthropologic matrix the notion of 'symbolic interaction' from G.H. Mead (1992), as well as the notion of inter-subjectivity present in J. Habermas (2003).

responsibility by overcoming the idiosyncrasies and contradictions of one's society.

To the anthropologic concept of the human person, we must add a fundamental conviction, namely that every human being learns, or is capable of learning, in his/her own way, pace and time. Learning, whether as individuals or in a social setting, is in one of the conditions for human existence. Being able to learn is a precondition for human development and for leading a human life as we understand it.

LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY, LASALLIAN EDUCATORS AND THE INVITATION TO TRANSCENDENCE: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Viewed from the angle of an up-to-date Lasallian pedagogy, we see the Lasallian Educator as one who is characteristically impregnated with the ideal of dialogue and brotherliness in order to give witness, by being and actions, to the Institute's values, especially faith and zeal. The educational work of the Lasallian Educator consists above all in a form of life witness, which shows a welcoming attitude, a respect for differences and a love for the work of teaching combined with a knowledge of the subject matters and methodologies.

The professional side of the Lasallian educator needs to be integrated harmoniously into the existential elements of a life that has meaning. In this way, the challenges of the vocation and profession of a teacher become opportunities for the renewal of one's practices and one's understanding of what it means to be an educator today.

Later on, we shall list some of the challenges and opportunities for teaching and for Lasallian educators, which seem to us to be central, especially when we consider the educational context to which we have referred, namely the option for a pedagogy of dialogue, the invitation to fraternity, the need for an interior life and a sense of meaning to life, the integration of faith and zeal, the role of the educator as a mediator and the continued formation of educators.

The Option for a Pedagogy of Dialogue

Seeing education as the pedagogy of dialogue presupposes a firm conviction that we humans are forged in an inter-subjective matrix, in which communication, interaction and dialogue are the means for developing social individuals. Moreover, it implies understanding pedagogy through anthropology, seeing it as the force and matrix of human development. In the educational process, besides learning to read and write, children develop as human beings in a new world and thus they are able to understand themselves in a different way. By learning to express themselves in their own words, the children learn to make their own life-story, creating and recreating themselves and their own world.

The process of creating oneself and one's world does not take place in isolation. We humans are not islands. We are human beings who depend on others; we are inter-subjective beings by nature. Dialogue, interaction and participation lead us to an encounter with others. They unsettle us and oblige us to share our existence and our common world. If education is essentially a form of anthropology, humanizing and creating humanity, the Lasallian educator is called to be a craftsman of lives, someone who helps mold and form new human beings and a new society. In this sense, teaching consists in helping each individual to learn how to write his/her own life story or autobiography through meeting with the cultures of other human beings.

In the process of learning and self-development, accompaniment is a fundamental factor in pedagogy. Like the Guardian Angels, according to Meditations 197 and 198 of De La Salle⁹⁰, Lasallian educators are called to go with their students on a journey.

To accompany is to act in such a way that the young person does not feel alone but perceives that he/she is valuable as a person and irreplaceable, with a mission to accomplish. To accompany is to help the young people to get to know themselves, to find self-esteem and to face the values of the Gospel (Rodríguez Echeverría, 2009, p. 25).

⁹⁰ Cf. *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, especially Meditations 197 and 198 (La Salle, 1988, pp. 449-454).

To opt for dialogue and for accompaniment in the school setting presupposes a clear understanding that individuals have something to teach one another. The teacher has something to teach the students and they in turn have something to teach the teacher. The context of interactive dialogue requires a time and space that favour sharing and mutual learning. That is to say, while exercising the function of teaching, the educator also learns, constructs and reconstructs him/herself in this world. In the same way, the students, through interaction and sharing with the others and with the teacher, construct knowledge, develop hypotheses about reality and how to socialize and experiment in styles of personality.

For an educator, the pedagogy of dialogue presupposes that he/she has the intention of being a witness of a world of values and meaning, of the ways of relating to this world, to the others and to oneself. The educator, while being a witness to his world and to his life and values, invites the students to share this complex set of meanings and then to build and rebuild their own worlds of meaning.

The invitation to Fraternity

As we have already stated, one of the characteristics of Lasallian pedagogy is its communitarian or fraternal character. It is communitarian when the educational centers are true “educational communities” in which all the members share responsibility so that “the school runs well”. The Lasallian educational community is conceived “as a place for discussion and dialogue that recognizes diversity and stimulates observation and a critical study of reality. It is also seen as a place to meet God, by integrating the dialogue of faith and culture into the educational process” (PERLA, 2011, p. 11).

In a Lasallian school, the teachers form a unity, together and in association, to plan, execute and evaluate the work of teaching. Difficulties and problems are approached with confidence in one's responsibility and delegated powers and are seen as challenges for all members of the educational community.

In addition to this fraternal character, which is basically practical and linked to the operational level of a Lasallian educational community, we

also find more fundamental elements that express the identity and the concrete way of being a Lasallian educator in today's world. For this end, fraternity becomes a way of life, a set of values that are human and fundamentally Christian and that affect the way people look at themselves and at others. Following the examples of Jesus and his disciples, Lasallian teachers are called to embody in their activity the ideal of a fraternal community. Saint John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers gave an example of fraternal living dedicated to education. Fraternity is also a way of living the evangelical values of welcome, respect, love for one's neighbor and mutual help. It is a form of life or an option of life that transcends beliefs and religions. In this sense, fraternity is a necessary condition for the maintenance of a way of life that is authentically human.

Interior Life and the Meaning of Life: joining Faith and Zeal and the mediating Role of the Educator

Lasallian educators, regardless of religion and culture, in addition to the capacity and technical training for their area of work, need to have a recognizable interior life that reflects their understanding of their existence and the practice of education characterized by faith and zeal. In other words, every pedagogical activity needs to be the fruit of and a witness to a way of life and to values and to the faith that underpins every Lasallian educator.

We have to recognize that faith, in any cultural and socio-historical context, denotes a set of beliefs, values and different practices. However, in every context, the search for a reason to be and to go on being an educator must remain alive and constant in all Lasallian educators.

We believe that Lasallian educators can construct a meaning based on faith and an interior dimension to life which will help them to be more human and better educators, regardless of their religion or culture. Thus it will always be possible for them to give witness by their own interior life as a way of being and existing in the world, which expresses their individual identity, their insertion into a culture and their capacity to judge what is right and what is good and the transcendence in faith.

Teaching activity needs to give witness to a living faith that is expressed in a practical way through the love for children, young people and adults

placed in the care of Lasallian educators. As Brother Alvaro has said, “The love of God is inseparable from the love of neighbor, as faith is inseparable from zeal” (Rodriguez, 2011, p.11). Consequently, we can perceive an inseparable link between faith and zeal. Faith only makes sense when it is accompanied by charity, when it is lived concretely in our schools by the specific practice of dialogue, welcoming and life witnessing.

Moreover, faith, dialogue and fraternity need to be visible in the way people are and the way they act, and it needs to be evident in the witness of the life of each educator. Consequently, Lasallian educators are called to show by the witness of their lives that formation is viable and that, in spite of the difficulties and socio-economic limitations, learning is possible. It is important to understand clearly that the educator cannot make the journey for the learners. The educator’s task is to help them in the process, to map out the paths, to be a bridge for access to knowledge and to new, alternative forms of human development.

Just as J. B. de La Salle, in the 17th century, saw the educator as a minister of Jesus Christ, we today can see the educator, in a poetic analogy, as the potter mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah (Jr 18, 1-6). As the potter gives shape to the clay, the Lasallian Educator helps to give shape to human beings. This shaping goes far beyond technical and scientific knowledge by unifying values, life experience and a witness to the fact that life has a meaning if it is shared and lived as fraternity, encounter and welcoming. For this, the educator needs technical abilities, a capacity to create, inventing and reinventing himself/herself every day. They also need to be models, living examples of the ideal of the new human nature. Their example and way of life must be visible to all, because good example attracts followers.

The Continued Formation of Educators

In the midst of all the changes in our world, cultural, scientific and technological, the need for teachers to go on learning is a basic premise if Lasallian pedagogy is to be viable. Continued formation, with a focus on the educational mission, is a constant theme of the documents of the Institute, of District Chapters and of the diverse organisms of discussion, planning and evaluation of the mission.

Even a brief look at history will give us several references on the topic of continued formation for the educational mission. Circular 435, of the 42nd General Chapter, recognizes the need for formation, both at District level and in each school community. In addition, the Circular recommends that all Districts make a fundamental priority of “Lasallian formation of teachers and educators” (Circular 435, 1993, p. 45). Some years later, the publication “A Shared Mission” highlighted the importance of human formation and formation for the educational service to the poor. It also stated that “the goal of Lasallian formation is to ensure that the educators make their work a gospel ministry, so that they can carry out, successfully the mission entrusted to them” (*A shared Mission*, 1997, p. 148).

The current view is that the continued formation of Lasallian teachers must ensure at least three levels of formation in processes and contents, namely personal formation, institutional formation, technical-scientific macro-structural formation.

By personal formation we understand the personal study needed to develop the personal identity of the educator and to give a meaning to life. It is a question of caring for the existential dimension of the educator's person, so that he/she may be happy in their vocation and profession, exercising their mission with responsibility and commitment to the development of each student. This kind of formation involves processes and methodologies that help the teachers to give unity to their personal histories by rereading the story of their lives with its difficulties and achievements, as part of a wider, transcendent existential project.

Institutional formation refers to the institutional vision that all the educators must have. It is a question of knowing the main institutional elements such as, among others things, the history of the Institute, Lasallian values, the elements that make up the identity of the establishment, the attitudes expected of each member of the educational community. In addition to these institutional elements, which are closely linked to the history and charism of the Institute, it is important that time be given to updating and contextualizing their contents. That is to say, it is not enough to know the past history of the institution. It is also essential that the whole educational community should undertake together a

hermeneutic exercise of updating the charism in practice in the social-historic context from which it comes and to which it belongs.

In connection with institutional formation, we must emphasize that continued formation is a central element for the ideal of association for the educational mission.

Formation for the shared mission must be a priority, aimed at the Lasallian style of education with its preference for the poor, its evangelical dimension, the role of the educator, the spirit of fraternity and the unity that exists between faith and life (Rodríguez Echeverría, 2006, p. 51).

Finally, techno-scientific macro-structural formation, refers to the specific knowledge required for each area of the teachers' activity, understood as being part of a wider knowledge about society and the current period in which the educator lives and exercises his function of educating. This kind of formation includes structural, politic and legal contents, and also the ability to read and understanding the signs of the times and the aspirations of the children, young people and adults with whom the teacher works.

We must stress that the process of formation that we refer to is not individualistic but is always organized with the educational community in mind. To learn how to learn, to learn together and to carry on learning are the essential prerequisites for a viable Lasallian pedagogy, which aims to transform the lives of students and of educators, as well as society in general.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we have shown throughout this chapter, Lasallian pedagogy of today is inserted in a world that is pluralist, globalized, relativist and post-metaphysical. This situation presupposes a discussion and a new look at the specific processes of teaching and learning developed in our educational centers and the models of organization and of management used in the educational communities, and also at the kind of witness in values and ideals that the Lasallian Educational Mission offers nowadays.

The manner of being Lasallian cannot be the same in today's society as it was in the past. The Lasallian heritage needs to be revisited and reinter-

preted in terms of dialogue, fraternity and transcendence. That is to say, Lasallian pedagogy needs to establish a dialogue with the new situation (cultural, religious and social) that has arisen, in order to rediscover and update its specific way of being faithful to its foundational values and charism and to the needs and aspirations of the children and young people of today.

In our view, this updating of Lasallian pedagogy presupposes a renewal of the institutional charism and values, an openness to the signs of the times, a judicious dialogue with the current culture, the practice of fraternity and a focus on the human person as the subject and centre of our mission of educating. Moreover, association, the experience of an educational community, continued formation and the living witness of Lasallians can all be signs that Lasallian pedagogy is in dialogue with today's world, and is at the same time a sign of transcendence and a catalyst for social transformation.

Chapter 11 - CENTURIES OF LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS: THE JOURNEY OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY INTO THE 21st CENTURY

Robert Berger fsc

For centuries Brothers and their colleagues have remained faithful to Lasallian education by placing the very core of their being in Jesus' promise: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). Today this faithfulness specifically calls Brothers to be companions one to another as they struggle with the identity of contemporary religious life.

Often this companionship leads to reflections that are both thought provoking and heartening. Hope, courage, faithfulness and creative imagination burst forth from Brothers who are focused on the belief that not only are we searching for God but that God is actively searching for us. Today's Brother is called upon to blend scholarship and lived experience to name the challenges and tensions of the day while offering insights that point to an ongoing authentic living out of religious commitment among men known as Brothers of the Christian Schools. As one thinks about the Lasallian pedagogy for the 21st century one must get ready to name present-day realities and prepare oneself for some honest challenges that call for faith, determination and focus.

BROTHERHOOD THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Identifying present-day realities is not a new task for the Brothers. For centuries the followers of John Baptist de La Salle have invented and re-invented what it means to promote a Lasallian pedagogy that is relevant to young people on the local level and inspirational worldwide. From 1680 until 1705 the foundational community invented a pedagogy that gradually centered its spirituality on the *Conduct of Schools*. The formation years with Canon Roland, the desires of Adrian Nyel and Madame Maillefer and countless unnamed experiences supported the actions of De

La Salle to form young men into teachers. Habits grew as the character of the newly formed community began to take shape as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a destiny intended by God.

During the next 150 years the Brothers developed wonderful images of Lasallian pedagogy. How different was the Lasallian world with the French Revolution of 1789 and the dissolution of the Institute in 1792! What Brothers from 1680 - 1705 could have foreseen the revolutions in France of 1787, 1830 and 1848? Yet we had faithful Brothers who steered us into an international Institute.

Worldwide we always had Brothers who were dedicated to the act of living and reflecting on their roles as educators while being interested in the formation of future teachers. For example, the Lasallian pedagogy of 1790 was not the same as 1690 so the *Conduct of Schools* needed to be revised and it was the focus of the 1834 General Chapter. It was also a matter of survival. Brothers were faithful to the patrimony of the first generation of Brothers. This was a new time, the Brothers paid attention to their experiences and they did something about it together and by association. Throughout the centuries Brothers have responded to the signs of the times by keeping one eye on politics and the other eye on scripture. From an external viewpoint these decades showed a time of logical pedagogical evolution.

By the time of the late 19th century the Brothers had developed an autonomous school system throughout the Institute, especially in France. Textbooks were written by Brothers, published privately within the Institute and used in a uniformed way by thousands of school children. The next 100 years found a sameness or conformity in the schools conducted by the Brothers throughout the world that rivaled any international organization. 1850 - 1950 was a period marked by responding to people who more often than not were dwarfed by the pressures of the Industrial Revolution as large masses of people moved from Europe to the New World (Rigault, 1937, pp. 281-330).

Post-world war II society started with a period of economic growth rarely seen in western civilization that gradually turned into the social upheavals of the 1960's and '70's. As the number of Brothers decreased and the actu-

al number of students and lay teachers increased from 1970 - 2010 the former period of stability turned into a period of uncertainty where old systems of uniformity were no longer effective and new models of shared mission emerged on all levels.

One thesis central to the Lasallian enterprise shared with Religious Life in general throughout the world from the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s was the fact that these one hundred years were only one unique chapter in the two-millennium history of the Catholic Church. For example, this one hundred year period was marked by impressive institutions staffed by large number of Religious women and men. In the United States of America, these structures met the needs of a ghettoized immigrant Catholic community protecting itself from Protestant and Anglican voices much more firmly established in the society of the New World (cf. Schneiders, 2011, pp. 108-109).

From the very beginning of a time when Catholics poured into the New World, the Brother of the Christian Schools arrived to help new French immigrants and others find their place in their new society. Women and men Religious who arrived on these shores in the middle of the 19th century in many ways resemble Religious of the early 21st century in that there were no large numbers of women and men in numerous communities solely supporting immense corporate ministries. The women and men Religious who arrived in the Americas took seriously the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not.
See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers (Is 43: 18-19).

Our sisters and brothers of yesteryear came to do something new, in a strange land and often with a new language. The United States may not have been perceived as a desert or a wasteland by arriving immigrants but it certainly was a land ripe for newness and with it the sowing of the Word.

In the second decade of the 21st century educational systems are changing before our eyes. There is no room for mindless repetition and duplication nor nurturing fears that come from false fidelities. Like the earliest days

of the Institute, like the years of instability in 18th and 19th century France, like the years following Vatican II, Brothers are once again called to show creative fidelity to a mission entrusted to us by God: the human and Christian education of young people, particularly the poor.

Who were the poor of 1680? The poor and the artisans in the time of De La Salle did not have much separating them on the economic level. Cold weather, lack of resources and two lost harvests due to excessive cold and rain at the end of the 17th century resulted in the deaths of many in France. The artisans knew a skill but they, like the poor, suffered from climatic factors, no job security, few resources and could not guarantee bread on a daily basis for their usually large families (cf. Battersby, 1961, pp. 62-67). In the midst of this chaos, De La Salle not only saw the need to have these people save their souls but he also saw in them the potential to build up and sanctify the Church:

You must regard your work ...as one of the most important and necessary services in the Church. This means that you are called to lay the foundation for the building of the Church when you instruct children in the mystery of the most Holy Trinity and the mysteries accomplished by Jesus Christ when he was on earth (MTR, p. 442).

Who are the poor of 2013? Obviously it is not the poor of 1713. Yesterday's dominant work of agriculture or industry now takes a back seat to a less stable contemporary work force. In the time of De La Salle an apprenticeship of ten years gave an artisan work for a lifetime. Today, studying a subject for ten years gives a skill that is marketable for about five years. Is there any guarantee for continual employment? Can the poor keep up in a world where technology and information are often out of their reach? How do we even go about identifying the poor in a post-modern world?

THE HALLMARKS OF LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness and innovation have been hallmarks of our Institute from our earliest days and it is no different today nor will it be tomorrow. Faithfulness and innovation go hand-in-hand as Brothers once again witness to the belief that fidelity is a door to the transcendent.

De La Salle wanted his Brothers to reflect on their experiences of the school in the chapel as they responded to the local cultural needs of the poor and the artisans. He was convinced that his Brothers were capable of building relationships among themselves that served as a model for learning. The heart of Lasallian pedagogy always balances activity and interiority in the constant search for God's will. As today's technological world replaces relationships among people with mere connections that are often empty and unsatisfying we have the opportunity to show the world the real enduring value of a Lasallian education. For example, take the growing popularity of on-line courses promoted by many large universities and for-profit organizations. It is deceptively simple as connecting individuals with ideas.....alone and by yourself in front of a computer. We, on the other hand, can invite 'individuals' to see themselves as 'persons' connected to a three-century-old tradition of education *together and by association* as we discern our role in God's world. Technology challenges us to re-learn association, which implies a profound respect for the other in relationship rather than a quick reply in a connection.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools once again are ready to do something new and that newness will come from surprising and fresh movements of the Spirit. Key to this movement will be ongoing reflections that address issues critical to Religious Life: prayer, vocation, history, discernment, power, prophetic lifeform, and leadership to name a few. These reflections speak with concern for whom and what Religious are as they struggle with their identity at the start of the 21st century and challenge all of us to reflect on the authenticity of Religious Life. Two questions might be posed. First, granted Vatican II and the previous and current papacies have spent much time and energy addressing an understanding of apostolic life, will these same issues say much, if anything, to this generation of young Catholics who are called to "fullness of life"?⁹¹ Today many writers on the crisis of Religious Life in the Church prose a thesis about the vitality of Religious Life that barely goes beyond some broad

⁹¹ See Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Vita Consecrata" of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops and Clergy, Religious Orders and Congregations, Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes, and all the Faithful on the Consecrated Life and Its Mission in the Church and in the World (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1996).

comments regarding habits and lifestyles of previous centuries, classical Vatican documents and an ecclesial community that seems anything but united (cf. O'Malley, 2006, pp. 4-5). A second question is whether we really need a distinctive teaching about Religious Life from the Magisterium. Do we need official Catholic directives about a segment of the Church that is meant to be ever-evolving to meet the needs of a rapidly-changing world? What is the difference between a directive and a response to the signs of the times? (cf. McDonough, 2001, pp. 67-90).

Serious approaches to current Lasallian pedagogy calls for careful consideration of Church documents while taking seriously the everyday human realities struggling to meet the world's greatest needs. How can Religious Life and, in particular, the Brothers of the Christian Schools get the slightest attention of our younger Catholics in a post-modern world as they too are called to fullness of life?

