Lasallian Studies

6

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 1726-1804

Brother Henri BÉDEL, FSC

Translated by Brother Allen GEPPERT, FSC

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Via Aurelia, 476 – C. P. 9099 (Aurelio)
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1998

Tipografia: Istituto Salesiano Pio XI - Via Umbertide, 11 - 00181 Roma - Tel. 78.27.619
Finito di stampare: Febbraio 1998

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ABBREVIATIONS

CL Cahiers lasalliens

HSP Historical Record of the Southern Province of France

RA Rome Archives (FSC Generalate, 476 Via Aurelia)

Illustrations and Tables

PREFACE

SOURCES AND WORKS OF REFERENCE

What are the sources on which we can base a study of the history of the Institute in the 18th century?

We have at our disposal a certain number of documents deposited in the Generalate archives in Rome (RA) and in archives elsewhere. This material needs to be evaluated to see how much it can tell us about the Institute and its work during the three-quarters of a century we shall be studying in this volume.

We are not the first to study these documents. Various authors have already used them when preparing their works on the history of the Institute in the 18th century as a whole, or on various aspects of it. We need to examine how these authors used these sources in order to determine whether the information they give in their works is reliable.

We need also to indicate briefly why we have used certain general reference works and not others when dealing with this period.

Sources

The documents which constitute our source material for the history of the Institute in the 18th century are concerned with either the Institute as a whole, or the various houses belonging to it at the time.

The Institute as a whole

Regarding the Institute as a whole, we are fortunate that documents of primary importance have been preserved, and later on in this volume, we shall describe how the Institute was able to save them. As a consequence, in the Rome archives, we can find:

- the admission registers of the St Yon and Avignon novitiates, and a document listing the Brothers belonging to the Institute at the beginning of 1791;
- a register recording deceased Brothers;
- the minutes of the General Chapters;
- letters or circulars of the Superior Generals.

To these can be added documents relating to the houses where the Superiors of the Institute resided:

- the register of deaths for the house of St Yon;
- the vow registers;
- the account books of the house at Melun.

In the Rome archives also, there are copies, made in a variety of ways, of documents kept in other archives. For example, there is a copy of:

- the Catalogue of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (cf. CL 3, 24);
- a list of houses located within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris in 1777.

We are far from possessing all the archives the Institute amassed before the outbreak of the French Revolution, but we do have the most important ones.

Houses of the Institute

Regarding the houses (communities) of the Institute and the schools that depended on them in the 18th century, there is, relatively speaking, a fair amount of documentation. When the Brothers were obliged to leave their houses during the Revolution, whatever archives they had were confiscated and can now be found in municipal archives in various places.

Evidence of dealings by individual houses or the Centre of the Institute with the King's ministers or administrative staff, the judiciary, etc., can be found in the National Archives in Paris or in the archives of Departments, to which the archives of the *Ancien Regime* were moved. In these archives also, can be found archival material generated after the reorganisation of administrative areas during the Revolution. Archives abroad have documents relating to houses of the Institute in neighbouring countries, such as Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, and to the Brothers who lived there.

The Rome archives, in their turn, have documents relating to the dealings of the Superiors with various authorities and administrative bodies. They have copies also of documents kept in the various archives mentioned earlier.

There exist also other archives with documents relating to the Institute and the Brothers in the 18th century. We have mentioned here only the most extensive and accessible ones.

In the Rome archives, or in those kept by Districts or communities, there can be found the historical records of individual houses or groups of houses in the 18th century. These historical records are particularly interesting when they include copies of documents on which they are based, or to which simply they refer. In this connection, the Rome archives are fortunate to have, for example, *The Historical Record of the Southern Province*, and the historical record of *The Establishments of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Brittany and Anjou before the Revolution*. When such documentation is missing, historical records lose much of their reliability.

Reference works

The history of the Institute in the 18th century, or some aspects of it, have already been written about by a number of authors. To what extent can we rely on their work?

The Institute as a whole

In the 19th century, Brother Lucard, the principal of the teachers' training college in Rouen, did some research on the Institute in the 18th century and recorded his results in volume II of his *Annales de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes* (*Annals of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*). The copies of documents which he made, and which are kept in the Rome archives, are an indication of the seriousness with which he undertook this research, but which he did not complete. Brother Lucard sometimes quotes from his sources. When we have been able to check these sources in the original, we have found, unfortunately, that sometimes he introduces changes into the quotations without indicating he has done so. Consequently he cannot be considered totally reliable.

In the *Histoire Générale de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes* (*General History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*) by Georges Rigault, two-thirds of volume II (*Les disciples de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle dans la société du XVIIIe siècle, 1719–1789*) and the whole of volume III (*La Révolution Française*) are devoted to the history of the Institute in the 18th century. The author clearly did a lot of research and consulted archives containing information about the Institute and its schools. We consulted a number of documents used by Rigault and it was clear he had been faithful to his sources and can be considered reliable. As can happen, he made an error at one point in his text (cf. II, 293). To his credit, he corrected it later (cf. III, 405). For reasons such as these, it was not necessary to repeat all his research.