Fullness of life by definition requires steadfastness in our relationships as Brothers. The challenge of loyalty lies in discovering how to embody that steadfastness in faithful action informed by God's concern for the educational world entrusted to our care rather than by deluded self-interest. Any human manifestation of loyalty is bound to be imperfect, because our motives are so rarely pure, because most choices for showing loyalty involve unforeseen consequences we might not desire, because as humans our best steadfastness is more fragile than we like to admit. Nonetheless, our weakness and uncertainty need not paralyze us. We make our choices for faithful living recognizing that not every wrong choice is disloyal and not every relationship can or should be arbitrarily continued (cf. Johnson, 1994, pp. 6-28). Above all, we make choices trusting in God's great loyalty: a loyalty that forgives our misunderstanding of the Lasallian pedagogical vision and forgives our lack of steadfastness in embodying even what we know to be right; a loyalty that in the end, despite all odds, will bring the vision of John Baptist de La Salle into the 21st century.

It seems reasonable to say that issues of loyalty and faithfulness are present, at least implicitly, in nearly every dimension of Lasallian pedagogy. Insofar as educators are relational beings, loyalty is always involved. Thus any discussion of contemporary Lasallian concerns must be selective and

regarded as illustrative rather than exhaustive. Readers are invited to reflect upon their own lives that raise questions of loyalty, and how this discussion might assist them. In preparing this paper, I have been especially helped by conversations with others, and I would extol the values of communal reflection for any who pursue this topic.

BROTHERHOOD AND CELEBRATING THE ORDINARY

As you reflect upon Lasallian pedagogy you need to think about the ordinary and the extraordinary. Brothers have a common denominator: each of us is an ordinary man with an extraordinary vocation. At our best, vocation means our deepest desire meets the world's greatest need. But if you think about it I wonder how many of our students have a mirror image of that understanding as they experience their Lasallian education in the 21st century. How many of our students see us as extraordinary men with an ordinary vocation? Do they see in us that one of the miracles of consecration is that it plunges a brother directly into the heart of mystery?

How did the reality of “an ordinary man with an extraordinary vocation” evolve into “an extraordinary man with an ordinary vocation?” How has this come about in our lifetime?

The tendency in the last few decades since Vatican II has been to downplay the extraordinary nature of a religious vocation in order to emphasize the universal call to holiness. An oversimplification of that universal call to holiness implied that, since any Christian way of life is holy, you must be a very extraordinary person if you chose the consecrated life. In our situation, the universal call to holiness implies that, since the dignity of a Christian teacher is holy, you must be a very extraordinary man if you chose to join the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Didn't the Institute of the Brother of the Christian Schools spend over three centuries educating the laity? Vatican II clearly challenged an educated laity that it was their moment to continue this charism of Christian education so greatly needed in a fractured world (cf. Kennedy, 1988, pp., 17-20). But here comes the rub, after all is said and done, why give up marriage, career and independence if you don't need to?

For the past fifty years many of us have stopped living in extraordinary large communities, wearing extraordinary clothes and doing extraordinary work. In recent days we have instead been living in simpler and smaller communities, often wearing plain clothes and ministering as small part of the workforce rather than in key leadership positions. The rightness or wrongness of those choices is not at issue in this chapter. The issue we need to look at during our day is whether we have given young people and our colleagues the impression that we are extraordinary people who are doing ordinary things.

That impression of consecrated life is misleading. Somehow we need to restore the insight that the consecrated life of a Brother of the Christian Schools is an extraordinary vocation that comes to ordinary men. We all heard stories or perhaps, years ago, experienced the famed recruiter who would visit school after school bringing boys to the Juniorate and the Novitiate. Pre-Vatican II years were heady years as recruiters looked for extraordinary young men whom Christ was calling to do ordinary things. Recruitment for consecrated life was in full operational mode. Brothers probably implicitly asked the question: how can we find these extraordinary young men and what can we do to recruit them? And weren't there hundreds of newly immigrated families ready and willing to affirm that their son was an extraordinary person ideally suited for consecrated life? But with Vatican II we, like most religious communities of consecrated men and women, moved vocations promotion from recruitment to discernment. Today we are looking for ordinary men to do extraordinary things. How can we help ordinary Catholic men discern the call of Christ in their lives and what can we do to support a vocation to the Brothers of the Christian Schools?

LASALLIAN EDUCATION AND CONSECRATED LIFE

There are many blessing that we have come to know and love as Brothers of the Christian Schools. In a world of false choices, there is a beauty in experiencing the reality that life gets simpler as we remain faithful. We look back and begin to understand how God's plan gradually emerged and took control of us in a way we would never have thought possible

when we were young. Consecrated life reminds us that we have never been in charge of our lives as we once thought we were. As young Brothers we needed initial formation but with age a brother more and more trusts intuition. Consecrated life is a readiness to say yes to the divine invitation from within. That invitation asks us to decide whether to reach beyond the narrow confines of limited self-interest to something richer that guide us to self-surrender. Consecrated life challenges us to see not only with our eyes but also with our hearts. In short, empathy comes more easily as the years unfold. In Galatians Paul tells us:

My ego is no longer central. It is no longer important that I appear righteous before you or have your good opinion, and I am no longer driven to impress God. Christ lives in me. The life you see me living is not “mine,” but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I am not going to go back on that (Gal 2:20-21).

Isn't that a great definition of consecrated life? The ego shrinks, the sense of self-importance fades, and there's less concern for others' approval of what we say and do. Consecrated life becomes the freedom we have long prized. We experience a lightness of spirit. We see our life and all we have done as a gift from God rather than as a list of accomplishments. Consecrated life allows us to become absorbed in Christ in a new way. Consecrated life is not two hours of prayer and spiritual reading on a daily basis rather it is my whole life as one long prayer to God. As Paul says, “Pray all the time. Thank God no matter what happens.”

Our vocation as Brothers of the Christian Schools is the one we love, not because we think it is the best vocation in the Church, but because it is the one God has willed for each one of us. Scripture tells us “you didn't choose me, remember, I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil”. Consecrated life is at once my will and God's will. None of us entered it blindly. May we never live it blindly! God chose it for each one of us when God's knowledge of my choice moved me to choose it for myself. In consecrated life we are called to the place in which God wills to do us the most good. It means we are called where we can best leave ourselves and find God. Consecrated life is our opportunity to find that one place in which we can most perfectly receive the benefits of

God's love for us and reply to God's love with our whole being. God's love frees us from our preoccupations (cf. Radcliffe, 2001, pp. 49-54).

A Christian Brothers' Spirituality

Who are the men among us who have generously lived out their lives as consecrated Brothers? When you make your personal list I would bet that each Brother you name has three characteristics: gratitude, confidence and is freed from self. The men on your list are reminders to live up to the ideals of consecrated life even though everything else may seem to have gone wrong. They have a sense of peace in their suffering. They teach us to laugh at despair. They tell us that there is nothing finer than dedicating one's life to the ministry of Lasallian education.

Our vocation as Brothers of the Christian Schools is the one we love because of the men we have lived with in community and the people we have worked with in ministry. But death comes all too frequently these days. Bit by bit, it comes to us that we shall never again hear the laughter of a certain Brother, this one gift of friendship is forever locked against us. For no one can replace that Brother. Old friends cannot be created out of hand. Nothing can match the treasure of common memories, of trials endured together, of disagreements and reconciliation and generous emotions. It is ridiculous, having planted an acorn in the morning, to expect that afternoon to sit in the shade of the oak. So life goes on. For years we plant the seed, we feel ourselves rich; and then come other years when time does it work and our plantations are made sparse and thin. One by one, our Brothers slip away, deprive us of their shade. Brothers - past and present - form a cloud of witnesses and the best among us show us a spirit of gratitude, a spirit of confidence and a spirit of freedom.

After 40 years as a Brother of the Christian Schools, here's what I see. As consecrated Brothers we need to differentiate Christian Brothers' spirituality and Lasallian spirituality. Lasallian spirituality refers to John Baptist de la Salle's overall spiritual outlook whereas a Christian Brothers' spirituality includes the spirituality of the Institute itself, based on our *Rule* and its governance. If we agree that we are ordinary men capable of doing extraordinary things *together and by association*, then we need to take discernment seriously. In 2013 how do we discern the call of Christ in our

personal lives and in our community? For example, in what I refer to as a “Christian Brothers’ spirituality” we read in our *Rule*:

In order to discern the will of God in his regard, each Brother is invited to seek an experienced spiritual director, especially in the most decisive moments of his life, as a companion for his spiritual journey (R. 75b).

This is a powerful invitation to freedom for those who see discernment as a key element of our consecrated life.

For the past fifty years every Institute chapter, every District chapter has been challenging us to shift our culture. Recruitment to consecrated life is over. Discernment still seeks a place at our table. Let me suggest that elements of our culture have already firmly seated themselves quite comfortably at our table and we have spent much time and energy entertaining them: the bold gesture, pre-occupation with self, the busyness of multi-tasking, the speed of cyberspace, the promise of branding, the lure of novelty and the never-ending search for the “wow factor” that is part of every architect’s presentation to us.

Where is Christ?

As we look around our globe there is one cultural value that stands out in today’s society: freedom. Look at the countries that border the Mediterranean and in the Middle East. We see whole nations clamoring for freedom. And isn’t freedom, freedom in the Spirit, at the core of our consecrated life? The Lord’s first words to Adam were, “You are free...” Christ’s message to us is the same: “I came so you can live real and eternal life, more and better life than you ever dreamed of”. Discernment is at the core of freedom. What kind of man does Christ really want you to be?” Do we have the courage to stay with the question and follow where Christ quietly invites us? As we struggle with issues of Lasallian pedagogy for the 21st century are we proclaiming that Christ is the center of our consecrated life. How do we take up the challenge with all the skills at our disposal? “Who has God called you to be?” And probably, more importantly, “who has God called us to be?”

When we have a discernment process within easy reach of every Brother of the Christian Schools, then we will have created a culture of conse-

crated life. This life will be vital, vibrant and attractive to the elderly, the middle-aged, the young among us and hopefully those who will join us. Is consecrated life needed? Together and by association we are squeezed between the short spans of our lives and the searing needs around us. We are thrown into grace. God needs us and these are times that beg for gratitude, confidence and freedom. We are called to be faithful.

In my own view, questions of loyalty and faithfulness are particularly pressing today in three components of our Lasallian pedagogy: brotherhood, shared mission, and association. Again I urge readers to name the most important areas to them, and to identify their own questions and concerns for those areas as well as for the three discussed in the following paragraph.

BROTHERHOOD AND LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY

Consecrated life is one of the few public statements of commitment that our church recognizes in the sphere of ministry. Contemporary uncertainty and uneasiness about long term commitments are evident in many ways concerning the decision to become a Brother of the Christian Schools: the attractiveness of short-term volunteer programs; the advice to a temporarily professed brother, “Don’t worry, you can always leave”; “candidacy” living together, in which the community and the new Brother are afraid either to ask for or to offer commitment; temporary vocations with specific ending dates subject to renewal. Ironically, many signs of the fragility of loyalty are probably attempts to generate loyalty. To the extent that they indicate a desire for responsible commitment, they may be hopeful signs (cf. Groeschel, 2007, pp. 12-15). Yet most of these alternatives rule out by definition the possibility of faithfulness “no matter what” as discovered in the early Brothers’ heroic vow. God’s faithfulness in all circumstances suggests that our own commitments should not seek to foresee every contingency.

Questions of loyalty surface in choices made by brothers in a community. Each Brother must consider the best way to use his God-given gifts for the larger community of the local Church, especially in the ministry of Lasallian education. However, choices do preclude other choices, some-

times permanently: not all aspect of Lasallian pedagogy can be resumed after a lengthy hiatus (Schneiders, 2009, pp. 12.14).

Today the expectation for relationships with various kinds of communities involved with Lasallian pedagogy is ambiguous. Too often relationships are ignored or treated as superficial. Perhaps loyalty calls the traditional Brothers among us to dialogue with brothers who are in a transition so as to learn about varieties of committed Lasallian pedagogies.

Shared Mission and Lasallian Pedagogy

Contemporary Lasallian pedagogy places many written and unwritten demands upon those who share in the mission. While these might not be labeled as “loyalty tests,” they often function as such. Administrators are prone to become uneasy with teachers who disagree, ask too many questions, like to do things differently. Teachers may be expected to hold particular views on certain issues in their classrooms. However such questions are resolved, living in brotherhood means loyalty first to God. It is to be hoped that loyalty to any form of Lasallian pedagogy means a career where one can find the embodiment of the good news of God’s care. To use a Lasallian expression, an educator in any one of our schools should be a “minister of grace.”

Since in our institutions, the administrators, faculty, and staff are inevitably dependent for economic survival upon those who hire them, those who wield the hiring power need to examine their expectations of employees. An institution should consider seriously what relevance its Lasallian pedagogy has to performance, and whether performance expectations are commensurate with community wholeness in the fullest sense. In any but the smallest schools, such questions may seem impossible to address, because the power center is so difficult to locate. Yet some individuals do have limited power to exercise loyalty toward those with less control even in the bureaucratic networks of very large institutions, such as colleges and universities (cf. Morey y Piderit, 2006, pp. 43-46). In this area, especially, sharing stories could help individuals and institutions to discover fresh and freeing choices that have simply gone unnoticed.

Choices with respect to Lasallian pedagogy, like all choices, lead us toward

God or away. Fixating too vigorously on choices can distort the Lasallian mission in a desperate effort to meet some overly narrow target. At times there might even be the temptation to cut ethical corners to achieve a goal. Deciding on choices while remaining faithful to Lasallian pedagogy needs to balance the positive with the negative, optimism with pessimism, a striving for success and security with an openness to failure and uncertainty (Burkeman, 2012, p. 9).

Association and Lasallian Pedagogy

One might suppose that the association of Lasallian educators would be a stronghold for faithfulness in ministry, but as a human institution it too can experience a failure of loyalty. The ancient story of Israel reminds us that the people repeatedly lost sight of God's intention for their own community, an intention that had implications for the world as well. So today, Lasallian educators are scarcely of one mind about God's intention for the community in which they work or about the role of the church in education (cf. Moran, 2007, págs. 55-57).

How might Lasallians who struggle to construct new pedagogies for the 21st century model loyalty within their own membership and to the community in which they serve?

One significant aspect of association may be to help its own members explore the dynamics of decision-making in various areas, such as mission statements, hiring policies, and curriculum. The exploration of various Lasallian pedagogies could be carried out in such a way that people would come to see the complexity of choices and something of the theological underpinnings of alternative positions.

All issues of Lasallian pedagogies, whatever their magnitude, can be viewed from the perspective of faithfulness in ministry. But even more, having helped people to think through an issue, our Lasallian association might seek ways to support and honor the differing pedagogies practiced by our colleagues. Loyalty continues the dialogue and serves the other despite disagreement. Humility befits all who seek to discover God's will. When the dialogue results in consequences for institutional Lasallian pedagogy, such as budget allocation, those who support the final decision

might show loyalty by continuing the discussion from within. In such association the school community can embody for others as well as itself the steadfastness of God's faithfulness to all people.

GIFTS FOR LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY

The preceding discussion has said a great deal about our embodiment of God's presence in the world by a personal and communal lifestyle of faithfulness and loyalty. But such a lifestyle cannot emerge in and of itself. The witness of the Brothers' community is very clear that loyalty, however frail, can exist, only as response to the communal and personal experience of God's faithfulness to us. It is God's loyalty that motivates our loyalty, strengthens it when it falters, corrects it when it is misplaced, helps us to hold fast to the Lasallian vision and to boast aright:

Thus says the Lord: Let not the wise glory in wisdom, nor the strong glory in strength, nor the rich glory in riches; but rather, let the one who glories, glory in this, that one knows me in prudence, knows that I, the Lord, bring about kindness, justice, and uprightness on the earth (Jer 9:22-23).

Only after we know Yahweh "bring(s) about kindness, justice and uprightness" can we heed the ancient words of Micah:

You have been told, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God (Mic 6:8).

May the vocations of our young Catholics be rooted in the same Spirit of loyalty and faithfulness found in women and men throughout the centuries: when their deepest desires meet the world's greatest needs. As we remain loyal to our roots and faithfully move into the 21st century, let us take seriously (paraphrasing) the words of Saint Teresa of Avila: Christ has no body now on earth but yours. Yours are the only hands with which to do God's work. Yours are the only feet with which to go about doing good. Yours are the only eyes through which compassion can shine forth upon a troubled world. Christ has no body now on earth but yours, and yours are the hands with which God is to bless others now.

Chapter 12 - THE LASALLIAN SERVICE OF EDUCATION: A MEANS OF SALVATION FOR TODAY?

Pierre Ouattara fsc

The Lasallian venture began with the intention to reach out to those who were poor. This chosen public, therefore, gives the clue to goal of the first schools. Educational service with a preference for the poor saw itself as «a means of salvation» (cf. R 3,03; R 16,01,04; MR 205,2,1; 205,2,2; MD 37,3,1). Let us be clear: the salvation envisaged does not refer to a life that will only be given after death. If there is no life before death, neither will there be any after death. Is the Lasallian educational service still a means of salvation today? In what sense? For whom? How? And according to what kind of pedagogy?

Nowadays, poverty has become a public enemy that knows no frontiers, and it is studied by the various human sciences⁹². In the last analysis, it is the statistics which count more than individuals for the purpose of measuring national and international performances, and there is a danger they may lead us to forget that every individual is of infinite value. Fighting poverty is one thing and serving the poor is another⁹³. Making this distinction is an obligation for the Lasallian educator, who sees in every one of the children «a child of God» (MF 96, 3)⁹⁴.

When speaking of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, our Rule (R.1) states that it was through the action of God that he was made attentive to the human and spiritual distress «of the children of the artisans and the poor». This suggests, therefore, that the initiative for our Lasallian educational service of the poor has a passive value⁹⁵. By understanding in the light of this

⁹² History, economics, sociology, demography... cf. The data provided by international bodies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Programme for the Environment (PNUE), the United Nations Programme Nations for Development (PNUD).

⁹³ Cf. The meaning of the parables in Mt 18, 12 and Lk 15, 4.

⁹⁴ For this understanding of «child of God» cf. Michel Henry, *C'est Moi la Vérité. Pour une philosophie du christianisme*, Paris, Seuil, 1996.

⁹⁵ As we shall see: patience, compassion, tenderness, gentleness, prayer...

quality who the poor are and better still what they represent, we are able to grasp the spirit which must have inspired that particular pedagogical service. There are different ways of viewing the poor and of serving them through education. Which way should the inheritors of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle recognise as most fitting for them? Is it possible to draw some conclusions about the principles of a Lasallian pedagogical attitude today by examining our fidelity to the privileged target group?

THE TARGET GROUP OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY, THE POOR AS IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In considering the question as to who the poor are, we should not let ourselves be led astray by the spirit of the age. When we read the writings of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle attentively we see that it was definitely not from any purely *sociological or simply human* point of view that he and the first Brothers committed themselves to their educational venture. Their commitment was inspired by the fact that Christianity reveals to us a God who comes into our world, through Mary, in search of a welcoming hospitality⁹⁶. Is not the whole of Lasallian pedagogy governed by the desire to allow God to find welcome and hospitality in the world and specifically in people's hearts?⁹⁷ This basic orientation obliges Lasallian education to take account of human reality in all its complexity.

Through association for the educational service of the poor, Lasallians as beneficiaries of the grace of salvation aim to give witness to the mystery of the Incarnation today. That presupposes that they work to create and to develop in themselves *a disposition of welcoming hospitality*. Seen from this perspective, being an educator is based on an indispensable presupposition of hospitality received by the children, which prepares them in turn «to develop a disposition of welcoming hospitality». The expression «Live Jesus in our hearts», which is used as the regular signal of the Community, and also the reading of *Meditation* 85, for example, should convince us that the Lasallian pedagogical tradition has always given a

⁹⁶ In this connection, read *Meditations* 85 and 86.

⁹⁷ The invocation «Live Jesus in our hearts!» testifies to this.

special and major place to heart-felt hospitality. In the light of this, we can better understand the phrase so dear to De La Salle «touching hearts» (cf. I 6,27,1; I 06,28,02 ; MF 85,2 y 85,3; MD 39,3), and see the great respect for children that it implies. For De La Salle, individual children, especially poor children, are to be treated as *images of God*⁹⁸.

Like Jesus, a poor person generally has difficulty in finding hospitality in the world⁹⁹. The possibility of finding and enjoying hospitality in this world is conditional on having access to education, to culture, to housing, to health-care, to employment, to land and property, to citizenship.