W. J. Battersby, Brother Clair Stanislas, does not really contribute anything new regarding the history of the Institute properly so-called in his *History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Eighteenth Century (1719–1798)*. The chief interest of the work lies in the way it sets this period of Institute history in its context.

There is material available also regarding the history of the Institute in the 18th century outside France. Recently, there appeared in Italy a short work dealing with this period by Brother Rodolfo Meoli, entitled *La Prima Scuola Lasalliana a Roma*.

There is also the work of Nive Voisine, entitled *The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Canada*, in which the author describes the attempts of the "Charon Brothers" of Montreal to obtain Brothers of the Christian Schools for their own establishments or to become associated with them.

Certain aspects

A number of *Cahiers lasalliens* refer to this period: CL 36, 37 (Rheims); CL 57 (Parménie) and 61 (in part).

Between 1907 and 1939, the *Bulletin of the Institute* published a number of articles of an historical nature, some of which dealt with the 18th century. When these articles are based on documents, which are quoted, or whose reference is given, then they are of great interest, even if, with the passage of time, the way of looking at things may have evolved. If this is not the case, as we have already said regarding a certain number of historical records of houses, then we do not know enough about the sources on which the writer based himself to be able to rely on him with any kind of certainty.

There are certain aspects of the period of history treated in this work which have been the subject of university theses written by non-Brothers. To judge by those that are kept in the Rome archives, their value as a whole is limited. Having said that, it has to be added that a point of view from outside the Institute is always worth considering.

The books we have consulted in order to fill out the background of the history of the Institute are, for the most part, written in French, and are quite restricted in number. This is not to imply that they are better than other works we might have used. All the same, those we have chosen have the advantage of not basing themselves on an a priori point of view. In France, this latter point of view has often led, and still leads writers, either to disparage the period of the *Ancien Regime* in order to praise to the skies the new era resulting from the French Revolution; or inversely, to see only the negative aspects of the latter period. There are, however, certain contemporary historians whose views are more balanced and certainly closer to the truth.

Conclusion

All in all, despite the inevitably incomplete nature of available documentation, we still have a considerable amount of information at our disposal regarding the organisation of the Institute and the administration of its houses and of the schools depending on them. On the other hand, it is very difficult to know what kind of life the Brothers led in their communities. Certain persons stand out, in particular, some Directors, but the majority of the Brothers exist for us only as a part of a mostly uniform mass. How can we learn more about these Brothers? In the case of most, we know only their names and have a minimum amount of information about them. How is it possible to remedy this lack of knowledge which is reflected in the present work? Research in this area would certainly be very worthwhile.

Brother Timothée (1682–1752) is considered by Rigault (II, 316) as the second founder of the Institute. He was Superior General for 31 years and opened 60 or so houses, which included three boarding schools and two novitiates (Avignon, in 1729, and Maréville, in 1751).

Proceeding with extreme caution and discretion, he obtained legal recognition for the Institute in 1724 by the Letters Patent, and the Bull of Approbation in 1725. And yet it was not on the administrative level that his influence was most strongly felt: his most decisive contribution was to ensure that the Institute remained faithful to the spirit of St John Baptist de La Salle.

Guillaume Samson Bazin was born in Paris. His father was probably a tailor. He entered the novitiate in 1700. In 1702, when the young Brother Timothée was due to make the journey from Paris to Chartres on foot, he was cured of an infected growth on his knee by De La Salle. He made his final profession in Paris on June 3rd 1703.

He became Director of Mende in 1710, and at the end of 1712 and the beginning of 1713, he was in charge of the short-lived novitiate in Marseilles. He replaced Brother Ponce as Director of the house in Avignon, and was given responsibility for all the houses in the South of France. Shortly after his election as Superior General, Brother Barthélemy put him in charge of publishing *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, which appeared in Avignon in 1720.

Elected Superior General in 1720, Brother Timothée convoked the 1725 General Chapter to receive the Bull and to bring the *Rule* into line with it. He arranged for the publication of Blain's *Life* and of the Founder's writings. He prepared the way for the Founder's canonisation, and transferred his remains to the new chapel at St Yon.

When he became aware of his declining health, he convoked the 1751 Chapter which elected Brother Claude in his place. Brother Timothée died five months later, a few days before his 70th birthday.

(Based on material from a work shortly to appear on the first Brothers of the Institute, by Br Augustine Loes.)

INTRODUCTION

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the 18th century, countries in Europe still had the characteristics they had inherited from the past, but as the century progressed, certain social and economic changes took place. The extent of these changes varied from country to country.

At the same time, forces which had been at work in the previous century and had resulted in what was known as the "European crisis of conscience", progressively grew stronger and brought about a profound transformation in thinking, at least among educated people.

This evolution in thinking had consequences of a political order, not only in European countries, but also in the colonial territories which some of these countries had in other continents, and especially in the American continent.

This evolution and this transformation in thinking had a particularly marked effect on France, the main context in which the period of Institute history that concerns us here takes place. Having first influenced the history of the country during the reigns of Louis XV and Louis XVI, they then called into question the existing order as a whole in the Revolution which marked the last ten years of the century.

A definition of Europe

First, it would be useful to say what we mean by 18th-century Europe. It corresponds to our present-day Europe, includes Russia properly so-called, but excludes the Balkan peninsula, which belonged to the Ottoman Empire at the time.

Different rates of change

In the 18th century, in most European countries, **economic life** continued to be based on agriculture, and between 80% and 85% of wealth came from the land (cf. Chaunu, 1966, 350). Despite the increase in population, the kind of famine that had occurred in the 17th century was rare in these countries. The increase in agricultural production, however, was due more to the increase in cultivated land than to improvements in methods of production or increase in yield.

In England, on the other hand, progress in farming techniques made it possible to feed an increasing number of persons not working the land. In France, the same kind of progress was beginning to make itself felt in the period leading up to the Revolution. In the other countries, except for the Low Countries, which were a special case, very little progress was apparent.

In continental Europe, most goods were still produced by small-scale craft workshops. The manufacture of textiles, which occupied an important place in the industrial production of the day, was in the hands of "dependent craftsmen". These worked singly or with others for a "manufacturer", that is, a merchant who supplied them with the raw materials and distributed the finished product. Iron foundries, which depended on running water for energy and forests for charcoal, were dispersed over the country.

What we know as the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century began in England. It was characterised by the mechanisation of industry and the use of coal extracted from the ground. This technical progress was slow to take hold in France, a slowness that was reflected in the rest of western Europe (cf. Corvisier, 1992, 408).

Apart from the increase in population, the real moving force behind the economic expansion which occurred in 18th century Europe was the development of trade links with territories which Europeans had colonised, and in particular, with those of the American continent. The economic recovery, which took place around 1730, was due to a new influx of precious metals from overseas, and was stimulated by the increased need of these overseas territories for the manufactured goods whose production was monopolised by European countries. Dominated by England and France, these trade links maintained economic rivalry between the two countries, to the detriment of other European maritime powers.

The **social framework** of Europe as a whole remained that of a society of Orders or ranks, that is, of a society made up of hierarchical groups based, not on their economic

power, "but on the esteem, honour and dignity attached to them by society" (Chaunu, 346; see Bédel, 1996, 2).

At least in Catholic countries, the first of these Orders was that of the clergy, which was very wealthy. It distributed some of its wealth by supporting charitable institutions, schools, etc., but this did not prevent numerous monarchs from regarding it with cupidity.

The nobility occupied a pre-eminent position at a time when "the ownership of land, especially by a noble, determined a person's rank in society" (Mounier and Labrousse, 1967, 181). In central and eastern Europe, monarchs often depended on the nobility to govern and administer the country. In France, as in Spain, the power of the nobles had been destroyed, and they were trying to regain it.

In the towns, the same social hierarchy was maintained. It was headed by the bourgeoisie. This category included persons who, having purchased an "office" (a public position), had administrative or judicial responsibilities, and those whose employment created economic growth through manufacture or commerce (cf. Parias, 1981, II, 348). Lower down the social scale were the craftsmen and the merchants with their own rigid hierarchical structure (see Bédel, 1996, 3). In rural areas also there existed a kind of hierarchical scale which distinguished between the *laboureurs*, who worked for the local nobility, and the less fortunate *manouvriers* and *journaliers*. Everywhere, but especially in towns, the poor, whether regularly assisted or only exceptionally, formed a sizeable portion of the population.

However, the evolution which had begun in the preceding period was leading to a reassessment of the existing social order. Money had always helped social advancement, but the ultimate objective remained accession to the ranks of the nobility. In the 18th century, there began to appear new social categories based on the role of a person in the manufacturing process of material goods. The idea of a society based on Orders or rank, which was no longer in force in cities in Holland, and had been destroyed in England at the beginning of the century, was called into question in France during the course of this century. In most of the other European countries, however, it remained in force till the end of the century.

A profound transformation

These varying degrees of social and economic development were accompanied by more profound changes in mentality. This transformation was brought about by an intellectual movement whose exponents styled themselves *philosophes* (philosophers).

Since these philosophes "claimed they were releasing the human spirit from the barbarity that obscured it and were guiding it towards the «light» (*lumière*) of reason" (Corvisier, 1992, 411), it became the custom to call the 18th century the *Temps des lumières*. The use of similar terms in other languages — Enlightenment in English (the title of this chapter), *Aufklärung* in German, *Illuminismo* in Italian, *Illustración* in Spanish — shows how the transformation in thinking that took place in the 18th century affected the whole of Europe. Countries were affected in varying degrees, however, and, in any case, the only people involved were those belonging to educated or, as was said in those days, "enlightened" circles.