Before all that and starting with our entry into this world, we must take into account the family, our first place of hospitality and the cradle of our humanity. But there is one other prerequisite to hospitality in the world, and that is the status of women and respect for their rights. One cannot fight for the rights of the child and ignore the rights of women and the family. Nowadays, when speaking of the poor, one must keep in mind the lot accorded to women. The situation of children, especially the very young, is closely linked to that of their mothers. Hospitality, even physical as provided at the mother's breast, depends on her state of mind and heart, on her cultural level and her social condition. The act of giving birth does not make her automatically a *mother for her child*. The child is welcome or unwelcome in society, depending on the physical, social and family conditions of its mother.

We are aware that the traditional family is in crisis. Indeed, the family is the first place where the high cost of poverty is most felt. It is the very root of our poverty in the sense that it brings us face to face with the fact that we start life as the result of *choices made by other people*. Many of the distressing material and human situations in which children and young people find themselves are a result of the penury in which their families live.

⁹⁸ MF 96, 3. Closer to the invisible than to the visible, every icon expresses a kind of poverty. Unlike an idol, the icon does not aim at attracting attention; it is by nature self-effacing, discreet and leading to transparency. For that reason it calls for the greatest attention and presence.

⁹⁹ The impossibility of finding hospitality in the world marks the chief forms of poverty: - poverty brought about by the hostility of nature, drought, floods, earthquakes, natural disasters etc.; - poverty linked to a lack of social hospitality, discrimination, injustice, conflicts.

We cannot guarantee the rights of the child without guaranteeing those of the family. There are plenty of organisations providing aid to children and young people, but it is the family which is still the main reference point for their welcome and insertion into society. Children are seriously handicapped if they have no family or lack one or other of their parents, or if there is a break down in the family¹⁰⁰. Difficulties experienced in the family milieu can mean that the psycho-motory development and health of the children are compromised even before birth. As a result they may show signs of retarded development as babies and later in language ability.

When parents, the primary educators, neglect their responsibilities, because they are too concerned with their own personal growth, certain children are not even accorded their right to live and grow as human beings. They chalk up a deficit in affective, educational and cultural terms, which condemns them to wander on the fringes of society. With little or no education, an individual is ignorant of his/her rights and does not know how to claim them or exercise them. In some countries, for reasons of ideology or budgetary restrictions, education receives little in the way of resources. In such situations, when the State abandons its duties, opportunities for private education proliferate, but they are directed more towards the well-off than the underprivileged. Schools are supposed to be accessible to all, but they can only carry out their role of inclusion in the context of a world-wide fight against poverty. The shortage of schools and teachers, in numbers and in quality, is matched by the increase on the numbers of those left behind by society.

Children fail to gain access to school (the main instrument for cultural integration) because of various forms of social discrimination¹⁰¹ on account of their sex, family origins and race. But to really find a welcome into society, it is indispensable to acquire its *culture*. Lack of this inevitably produces awkwardness and low self-esteem, and the poor are condemned to silence, with no power as actors in public life unless they obtain it through violence. To escape from this humiliation and degradation and

¹⁰⁰ This phenomenon of street children is aggravated especially by the consequences of war and is evident in the main urban centres of Africa.

¹⁰¹ Discrimination according to wealth, sex, race, religion.

develop self-esteem, participation in cultural life is essential. Without this participation, children, especially of immigrant families, remain on the edges of society, wounded in their dignity and their significance for others. They need to go beyond having access to the culture and to be able to contribute to it and to *participate in the construction of the social life*. Culture is an essential means of participation in and contribution to dialogue in society. Effective exercise of the right to culture is a means of preventing dependence, parasitism and of resorting to community violence as the only means of self-expression. However, to acquire culture, it is not enough just to go to school; it is also necessary to remain there *long enough* and to learn the *right skills in a suitable environment* in order to acquire a sufficient level of education and learning. One cannot ignore the overcrowded classes, the shortened period of schooling, the lack of textbooks, the inappropriate programmes, the discouragement of teachers and pupils, which are the causes of many drop-outs and unemployment that remain as social time-bombs.

Through lack of an *integrating and liberating* culture, the abandoned child and the marginalised teenager remains alienated from his/her dignity and true being. Education cannot be reduced to a mere imparting of knowledge or of culture. It is also a *community work of creating* a society of justice and of fraternity, a society in which citizens help one another in the task of understanding their environment and the links that bind them together, so that they find ways of overcoming the failures of justice and of fraternity. To educate means to teach a person how to live in *reciprocal hospitality* with others (Mt 25, 40-45). If a school only dispenses knowledge that is certainly useful but is lacking in *ethical orientation*, like a compass with no needle, it cannot be really liberating. Such a school lays the foundation for a different kind of poverty: the poverty of living «without a sense of direction», and «of being lost ». It is not simply a higher standard of living or increased purchasing power that rescue people from poverty but the choice of living together a '*virtuous*' kind of poverty¹⁰². This kind of poverty was lived by Jean-Baptiste De La Salle and his first companions as a result of their vow of association. It revealed to them God's own peda-

¹⁰² Due to the increase in the power of society and machines to produce goods.

gogy which De La Salle apparently never ceased to meditate on¹⁰³. Christ chose to be the instrument of precisely this sort of pedagogy.

In terms of our Christian faith, is there anyone poorer than Jesus? Meditating on the meaning of his cry from the cross, « My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? » (Mt 27, 46; Mk 15, 34; cf. Ps 22), who can claim to have gone further than he in self-abasement? He, the Son of God to whom he always claimed to be united, presents on the cross the image of a man who is at the end of his strength in abandonment to his Father, and yet who feels abandoned by everyone including his Father. He is stripped of his Divinity to such a degree as to incarnate «humanity without God»¹⁰⁴. He presents the picture of humanity in need and in distress, powerlessness and humiliation, living through «an eclipse of God ». With Jesus on the cross, the mystery of the Incarnation reaches a realism that is striking. There is a great diversity in the forms of poverty¹⁰⁵, but not knowing God seems to constitute the worst of them. Anyone who does not know God, who is separated from him, does not know what true Life really means. Those who have no knowledge of the Father do not know how to live as brothers and sisters together; they do not know how to live either with themselves or with others¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ Cf. for example the *Mémoire des commencements*, (*Mémoire on the Beginnings*) in which the Founder meditates on the way God led him.

¹⁰⁴ An expression which suggests both a godless humanity and a humanity apparently abandoned by God.

¹⁰⁵ In the light of human sciences, especially sociology and psychology, the nature of poverty as unsatisfied needs appears complex and extensive. However, we can say that the poor belong to every period as «those who lack what is necessary». The 'What is necessary' varies according to time and context. Nowadays, human life needs a basic minimum including a family, a culture, a public life, an interior life, leisure and sport. Misery is not just a matter of the lack of bread; it also means a lack of proper conditions of housing and work; it includes isolation or overcrowding, the lack of time, the absence of ideals and the contempt of others, self-disgust. With Plaquevent (in *Revue Economie et humanisme*, January-February, 1954) we can distinguish five major categories of basic needs, with each category subdivided into five: 1) vital needs: warmth, fresh air, sleep, water, food; 2) needs related to personal achievement: security, possessions, victory, independence, peace; 3) informational needs: sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste; 4) activity needs: movement, games, expression, creation, control; 5) social needs: help, exchanges, understanding, confidence, wonder. All in all, everything that contributes to what is materially most necessary for a human being can also be something that is lacking and therefore a source of poverty. Since poverty is no longer necessarily material, it can affect every human being whatever their financial situation. However, there are always those whose material poverty is the prime cause of all their other wants.

¹⁰⁶ « Adam, where are you? » (MD 64, 1 and 2; Gn 1, 9-10).

Plunged into the darkness of the absence of God, Jesus welcomed in his person every kind of poverty. From then on, everywhere and always, God is found mysteriously identified with the poorest of the poor. Jesus presents the scandal of a God who cries for help, the first victim of the sins of humankind. In every poor person who finds no place in this world, there is Christ, abandoned by God. In his solitude, Jesus embraces the loneliness of all the marginalised: the loneliness created by fear, contempt, hatred, indifference, pride, egoism. This most radical of solitudes confronts each individual in their poverty. In this way it is seen that it is not good for man to be alone, because he is made to love and to be loved. But who needs the friendship of the poor?

It is in fact his love for «all those who are lost» which crucifies Jesus. No-one takes his life from him; it is he who takes it. He is the one who renounces it freely and thus welcomes in his person the multitude of the children of God. He does not jealously cling to his status of Son, but offers to share it with all. In this way he accomplishes the will of God his Father and *gives a face to his suffering* before a human world that is torn and divided, in which the poor and the weak are not recognised or treated as his children. God who provides, as in the manna from heaven, becomes our food in Jesus, in order to gather his lost children. He nourishes us with his poverty. In Jesus' abandonment, we see a poverty which is life-giving. In this poverty lives the trueness of love and likewise *liberation, the synonym of salvation*.

THE VIEW OF FAITH OF A COMMUNITY THAT MEDIATES SALVATION

There can be no Lasallian pedagogy without the self-awareness and realisation of one's nature as a member of a community of faith. A community life, organised to serve the poor and united with God's inexhaustible love, is a source of salvation¹⁰⁷. This community life takes shape for its members according to three essential aspects: spirituality (a passion for

¹⁰⁷ «There is only one God and Father of all, who is above all, who acts in all and is in all » (cf. Ephesians 4, 6).

Christ), mercy (a passion for humanity in the most poor), organisation (realism in line with one's situation)¹⁰⁸. We will try to knit these three aspects together.

In the first place, salvation does not come about because of a need «to do something»; it comes from a view that is informed and converted by faith (Mk 10, 21; Jn. 6, 5). There is no view of faith without love. Through this view of faith, we learn to recognise in other people our brother or sister in God, no matter how poor and socially despised they may be. This vision of brotherhood is a grace received through an authentic community of faith. The society we belong to conditions us and controls what we see, limiting the scope of our generosity. Generally speaking, life in society is dominated by relationships based on strength and power and carries a hierarchical structure. It tends to make the poor invisible, reducing them to silence and pushing to one side those who are weak, uneducated or handicapped. Poverty is sometimes caused by making an absolute of society's outlook. The blinkered view of social or racial prejudices, so superficial and reductionist, makes us strangers to the *mystery* of real individuals.

Jean-Baptiste De La Salle himself admits that he travelled a long way before reaching the point where he could see his «Brothers» in the schoolmasters with whom he was living. His decision to associate himself with the masters opened a new stage in their human relationships. In De La Salle, we can see how a lack of social respect maintains and even aggravates the suffering of the poor. Quite often, it is our lack of humanity that causes most suffering to the poor. An attentive look, on the other hand, 'humanises the poor because it removes them from their social insignificance and saves them from indifference and contempt. Such a look is made possible by faith based on values other than those that are purely social, which often just display our own personality. Our attentiveness to the poor indicates an *interior freedom* vis-à-vis the position of society and its values¹⁰⁹. This proves that true service arises from a pure heart. Happy are the poor in spirit, for they shall see God.

¹⁰⁸ For example, in a situation of poverty, how can anyone organise and find the means necessary to support the needs of the community and the mission?

¹⁰⁹ This liberty depends both on grace and on conquest of oneself.

Nowadays, the different forms of aid and assistance are suspected of being instruments of power or of being the power itself. History shows that they can be just that. It is also legitimate to question the purity of the intentions and the disinterested nature of the benefactions of all those who claim to be serving the poor. Assistance and aid which keep the poor in a state of dependence are to be condemned. The fact is that nobody can serve the poor in a credible way if they remain simply on the level of social assistance, without entering into a communion with the poor. A true service of the poor commits you to *liberating them from within yourself*. That is to say that their liberty begins with your own liberation in relation to yourself¹¹⁰. Unfortunately, we are more concerned with security than liberty, and we act more as domestic beings rather than social beings and still less as beings of «communion». It is not possible to live in communion without living a form of poverty, that is to say of liberty vis-à-vis oneself.

Serving the poor with respect implies doing justice to the humanity in them and in ourselves. Education is the first form of justice due to human beings as such, because it is the way to freeing them for freedom. De La Salle indicates in a number of passages what kind of freedom they are destined for (cf. MA 83,1,2; MD 48,1,2; MR 203,2,2; MD 45,1,2). Here we cite two of them. «Consider that it is an all too common practice among artisans and the poor to allow their children to run free as vagabonds wandering here and there». He observes that the poor have neither the time nor the means to instruct their children, and so these, left to themselves without guidance easily fall into bad habits¹¹¹. «We can rightly say that a child in the habit of sinning has in a sense lost its freedom and is an unfortunate prisoner(...) It is for you the teachers of those you lead to take all possible care to give them the freedom of the children of God. (...) For this you need two things in your dealings with them. The first is gentleness and patience. The second is prudence in repre-

¹¹⁰ DA 201,1; 201,3 ; Declaration 41. This will be developed further in point 3 below.

¹¹¹ De La Salle talks of two types of liberty: one is equivalent to idleness which ends by bringing the children into bad habits; the other is that of the children of God and it results in a virtuous life (cf. MR 194, 1, 1).

hending and correcting them» (MR 203,2,2). «To save» is more than just to *teach and give moral instruction* to children exposed to all sorts of vices and devoid of the skills and habits essential for living in society. The educator only saves by personally living a life that is prophetic, a *life of salvation*, characterised by patience, gentleness and prudence.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE OF THE POOR AND THE SPIRIT OF POVERTY

Saint Paul says: «Brothers, *your vocation is to freedom*. Not that liberty which is used to justify the desires of the flesh, but that which puts us at the service of one another through love» (Gal 5, 13-15; the emphasis is ours). He links this sort of liberty with love. To truly love and serve, the educator must work to liberate him/herself. The wish to serve the poor in a liberating way involves a decision not to act unilaterally as a benefactor. The generosity of the rich can be humiliating and enslaving. Beyond «doing good», the really important thing is «to be loved». That means being «poor and free in oneself»¹¹². Without love, education is easily reduced to *disciplined training*, a straightforward attempt to have power over another. Education includes a dimension of faith, a gamble on the possibility of achieving a *freedom which is communion*. When the teaching relationship is established on this basis, the educator is placed in an uncomfortable situation of chosen powerlessness in the face of the one being educated. In order to work towards salvation, helping to liberate freedom, he/she must experience the educational relationship in a spirit of poverty. Anyone who wishes to educate must choose to live a certain kind of poverty.

The human, spiritual and material resources need for the Lasallian educational mission to the underprivileged are provided for by the founding and organising of a *community of goods, of faith and of zeal*. Such a community commits every member to a process of permanent self-despoliation. The community's *direct or indirect* commitment to service of the

¹¹² «If I distribute all my goods as alms, and I deliver my body to be burned, if I have not love, it benefits me nothing » (1 Cor 13, 3).

underprivileged is expressed in the spirit of poverty that reigns within it. This spirit of poverty also involves each individual in the process of his own salvation. The care for the poor, if it is authentic, entails a questioning of the ordinary way of acting, living, thinking and feeling. It calls for the saving of oneself and the saving of others through one's salvation. Salvation requires action of a spiritual nature. As prisoners of our needs, we naturally have a tendency to ignore the needs of others. Locked into our habitual ways and established methods of teaching, in the ivory tower of our successes, of our social position, of our culture and even of our faith, we are more inclined to a repetition and defense of the established system¹¹³, rather than to a pedagogical creativity which would require us to attend to and help the handicapped and those excluded by the dominant system. Good faith, a good conscience and even good will are not enough to assure the salvation of anyone. Serving the poor supposes in fact the capacity to question in ourselves those ways of being and of thinking which make us blind, deaf and in short insensitive to the real needs around us. All in all, one cannot become an artisan of salvation without establishing a certain poverty in oneself. We fight against poverty by the spirit of poverty inspired by love.

In the time of Jean-Baptiste De La Salle schools were works of charity; today they are directed towards the rights of the child. These rights include «the right of all to an equal guarantee of a place of security allowing for development into a place of generosity» (cf. Zundel, 1996, pp. 309-316). From this point of view, the fundamental right to education is legitimized by the gift of self that each one is called on to make *freely*. This universal call to self-giving means that the spirit of poverty is something expected of everyone, not just of an elite group. If everyone is called to be a centre of *hospitable intimacy*¹¹⁴, the Lasallian educator is called to live and to teach in a spirit of poverty which is a source of freedom. The Lasallian School, which is open to all, is specifically required to promote this spirit. It seems to us that this its way of serving the poor, both direct-

¹¹³ This is called «methodological stubbornness».

¹¹⁴ Virtuous intimacy, hospitable intimacy, suggests the idea of «welcoming others into one's heart» as part of self-giving.

ly and indirectly. Just as the baby begins its existence with the welcome it receives into the world,¹¹⁵ so education contributes to teaching the child how to find and to create hospitality from within.

If the Lasallian school is to meet its vocation as a *school of hospitality*, it must attend to the following: knowing the pupil and his/her family situation; paying careful attention at the time of selection to the details of pupils (and their families) living in poverty and following them up throughout their school careers, in a framework of collaboration and continual consultation of various people involved (families, national and international institutions, associations, authorities, public opinion); avoiding the creation of ghetto schools, either for the rich or the poor; examining the school's functioning and system in terms of the relations between the different contributors to education; developing a pedagogy that is sensitive to the specific family situations, which is open to pupils in need, particularly the underprivileged, and which is attentive to the styles used in learning; encouraging different modes of expression to give children confidence; promoting mutual help and solidarity among the pupils.

A Lasallian school, led by an educational team under permanent continuing formation, gives witness to a universal call to poverty at the heart of the human mystery. By developing a spirit of poverty, it is working for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in this world (cf. EM 4,149,3). The development of the spirit of poverty enables people to live in communion with others and to receive fraternity as a grace (cf. LI 53,4-9; MD 65; MD 77; MF 91; EM 11, 249).

THE LASALLIAN SCHOOL AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE INCARNATION

The Lasallian spirit commits us to disseminating a spirit of poverty so as to produce a society which bears an *ever-widening sense of humanity*. This

¹¹⁵ It is interesting to note that in French the word «*hôte*» indicates both the one who receives hospitality (the host) and the one who gives it (the guest); as if hospitality always involves reciprocal welcoming.

commitment does not look towards a distant fulfillment in some future salvation to be found in heaven. The salvation envisaged is not something for the next life; it consists in *changing* the present life (Guerand, 1979, p. 53). The temptation to escape from our human condition is always present and takes many forms. We dream of «somewhere else», in time and space, where we will be free from suffering, failure, old age, death and sin. It is as if the honeyed voice of the serpent were whispering in our ears «you will be like gods» (Gn 3,4). We dream of riches, power, reassuring security, comfort and social esteem, or even of virtues that testify to our holiness. This attitude hides our refusal to be creatures and **children**. Because of it we refuse to make room in ourselves for **others**. So we put up obstacles to the creation of the new man within us. Humanity is only created from within each individual. The true educator is aware of this because his role is to participate in it.

In the form of a child, God came as it were «to seek from us his salvation» in this world. That is his way of loving us and of teaching us to love at the same time. The work of salvation begins in childhood with the gift of love that this requires. Having brought a child into the world, we must then educate it. We must find and give it the means it needs to be born into the world with its own existence as a gift. Powerless and dependent at birth, the infant can earn nothing by itself. In every family, the mothers spontaneously give preference to the smallest and weakest. They are the ones in greatest need of love and attention, of patience and care. In their case, love is an *urgent, vital, concrete need*. With its concrete need for attention, the child, just like the poor person, calls for our immediate presence. Clearly, «the one who lives in the present is patient, persevering and gentle; he is poor in all things, pure and merciful, because he possesses love in its most beautiful and true form» (Lubich, 2009, p.10). We could also say that love displaces the self in the one it inhabits.

Jean-Baptiste De La Salle, by deciding to educate poor children and to love poverty, has pointed us towards a spirituality of the Incarnation. Through the Incarnation, God determined to **come and love** us in our human condition of flesh and blood, mortal, vulnerable and sinful. Poverty is more than just a vow of religion; it designates a process of new birth and an itinerary by which each individual is born again to the gift

of love and discovers his/her own «heart of flesh». The Lasallian pedagogical experience is an experience of *strength in weakness*. Relationships that are based only on strength and power produce mistrust, divisions and hostility. Any education needs to be based on *communion and trust* as the foundation of human psychology and the conditions for human growth. They are found with difficulty in a context in which the struggle of fierce competition makes us rivals if not enemies of one another. The determination to be the strongest, to defeat the others at all costs does not allow for trust and confidence. A school that is governed in a communitarian manner can soften the spirit of competition and rivalry and promote a spirit of mutual help, co-operation and support. Such an atmosphere facilitates acceptance and inclusion so that individuals can overcome their weaknesses and limitations. The Lasallian School provides an atmosphere that helps to remove the banishment that confines people to themselves¹¹⁶.