The new ideas which flourished in the 18th century originated in the previous century, in which "totally new concepts of man and society" (De Viguerie, 1995, 115) had been propounded. Descartes (1596–1650), the leading exponent of these ideas, based all knowledge on reason.

Descartes's intention had been to create a system of thought that was in agreement with Christianity, but "after 1680, a change had come about in the way people thought: it had become customary to accept the existence only of what could be known from observation and experience. Religious, political and social institutions had now to be examined in the light of reason" (Corvisier, 1992, 386).

By 1740, all over Europe, a whole section of the intellectual elite had abandoned traditional values, and from then onwards the transformation of European society took on a new momentum. The ideas of the Enlightenment began to win over minds.

In the period 1760–1770, under the influence of especially the French philosophes, the "philosophy of the Enlightenment" had become a veritable creed among the "enlightened" elite. The work in which they expressed their ideas was the *Encyclopédie française* of D'Alembert and Diderot, which appeared between 1751 and 1766. This work was complemented by Voltaire's *Dictionnaire français* (1764). Abroad, the first volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* appeared in 1768, and that of a Germann encyclopedia, in 1778 (cf. Corvisier Précis, 1992, 414).

The ideas of the philosophes

What the philosophes considered most important was proof, clarity and reliance on reason.

♦ Most are deists. They believe in the need for a first cause and, therefore, in an eternal Being on which all things depend. We cannot know this God, but we know he exists. God created the world according to eternal laws. It is pointless to pray to him.

♦ Nature, created and regulated by God, leads man to live in society. Human reason should determine the laws which regulate society. There is a natural law based on the laws of nature. There is a natural morality based on natural laws.

♦ Our senses tell us that we are on earth to be happy, that is, for pleasure. To be happy is a right. People choose their government to guarantee their rights. This government must have all the powers necessary to accomplish its task. In states of a certain size, it must be despotic and monarchical. All that is required of it is to accept the teachings of the philosophes. This is enlightened despotism.

♦ The sovereign guarantees the rights of his people. These are, first of all, the freedom of thought and equality before the law. There must no longer be any privileges based on birth: nobles and ecclesiastics will pay taxes like everybody else, and will be judged by the same courts.

♦ All careers are open to those with the necessary talents. Nature, however, has not endowed everybody equally. The sovereign must maintain the differences in fortune that this produces. He should bestow legislative power on the rich and on landowners.

♦ War is permitted only when it is necessary to take up arms in legitimate defence.

♦ Man makes progress through the diffusion of "light". Education is the principal means to achieve progress. It must be directed by the State, in the interests of the State. It must begin by what is perceived through the senses and then work its way up to what is intellectual. However, not everyone is destined to receive the same level of instruction.

(Extracts from Mousnier and Labrousse, 1967, 75–79).

There was no general agreement among the philosophes. For example, some, such as D'Holbach and Helvetius, were materialists and atheists. Others, less rationalistic, insisted more on the role of feelings. The chief of these was Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to him, man, who is naturally good, has been corrupted by civilisation. The aim of his

Contrat Social is to find a form of political organisation that will protect the equality and freedom nature has given the individual person. In *Emile*, he advocates a system of education which enables a person to preserve his natural goodness. He differed from other philosophes also by his deism, which was based more on feeling than on scientific reason.

All the philosophes, however, attacked whatever they considered to be an obstacle to the diffusion of their ideas, as for example, the power of the monarchy and, in particular, the Catholic Church. The Church's power to resist "had been weakened by the interference of the State, the absorption of the spirit of the age and by its own internal divisions" (Mousnier and Labrousse, 1967, 82).

But, as one of the authors of this work states, the Church lived on in its innumerable priests and religious who, "inspired by that immense love for their neighbour which is the love of God, dedicated their lives in silence to the unfortunate, the elderly, the poor and to children"; it survived in its missionaries, and in "the thousands of pious lay people, who tried to practise their religion quietly and, each day, to become more authentic, more conscientious, more upright, more devoted and more loving". The Church lived on also in all those lay people and ecclesiastics who responded to the attacks, who showed that the faith is not bound up with any philosophy (*id.*, 83).

Political repercussions

In some states, the sovereign based his form of government on the principles of what was known as "enlightened despotism". The philosophes found it hard to envisage a democratic form of government in a state, and they had no problem in accepting that the sovereign held all power and did not share it. The only thing they required him to do was to work for the material happiness of his subjects. "They called for individual freedom and equal rights, but they normally settled for religious tolerance, equal taxation, the reform of the law and the extension of education" (Corvisier, 1992, 434).

Monarchs who were inspired by the principles of enlightened despotism included Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine II of Russia, the Empress Maria Teresa and the Emperor Joseph II. These principles were applied also, with varying degrees of success, in certain Italian states, such as Tuscany, in Spain and Portugal, and in Denmark and Sweden. In practice, they often became a means of making people submit to the authority of the state, or to reduce the influence of the Church.