From what we have said so far, it is clear that the Lasallian educator needs to promote encounters with pupils, in which both parties are renewed inwardly, and on which depends our ability for encounters with others. What really unites us is not power but the experience of interior poverty. Mother Teresa has said «The primary poverty people have is that of not knowing Christ». In other words, ignorance of the true Life is the first of our poverties. The God in whom we believe as Christians is found in every individual. Salvation is to know God and make him loved. But knowing and loving God come to the same thing (cf. 1 Jn 4, 7-8). The Lasallian School endeavours to expand the human family by opening it up to the source and model of all family life, the Holy Trinity. In every human community we see a shadow outline of the full realisation of the ideal of universal communion which we Christians receive from Christ. This communion is not just a human ideal. In every society there exists a minimum of communion, but the existence of the poor is always a reminder that this communion remains only a partial and one-sided reality.

¹¹⁶ This question from *Genesis* is always there for each of us: «Adam, where are you?» in other words, «Adam, where do you dwell?» If God in the person of the poor comes knocking at the door of our hearts, are we at home? Do we really live our lives, or are we always somewhere else?

Service in a spirit of poverty is directed towards creation in us, individually and together, of a true *intimacy*, and this is a work that is both human and divine¹¹⁷. When De La Salle demands that the educator should have the tenderness of a mother for the pupils, especially the poorest¹¹⁸, he is highlighting the need for a love that is disinterested and gratuitous, in the way God loves. He is describing a situation in which Jesus-Christ would see in an educator both *father and mother*. «You are under the obligation to teach the children of the poor; you should, therefore, have a special affection for them, and seek their spiritual good as much as you are able, looking on them as the members of Jesus-Christ, and as his loved ones» (MF 80, 3,2). What is this, other than to *offer the Father a heart of flesh* in which he can love all his children?

In the educational perspective of Lasallian spirituality as *reconsidered here*, we do not make a separation between on the one hand temporal goods of lowly earthly value, and hence despicable, and on the other hand those things that are eternal, highly spiritual and therefore worthy of esteem. There are only good or bad uses made of these God-given worldly goods, usages dictated by egoism, pride, greed, (in a word: sin). And this applies to both «material» and «spiritual» goods.

CONCLUSION: GRATUITY AND THE MEANING OF SALVATION

The salvation offered by a Lasallian school is not limited to material satisfaction or social success. It cannot be reduced to just teaching the poor in order to enable them to *escape from their indigence*. To content oneself with action at that level would be simply to prepare the pupils to find hospitality in this world. Children, who learn to speak, think, read and write, will give hospitality to the world in themselves. They find their place in a world that they understand and where they are understood, integrated and have their rights respected. But when it is the cult of autonomy, an

¹¹⁷ Political, moral and religious.

¹¹⁸ «If you show towards them the firmness of a father to keep them far from disorder, you must also have the tenderness of a mother for them, to receive them and to do them all the good that depends on you» (MF 101 3,2).

exclusive idea of one's individual rights, which installs a person in the world, salvation is no more than a *social grace*. In such a context, anything that allows an individual to shine or be loved, admired and sought after can be called a grace.

If we do not have a right idea about salvation, our conception of gratuity also remains sketchy. Gratuity of schooling, at least in organisation terms, is a basic principle of any society claiming to be democratic. It fits in with the goal of guaranteeing to all the opportunity to have access to a decent life. Conscious of their dignity, the poor themselves would not wish to have total, automatic or systematic gratuity. They feel honoured and respected when they are asked to contribute something. The salvation aimed at in Lasallian education is part of the idea of social justice which allows each one the possibility of self-donation. But the realisation of this salvation goes far beyond the creation of a society open for all.

Over and above the struggle for gratuity so as to makes schools accessible to the poor, Lasallian education tries, in the varying contexts, to reveal a radical gratuity: that of the salvation of God. The only salvation is that in which individuals leave behind «their self-sufficiency». Salvation is first of all a divine grace and is out of reach for our human efforts. Experiencing the gratuity of salvation, however, is something that is within our reach. For that, we need to set out on the path of faith. Blinded by our claims to self-sufficiency, we fail to understand the real meaning of gratuity. This explains the fact that we are often strangers to gratitude (cf. Saint-Jean in Rayez et Viller, 1967, pp. 776-781). Gratitude presupposes a belief in the gratuity of salvation. It expresses itself *in the joy of knowing we are saved and in zeal* which is a prolongation of the generosity of which we are the beneficiaries. Gratitude is the memory of the heart, and it appeals naturally to recognition, the memory of the mind and of life. Our service in a spirit of poverty concretises in some way our gratitude and our recognition.

According De La Salle, the essential task of the educator is to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, making ready his own heart as well as those of his disciples who listen to his instructions (cf. MA 168,2,1; MD 2,1,1). To fulfill this role properly, De La Salle recommends us to work

for a renewal of the *interior person* (cf. MD 2,1,2; MD 3,1,2). To renew one's sense of spirituality means precisely to become attentive to an interior power of creativity, of re-creation. The ultimate goal of education is to «touch the hearts» and De La Salle sees that as a miracle (cf. MD 3,2,2). To attain this goal, educators must fight against any idea of domination over or of manipulation of those who are entrusted to them. In addition, they must make mental prayer their first and principal daily practice (cf. RC 4, 1), “Meditating on life and meditating on others is the surest way of respecting their divine vocation and their secret lives. Simply *remaining kneeling interiorly* is the best way of arousing in them that divine life which they have in them and which is their greatness and their joy” (Zundel, 1996, pp. 370-371; the emphasis is ours).

Chapter 13 - A CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING HOW TO “LIVE WELL”, FOR GOOD LIVING, FOR LIVING THE GOOD LIFE¹¹⁹

Patricio Bolton fsc

The purpose of this institute is to give a Christian education to children; and it is for this purpose that the Brothers conduct schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening, *they can teach them to live a good life*, by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and inspiring them with Christian maxims, and so give them a suitable education (RC 1,3).

It is necessary to revitalize the charism, transforming it such that it can mean in today's perspective what in fact it meant in the past (Torres, 2000).

The original Lasallian schools “tried to respond to the educational and pastoral needs of the children of the people and of the society. Among other initiatives and things they brought about, the schools searched for, and slowly clarified, their identity” (cf. Lauraire, 2011).

¹¹⁹ The original Spanish title is, “Un curriculum para aprender a “vivir bien”, al buen vivir, al buen convivir”. Immediately, one can note that the play on words is not as evident in English [Translator's Note].

The actual Lasallian expression is “to live well”. Today, that expression has a neoliberal and individualist connotation. Thus, looking into the deeper meaning that John Baptist wished to give it, we speak more here of living well, of good living, and of living the good life in the fullest sense, as well as in a community, integral and Gospel-based sense. The metaphor of the Reign of God, brought about by Jesus, is the image closest to the idea of living well, of good living, of living a good life. The Andean expression, *Sumak Kawsay* goes in a similar direction: “The utopia of Good Living is based on a cosmic conception of reality, perceived in the Andean lands of Yala Abya, thousands of years ago. There was a proposed way of living called *Sumak Kawsay* by the Quechua, which includes all human society and all the forms of life on land. There need not be inequalities in rights, between natural life and human life, or between men and women, or between indigenous and non-indigenous, or among social groups, or over scopes of territory... There has to be favorable conditions for all living things. That which sustains, strengthens and develops this life in its rich diversity is the quality of interrelationships that points towards a cosmic community. Such a community is constructed amidst diversity through the principles of *Sumak Kawsay*: reciprocity, solidarity, equality, mutual respect for difference. It is supported by all” (Bremer, 2012).

There are many reasons that seem to have caused schools today to lose awareness of their task in shaping the identity of individuals and societies. Market, family pressures, educational competitiveness, emerging educational concerns, acceleration, disruption, clientele, the need to publish, the lack of an educational community, the lack of teacher training, the lack of social and political orientation, the absence of authentic religious experience, disastrous education policies – these are some of the many terms we would use to account for this complexity: a school today, which has lost an integrated approach in what, in effect, it offers as a framework of meaning, for the shaping of the identity of persons and societies. Nowadays, very often, the school has become a fragmented and merely replicative place, dispensing disjointed knowledge.

We need to rethink the school and the teaching and learning *processes as processes of subjectivation and construction of culture with a Christian agenda*. How does the school help in the formation of subjectivities from a humanizing and Christian perspective in this post-modern society and global capitalism that we live? What educational processes should we be able to design for the Lasallian school to once again mean “for the perspective “ what it meant in its beginnings: the possibility of critical and Christian insertion of new generations into this time and place, now and in the future?

The original Lasallian School was geared towards the concrete needs of the artisans and the poor. And this, despite the serious difficulties of the time: the *misfortunes of the time*, as historians say. Amid these difficulties, John Baptist de la Salle and the first Brothers were able to propose a school that *affirmed their identity*, with the intention of integrating them into the urban society of the 17th century, into the post-Tridentine Church and into the educational system in the process of organizing itself” (Lauraire, 2011, p. 7). Brother Léon Lauraire defines Lasallian pedagogy as a practical and theoretical pedagogy: it was experienced and reflected on, lived and recorded. But also, and above all, as a utopian pedagogy, “through its optimism, its confidence in the transformative potential of the school, to benefit the children of artisans and the poor, but the whole of society as well. Hence, his model of a school capable of ensuring the development of the child at different levels: professional, person-

al, social and Christian, a school that would contribute to the building of a more fraternal, more just and a more Gospel-based Christian society” (Lauraire, 2011, p. 29).

This is the reflection that we wish to propose in this paper: how to offer a curriculum that would contribute to the creation of personal and collective identities, according to the “the spirit of Christianity”, as John Baptist de La Salle liked to say. Because it is necessary to rethink the school of today with the conviction of the first Lasallian community: a school can and should transform; the school can help to form new men and new women, and should do so. The Lasallian School, from all that it is and teaches, can offer meaningful signs for the Christian configuration of one’s life and of culture.

A Lasallian school with a foundational mandate to teach Christian living, and no longer in the context of Christianity, but of growing secularism¹²⁰, – what kind of curriculum should it be able to construct? Many people open schools today, and in very varied forms. Schools with the most advanced technological means are available for anyone with some resources. But schools that would be animated by communities which would help to configure the life of persons and societies in a Christian way, from a standpoint of searching for a society of greater social justice, equality, a better life for all – this is up to us Lasallians – to conceptualize them, to carry them out – together with others who are willing to join us and with those whom we join.

SCHOOL AND PROCESSES OF CONSTITUTING SUBJECTIVITY AND CULTURE

The school helps in the processes of constituting subjectivity and culture, today and always, whether or not it knows this, whether or not it likes to.

This is so and has always been so; it goes beyond every school and educator be they aware of it or not, regardless of political or religious affilia-

¹²⁰ Secularism [should be understood here], not in the negative sense, but as a socio-historic and cultural process, of the separation of stories, of powers, the differentiation of the various dimensions of human life.

tions, be it a hope or not of the educational activity. All educational activity involves relationships, experiences, knowledge, feelings and evaluations. All these elements are necessary in the processes that shape personal and collective identities. These may be conscious or not, determined or reproduced. But even so, they nevertheless mould identities.

As individuals and as social groups, we are what others tell us, what we tell ourselves, and what we say of ourselves. We are our history; we are the sum total of experiences and valuations; we are who relate with us; we are the choices we make; the values we embrace and the way we look at, and act in the world; we are the knowledge we incorporate for constructing our perspectives, a valuing system for behavior in the world. We are what we are constructing; choosing what comes to us at the moment of deciding. We are what we are experiencing, and our way of reacting to what we are experiencing. We are what we take up to become part of our nature, and what we ask ourselves about. We are what we are silent about, what we ignore, what we know, what stresses us. We are the representations about ourselves and the new configurations that we are setting. We are what we love and what we hate. We are the body; we are the space and time that we live and what we imagine about them. We are the gaze of the other and our own gaze. We are...

That which we call personal or social identity is no other than the configuration of a particular narrative which links together in a singular story the experience of living by a person or a people/society.

And the school¹²¹ is a fundamental place in the experience of the shaping of the identity of individuals and societies, in the experience of helping to build those stories. But the school is not a shaping experience that has no time reference; rather, it is historical. So its story – the educational story – intersects with other stories that bring, help and/or stress the forming of identity. Today we can, for example, talk about the stories of mass media, the stories of the Market, the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives, the social stories, the family stories, etc.

¹²¹ And all intentionally educational and evangelizing experience. It is hoped that the reader can take from this generalized reading and find applications in his or her own context. When we speak here of schools, we could refer as well to both formal and non-formal educational projects.

Whether or not it is perceived, whether it is lived with joy or in suffering, whether or not it is intentional, the school figures heavily as a narrative in the shaping of identity. This school story helps confirm other social stories or could be presented as an alternative, countercultural, counter-hegemonic narrative. Whether or not we want to think of it this way, whether or not we want to make it explicit, the school is a narrative of meaning (for better or for worse) that we offer to students, teachers, society. These are meanings close to who we are, who Man is, who Woman is, what the world is, what relationships we should live, what we can expect, what... The school, for what it does and for what it is silent about, for what it offers and what it lives, is a narrative of meaning that is offered to new generations.

This is the story that must be discerned. And it is from this perspective that we have to think, discern, and build the curriculum, all curricula, as a contribution to the narrative processes that shape identity.

LASALLIAN SCHOOL, SUBJECTS AND CHRISTIAN CULTURE

The Lasallian School of the community of the beginnings was well aware of this: all that was done would help in the creation of new subjects and a new Christian culture.

La Salle's action is part of a movement which hopes to give an organic response to the problem of urban poverty and the incorporation of the poor into an emergent modern society. Elementary education will be considered as the basic resource for such incorporation. In the Christianity in which La Salle still lived, incorporation into society was identified with incorporation into the Catholic Church (Rodríguez Mancini, 2001).

The Lasallian community of the beginnings lived a process of looking at the "serious drawbacks" that cause poverty (cf. MTR 194,1) and of reading them from [a perspective of] faith in God, "who is so good and wills that everyone come to the knowledge of Truth" (MTR 193,1,1). That school, as a community project is the result of an exercise of double discernment: the reality of the poor and the will of God in history. Its educational project, its narrative of meaning, is the result of community dis-

cernment in the light of faith. Thus, for today as in the past, it is fair to say that there is no Lasallian educational project without a community that discerns together the realities of present day poverty in the light of faith. It is within these dynamics, that such Lasallian educational projects may then be read, as means of salvation given by God to those who live this impoverished reality.

Therefore, the framework is simple:

- a community that goes to the reality of poverty, where God dwells and from where He invites [the community] to its transformation and to our transformation;
- a community which, upon going to the poor to listen to their reality and to God among them, incarnates itself in that history, elaborating an educational goal, as a reading of the will of God for this history; and,
- develops an educational project (comprehensive curriculum/narrative of meaning¹²²) coming from communal discernment, and which lives as a means of salvation of God for that reality. This educational project is an invitation to be experienced in a new way, by both educators and learners.

The community of the beginnings was aware of its helping form new personal and social identities, and in this, that it was shaping itself. Its clarity came from knowing to where they were to journey together, from the community definition of educational goals of everything that they were to undertake. Its educational practice – the result of community discernment in the light of the Gospel – had a perspective that was at the same time, eschatological, religious and historical. Thus we see that the result

¹²² What we understand here as school has four facets: the institutional matrix (institutional culture, how it is run, its lifestyle, how relationships are maintained, the economy, technology, space, time, bodies); its predominant culture (values it proposes, which cut across all its educational proposals), the web of meaning it offers (the particular curriculum: the obligatory and elective academic areas, how it organizes knowledge and process for teaching and learning it, the evaluation system) and the spaces for explaining the Gospel (spaces for religious formation and catechesis, celebrations). This is the comprehensive/general curriculum. The particular curriculum is one of four facets: the web of meanings offered.

of each educational practice, not only had to do with an educator's eschatological bliss: rejoicing to "see in the sky many (students) who helped to enjoy such great happiness" (MTR 208,2,1). These practices, more than anything, had as a primary purpose, to see that these children "conduct themselves wisely, know their religion well, have compassion" (MTR 207,2,2), live "according to the spirit of Christianity", "live with justice and mercy (...) practicing good works" (MTR 207,3,1), all inspired by the Gospel.

The students could "be employed in a job", "learn to read and write" (MTR 194,1,2), live according to "the spirit of Christianity" (MTR 194,3,1) and were attracted to live out the Gospel (cf. MTR 197,3,1), especially the practice of truth, tenderness, forgiveness and "love for another as Christ loved them" (MTR 198,3,2). It was not about acquiring an external moral code, but an invitation to live "in this freedom of the children of God that Jesus Christ has purchased for us" (MTR 203,2,2). "To behave properly" in relation to good habits, to social inclusion, to knowing that oneself is a part of society and the Church, was not only the result of incorporating a set of rules and customs, but above all, of the acquisition of a new spirit: "look at everything with the eyes of faith, attribute all to God and doing nothing except in view of God" (RC 2). This is what forming the spirit of Christianity will consist of. The shaping of identity, which those of the community will aim for, for themselves and for those they teach, will consist of this. Because the educational project is a community project and a personal project. The offer of meaning is for one and all. And this has to do with the will of God, with "the glory of God."

It is from this clear educational purpose, communally discerned in the face of reality, that the community develops an educational curriculum that will help "to live the good life" (RC 1.3), by the shaping of a life in the Spirit (cf. MF 171,1). But when we say it developed a curriculum, we do not mean that it made a list of curricular areas (disciplines, areas) and contents to be taught (curriculum in the narrow sense), but, more than anything else, including the former, it designed an entire experience to assist the formation of the identity of these children (a comprehensive curriculum). School resources, schedules, rules, types of relationships,

temporal and spatial organization, regulations, teaching methods, manner of clothing, knowledge, etc. Everything, absolutely everything, was put to use in service of this educational goal: the formation of the identity of the subjects and of the society. All experiences and activities that were proposed, along with the classroom content to work on, meant to offer elements for individual and collective formation according to the formative story of Christian identity itself.

The Lasallian educational project involved:

- an educational goal, which was a response to the reality, reflected on by a community;
- a comprehensive curriculum, which was an expanded framework for the shaping of identity;
- and a narrower, particular curriculum, which were the curricular spaces that shape identity from some organized knowledge that was taught, learned, evaluated; and,
- a community of educators taking up this same formative story and offering themselves as signs of that which they invited [others] to live¹²³.

COMMUNITY DYNAMICS AND UPDATE CHALLENGES

Today, we would like to retrieve the community dynamics of the beginnings, which took up the challenges of that time, in the construction of the curriculum.

There are many challenges that we have today, if we would like to consider education from this perspective: the curriculum as a narrative constructed by a community as the fruit of the discernment of a community of educators, considering the concrete here and now, and providing meaning for the shaping of the identity of individuals and societies. Without wishing to exhaust everything, we can name three challenges.

First challenge: *the creation of communities of educators, as animators of processes that help the formation of subjectivities and culture.* And this has

¹²³ La Salle is going to emphasize a lot, the power of the teacher's example over any words (cf. MTR 202,3).

become a real challenge in the cultural times¹²⁴ that we are living in, because of everything that the building of communities in schools involves, and all that the retrieval of this task of accompanying processes for the shaping of identity implies, as a fundamental task of the educational act.

The second challenge is *to take up, as a community, the reality into which the educational project is introduced*¹²⁵, *to build with and from, and to dialogue with and from, this reality, a curriculum of meaning, allowing us to shape ourselves, insofar as we are subjects of the here and now, from a Christian perspective and a better social justice perspective.* It is our challenge to retrieve a key role in raising a real and possible hope for humankind and the planet, retrieve a key role in enabling an alternative life, good living, living well, living the good life, from the comprehensive curriculum and the specific curriculum we offer. Only by asking ourselves, “What reality are we living?” or “What kind of man, woman and society do we

¹²⁴ Expanding and contextualizing this challenge, we can say, without going into much detail, that neo-liberalism imprinted a technocratic perspective, where many educators are merely technicians who have to implement a number of procedures and preset curriculum, which is presented as neutral and apolitical. We educators live a largely fragmented consciousness. Nowadays, there is a devaluation of educational work that exists in many educators. There is, in many places, an absence of a strong formation for teachers that integrates sociological, anthropological, philosophical, spiritual and educational perspectives. In the school, the organizational and the functional perspectives are usually given more weight, to the detriment of a communitarian and systemic perspective of education. There is a tendency to regard the student as a client, through a neo-capitalist reading of educational activity: and “clients” are those that shape the social meaning of the educational activity (and which very often have to do with the re-production of class). Alongside this, there is often a dominant Market perspective, which only seeks skilled labor (output) from the educational processes. Proposal projects for publication in many educational institutes outweigh the spaces for the discernment and reflection of the communities of educators, conditioning the meaning of educational work, and depriving us educators from critical reflection about educational work: Why am I going to teach this? Why am I going to teach? What kind of man, woman, societies do we want to help shape, as an educational community? The customs and rituals that have become second nature in many schools have much weight, and prevent any and all reflective, critical exercise. It is difficult for us to design, in many places, processes of evangelization for educators, which help them live a true experience of God, and allow them to integrate their life experiences, their dreams, their task, their limits, their wisdom, their view of the world... How the work of educators has been organized, which makes them move constantly most of the time, makes the formation of a community of educators difficult.