The ideas of the philosophes spread beyond the confines of Europe. Even if they did not directly inspire the revolt of the 13 colonies in North America against the British

Crown, they helped to give this event a revolutionary character. When, on July 4th 1776, the representatives of the 13 colonies met in Congress in Philadelphia and voted for their independence, the opening section of their Declaration clearly reflected the doctrine of the philosophes:

> "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government" (*Declaration of Independence*).

As they believed that these rights had been violated by the King of Great Britain, the colonies declared themselves to be free and independent states. With the help of France, they obtained the recognition of this independence from their mother country.

In Latin America, the ideas of the French "philosophy" took hold among the rich and educated Creoles of Brazil, which still depended on Portugal; and the example of the United States inspired thoughts of independence. The evolution of Spanish Latin America reflected that of Brazil, although national sentiment was stronger there. The independence crisis began in 1789 (cf. Mousnier and Labrousse, 1967, 300-301).

Both the stir created in France by the independence of the United States, and the deficit created by the cost of the war in America, helped to precipitate the events which marked the beginning of what is known as the French Revolution. The principal figures in it were "enlightened" persons who had been won over by the ideas of the philosophes. They wished to apply their principles by re-modelling the organisation and government of society in France.

France

As a part of Europe, France shared in the social and economic changes that occurred, and contributed to the change of mentality which affected it in various ways. In France itself, however, these changes took a particular form.

Where politics was concerned, royal power was under attack from two different directions. On the one hand, there was the aristocracy, represented by the old nobility and the senior magistrates of the parlements, who wanted to recover the political role they had lost

under Louis XIV. On the other, there were the philosophes who demanded reforms which undermined the very principles on which the French monarchy of the day was based.

The monarchy was able to satisfy some of the demands of the nobility, but when it tried to undertake reforms along the lines advocated by the philosophes, it came up against the opposition of the parlements. And so, paralysed, the monarchy wavered between firmness and tergiversation. In the end, it was swept away in the revolutionary movement which took over France in the last ten years of the century.

1726–1750

On the death of Louis XIV (1715), his successor was too young to rule, and so power passed into the hands of a Regent, Philippe d'Orléans. At the beginning of the personal reign of Louis XV, effective power was first entrusted to a "chief minister". In 1726, it passed into the hands of Cardinal de Fleury, who directed much of his energy into trying to crush the Jansenists. The Jansenists, however, found support in the parlements.

On the death of Cardinal de Fleury (1743), the King took over power himself. Since his accession to the throne, the situation in France had been quite settled, in spite of two periods of war. This situation lasted till 1750 or so.

1750–1774

Around 1750, a change took place. Opposition in the parlements grew stronger. The parlements challenged the power of the monarchy, not only regarding religious matters, but also where fiscal and administrative questions were concerned. "Their claims to political involvement were growing. In 1756, they claimed that the parlements were all 'classes' of one and same body, the parlement of France, whose approval was an indispensable condition for edicts to have the force of law. Soon after, they stated that, in the absence of the Estates General, it was they who represented the nation" (Corvisier, 1992, 426).

At the same time, the new ideas were gaining ground and, in the years 1760–1770, they came to be generally accepted. "The philosophes had changed the mentality of the French: now they looked at everything in a critical and objective way. The monarchy and royalty were affected by this new way of seeing things" (Viguerie, 1995, 194).

In 1762, an agreement reached between the parlements and the philosophes brought about the expulsion of the Jesuits from their colleges and, in 1764, the suppression of the

Company in France. This agreement was shown also by their common opposition to all fiscal reform. From 1765 onwards, the conflict between the parlements and royal power became very fierce.

The King's reaction was to hand over the management of affairs to three supporters of state reform, known as the "triumvirate". Meaupou, created Chancellor in 1768, put an end to the claims of the parlements. By an edict dated February 22nd 1771, he created new parlements and split up the electoral district (**ressort***) of the parlement of Paris. This period of reform produced many good results, but the unexpected death of Louis XV in 1774 brought it to a close.

During this period, there was also the Seven Years' War, which France paid for by the loss of its territory in Canada and Louisiana.

1774–1789

When Louis XVI came to the throne, he was almost 20 years old. He was good, educated, but "was always torn between two conflicting ideas, which he could neither reconcile nor choose between: respect for the past, and a desire for radical reform of a revolutionary type" (Viguerie, 1995, 345).

Shortly after his accession, he dismissed the "triumvirate" and re-established the former parlements. He formed a government consisting of administrators who supported the philosophes, and economists called *physiocrates*, whose policy stressed the primacy of agriculture and the need for economic freedom. Turgot instituted reforms along the lines they advocated, but he incurred the displeasure of the aristocracy and the common people. He was dismissed in 1776.

In 1778, France gave its support to the *insurgents* in America. In September 1783, the peace treaty with England was signed at Versailles. The war had plunged the state further into debt. Calonne was appointed Controller General for Finances in November of the same year. He tried to increase revenue from taxation and by rationalising the management of public spending. In 1786, he introduced a major piece of fiscal reform, whose principal measure was a new tax, a levy on land, which applied to all revenue from real estate. In February 1787, he submitted his proposals to the "Assembly of Notables" which promptly rejected them. The King resisted for a while, but eventually gave way by dismissing Calonne in April.

Calonne was replaced in May 1787 by Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, who tried to push ahead the latter's reforms by submitting them in an amended form. They were rejected by the parlement of Paris, which refused to endorse the fiscal edicts, saying it was incompetent to do so, and declaring that such power lay with the Estates General. Regarding the composition of the Estates General, the members of the parlements wanted each of the three Orders to have the same number of delegates, while public opinion demanded twice the number of delegates to represent the Third Estate.

On August 8th 1788, a decree from the King's Council announced that the Estates General would meet on May 1st 1789. On December 27th 1788, the King declared he was in favour of doubling the representation of the Third Estate. A shortage of food resulting from a bad harvest in 1788 led to civil disturbances in March–April 1789, and it was against this background that the elections of the delegates to the Estates General were held.

1789–1804

As soon as the meeting of the Estates General began, it was clear that there was a major difference of opinion between the King and the delegates of the Third Estate. The King wanted the three Orders to deliberate separately, as was the custom, but the delegates of the Third Estate, full of confidence because of their large numbers and the sympathies of a certain number of delegates from the other two Orders, insisted that the deliberations take place in a single assembly, with each delegate having one vote. Also, while the King's intention was to limit the purpose of the meeting of the Estates to an examination of the financial situation, the delegates of the Third Estate wanted the assembly to undertake a vast programme of reforms.

After the delegates of the Third Estate had succeeded in imposing their views on the King, the delegates of the three Orders proceeded together to set up a National Assembly. This event marked what was seen later as the **first stage of the French Revolution.**

The Assembly set itself the task of drawing up a "constitution" for the kingdom. Inspired by the "philosophy of the Enlightenment", the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen", with which the Constitution opened, laid down new foundations for French society.

The Assembly undertook also a vast programme of reforms. Certain of these reforms, such as the re-organisation of the administration and of the judiciary, proposed during what was already becoming *l'Ancien Régime*, now became law. But above all, what the

Assembly wanted was to abolish any remnant of the old feudal system. As the Catholic Church was closely linked to the monarchy, it too was included in the Assembly's programme of reforms.

According to the constitution it had adopted, the National Assembly gave way to a Legislative Assembly which, as its name indicates, had the task of drawing up laws. Before these laws could come into force, they had to be approved by the King, who, however, had the power of veto.

It had been agreed that none of the members of the first Assembly would be members of the second. The new delegates were for the most part convinced revolutionaries. In addition, the Legislative Assembly was subject, much more than the previous one, to pressure from the people of Paris. When, on August 10th 1792, the people heard that enemy forces were threatening to invade France across the eastern frontiers, they rose up against the King, accusing him of plotting with the enemy.

There now began what is known as the **second Revolution**. The National Convention elected, in theory, by universal suffrage, but in reality, only by the revolutionary militants, met on September 21st 1792. It abolished the monarchy, and King Louis XVI, condemned to death by the Assembly, was guillotined on January 21st 1793.

In the spring of the same year, new threats of invasion and rebellions within the frontiers of France led the Convention to set up a revolutionary government and, contrary to the principles of the "Declaration of Rights", to govern by imposing a "Reign of Terror".

The Reign of Terror reached its height under Robespierre. But on the 9th of Thermidor, Year II (July 27th 1794), he himself was overthrown and executed. There ensued a period of relative peace.

During the period known as the **Thermidor Revolution**, the chief concern of the surviving members of the Convention was to preserve the achievements of the Revolution. On August 22nd 1795, they adopted a new constitution which shared out power between two Assemblies and a Directorate composed of five members. On October 26th 1795, the new measures were implemented.

The ex-Convention members were numerous in both Assemblies, and this enabled them to pursue the same policies. During the "Directory", depending on the dominant faction, periods of relative peace alternated with those of political intransigence.

In November 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte, a general famous for his victories in Italy (1796–1797), overthrew the Directorate. Under the new political system known as the Consulate, Napoleon undertook an extensive programme of administrative re-organisation

and tried to bring reconciliation to the French, in particular, by signing a Concordat with the Pope on July 15th 1801.

After five years in power, Napoleon consolidated his political position by proclaiming himself "hereditary Emperor of the French". He persuaded Pope Pius VII to come to Paris and consecrate him in Notre Dame on December 2nd 1804.

It is against this background of change in Europe and, more specifically, in France between 1726 and 1804, that this History of the Institute in the 18th Century is set.