¹²⁵ We live in an increasingly unequal world. The poor are becoming poorer and the rich richer. Social injustice grows and generates violence. The promise of Modernity, equality and development for everyone, did not happen. Social fragmentation goes on unabated; taking on new forms, and for us,

want to help build” can we think of educational goals, and thus the new curriculum. The starting point of all Lasallian curricula is the definition of a goal that is explicit, clear, conscious, stated and taken up in confrontation with reality, and is associated with social justice, integral and sustainable human development, participatory democracy and radical citizenship, the establishment of a social system of eco-justice, the fight against poverty and inhuman inequality.

And a third challenge is *to understand the knowledge to be transmitted and constructed insofar as it is a consideration, and evaluation of, the world; as tools that allow insertion and action in the world, from a Christian and liberative stance*. We have moved from a highly academic and encyclopedic curriculum, which proposed uncritical and rote memorization to arrive today, in many ways, at an activism, of doing for the sake of doing, without helping students in the construction of meaningful knowledge. There is a tendency to repeat curricula, rather than creating them. Curricula are regarded more from their disciplinary logic and rarely from the meaning that is offered with the curricular selection and organization.

school men and women, educational fragmentation is of particular interest, because it ensures the perpetuation of the unequal distribution of the goods of humanity. Social fragmentation has reached such levels that a whole series of violations of human rights, the rights of minorities and the rights of children – a particularly important issue for us Lasallians – becomes the norm. Historically, we have failed to build systems of state representation that take charge of the social processes of the democratization of goods, culture, rights, justice. The market and globalized capital continue to concentrate power, bringing along effects such as economic crisis and instability, capital flight, rising levels of joblessness and impoverishment. Drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, pornography rings and child prostitution, alcohol and all types of drug abuses, insecurity – these are some of the evils of globalized and powerful capital, which always find allies in corrupt governments and officials. The environmental and ecological crisis is breaking out everywhere, and the environmentalists sound the alarms everywhere, yet they are not able to substantially amend lifestyles, modes of production and consumption that bring the planet closer to its complete destruction. Problems of land, mineral resources, pollution, environmental disasters, climate change, water scarcity, population displacement and migration, are some of the many names given to all these alterations of nature and ecosystem. The social media effectively impose a way of life and a way of consumption that promotes the transnational and globalized market. They are faithful servants at the service of the entertainment industry, consumerism, of apocalyptic and demonizing logic. Meanwhile, postmodern culture spreads its slogans of exclusion, isolation-encapsulation, immediate gratification, immediacy, distrust, and competition. Generations of adolescents and youth are particularly sensitive to all this – the logic that makes individualistic idolatry of immediate gratification – and they do not see that the sacrifice of many lives at its main altar is the practical consequence of their choices.

It is necessary to construct and transmit knowledge that help challenge and dismantle perspectives and actions in the world which dehumanize. Knowledge that:

- enables cultural negotiation, the dialogue between ways of living and understanding culture today, and new, more liberating and Gospel-based forms possible;
- helps dismantle male chauvinist, authoritarian, individualistic, predatory, consumerist, dehumanizing perspectives;
- helps name new experiences that are counter-hegemonic to dehumanizing experiences now assumed to be natural;
- allows new evaluations on ways, now assumed to be natural, of seeing the world and understanding social realities, of judging and stereotyping the other, especially the other who is poor, different, considered unequal, distinct, commonly regarded as abnormal, dangerous and an enemy;
- allows a systemic, critical and global look at the world and social relations, at man and political and economic systems, at religious experience and daily living;
- helps to break with a scholastic logic of knowledge and with a positivist view of it;
- be they multiple, are seen to be of distinct nature, of different origins, and constructed in various ways;
- helps bring into dynamic interaction, the word and the action of men and women who build knowledge, in search of another world possible, the Kingdom of God revealed in Jesus;
- arises from questions such as: What is the dehumanizing logic which we will help unmask? What new social logic will we help build? To raise what kind of experience of God, what kind of experience of the other, of otherness, of the poor, and of the other sectors of the people? What new view of the world do we want to help build, what new evaluations, what new hopes, what new judgments, what new forms of reasoning? What socio-historical processes would we like to help push forward, to empower, to enable? In other words, what are the social causes, the causes of the

people, which we want to involve ourselves in, those in which we want to have a stake? In another manner of speaking, what are the challenges of the times, the social concerns that demand immediate attention, the cries of the victims and the hopes of humanity that we must address and take up in the curriculum?

We need to understand knowledge as a tool that forms the subject and culture, and take it as such: it shapes world views, ways of understanding and valuing the world, ways of positioning oneself and acting in the world, ways of falling in love with, and dreaming of, the world; ways of living the world in religious and political [ways].

We also need to think about the experiences that lead to new learning. Educational experiences that make us, educators and students, listen to the cries of the victims of the system and their hopes that make us listen to our complicity with the dynamics of violence and death in the world we live in, which makes us listen to our dreams and our noblest and most humanizing ideals; educational experiences that lead to new knowledge with emancipatory meaning.

Summarizing¹²⁶:

Communities of educators and evangelizers animating educational and evangelizing processes that shape subjects.

Taking up reality with faith and a critical eye, to build and dialogue with it, a curriculum of meaning, with Christian and social justice viewing lenses, from an educational purpose determined together [in community].

Knowledge taught and built together, that challenge reality, forming new meanings, new values, new actions, new worlds.

¹²⁶ And these challenges are not [only] with reference to the definition of a Lasallian educational project today, but also with reference to the configuration of the religious community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Because, as we hinted at above, the creation of a project which helps shape identity, of a project on curriculum, was not just a project for facilitating the formation of the identity of others, but rather, at the same time, was a project to help the forging of one's own identity. Hence, the *Conduct of Schools* cannot be read without the *Rule of the Community*, and the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and [the *Meditations*] for *Sundays and Feast days*. They cannot be read either without the *Duties of the Christian*, and so on. For the duties of one's own salvation, are the duties of one's own state (cf. RP 3,0,3). But that is another story.

To speak today of the new curriculum for the Lasallian school is to talk about processes for constituting communities of Brothers and/or lay Lasallians, who looking at situations of poverty today, recognize God who dwells in, and invites an overcoming of, these realities. Communities, who from this dialogue with reality and with God elaborate an educational goal, read from the Faith. And from that aim, develop a general (comprehensive) curriculum and a more particular curriculum, which help to offer provide elements for the formation of new personal and social identities.

CURRICULUM TO LIVE WELL

Taking up these challenges to build a curriculum that would be from a Christian and liberative perspective; that would be an offer of meanings, for us to learn to live well, to good living, and to live the good life¹²⁷.

Three community steps in the process of curriculum development from this perspective:

- Listen to the culture.
- Define the pedagogical, political and pastoral purpose of the educational action.
- Design the curricular project, from a liberative and Christian perspective.

Listen to the culture¹²⁸

But, what should be listened to in constructing a curriculum? We have to begin to hear everything that happens in the lives of students, their families and their neighborhoods, of organizations and institutions around us, of the men and women of this time, but identifying different listening levels.

¹²⁷ "Let us then be, of our time, dearest Brothers, as the saints were [of their time], as our venerable Father was, especially; let us also be of our land, just as the Saint of Saints, our Divine Master and Model was ... Let us love it, let us bind ourselves to it, ... that its teaching may have, in a certain sense, local color..." (Circ. 21, Brother Superior General Irlide, January 6, 1881).

¹²⁸ "Within certain limits, transforming the representations can transform the world" (Pavcovich, 2010, p.79).

It is one thing to hear anecdotes and events, everyday realities and experiences, and it is another to hear the deepest feelings of a people, and the cultural wisdom that is intertwined with this worldview. It is listening to these deep feelings, and constructing a curriculum from them, which can foster processes of subjectivation¹²⁹ and the building of culture.

We understand then that the curriculum from this perspective is not merely a sequencing of unconnected bits of knowledge, which is decontextualized or which only follow the [internal] logic of a discipline. The curriculum must, above all, be able to stand as the design for the processes for the construction of learning and experiences to be lived-out that

¹²⁹ The Subject is the doer of his/her actions, the one who acts according to his/her own decision and will, the one who is the protagonist of his/her acts, bringing their [distinctive] mark and personal originality. The Subject is the actor-author, who writes his scripts and sets his reasons into play. The Subject has the ability for intelligent knowledge, insofar as he is able to differentiate himself and know himself as autonomous, with a critical distance from the object. To emphasize these elements of decision, autonomy, freedom, originality, critical distance, intelligence, personal responsibility, is to speak of the critical Subject, the autonomous Subject, and the historical Subject. On this critical differentiation from the object, insofar as it is Other, insofar as a far-off discourse, insofar as it is words spoken from other interests, other realities, other places, Heidegger will speak of the authentic Subject and the inauthentic Subject. The inauthentic Subject is that which is not spoken of, not narrated, not named from its history and its decisions, but is spoken of, named, pronounced by foreign discourses, which are assumed to be its own, as second nature to it, as real, as universal.

In critical theories, the Subject is the person who positions himself as an agent of change and transformation insofar as he is able to objectify the meanings that he lives with, and which mark him. The Subject can select, decide, reconvert these meanings that identify him and that he defines, taking the most liberative meanings. The Subject is the most salient characteristic of the "human spirit seen in opposition to the external world, in any of the relationships of meaning or knowledge, and in opposition to himself as well, in terms of consciousness" (Royal Spanish Academy).

To become a subject in proximity and at a distance, in encounter and in dialogue, in listening and speaking, in autonomy and in relationship, in passion and in action. As far as we are concerned, subjectivity makes the qualities of the subject conscious acts. The process of Subjectivation [i.e., becoming a Subject] is the way in which a person will develop a range of skills, abilities, knowledge, sensitivity, skills, ways of being, which constitute him as an autonomous, critical, historical subject. Subjectivity does not appear in the dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy. It is a term recently used in some areas of psychoanalysis to discuss processes of identity formation, in differentiating the intra- and the inter-subjective. It helps our reflections on education, to refer to the way in which we become Subjects when we have our own perspective and consciousness, in the schools, in the processes involved in relationships, experiences and knowledge. We are captives to certain perceptions of ourselves and our behavior, thinking that what we do and what we believe we are is what makes us who we are; we are products of our practices. Subjectivation is the term used to refer to the process by which we become subjects, i.e., when we objectify what we have been constituted of, [or what has shaped us], and in doing so, we articulate a more authentic narrative of the "I"/"Self".

help to shape new meanings from the present meanings. Hence, we talk of curriculum as a network of humanizing and Christian meanings that are offered in the teaching and learning processes. We understand curriculum as an opportunity for dialogue between knowledge and social meanings that are hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, dominant and liberating. We understand curriculum as an experience that enables dialogue and cultural negotiation, seeking the creation of more Gospel-based and liberating personal and social meanings.

The curriculum, through this viewing lens, is the chart for a Gospel-based and critical dialogue between the educational community and today's culture. What we should be able to hear, in order to construct a curriculum that subjectivizes and builds culture, is the core, the center, the very core of the culture of a people, the way a group of men and women understand, believe, imagine and act their relationships within themselves, with others, with nature, with history, with things, and with transcendence. We understand culture as a socio-historical construction, as the way of being, and remaining in being, of a people. Culture is the way a social group sets up, understands, lives, reproduces and transforms the social, artistic, political and economic dynamics. It is the way people shape the "day-to-day" [*commonness*] of their existence. These configurations of the present (actions and meanings) are the result of social and cultural representations that are internalized. They result from the webs of meaning woven into the fabric of their concrete historical relations. These meanings weave the ways in which relationships are built, the ways of being in the world. These social and cultural representations are ways to see, judge, act, live and appreciate the world.

The social and cultural representations that we deal with and which shape us are not given once and for all. Within a certain range, and under certain conditions, they change. It is new experiences, knowledge, relationships and meanings constructed that weave new representations and replace the old representations.

The construction of meanings and social and cultural representations do not arise simply from conscious deliberation, but are mostly woven from everyday experience and the interweaving of various discourses that we

deal with, especially the dominant ones –the discourses of communication media and the market discourses. From these discourses that name us and name reality, meanings and actions on what man is, what woman is, what family is, what neighborhood is, who the other is, how we ought to relate to the other, the place each one should occupy in society, what I should expect from my life, what I can do, what is valuable, and so on, are configured, but always in tension with other counter-hegemonic discourses. The culture is shaped by the practice of discourse, which shapes identity from the multiple crisscrossing of discourses that explain (title, name, stereotype/pigeonhole, label, enable, disable, determine) the social practices of individuals and groups.

To work with culture is to unravel the dominant discourses that oppress and dehumanize¹³⁰. It is to “dismantle”, in processes of elaboration and analysis, the internalized representations and how these shape everyday life. It is to generate experiences for reading, understanding and judging the way of being present in the world, attempting to set up new ways of being present, ways that are more humanizing, more liberating, from the setting up of new representations that allow new positions, new relationships, new behavior¹³¹. It is enabling experiences that allow us to break the habitual ways and make new paths, hear new stories, build new relationships, learn new knowledge, new shape new worlds possible, dream of and desire new horizons.

And these new ways generally have to do with going out to encounter the poor and victims of this neo-capitalist system we live in. Because the dominant social representations present in the world today, are the perspectives that make the existence of victims invisible and the dynamics that

¹³⁰ To work in an educational sense with the culture of the Subjects through the teaching and learning processes, is to work on “the explanation of the mechanisms of domination in the dominated” (Pavcovich, 2010, p.27) which are present in these representations that are acted and lived out.

¹³¹ Social representations are “the subjective structural conditions representing the margins of conditioning or freedom from which social agents reasonably evaluate changes in their daily lives” (Pavcovich, 2010, p.28). To enable dialogic processes around social representations of educational subjects is to help them to question the changes that they incorporate into their daily lives, the strategies that they create to live and survive, to connect themselves; it is to provide a framework so that everyone can work on ways that connect people, on relationships, on daily routines and actions/decisions that shape their lives, and on the deep meanings that keep these day-to-day things together.

make them such. Helping to “dismantle dominant perspectives” is to encourage oneself to see the dynamics that make the other a victim and impoverished. This is not a simple task in this world, which values the self-referenced perspective. Thus, all good curricular processes should lead towards meeting the poor and our conversion to their cause. It was the meeting of La Salle with those poor teachers, with those poor children, with the 17th century educational movement, which set him face to face with a God who called him to conversion and set him on undertaking new paths for his life and for the life of the others.

From this perspective, a Lasallian curriculum would be a curriculum that:

- enables dialogue with experiences to reveal social representations involved and to judge them with a Christian discernment from where the poor and victims are;
- makes new experiences possible, experiences which, mediated by the educational dialogue, inaugurates new representations which question those already existing;
- presents knowledge as an important structuring element for the reading and understanding of, and action in, the world; and,
- accompanies the progressive personal and social synthesis, shaping new, more liberating and more Gospel-based subjectivities and cultural modes.

The dominant culture of globalized capitalism seeks to impose itself, imposing meanings, a logic, ways of being and acting. It seeks to impose representations, meanings and values that shape class *habitus*¹³². It seeks

¹³² It is in this sense that we can use the concept of *habitus* of Pierre Bourdieu, as the “understanding of the reasonableness of the predispositions to act more in one way than another, within a vision of what is and what is not for us, as part of being history-in-the-flesh (embodied), but which also includes the generative capacity of social and relational practices” (Pavcovich, 2010). A curriculum that subjectivizes and constructs culture is a curriculum that is organized around experiences that allow the educative word (knowledge) and liberating dialogue, around the *habitus* of a particular social group, in this time and place, allowing this dialogue to help deconstruct hegemonic representations that dehumanize, and build new representations and meanings based on the local culture. “The *habitus* are systems of lasting and transferable, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as generative and organizing principles of practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to an end without presuming the conscious pursuit of goals and the

to impose itself as legitimate and legitimizing, devaluing other modes of knowledge, other perspectives, other evaluations. The dominant representations tend to present themselves as unifying, universalizing, natural and normalizing perspectives. In ongoing processes of symbolic violence and cultural violence, they seek to make their meanings as part of our nature. The dominant culture creates knowledge that generates meaning for the perpetuation of modes of relationships that accommodate the interests of the dominant class. To listen to culture, understood in all this complexity, in order to build the curriculum is to think of the school as a place for unmasking these forms of symbolic violence and for the creation of new forms of knowledge that would allow looking at the world in a more humanizing and Gospel-based way, enabling living and acting in the world in a more human and Gospel-based way¹³³.

*Defining the Purpose*¹³⁴

express domain of the operations necessary for achieving them, objectively “regulated” and “regular”, without being the product of obedience to rules, and at the same time, all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of an orchestra conductor” (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 92). “By predisposition, we mean the tendency to act, perceive, evaluate, choose, certain things more than others, more of one over the other in a certain way. Further, the *habitus* defines ‘what is for us’ and ‘what is not for us’, the thinkable and the unthinkable’, trying to make a correlation between the objective and subjective conditions”. They are like the rules of the social field in which it is immersed. They are unconscious practices in most cases, or non-rational [actions], even if they may be reasonable. The *habitus* are the ways in which socio-economic structures take shape. They function to structure the practice of agents. They are shaped through socio-historical process and change due to new experiences. They are a combination of constancy and variation: it is enduring but is not unchangeable. That is not the goal. They are continuously affected by new experiences (See Gutiérrez, 2004).

¹³³ The school thus becomes a space for political action which “denounces the contract with the established order that defines the original *doxa*, presupposes a reconversion of a view of the world, a heretical subversion which exploits the possibility of changing the social world, by changing the representation of this world that contributes to its reality” (Bourdieu, 1985, pp. 96-97). There could be nothing more Gospel-based than this.

¹³⁴ A view from the gutter can be a view of the world. Rebellion consists in looking at a rose until the eyes are pulverized (A. Pizarnik).

While capitalism (a regime that has lasted more than 500 years) holds sway, and cannot be otherwise, the system of inequalities and the glorification of selfishness and greed will produce conflicts, antagonisms, and all consensus will be temporary, and will last as long as the agreements dictated by the greed of various powers last. When there are collisions, the antagonisms return. The extreme resolution to the antagonisms is war. Which, far from solving them, takes them to the field of blood. When blood appears, the politics die” (Feiman, 2011, p. 91).

Our field, in school and in pastoral activity, in formal education processes or in non-formal or informal learning spaces, is the battlefield of social meanings. We seek to transform the world, unmasking meanings contrary to the perspective and feeling of God for the world, by helping to build new perspectives and a new valuing of the world, according to the will of the Father, revealed in Jesus, communicated by his Spirit, which is discerned in educational communities which listen to men and women of their times. That is the ultimate vision of all Lasallian educational action. “To seek the glory of God” was the expression that the Founder liked to use.

Working with a curriculum constructed from social representations, from the deep feelings of a culture, from the social *habitus*, involves taking up and working in a certain way, *educational knowledge*. We talk of educational knowledge to refer to the body of knowledge that is built up in the school environment (not just in the classroom space) and is significant to the lives of the subjects. The opposite of *educational knowledge* is *school knowledge*, i.e., knowledge that is useful only to the school system, but is not significant to the lives of students, pupils and teachers of the school. “Learning” that *school knowledge*, only serves the purpose of moving the school system along. That can never be the ultimate intent of our educational act.

Educational knowledge that takes up the social representations of the present time, seeking to transform them, is a body of knowledge that has emancipatory meaning, as Habermas and critical pedagogies teach us. A curriculum built from this approach of listening to social views/opinions should be able to take the prescribed curriculum and all the other content and knowledge necessary for teaching, and organize them in view of an educational purpose, that in turn is necessarily political and religious, with a perspective on social transformation and subjectivation in a Christian light. Thus, once the culture has been heard, there is a need to define the intent of the processes that we animate. The task of transforming oppressive social representations is the main perspective from which each teacher must organize, prioritize, and articulate all official curriculums and all other school content. Therefore, the first question is not so much what content I have to teach, but towards what new man

and new woman, and towards what new culture we teach what we need to, want to, and can, teach. From this perspective, all processes of meaningful construction of knowledge, humanizes, empowers, dignifies, elevates, and evangelizes.

Seen in this light, the curriculum must be a body of knowledge that allows the naming and analysis of social representations from a Gospel perspective, be this explicit or not. If social representations are the starting point for designing new, liberating, and Gospel-based educational experiences, they can only be so to the extent that there is knowledge placed at the service of this unmasking and the construction of new representations of reality. This exercise of looking at the world and analyzing it, living and naming new experiences, will lead to dreaming and making possible new worlds, organizing and planning new ways of doing things.

Putting together a curriculum with this perspective is not just thinking up this list of contents to be taught, but the ways in which they are to be presented and worked on, how they are to be evaluated, the way they are to be taught, the context in which they are to be learned (time, space, organization, environment, resources, mediations), experiences that are to be enabled for the teaching and learning of the said knowledge and for what purpose they are going serve (which representations, *habitus*, social meanings, realities we will transform).

Designing the project together in community¹³⁵

An educational community that pursues the construction of a curriculum from this approach of encouraging processes for the formation of subjectivity and culture, knows itself primarily as historically responsible for this world, a community co-creator with the Father, companion of Jesus Christ in establishing the Reign of justice and peace, and inspired by the life-giving Spirit. There may be no words of faith to put it in this way, but

¹³⁵ At this very hour, there are street children .../ It is a matter of honor for me/n to protect what grows,/ to ensure that no childhood/ be scattered through the streets,/ to prevent their heart,/ their incredible adventure of bread and chocolate,/ from sinking like a wrecked boat,/ putting instead a star where there is hunger./ Otherwise it is useless;/ otherwise it is absurd, to practice joy and singing on earth,/ because all these are worth nothing/ if there are street children (Armando Tejada Gómez y René Pérez).

it is a community that knows itself as a subject of history and a maker of the world.

An educative community which carries out the shaping of curriculum as processes of listening to culture, defining political and religious intention with the world, designing the project of salvation of Jesus Christ as its own, is a community that unites itself with the economy of salvation in God's plan, as proposed by John the Baptist in his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*. It is a community rich in utopian and prophetic content. It is hope-filled and loves humanity. "Only he who is in love with humanity educates," says Sabater. It is a community that knows it has a historical responsibility to its generation and future generations. It knows what is at stake is life, especially those of the young, the poor, the victims, the excluded, and with them, the lives of all.

"What is not assumed is not redeemed"; so runs an old maxim written by St. Irenaeus, who in contemplating God's saving action in His Son Jesus Christ, acknowledges the mystery of the incarnation as God's saving plan and His way of being loving to humanity. To be involved in history, to take up history, to be part of culture, to be tainted by it, to humble oneself, to be born again into the thick of the culture, was God's loving way of salvation in His Son Jesus. When we read the Gospel, we see the Son perpetually in this attitude: involving himself in the history he was part of. Hearing their needs, knowing their desires, joys and sorrows, understanding their anxieties. Only from there, from within the center of the culture, can the Son carry out God's loving and educative plan.

We could say the same thing for Lasallian educational activity. What is not taken up, is not educated, is not evangelized, is not redeemed. We should be able to say with St. Irenaeus, that until we leave an impact, address, be challenged by the other, by the society we live in, by their cries, needs and potential, we cannot carry out educational activities from a Christian standpoint, which would be meaningful for the lives of others. However, this demands that an educator be wise, that he or she lives in an attitude "of open eyes", continuously constructing a synthesis of his/her own life and with a critical reflective consciousness on the perspective, stance, knowledge and spirituality that he wishes to transmit and

witness to. This is what it means to subjectivize and build culture. We have to position ourselves as cultural workers, as men and women of culture who love this time [in history] and want to be part of it. But this is not a complacent love, but a “well-armed love” as Paulo Freire would say. A love that loves these people and wants to lead and accompany them through educational processes that lead to more and greater humanity. Educators with a well-armed love who want to be part of these educational processes that transform us all.

Therefore, a comprehensive curriculum, i.e., the institutional culture, educational relationships, the shared life, management, financial affairs, information and communication, the distribution of space and time, the proposed themes, space and time – in short, everything, absolutely everything, – will be conceived and designed by a community, as a Christian response to that liberative and Christian aim, which is a response to the reality that is listened to. And the curriculum understood in the strict sense, as organized knowledge, will be experience and knowledge that respond to that purpose and that reality.

CONCLUSION

Any educational process sends clues and signs, for better or for worse, to the other, to the world, for this other to configure its identity. Our identity is involved in it as well, whether or not we are aware of this configuring role.

A Lasallian educational project is a community project, of reading and discerning reality, of announcing political and religious options in the world, of constructing educational projects by which these options can be carried out. And through the lenses of faith, a Lasallian educational project will be the way for letting God lead us, as He did with Moses, Jesus, La Salle, to the poor, so that from there, we can offer new signs, new words, new experiences, new perspectives, that the Kingdom of justice and peace, will take place in our world, especially in the world of the poor.

Lasallian Pedagogy and the Lasallian Community

Synthesis of the Third Part

Pedro María Gil fsc

Having come to almost the last page, we once again feel ourselves witnesses to the dialogue between history and social institutions. If, in concluding our reflections on Lasallian education in our second section, we were saying that we were clearly facing a new time, our consideration of the overall material of the third section confronts us with the same experience: the institution now confronts us with a much broader panorama than that of its own interior. This time we are dealing with an overwhelming experience.

Indeed, in the last two previous sections, it was relatively easy to analyse the reality from the key of the five axes which we have been using since the beginning. It was relatively easy to identify the first emphases: the Poor, the Method, Insertion into society, the educational Community and the educator's Faith. From these emphases, we came to a System which expressed Lasallian education in both its local and universal extension. There were certainly new things, but there was also continuity. On the other hand, if we consider the attempts of this third section, we discover that it is much more difficult to come to a common reading, similar to that opened up in the preceding round.

The point is that this is due not only to the fact that each author is replying from a different country but also from a distinct culture. Each author has reflected in the direction proposed – one of these first emphases – but has done so from a very personal viewpoint, as a person from a different culture. This means that the understanding of politics, of education, of economy, of religion, of culture ... is different. That is why reading each author can disappoint us because it is written in a language which we do not know. This is so when we take our viewpoint with the assumption of a universal vision accepted by everybody. If, on the other hand, we return to listen to each author from his own position, then we come to a much

clearer sound that is at the same time in harmony with the whole.

It is not evident how to live the past without taking into account how we situate ourselves with regard to the future. The problem is that there are new mediations of Lasallian education.

1.

The conclusion to the Second Part was opened up from a wide-ranging text of a Circular from Brother Irlide, Superior General. In this Third Part, we can situate ourselves in a similar way with the *Declaration of the Brother in the World of Today* from the General Chapter of 1966-67.

In this case also we meet a document which is much more than its own literal meaning. The *Declaration* ... is a taking stock, an interpretation of the heritage, the expression of hope in the Lasallian institution. In this regard, it resembles what happened one hundred years ago in the last third of the 19th century. From another point of view it is completely different: both documents were written for the present, but one from the past and the other in view of the future. That is why while Brother Irlide's text can close the Second part, the document of 1967 presents the Third part, inviting us to enter and, in so doing, offers us new paths having already provided us with a key to guide us.

The *Declaration* offers a reading of the Lasallian present from the viewpoint of the future. It is an act of faith expressed in words and proposals. Thus it is understood that half a century later a good number of its proposals give us a paradoxical feeling. On one hand they can seem to be a long way off, like something we knew from a long time ago. They leave us asking ourselves if we truly understood them at the time and hence if we will now be any more capable of implementing them... On the other hand, from another point of view, that of the act of faith, we seem to be fully alive with all our strength and at the same time capable of reading the possible future.

The document – or the act of faith – has two parts: the first expresses the identity of the believer who is a Brother; the second describes the fields to

which his faith takes him. We cannot say anything more about these two except this: the very fact that they are two. The document, in fact, was not born only of these two ideas but mainly from the second. Its production took a great deal of work without taking into account the ins and outs of the three months of editing. It is noteworthy that various people wished to express not only what the Brother was, or what he should be doing, but both dimensions, and for this reason it is a document of mutual references¹³⁶.

In this case we do not begin this conclusion with its express references but rather we go along setting out again from this almost last reflection. It is not the same thing, in fact, to recall these texts as we received them at Christmas in 1967, without reading them again from the structural implications of globalisation with regard to pedagogy. We allow ourselves extensive citation because we need to show what can still be said about the Lasallian institution which our study is showing fifty years afterwards.

There is, in fact, a vital continuity between those days and our own in such a way that the act of faith of that document can appear to be adequate for us also in the context of the subsequent general Assemblies, that the authors of this document did not imagine.

¹³⁶ Certainly they are not always well-balanced in a way that we can say that the reflection would have required another three months to be as useful for us as what its editors had hoped. But it came about after what was already more than a year and half of a Chapter and it could do no more. That is why we have a somewhat hurried document of contrasts with more elements than a synthesis. Even so, it was a magnificent result. Going farther than what it says literally, it is saying that there is neither activity without identity nor action without identity. It is also saying that neither one nor the other lives at the edge of society so that there is reciprocity between pedagogy and the Lasallian community. In any case, we cannot forget the fact that the document treats of the identity of the Brother, who already was understood to be neither the only nor the principal agent in Lasallian projects. Consequently, we need to see the actual reading of the terms referring to the Brother (above all everything referring to the community without neglecting its proposals about formation). Let us underline as well that this document came into being at a time of abundant statistics (if we can speak in this way) with regard to the number of Brothers. This meant, for a large number of regions of the Lasallian institute, that the future could not be envisaged as in any way different from what was being lived. In any case the concern was adjusting something in its interior without taking into account other external conditions: changes in cultural sensitivity, the globalisation of information, a planetary economic, changes in the function of social Administration, new forms of poverty etc. It is logical, therefore not to find anything of this expressed in the words or in the logical structure of the document.

Thus the *Declaration*, in offering us a bridge across fifty years, can help us to an intelligent interpretation of the newness of this Third part and its diverse viewpoints.

2.

We are saying that between the First and the Second part of our study there was something new as well as a continuity of historical time. Yet, at the same time, we are not very certain about whether we can say the same as we face this Third section.

Between the First and the Second period there was a basic continuity: society became modern. There was a change between its first shape and its definitive consolidation and diffusion but there was continuity as regards the way of looking at life and history, work, culture and the economy. It was always concerned about something marked by analysis, organisation, improvement, knowledge and profitability. It was different in the extent of the area understood by this way of seeing life. The journey of Lasallian origins corresponded without knowing it to that of a modern society putting forward ideas that could not be verified (as happened with an important part of the work, among others, of innovators such as Galileo and Newton). But the re-expression of Lasallian education in the heart of the 19th century already reflects a world that already accepted and built itself on the standard of the states arising from this way of looking at the world.

Both situations, continuity and newness, allowed us to see the passage from the experience of a pedagogical journey to the building of an institutional system. Where there was fidelity to the poor, we have been coming to the exploitation of knowledge; where there was attention to the mystery of the person, we have been coming to inclusion and social commitments; and where there was need for a common brand, we have been coming to a social institution with a function or a place among other institutions dedicated to social animation.

In this way we have seen that the Lasallian institution and its pedagogy have been evolving and responding through their continuity to new situ-

ations. They have been able to do this because in everything born with Modernity they have been able to develop themselves and consolidate their position in this same Modernity.

But our Third part places before our eyes the evidence that this very Modernity is already over. The model of society and Administration is now something different: Poverty has surprising aspects; programmes now go much farther than conventional knowledge; new forms of educational and Lasallian communities are emerging; these are the days of the New Evangelisation.

For example: in the First section, when Bruno Alpago spoke about the Poor before the first Lasallian school, we knew what we were talking about and we could not be surprised by the response; in contrast, when we proposed the same question to Pierre Ouattara, we discovered ourselves confronted by a reply that went much farther than our anticipation; we are aware in the same way of what we asked of Gerard Rummery with regard to the model of community, but we could never say that what we were expecting from Robert Berger with regard to this same theme in this Third part.

For all these reasons, even without very well knowing what we are talking about, we are also speaking about Post-Modernity in this study of Lasallian education. Our survey of the first four chapters clearly shows that the period of Modernisation was characterised by organised reason, whereas Post-Modernity seems to direct itself much more to relationships or from reasons born of relationships. It is from this point of view that the answers from the previous texts are neither intelligible nor to be hoped for (not only the example, because it is the same for the other two, as the reader can see).

History shows us what has been going on for almost a century. We knew this from the evidence of the past fifty years, in a pair of decades of social opposition and construction of new systems based more on relationships than on logic. Since then therefore it is as if we are living with another form of logic. The fact is that we have been passing from a concept of truth based on an element to one based on a system; each element does not generate a system but is rather the fruit of all the relations put together. It cannot be thought of in any other way.

We have been learning with overwhelming evidence that what is taking shape before us is globalisation, the universalisation of a primary economy and subsequently of everything human. Through a progressively accelerated process in a half century the world has been becoming larger or smaller, according to your viewpoint, but it has become one. We have all been taking into account that we belong to one great reality.

In a parallel way nevertheless, we continue to be witnesses to the permanent contradiction within modernity pointed out by sociologists for one hundred years: with modernity, the world has gained from the viewpoint of organisation, but we cannot say the same for the viewpoint of community. The result is that our expectations increase more than our satisfactions as if we were all taking off on a path which instead of bringing us closer will take us away from our destiny.

We can therefore probably say that societies still need time to profit from whatever kinds of institutions which only a little while ago carried identification and a feeling of belonging. This was the function of cultural, political, labour and religious institutions. Meanwhile there is such a growth of lack of certainty in the most fragile groups in society (childhood and youth, women, the unemployed, third age).

From all this we can understand much better than fifty years ago these paragraphs from the Declaration, which do not limit themselves to repeat what we ourselves met with in the foundation years or in the final days of the 19th century:

The renewal of the school calls for great attention to persons and to the community life of the school.

The brothers' school, then, will be characterized by a concern for each student. Modern techniques of psychology and pedagogy make it possible for the individuality of each one to be known and respected. This concern encompasses the whole person: his family background, his temperament, his strong points, his special interests; he is more than just another student who happens to attend the school. The brother will endeavour to discover and develop more and more the special talents of his students, not concentrating on short-comings and mistakes.

Thus the school will be a living community where young people, coming from different social and family backgrounds, educate one another by

mutual understanding and respect, openness of mind in dialogue, acceptance of the uniqueness and limitations of each, growth in the spirit of service, and the practice of justice and fraternal charity.

To give a living example of the true meaning of community, the brothers' school will strive to promote the students' personal freedom, encouraging them to assume the responsibility for their own formation. Education to freedom is achieved by a cordial relationship between faculty and students, by intelligent school discipline, by the very approach to teaching itself. The experience of freedom is absolutely indispensable to training in responsibility: students need to assume an active part in the life of the school itself, its discipline, and all its operations. Work in small groups will be preferred in order to instill self-confidence, a sense of responsibility and the spirit of collaboration.

This will also minimize the problem of undue conflict and selfish ambition. The school will be molded into community only through a faculty rich in the diversity and the unity of its members. For this reason the brothers work closely with lay teachers, who make a unique contribution through their knowledge of the world, of family life and of civic affairs. Lay teachers should be completely involved with the whole life of the school: with catechesis, apostolic organizations, extra-curricular activities, and administrative positions. Similarly, the brothers will do everything possible to facilitate the ministry of the priest in the religious spirit of the school as a community, and in the Christian education of the students (Decl 46, 1-3).

...Nothing new, really. We can envisage this in the dynamism to which our study leads us. Why then repeat it? Might it not be that the authors of the document lacked something, a perspective we have today?

3.

Having said this, we know at the same time that it will not be surprising to encounter this in the texts of our study. But what draws our attention is the clarity which resounds in all of them.

For example, what is the meaning of the agreement between the two sensitivities as diverse as those of Robert Berger and Pierre Ouattara, cited above. One speaks from USA; the other from the Ivory Coast. One

reflects on new forms of poverty and the other on the new Lasallian community. New forms of poverty lead Ouattara to speak of hospitality and welcome. The new Lasallian community leads Robert Berger to value the ability of welcoming in work.

In each case, the coincidence is in understanding the departure point. So it is that as regards the theme of poverty, there is no progression to commitment and action, to programming economic alternatives (always through education). In his interpretation of Lasallian education, Ouattara understands that the theme has to be situated in another way of understanding life and living together: not based on a profitability which has to be improved but rather on a spirit and feeling of shared homeliness. In his turn, Robert Berger reflects on new forms of the educational community developing in the Lasallian institution by means of definition of the distinct members of these new communities. It affords a direction centred on the ability to be together with others, in a friendly way, bringing hope not so much through work well done but rather on the basis of professional work in education done in the same spirit. It could be said – the author does not do so – that the identity of each one is the result, not the condition, of the new community.

In both cases, what is emphasised is the personal relationship rather than the possible results. They obviously do not neglect them but it is clear that they are not fundamental. They express clearly the idea of a “school of relationships”.

There will not be much more to say given the reflections of Patricio Bolton on the renewal of programmes and their content or that of Clede Casagrande on the meaning of mission or evangelisation for the school of today. Both speak from Latin American sensitivities close to them but with regard to themes with different foundations, the educational programme and evangelisation. Nevertheless for all the closeness and the difference there is also a coincidence: the capacity for meeting, as both objective and criterion for the design of the institution.

What we must state is that if we read these things in the light of the Declaration on the Brother in today’s world, we understand much better the extent of what this will open up. Indeed, it is not the same to read the

following paragraphs in this part of this study which we received in November 1967. Now, without any doubt, we see in them much more than what the authors wrote:

First, it is important that the brothers' school at every level be characterized by quality education, a truly professional spirit and genuine service to students and society.

The school must be aware of the tremendous cultural changes of our times and consequently update itself in its objectives, programs and methodology: in its objectives, by imparting to the students more than mere book knowledge, and by emphasizing instead the development of the powers of observation, imagination, reasoning and discrimination: in its curriculum, by keeping in mind the present importance of physical sciences, the need for sociology, anthropology, the behavioural sciences, modern languages and the significance of the mass media and increased leisure time: in its methodology, by highlighting research and creativity rather than rote memorization, by using the best audio-visual materials, and by taking advantage of the more recent developments in pedagogical techniques.

In this way the school will play a specific and important part in the total process of education by enabling a man to profit better from other communications media, or by providing a completeness and synthesis to all that he learns (Decl 45, 2-3).

... The authors of the *Declaration* were all very conscious that this combination of the educational relationship and the contribution of the meaning of society would require the renewal of the school.

4.

The design of the educational institution: somewhere here is the theme that contains the definitive answer to our questions about the nature of Lasallian education and the meaning of the Lasallian institution in itself. Such is the message of our first commentary of Clede Casagrande with his suggestions concerning the relationship with Administration or the relationship between the Lasallian educational institution and the network of social animation.

Because if it is not sufficiently clear, we will find ourselves with this perspective sent back to the world of the initial foundation and feel the need to rediscover the institutions' own journey as a guide to the future.

In its context today the Lasallian world is living amid the redesigning of all the models of social intervention. All of them are living the puzzlement between objectives and structures, that is to say, between what is established and its renewal. It is also living the relative precariousness of all the attempts at renewal, lacking guarantees in time and space, that is to say, without too much experience or without enough international and cultural contrast.

If it is looked at closely, it is very similar to that of the first Lasallian generation.

Then there was also a need for some kind of answer, inadequate or unsatisfactory as it might be. There was a slow and demanding maturation of a society which came close to the frontier of the revolution of freedoms. There was the structure of a State or of social bodies to intervene in whatever slow preparation there was for change. There was the Lasallian genius – and similar ones – capable of seeing much farther than immediate needs to set up suitable institutional guidelines.

We have already seen this in relation to the foundation days with regard to our own days, it is now beginning to appear as we can see from the texts assembled in this Third Part.

It is also a question of finding a reference horizon that transcends the limits of what is possible, that is to say, of the usefulness of a mathematical correspondence between an understanding of needs and the proposal of a structure which ends with these. Such a way of behaving has to be almost by necessity, continuous. It is based on what is already known and proposes to go very much farther. But it can be that the same reading of the reality is simply doing what is already known, that it is seen from the past and not useful for the future.

The redefinition of social services needs today a leap similar to what we have seen between the first and the following Lasallian generations, when it passed very silently from the charity school to the school as an instru-

ment of social change, or from the local school to a school in a network, or from regional practice to a network programming, or from improvisation in the formation to professional formation.

The leap, as we have been seeing, is in changing the centre of gravity from knowledge to relationships¹³⁷.

5.