Institute history in the context of the history of 18th-century France

1726–1750: favourable situation
1743: death of Cardinal Fleury

1750–1774: opposition of the parlements
1756–63: Seven Years War
1762–64: expulsion of the Jesuits
1771: modification of the parlements

1774–1789: reign of Louis XVI
1778: support for "insurgents" in America
1783: Treaty of Versailles regarding America

1789–1804: French Revolution
1789: National and Constituent Assemblies
1792: Legislative Assembly
1794: Convention, Reign of Terror
1795: Directory
1799: Consulate

1804: Napoleon crowns himself Emperor

From 1720: Br Timothée, Superior
1734: St Yon, 5th General Chapter
1745: St Yon, 6th General Chapter
Problems in Rouen and Rheims

1751: St Yon, 7th Gen. Chapter, Br Claude
1761: St Yon, 8th General Chapter

1767: St Yon, 9th Gen. Chapter, Br Florence
1771: Paris, Maison du St Esprit

1777: Rheims, 10th Gen. Chapter, Br Agathon
1778: Letters Patent (Paris Parlement)
1780: Melun, Maison du St Enfant Jésus
1787: Melun, 11th General Chapter
1790: General Idea of the FSC Institute
1792: Institute suppressed; death of Br Salomon
1793: Br Agathon imprisoned

1795: Rome, Br Frumence, Vicar General
1798: Death of Br Agathon
1804: Br Frumence in Lyons

Part One

Growth (1726–1751)

Introduction

Brother Timothée had been Superior General since 1720. He had taken over from Brother Barthélemy, who himself had succeeded John Baptist de La Salle in 1717. He was a companion of the Founder, and for the 25 years he would be at the head of the Institute, he would be surrounded by Brothers who also had known him.

From what we can gather, the twenty years or so which followed the General Chapter of 1725 were favourable for the Institute. On the other hand, the last few years of Brother Timothée's term as Superior of the Institute were characterised by difficulties which proved to be only a prelude for what would happen in the following period.

Part One is divided into three chapters

A period of transition

Chapter One — A period favourable for the Institute (1726–1744)

Chapter Two — More difficult years (1745–1751)

A period of expansion

Chapter Three — The rapid expansion of the Brothers' educational work during the 1726–1751 period as a whole

Chapter One

A Period Favourable for the Institute (1726–1744)

Successive General Chapters and inter-capitular periods provide a useful framework within which to consider the principal facts we know about this period.

Consequences of the 1725 Chapter

During the period preceding the Chapter, the Superiors of the Institute took steps to obtain the official recognition of the Institute. In 1724, Letters patent (**Lettres patentes***) were obtained from Louis XV, and Pope Benedict XIII granted a Bull (**Bulle***) which gave official approval to the Institute. The General Chapter was summoned for the official reception of the Bull, and to bring the *Rule* into line with it. On this same occasion, the Brothers pronounced vows according to the new formula. Brother Timothée was confirmed as Superior General, Brother Irénée was elected first Assistant in the place of Brother Jean Jacquot, and Brother Joseph was re-elected as second Assistant (see Bédel, 1996, 204).

When Brother Joseph died in 1729, Brother Timothée set about finding a successor, following the prescriptions for such an eventuality, established by the 1720 and 1725 General Chapters. The votes sent in by post by the Brother Directors were counted on April 23rd 1729. The majority were in favour of Brother Dosithée (Claude Longière), who had entered the Institute at the age of 36 and was now 58. He had taken part in the 1725 Chapter as the "procurator of the Paris house" (cf. Rigault II, 108).

After having the revised *Rule* printed in 1725, Brother Timothée sent copies to all the communities. The text of the Rules and Constitutions was accompanied by endorsements from various bishops and a French translation of some of the articles of the Bull of Approbation.

In the same year, Brother Timothée had a new edition printed of the *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, and then, between 1726 and 1731, he published St La Salle's *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and his *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts* (cf. Bédel, 1996, 193-194). In 1733, there appeared *The Life of Monsieur Jean Baptiste de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* by Canon Blain (cf. Bédel, 1996, xi). All these works served to keep alive the memory of the Founder among the Brothers, and to increase their veneration for him.

The main facts regarding the period 1726–1734

The information we have about the Institute in the period between 1726 and the 1734 Chapter can be set out as follows:

Relations with the Holy See

During the course of 1726, two Brothers were sent to Rome to replace Brother Gabriel Drolin. The Brothers in question were Brother Fiacre (Jacques Nonnez), who had been Director of the house in Boulogne and had become the "Visitor of the houses of the Society", and Brother Thomas (Charles Frappet), who had been "Procurator", that is, bursar of the Institute, and then Director in Marseilles.

These two Brothers had in addition the mission of conveying the gratitude of the Institute to the Holy Father for granting the Bull of Approbation. They were received by Pope Benedict XIII thanks to the good offices of Cardinal de Polignac, the representative of the King of France to the Holy See (cf. Meoli, 1995, 48).

By a brief (**Bref***) dated March 4th 1727, Benedict XIII granted a plenary indulgence (**indulgence***) to the Brothers on the day of their final profession, at the moment of their death, and when they visited the chapel on certain feastdays (cf. Lucard II, 3).