In recent years social sciences have developed an expression which can help to place hope and a face to this discourse: 'Third Sector'. It was certainly not formulated in this way in 1967 but it was the pole already there very silently directing everything.

This expression refers to a system or interpretation of society which analyses it in three sectors: Administration, the Market and... problems which come about but are not connected to the other two. Administration is concerned with giving order to everything that is social, that is to say, laws, public health, public order, education... The Market is about every-

¹³⁷ To include the school of knowledge in a school of relationships without knowledge being lost or less appreciated is a great deal more than adjusting to a pedagogical model. It belongs, using a vocabulary common in social sciences some ten years ago, a field of the *challenges of adaptation* rather than *technical challenges* (In the Lasallian Institution this was proposed in the General Chapter of 2000 from the District of San Francisco). The technical challenges have in common that they do not question more than certain sections within the institution. With them, the institution itself does not feel itself challenged. Throughout our whole reflection, thinking in this way about the newness of which we are speaking, does not square with our situation. Our situation is much more the break in the balance of centuries between the tasks of educational institutions and the nature of social institutions. The problem, or the challenge, does not refer to what takes place within education, but to its social function, that is to say, to its place within the combination of social institutions.

That is why we say that it is so much an internal problem, a challenge to which each institution can respond with technical formulae or autonomous means. There is a need to conceive of another way in order to recover its social function, that is to say, by connecting with the social need and bring meaning to the society. When the problem is in the bridges and not within the territory, we speak of the challenges of adaptation. That is our case. Our priority is not the need to accommodate our pedagogy but rather to re-design our institution in such a way that it is capable of generating the spreading of an adequate pedagogical model. It is in face of this challenge when we are better able to appreciate the value and the capital of the Lasallian educational tradition: when within the institution itself, that alone can prolong its present situation; when, on the other hand, that outside of it, when it can really send the institution back to a field which transcends it and is therefore capable of jumping outside of itself and so renewing itself.

thing relative to human activity, mediated in terms of creativity, profitability: industry, economy, commerce, development and sustainability.

In reality, no society needs more than these two 'sectors'. Between the two of them, there have to be ways of resolving problems and directing possibilities. Nevertheless, when a society passes through a period of renewal, there appear at its centre situations which cannot be resolved from what is already in place. It is at this stage then that there wells up from within a kind of initiative which goes much farther than the functional (Administration) or the beneficial (Market), with the capacity to do something for the social sectors that are not being helped. These initiatives usually go where others have not been able to go and provide means which otherwise would have been lost. But at the same time, in its comings and goings with whatever was there or with what was not being helped, it brings to society unknown and renewing experiences and systems of organisation as, for example, the mediaeval monasteries.

The usual result is – a paradox of paradoxes – that when these initiatives are successful, they disappear. Logically its destiny is to get going and leave its heritage in new ways of designing what is already established. Then, of necessity they lose their meaning, as did the mediaeval monasteries.

That is why, whatever may be our understanding of those last twenty years when these expressions that emerged disappeared, it does not mean that the reality they expressed referred only to recent time. There may be a new vocabulary but not a new reality. This will be more or less obvious according to the size of the change being lived by the society. If we look at history we will find plenty of examples which at the time change into suggestions about what we are living.

For example, the first Lasallian community came to birth as an institution typical of the third sector. In the absence of any actual ministries or departments of education, this tiny institution imagined a perception of the need and a specific response of which the society was unaware: special attention to the educational service of the poor, lay teachers living their Christian faith in a common life, functioning as a network with initial and continuing formation processes and stable economic structures. One

hundred years later it was on the point of disappearing, absorbed precisely by the creation which practically no one had helped to be born: the Administration of primary instruction by the State.

Viewed from such a perspective, history takes on a new meaning. As regards our study, when we consider it from the viewpoint of the Third Sector, Lasallian education demonstrates with complete clarity its value and its limitations.

Once again the Declaration spoke about this before May 1968:

Apart from the school, or as an extension of it, the Institute has always provided for a variety of educational or apostolic activities. Today many of the brothers seem to desire a more determined openness on the part of the Institute to diversification in educational work and they expect the General Chapter to give clear direction in this matter.

The questions put by the brothers on this subject are not contrived. Most of the time actual situations give rise to them. Sometimes the brothers find themselves in relatively permanent circumstances that make it impossible to maintain schools; sometimes they are prevented from any teaching at all.

In some countries, because of the progress of socialisation, it seems inevitable that the whole approach to Christian education will have to be revised. New educational and apostolic needs are making themselves felt in many places; these will require new educational ideas, new teaching methods, new ways by which the Church can make her presence felt among the young. Millions of adults in the developing countries cannot read or write and millions of their children do not attend school. This very fact shows the need to find new educational methods that are different from those that have been used in the developed countries. Then again, many people also wonder how the Church can remain uninterested in the ever-increasing number of young Catholics who do not attend Catholic schools. It is incontestable that some brothers are being called by external circumstances and by personal desire to exercise the apostolate of education in these special areas.

Needless to say, an unintelligent proliferation of different forms of the apostolate will involve certain dangers. There is the danger that the apostolate of the school will be abandoned despite the fact that this is the main work of the Institute and that its essential importance remains.

There is the danger of scattering our forces. The Institute cannot do every possible good and it is better to have a solid core of activity than spend energy in every direction. There is perhaps also the danger of self-deception and individualism, the temptation to escape to something that seems to be easy.

Nevertheless, it is the mind of the General Chapter that the Institute does not limit the interpretation of its educational apostolate so as to refuse all apostolic activity unrelated to the school. Such a narrow point of view would not conform to the traditions of the Institute. It would run the risk of opposing the action of the Holy Spirit among us, and it would paralyse the very initiative that is capable of renewing the schools themselves.

.....

Superiors and brothers will see that the activities carried on apart from the school emanate from specific educational needs and not from a mistaken disregard for the value of the school itself, much less from an unfortunate experience with teaching, inadequate preparation, or poor school organization. Very often the school itself can become a centre to bring together people not in school whether for evening classes, cultural activities, or friendly gatherings. Finally, the brothers will remember that instead of doing everything themselves, they can involve their students and alumni in some of these educational or apostolic activities (Decl 51,1-4; 52,4).

6.

Well then: a further step.

In the Lasallian world and in similar ones there is a new and highly significant phenomenon: the differences in the lifestyles and in the degrees of commitment to the project. Even if this appears to refer to something other than the pedagogy, nevertheless it is far from being so.

In the Lasallian vocabulary, 'community' and 'association' are the two poles of the identity and institutional systems. They have reference in this case to a network of places which all belong within the same joint project. We all know this discourse and in this study we have been able to refer to it at one time or another in its relevance in the setting up of the local and social pedagogical model.

Nowadays, nevertheless, the visibility of the first of these two poles, the one called 'community' is changing. It is an enormously significant fact that it can become hidden by the indiscriminate naming the term with the expression 'association'. Thus we are in fact using this last expression with a meaning that is no longer Lasallian, at least in the way it was used in our origins. Lasallian beginnings applied the expression to the fact of people living together or to a network of schools, as we have recalled more than once in this study. It is not from this position that there is arising the novelty of our time about what up to now we called 'community'.

In fact, 'community' made up formerly by one type of persons or of belonging, is beginning to shape itself in another way in that what is fundamental is not life shared in common and lived as celibates in a community, but a mission and spiritual communion between its different members. What is certain is that a significant level of commitment or identification is not being arrived at in all places, whereas the path should usually come to trajectory of commitment to its fullest extent.

What is significant is that the soul of the Lasallian project neither today nor ever was in its organisation and efficiency but rather in the fruitfulness of belonging (which certainly needs to be organised). The challenge that confronts us is to revive the sense of belonging in life systems -so that all require some kind of sacrifice in professing faith in God and in one another. This sends us back to the last dimension of belonging as a place where professional gestures are born.

It happens that the model of apostolic religious life especially for lay people of both sexes is an indicator of a state of Christian society in which the lay person as such was not committed in the apostolate. This is what it was like between the 16th and 18th centuries. Then as the 19th century developed emancipation and justice movements in social roles were accelerating the progress of all societies, there was also developing in Christian mediums a new way of interpreting the relationship between the apostolate and consecration. Gradually there was being born the lay Christian not designated as a consecrated celibate. Thus for more than a century there have been appearing at the church door indications of other ways of belonging which today are shaking models of institutions already no

longer so homogeneous or uniform as previously from the viewpoint of spiritual belonging or human relationships.

This is the new thing that is happening. Its message: remember the feeling of belonging, the soul of whatever kind of commitment. The reflection of Robert Berger, for example, has reminded us of it.

7.

That the future of institutions of apostolic life is being judged in this atmosphere is also beyond discussion. What we cannot yet see with any clarity is the professional or secular root of this guarantee for the future which is where our pedagogical discussion comes in.

In fact, from a theological viewpoint we are inclined with hope and discernment to accept distinct ways of living the consecrated life. But it is not so usual to meet in this diversity of belonging the guarantee of an answer from a professional aspect. There is more: that the professional answer in apostolic consciousness depends on the quality of new forms of consecrated community means that these forms in their turn depend on this answer. It is to say that if the professional expressions of the hints of new groupings, fraternities or Lasallian communities are not relevant; none of the forms they produce can survive. The law of life here is the same story of Lasallian identity that proves it. Our study ought to have led us to draw this conclusion.

This is the place where our whole argument comes together: **the relationship between the new community and the new education.**

We cannot indeed fall into the ingenuity (or Manichaeism) of reserving the matter of the new community for the theological or spiritual order, by removing the professional and secular aspects of education from it. Moreover, as our experience of the beginnings has shown, the Lasallian community begins with an educational work well done. Afterwards, gradually and by a constant process of feedback, the professional answer has been generating identification and social acceptance, so that faith teaches to understand it as the place where God shows himself, calls and sets up

the new Association. Finally, to close the circuit, the new association is changed into the definitive source of professional creativity, that is, in the large pedagogical place.

What is needed is to accept the principle that new institutional forms are precisely that: new. If they are new it is that partly they have to be unknown, surprising, just as enigmatic as the actions of Jesus for his contemporaries, when they were asking how could it be thus, if the members of his family were seen to be people just like others.

We need to accept what is new when it does not appear to be. That means accepting its possibility, not its programme. Newness is free, like a child of the Spirit and of History. Within the scope of our reflection, newness is the root of everything that surprises us in the education of this last generation and which nobody has programmed. The newness is in maintaining a creative spirit throughout a whole generation, when the institution keeps itself going midway between the social and the administrative, resisting narcissism and the privacy on one side and functioning and stability on the other.

There are movements in all this, in the Lasallian world as in that of education in general.

There are the ones which are recreating Lasallian education at the same time as they re-invent the same Lasallian institution: projects and networks of projects of educational service to the poor, innovation in social programmes directed towards sustaining them, educational projects in interior silence and commitment, extension of sections in the hours both for teachers and those being educated, systems of diversification of economic support of projects, collaboration with other educational networks, dedication of strong budgetary support in the formation of teachers: relationships with trans-national administrations, designing educational projects of various kinds for local networks, an intelligent and constructive presence in the economy of school programmes, treatment of religion in the context of the new evangelisation.

An institution such as the Lasallian needs to be convinced that it is doing something with this, that almost all this is forming a new educational

project understood as an experience of the Third Sector. It needs in consequence to be aware of what it is offering together with the society even before it takes into account what it is doing within itself.

Possibly today, in 2013, we are in better circumstances than those who wrote it to appreciate the prophetic extent of this section of the *Declaration*:

The renewal of the Christian schools calls for a reappraisal of the policy for the opening of schools and of the nature of their programs. Without a sound policy in this regard the quality of the education provided by the brothers, as well as their own preparatory and continued education, becomes very difficult.

It must be recognized that taking on too many commitments may result in an abbreviated or incomplete preparation for the young. For the brothers already teaching, such over-extension of our apostolic work means the impossibility of deepening and renewing the intellectual life; for the communities it causes difficulty in creating dialogue and reflection; for certain areas it results in the impossibility of giving sufficient attention to changing conditions and new opportunities. The General Chapter, then, urges the regional and district chapters to review the present state of their commitments and to make adaptations consonant with the Institute's purpose, which is not simply to maintain schools, but to work in the apostolate of education with the school as a privileged means.

In this reappraisal it must be remembered that the influence of the Christian school will come more from quality and excellence than from mere numbers. The first objective, then, will not be to preserve existing schools, but to form excellent communities staffed by qualified teachers in sufficient numbers to be the animating influence of a school (Decl 49,1-3).

Attention: these paragraphs were stubbornly forgotten by the Lasallian educational institution a few months after they were promulgated. From such a forgetting there came about situations in which what was specifically Lasallian education is not capable of being recovered today and all this discourse has no meaning. The generation that succeeded the *Declaration* insisted very often on confounding community with organization. The logical conclusion had to be one of confusion; what has followed has been its own pedagogical model becoming a more or less opportunist and eclectic.

8.

Let us say, finally, that the consistency of Lasallian education is already a function of its ability to re-create a social space within the same institution.

In the two previous steps of our study we have been able to see the continuity and the novelty which made themselves compatible with two phases of the same process: the opening and consolidation of social institutions in modernity. The Third section, on the other hand, proposes other kinds of questions or on each occasion more and more, pedagogical questions in another type of society. This why there is not the same relationship between the first two and the third.

We can see this difference better if we realise that between the first two there was continuity in the spirit of its procedures, but there was something new in the form of both procedures. But the relationship between spirit and procedures does not change. In our days, however, the spirit can be maintained but in no way the procedures whatever their forms.

The inherited procedures come along with dimensions proper to education in modernity; today, what is educational is defined in another way, each time more in reference to the social rather than to what is strictly cognitive. The person to be educated is enrolled today in a world or in a group of societies from which the applications which completed the formative task for new generations have disappeared, in proportion to areas or institutions of reference which facilitated the processes of identification. These things do not or hardly exist and this is why the educational process goes on widening its fields and dimensions.

In this regard, we refer to the importance of the neighborhood in today's society, which confers on the educated person a design it never previously had. It is in this situation that we are able to assert that the spirit of Lasallian education is still alive.

As you will have deduced, however, this is not a state that is capable of maintaining itself indefinitely. In the measure that societies are becoming aware of the new and its structuring, there is a need to encounter institutions that confer meaning. If in a brief period they do not meet with this contribution in institutions they know, they will abandon them to their

own shrinking or false specialisation. Each time they will carefully substitute things completely deprived of any educational capacity, reduced to a utilitarian or operational function.

But institutions such as the Lasallian are necessarily referred to a transcendental, personal, cultural and religious universe of which death is the horizon. Thanks to its experience and tradition it can survive for a while. But, if in a reasonably short time it has not re-shaped its educational planning according to the guide of the Third Sector, it will disappear for lack of pedagogical autonomy.

This is to say that the present and the future, truth and hope, depend on the ability to create its own pedagogy. That is why we say that Lasallian education is also the time of the Spirit.

Annex to the Third Part

THE DECLARATION IN DIALOGUE WITH THE PEDAGOGIES OF THE TIME

Fabio Coronado fsc

By the time of the Vatican II Council (1962-1965), the Institute of the Brothers of Christian Schools had already developed an enormous educational project over more than two hundred and eighty years. Scattered throughout the five continents, it relied on sixteen thousand Brothers dedicated to Christian education of the young in very different contexts. It had been recognized for its educational quality and had also suffered persecutions. It included saints, beatified and martyred members. But different times were around the corner.

In fact, the movement generated by the ecclesiastic renewal drove the Brothers of the Christian Schools to return to the sources of their identity, their spirituality and educational work. As they gathered for the 39th General Chapter, they made the commitment to look to the future and they drafted the *Declaration of the Brother in today's world*.

The objective of this reflection is to contextualize the drafting of the *Declaration* within the entire pedagogical movement that had already emerged in the 20th century. This will allow us to understand that the Lasallian Pedagogy is situated in an ample multi-reference horizon from where it can continue questioning itself and those who wish to live and think about the education from a Christian perspective that is original and associative.

By the decade of the sixties, the Lasallian educational community was supported by the presence of Brothers organized in religious communities, responsible for the animation of educational centres at all levels. They shared some tasks with lay people and accompanied a large number of families and alumni in organizations for ministry and school support.

Today, nearly fifty years after Vatican II, things have changed. The Brothers have diminished in number but the concept of Lasallian community is enriched by the remarkable presence of lay people committed to the animation, organization and operation of the Lasallian educational centres which, not only have not diminished in number, but also continue being diversified, responding to the new needs expressed by the children and young people of the 21st century. Today, we speak of a community of educators that comprises eighty thousand Lasallians – Brothers and Teachers – throughout the world.

When we contextualize the event of the *Declaration*, we are perhaps confronted with three generational perceptions of Brothers:

Firstly, the one of all those Brothers for whom this document represented a key “milestone” in their life and for the transformation of the Institute they inherited. It was the most significant event they happened to experience. Without exaggerating, we can affirm that, for them, the *Declaration* was for the Institute what the Vatican Council II represented for the Church: an inspiring event that generated new life, a passage of the Spirit through their existence.

Secondly, the perception shared by the group of Brothers for whom the *Declaration* was a reference, since they began their life in the Institute immediately following the Second Vatican Council. We can say they were close to such a foundational event and they shared their life with the main characters of the *Declaration* and of the personal and institutional renewal it brought about.

Thirdly, the perception of this event by those new generations of Brothers and Teachers who deem the *Declaration* is an event from the past, considered important for that time. They are the protagonists of another world, another consecrated life and another way of educating that are very different from the two prior generations. It is in this generational context that we are presently situated as Lasallians, Brothers and Teachers, to walk together in a search for a creative fidelity that is consistent with a tercentenary pedagogical proposal.

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT AT THE TIME OF THE DECLARATION

Although the *Declaration* was not specifically a treaty in pedagogy, it did represent for the Brothers a meeting point of numerous dynamisms that had emerged throughout the first half of the 20th Century, both in the world and in the Institute. Society began to experience the beginning of a time for changes in the culture that is still being built today¹³⁸.

The *Declaration* is part of a particular period of educational reflection in its time that suggested a transition between traditional education and the new education. It should be noted at the outset that education should always be a constant effort of adjusting to the world realities, the new needs of society and the new characteristics of the generations of children and youngsters; in this perspective, education should be continuously transformed. Nevertheless, if the above is true, we must also point out that the sixties were characterized by a radical deepening of a fact, which was nearly revolutionary: an accelerated process of change in the educational field, similar to what had happened in the other human fields. The *Declaration* was not excluded from such a singular event in the general history of the 20th century education¹³⁹.

The constant confrontation between the so-called traditional education and the new education throughout the past century drove the emergence of new educational paradigms. It was well represented by Fabra (1973) as she affirmed that traditional education was considered at the time – and still today – as the one focused on the interests of the adult society; it encouraged students to be passive, to blind obedience and submissiveness; they were trained to compete among themselves; it attempted to transmit to them an outdated culture and a dogmatic ideology and fostered in

¹³⁸ In this respect, the following books are very illustrative: Zygmunt Bauman. *Liquid Times. Living in times of uncertainty* (2007); and Mario Vargas Llosa. *The show Business civilization* (2012).

¹³⁹ To expand and go in depth in the summary we will present below, you may refer to: Maria Fabra. *The new pedagogy* (1973); Vladimir Zapata et al. *History of pedagogy* (1994); Moacir Gadotti. *History of the pedagogical ideas* (1998); Jaime Carbonell. (Editor). *Pedagogies of the 20th century* (2000); Jaime Jaramillo. *History of pedagogy as a history of culture* (2002); J. Trilla. *The pedagogical inheritance of the 20th Century for the 21st century School* (2005).

them a disproportionate respect for authority. Before this, new education appeared as progressive and scientific, focused on the student and on the environment in which it develops, and it attempted to know each one through the resources provided by psychology and sociology. New education attempted to promote self-education, reducing the role of the teacher to a facilitator of learning processes, not based on rigid programs, rather on the interests freely manifested by students, maintaining the ideal of promotion of creativity, critical thinking, sociability and cooperation within a democratic society.

Therefore, in the historical hinge of the sixties, the supporting principles of traditional methods gradually fall behind: the pyramidal structure of knowledge ranging from the simpler to the more complex notions, considering that the student is incapable of capturing complexity; memorization, as the sole manner of learning, through which the teacher exercises total control by way of exams and lesson taking; efforts and skills stimulated through an award system – for instance, honour rolls and medals – and punishments; the absolute authority of the teacher, considered as a representative of the adult society.

Thus, the new principles for learning begin gaining ground in the everyday educational process: an interest in free enterprise, the basis of the knowledge and the experiences of the student, the self-discipline and cooperative work, among others. In this progressive education, the mission of the educator does not entail testing skills, rather creating them in each student, in the attempt to improve the environmental conditions of educational spaces, of its organization and methods.

The *Declaration* was written thinking of a teacher that suggests, encourages, invites and exalts; one that relies on modern and attractive didactic material and who accompanies his students to visit towns and factories. Evidently, the student would be much happier in the new education process.

However, this transition could not occur without the tensions and conflicts that are typical of any deep change in paradigms. Those who lived in that time experienced what remained, recorded as a general crisis in education, expressed through the educators' malaise and the students' rebellion. Educators experienced confusion upon not knowing how to

form new generations, since the educational practices they had established thus far seemed to be losing effectiveness and, moreover, the educational institution was questioned as to its ability to continue being a mediator in the educational process. In turn, the young expressed their dissatisfaction with the world set up to that moment by adults, lashing out, among other things, against the educational structures and processes they rejected as obsolete before their search for answers to the world's issues. If we add to the prior chaos the new educational approaches that began permeating all educational environments, both in schools and universities, the bewilderment it all caused was more than normal. It was the spirit of May 1968...

MAJOR PEDAGOGICAL CURRENTS OF THE SIXTIES

In the period we are discussing, there were mainly seven major pedagogical currents stirring people's thinking and questioning the educational practices of the time. These are certainly not the only ones, but they are the most significant. Let us mention something about each of these.

The Christian pedagogy: If, at the time, the Brothers raised the importance of the *Christian pedagogy*, it was because they decided to approach in a critical, systematic and projective manner the educational work from the perspective of Revelation, based on the inspiration and horizon of the Gospel. This meant performing a reading of faith, in the following of Jesus Christ, about the educational process they were involved in. Five traits characterized the Catholic pedagogical model that gradually came to exist at that time: the pedagogy of values, the comprehensive training of the person, social thinking, the promotion of the educational community and the educational relation understood as fraternal accompaniment (cf. Coronado, 2012).

The anti-school current: suggestive book titles such as *The school has died* by Everett Reimer; *The deschooled society* and *Education without schools* by Ivan Illich are clear expressions of the pedagogical current or radical criticism of the school system of which precisely Illich and Reimer were the principal representatives. The central thesis according to which no country could offer its citizens an appropriate education through the institu-

tion called school, and the impossibility of a progressive transformation of the school institution in itself required a necessary deschooling of society and education. These positions caused at the time an international social and pedagogical debate of major proportions. Although by the decade of the eighties this controversy had been resolved, we must not ignore its significance as an incentive to re-approach the functions and manners of educating at the time. To question the existence of the school, as was known at the time, involved the counterpart of advocating for a new educational system which, as stated Fabra (1973):

...suggested three objectives: a) facilitating the access to the sources of knowledge to those who wish to learn, at any time of their life; b) offer opportunities to those who wish to have the others share their knowledge, to meet with people eager to acquiring it (and vice-versa); and, c) allow all those who consider themselves bearers of new ideas and who wish to face public opinion to freely express themselves through any of the mass communications means.

In other words, a free access to knowledge with no mediation by the institution called school and a questioning of the mandatory nature of learning presupposed a cultural change in which people could recuperate their freedom to learn, to relate to others and to contribute to mutual learning. Consequently, we may understand how revolutionary this topic was at a time that did not rely on today's technological progress. To think of replacing the school system, practically the only way to learn at the time, with alternative forms where the individual could freely access education, was simply unimaginable.

The cybernetic and group dynamic pedagogy: cybernetics, understood as the interaction between people and machines, will boost programmed teaching and encourage the disappearance of the teacher who will be replaced in the future by robots and teaching machines. The group dynamic, upon studying the interaction between the teacher as the class leader and the class-group, will generate a wide array of tools that will break away from the authoritative and strict unidirectionality of the professor before the group, to become the energizer of the network of likes and dislikes, addressing situations of aggressiveness, camaraderie, cohesion and identification with the leader that exists in the learning group.

In this movement, the teacher nearly disappears in his role of transmitter of knowledge and controller of the acquisition of the same since now self-teaching and self-control prevail. Self-teaching is carried out through machines the student is free to use according to his wishes and needs. Thus, those wishing to learn languages will report to the language laboratory. Self-control has its significance since the student, after exercising a number of learning efforts, is compelled to answer specific questions whose answers, if correct, will provide him with the certainty that he has actually assimilated the knowledge he wished to acquire. The core of the teaching-learning process is the group itself, with its internal dynamics that are animated by an expert agent equipped with the necessary instruments to energize groups and help them reach previously set objectives.

The anti-authoritarian or non-directive approach: Alexander S. Neill in *Summerhill* suggested a school based on freedom and self-government; and Carl Rogers with the development of the non-directive therapy or focused on the client, will give rise to non-directive education, reflected in his books: *The process of becoming a person and Freedom and creativity in education*. In *Summerhill*, freedom was the fundamental aspect; attending classes was not mandatory, which permitted the student to be occupied with what he pleased, to dress as he pleased and to attend the classes that seemed appealing. However, freedom had its limits, which consisted in not interfering with the right of the other to his freedom. In other words, a student in *Summerhill* could do as he pleased as long as he did not disturb the others; if this occurred, his case was presented before an assembly of his own companions and he was sanctioned for his anti-social action.

According to Rogers, the educator is a facilitator using methods focused on the student. He must trust the pedagogical relation and create an appropriate atmosphere for coexistence; accept the group and each of its members unconditionally through an empathetic attitude; he must be consistent and authentic with himself, that is, aware of his own opinions, ideas and feelings so as to be allowed to enter in relations with others, with no masks or facades. Lastly, he must not judge, so that each of his members may express himself freely, without fearing rejection from the others. Based on the above, we conclude that we must give up teaching

since the focus is learning; we must abolish exams and omit all diplomas and acknowledgements. The process must start with the student since any individual is capable of addressing himself, finding his balance and values in his own nature.

The Marxist-oriented pedagogy: the goal of the educational process rested on the model of person that had to be formed (the communist personality), directly supplied by the Marxist ideological and political framework. In addition to the principle of a general and free education for all, it affirms the union of teaching with material production. An education system which, based on science and technology, along with productive work, must succeed in eliminating the traditional dualism between manual and intellectual work. It is also characterized by its accentuated atheist and non-believer position.

The Marxist pedagogy is essentially work pedagogy since it asserts that work is the instance that actually shapes the person. According to Celestin Freinet and Anton Makarenko, the school is organized based on productive work and the community is the means and the goal of education. The basic principle is the community and making individual goals coincide with social ones. Therefore, the basic educational relation is not created between the teacher and the student, rather between the latter and the community that rules the conduct of each of its members. Makarenko will create a strong community in the colony, cohesive and well organized, with clear and demanding goals, where a discipline consciously adopted by all prevails. Freinet will turn the school into a self-managed cooperative, whose techniques will be widespread: text and free-hand drawing, school file, centres of interest, the school printing press, the school cooperative, interschool correspondence and weekly cooperative assemblies. Despite all the positive contributions, we must not forget that they ignored the religious and spiritual dimensions that existed in their own cultures for centuries. Its pedagogy was indirectly a pedagogy that banished God from classrooms and from education.

Popular and liberating education: amidst the then so-called *third world*, whose population mostly lived in circumstances of extreme poverty and whose countries were structurally unjust, it was no wonder that a charac-

ter like Paulo Freire emerged, a Brazilian pedagogue who systematically became involved in the educational problems of underdeveloped countries, where the majority of the population was illiterate. His books, *Education as the practice of freedom* and *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, summarize his thinking. According to him, education is a critical awareness of reality, so as to lead to act or react in an effective manner. Thus, liberation pedagogy must necessarily be practical and result in action. In this regard, literacy and awareness rising go hand in hand: turning the illiterate into an active agent of his own learning and managing to transform his own literacy method into a social awareness tool. His theoretic discourse and his praxis with major inner consistency, reminded educators that the time for education carries a great transforming power and that its primary recipients are those more poor and estranged from society; through the act of educating said poor and estranged from society, they can succeed in being protagonists of their human and social development.

Institutional pedagogy: if the set of institutions attended by a subject educate him in the most essential aspects of his existence, then pedagogy must focus its intervention at this level. In other words, attempt to optimize or educate institutions, submitting them to the pedagogical analysis and self-management. They will not be forming unless they are previously reformed. The main claim of this proposal is not to introduce new institutions, rather analyze and transform the existing ones, and to do so based on the free participation of learners. Social and pedagogical self-management is indispensable if we wish to deeply transform society. If the mentality of the individuals that are part of an institution changes through an education based on self-management, the same institution will change.

The prior seven specifically educational coordinates strongly upset the educational ideals and practices of the seventies. Those who know our lifestyle during those years can easily understand their impact on the awareness as in the urgency to transform the existence and the work of the Brothers throughout the world, and undoubtedly on the first-line protagonists of the *Declaration*.

PEDAGOGICAL INSIGHTS BASED ON THE DECLARATION

More than pedagogical principles, educational techniques or a specific methodology derived from the creativity of the Brothers who participated in the writing of the Declaration, the background we may find is a staging of the way in which the Founder and the first Brothers pedagogically reflected on their experiences. We note three fundamental elements:

1. Collective construction of the pedagogical discourse: just as the *Conduct of schools* was written *after numerous conferences with the oldest Brothers in the Institute and the most capable of teaching classes*, a practice that has consecrated the Lasallian educational tradition throughout centuries, the Declaration was a process of joint writing with Brothers with ample experience and expertise in the Institute.
2. Dialogue with contemporary pedagogies: just as today we can trace and identify the sources that inspired the Founder and the first Brothers, as a means to enrich the educational sense and practices, the *Declaration* is no stranger to the pedagogical theories that at the time influenced its educational perspective.
3. Academic conversation about reality and the surroundings: the *Declaration* refers to this as being attentive to the signs of the times; for the Founder and the first Brothers, it referred to being *touched by the situation of abandonment of the children of artisans and of the poor*, a condition sine qua non of any lasallian pedagogical reflection.

We could summarize in the three prior pillars the way in which the Lasallian pedagogy took up its task, even at the time of the *Declaration*, to think about education; it remains a reflection that invites to a pedagogical update in the here and now of the Institute of the sixties, seeking to be faithful to the inheritance left by the Founder and the first Brothers.

RETHINKING THE LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY

Fifty years since the occurrence of Vatican II, we experience a world with new challenges. The national educational systems are strongly affected by

supranational institutions that set guidelines and accentuate inequalities in the world. For its part, pedagogy continues on its itinerary as an academic discourse seeking its own epistemological status; all the more, the various contemporary proposals¹⁴⁰ exceed the scope of the Lasallian education delivered in the Declaration.

The 21st century challenges us to be faithfully creative amid a world in conflict. Inequalities continue increasing, as well as the needs of children, young people and adults who wish to find alternatives for their growth as people, citizens and children of God. We Lasallians cannot remain indifferent.

¹⁴⁰ With regard to this detail, an overview may be found in the following books: Miguel De Zubiría Samper. *Contemporary pedagogical and didactic approaches (Enfoques pedagógicos y didácticas contemporáneas)* (2005); Miguel Ángel Maldonado García. *Critical Pedagogies. Europe, Latin America, North America* (2008).

EPILOGUE

Diego Muñoz fsc

In France, at the end of the 17th century, a community of men made a radical life commitment to work from morning until night in accessible, networked schools. Accessible, because their teachers only required the presence of a responsible adult when the child registered for school; networked, because the schools were managed under the same scheme of organizing lessons, schedules and classroom work. It is in this community that an original, effective and stable way of living and thinking about education was born. It is the Society of the Christian Schools or the Community of Brothers, both instituted by John Baptist de La Salle, and whose members currently continue their educational work in eighty-four countries throughout the world.

Throughout this book we have asked ourselves how this community was capable of reflecting on their daily work in the schools. We have demonstrated that their way of “living the school” and thinking about education was the product of a community experience sustained by faith in God’s call.

Thus, we arrive at an important finding: Lasallian pedagogy was born in the heart of a community with its own identity; it matured amid crises and difficulties. It was the community who designed and supported an original style in order to meet the educational needs of the society of their time. Often limited by their own way of seeing reality and seeing themselves, of believing in God and thinking themselves faithful to the project of that same God, they faced new situations, sometimes closing in on themselves, and sometimes shattering preconceptions and confronting the *status quo* ... Three-hundred years later, the Lasallian community is not the same, and we continue to ask ourselves what Lasallian education and its teaching methods are.

Therefore, this book cannot conclude by imposing definitions. It was conceived of as a shared reflection that must find within the current

Lasallian community a vital space that continues to evolve. However, we do have a guiding word and we wanted to share it throughout these pages.

From the beginning this book has presented a hypothesis: that Lasallian Education is the way of “living education” on the part of a community that has matured its own proper identity around the experience of John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers of the Christian Schools.

Throughout the 18th century, the Brothers understood their role as successors to the founding times and they secured state and ecclesial recognition of a network of schools that they had developed and of an identity within the Church according to the standards of the time. Half a century later, the French Revolution challenged a world that wanted change. And that world challenged them as well. They seemed to have come to an end. But, once recognized and called by the French state at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and required to regain their identity, they faced new educational circumstances that affected their way of “living the school” and thinking about education. Thus, from the accumulated knowledge of their community, in fidelity to its origins, they tried again to understand both its own identity and the school reality that was emerging. With trial and error, they debated about fidelity and attention to new needs. Their responses were, no doubt, more advanced than their concepts and perspectives. And then they reached the end of the century.

In the early twentieth century, the majority of the national states assumed the leadership of their educational systems, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools faced new challenges that were much more complex: wars, ideologies and especially, the end of modernity. What emerged was a vast horizon of teaching methods and the development of educational science.

Today, to speak of Lasallian education involves an original way of “living” and thinking about Christian education in a multi-cultural and multi-religious context. It is clear it cannot be thought about except from within a community with a Lasallian identity. Identity and Education are inseparable – one without the other has no place in the Lasallian school inspiration.

Only a community of educators – who share an identity and a future project – can “live” and think about education in a coherent and relevant way. Therefore, the Lasallian community is a community of faith where its members share the experience of the God's action in their lives and, based on that experience – which is multiple and shared both personally and communally – they understand and nurture their zeal to educate. That is why Lasallian education has an original way of being expressed, “lived,” and carried out.

None of this would make sense if the school were not in the center of our concerns. So today, the invitation that De La Salle made to Brother Robert, in a letter dated February 26, 1709, still rings true in our hearts: *Take care that your school runs well.*

Rome, May 2013

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Table of Contents

	Pág.
PROLOGUE	
<i>Diego Muñoz fsc</i>	5
Abbreviations used in this work	8
FIRST PART	
THE FIRST DEFINITION	
<i>Pedro María Gil fsc</i>	11
Chapter 1 - THE TARGET GROUP	
<i>Bruno Alpago fsc</i>	21
Artisans and the poor	21
The pupils of the “Christian Schools”	26
Others targeted	36
Conclusion	38
Chapter 2 - LA SALLE: SOCIAL AND WORK INSERTION AND CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING	
<i>Edgard Hengemüle fsc</i>	39
The Church’s responsibility	40
La Salle and education in the Great century	41
Social insertion	41
Insertion into work	47
Christian qualification	51
Conclusion	61
Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY: A FACTOR IN SUCCESS	
<i>Léon Lauraire fsc</i>	63
Recalling the historical context	63
Why have a Lasallian methodology?	65
Results of using the Simultaneous method	68
Optimizing the conditions of work for the pupils	74

The need for coherence	76
Conclusion	77

Chapter 4 - ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN LASALLIAN EDUCATION

<i>Gerard Rummery fsc</i>	79
The biographers tell of the development of the community	79
How did De La Salle support the idea of community in his writings?	82
The Conduct of the Christian Schools	85
Conclusion: how did the key role of the community influence the continuing development of Lasallian Education [Pedagogy]?	88

Chapter 5 - THE TEACHER, A FULLY COMMITTED MAN

<i>Diego Muñoz fsc</i>	91
Introduction	91
An uninspiring reality	92
On the path to an answer in fidelity to God's project	94
The options that define the profile of the teacher trained by La Salle	99
Conclusion	108

THE FIRST DEFINITION OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY

Synthesis of First Part

<i>Pedro María Gil fsc</i>	111
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SECOND PART

A LIVING PROJECT

<i>Pedro María Gil fsc</i>	125
----------------------------	-----

Chapter 6 - BROTHER AGATHON THE EXPERIENCE OF A CENTURY OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY FIDELITY AND ADAPTATION

<i>Francis Ricousse fsc</i>	133
Preparation: commitments and development	133
Fidelity in troubled times: the work of Brother Agathon	135
The work in schools	137

Pedagogical work	139
The Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher	143
Other works	147

Chapter 7 – THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION. THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF 1834

<i>Alain Houry fsc</i>	149
“Some fragments from old exercise books found in our archives”	149
New times for the schools of the Brothers	150
A General Committee for the revision of the <i>Conduite</i>	153
Pedagogical progress through the strength of Association	156
Some aspects of education	162
Limitations in the spiritual dimension	164
Conclusion	165

Chapter 8 - LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY AND THE LATIN QUESTION: WHEN LAW DOES NOT FIT LIFE

<i>Peter Killeen fsc</i>	167
The early Institute and Latin	167
Unfolding of a drama	170
Effects of the ban	178
Americanism	179
Classics restored	180
Contemporary Lasallian pedagogy and the Latin Question	181

Chapter 9 - THE REVISION OF THE CONDUCT OF SCHOOLS TOWARDS A WORLD-WIDE LASALLIAN EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

<i>León Lauraire fsc</i>	183
Three factors of change	183
A world-wide Lasallian educational network	188
Theoretical foundation of educational practice	194
New Lasallian educational works	198
Conclusion: the end of an epoch	202

FROM FOUNDING JOURNEY TO PEDAGOGICAL SYSTEM

Synthesis of Second Part

Pedro María Gil fsc 205

Annex to the second part

EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES FROM THE INSTITUTE: ELEMENTS FOR AN OVERVIEW

Bruno Alpago fsc 220

18th century 220

19th century 221

Teacher training 221

Adolescent and young labourers 223

Adult labourers 224

Orphans 225

Prisoners 227

Deaf and dumb 228

Boarding schools (“pensionnats”) 229

Middle and high school 230

Technical school 231

Youth works 233

Children and youth at risk 235

THIRD PART

LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY TODAY

Pedro María Gil fsc 239

Chapter 10 - THE LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY IN DIALOGUE WITH TODAY’S WORLD: PLURALITY, FRATERNITY AND TRANSCEDENCE

Cledes Casagrande fsc 249

The current society and the Lasallian Educational heritage 250

The Lasallian Pedagogy, the Lasallian Educators and the invitation
to transcendence: challenges and possibilities 258

Final considerations 264

**Chapter 11 - CENTURIES OF LOYALTY AND FAITHFULNESS:
THE JOURNEY OF LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY INTO
THE 21ST CENTURY**

<i>Robert Berger fsc</i>	267
Brotherhood through the centuries	267
The hallmarks of loyalty and faithfulness	270
Brotherhood and celebrating the ordinary	273
Lasallian education and consecrated life	274
Brotherhood and Lasallian Pedagogy	278
Gifts for Lasallian Pedagogy	281

**Chapter 12 - THE LASALLIAN SERVICE OF EDUCATION:
A MEANS OF SALVATION FOR TODAY?**

<i>Pierre Ouattara fsc</i>	283
The target group of Lasallian Pedagogy, the poor as in the image of god	284
The view of faith of a community that mediates salvation	289
Educational service of the poor and the spirit of poverty	292
The Lasallian School and the spirituality of the incarnation	294
Conclusion: gratuity and the meaning of salvation	297

**Chapter 13 - A CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING HOW TO “LIVE
WELL”, FOR GOOD LIVING, FOR LIVING THE GOOD LIFE**

<i>Patricio Bolton fsc</i>	301
School and processes of constituting subjectivity and culture	303
Lasallian School, subjects and Christian culture	305
Community dynamics and update challenges	308
Curriculum to live well	313
Conclusion	322

LASALLIAN PEDAGOGY AND THE LASALLIAN COMMUNITY

Synthesis of Third Part

<i>Pedro María Gil fsc</i>	323
----------------------------	-----

Annex to the Third Part**THE DECLARATION IN DIALOGUE WITH
THE PEDAGOGIES OF THE TIME**

Fabio Coronado fsc 343

The educational context at the time of the Declaration 345

Major pedagogical currents of the sixties 347

Pedagogical insights based on the Declaration 352

Rethinking the Lasallian Pedagogy 352

EPILOGUE

Diego Muñoz fsc 355

References 359

Authors 371