Events connected with St Yon

The long-standing dispute between the parish priest of St Sever and the Brothers of St Yon was finally settled. According to an agreement signed on July 14th 1727, for an annual fee of 10 livres, the Brothers were exempted from paying the tithe; and for a further annual fee of 8 livres, they obtained the right to open a cemetery on their property for the Brothers and the other inmates of the house who died (cf. RA CB 151-2, dos.7; copy of an extract from the register of the Parlement of Rouen).

The existing chapel no longer met the requirements of a well-filled house which included a number of very different groups. A new chapel was therefore built according to plans drawn up by a Brother (cf. CL 8, 193). The blessing of the two foundation stones took place on June 7th 1728 (cf. Rigault II, 126-127). With the help of the Brothers and of some "custodial boarders", the work was completed in two years.

The interior decoration of the chapel was subsequently supervised by Brother Timothée. From the approval given by one of the Vicar Generals of the Archbishop of Rouen to a collection of Masses and hymns, we see that, contrary to the growing custom of using a new rite, the Brothers continued to use the Roman rite in the chapel of St Yon (cf. Lucard II, 103, note 2).

In 1734, the Brothers obtained permission from the parish priest of St Sever, M. du Jarrier Bernard, to transfer the remains of their Founder from the parish church to the chapel of St Yon. The ceremony took place on July 16th of the same year (cf. Rigault II, 131f), and the blessing of the chapel followed on the 17th (cf. RA CK 566-4/2).

Re-organisation of the southern part of the Institute

The houses of the Institute located in the southern part of France formed a somewhat separate entity, with its own Visitor, who was the Director of the house in Avignon. The kind of apostolate called for in the provinces of Languedoc, Provence and Dauphiné differed in many ways from that of the first houses of the Institute. The population in these areas "preserved their own special civilisation and their own particular institutions. Their customs and their own language ensured for them relative autonomy in their moral and social life, if not in political matters" (Rigault II, 171). While the Institute needed to preserve its overall unity, it also had to enable the Brothers working in these areas to adapt to their situation.

In 1728, when Brother Timothée visited the house where he had lived from 1713 to 1720, he wrote the following on the opening page of the new register of vows:

"We, the undersigned, Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, have recognised on our visit to communities beyond Lyons, that it is very difficult and even harmful for the Brothers of the said communities to go to Rouen to make their vows, given the great distance involved. . . . That is why, on the advice of our dear Brother Assistants, we have chosen our house in Avignon, so that the Brothers from the area who are ready to make vows can go there. The same house will also enable our Brothers to make their retreats there" (RA CG 404-2/2, quoted in Rigault II, 183).

Among the names of the Brothers who pronounced their final vows at the end of the retreat presided over by Brother Timothée in 1728, we find that of Brother Gabriel Drolin. He had returned to France that same year after having lived alone in Rome for 26 years, and had not yet pronounced his vows according to the Bull of Approbation granted in 1725. Subsequently, in 1731, he was deputed to receive the vows of four Brothers (cf. Rigault II, 185). He died in Auxonne on January 11th 1733, at the age of 69.

It was Brother Timothée's intention also to establish a novitiate in the same house. This novitiate opened on September 14th 1729 (cf. RA CJ 501-1, *Historical Record of the Southern Province* (HSP), part II, 357; Lucard II, 9). Its first Director was Brother Stanislas (Albin Bouché). He was one of the Brothers whose biography was included by Blain in his Life of M. de La Salle.

One of the two novices who took his habit there on October 15th 1729 was François Antoine Isnard, a former pupil of the Brothers from the age of eight, who entered the novitiate at the age of fourteen and took the name of Brother Bénézet. Up to the time of his death in 1792, he would prove to be one of the Brothers who was most typical of the southern part of the Institute.

The 1734 Chapter

Circumstances

The ten years at the end of which, according to the Bull of Approbation, a General Chapter had to be held, fell in 1735. There was nothing to prevent the date of the Chapter being brought forward, and so, when Brother Timothée invited Brothers from other houses to join those of Rouen for the transfer of the Founder's remains on July 16th 1734, he may have already decided to hold the General Chapter on the same occasion, and may have chosen Brothers to attend the ceremony with this in view.

What happened was that, on August 2nd, the Brothers who had gathered "to be present at the exhumation and transfer of the remains of Monsieur Jean Baptiste de La Salle", were asked to consider the opportunity they had of bringing forward the General Chapter by a year. "They decided unanimously that it should be held without delay in order to avoid the cost and fatigue of a second journey within such a short space of time" (RA CC 200-1/1, *General Chapters before 1777*, 32). They added the rider that the following General Chapter should be held in 1745.

During the Chapter, the capitulants declared that "the present General Chapter thought it appropriate not to use the names or terms «Rules» and «Constitutions» to refer to matters which would be decided and defined, but instead to use «ordinance», «statute» or «regulation», through respect for our holy Rules and Constitutions approved by the Holy See" (RA CC 200-1/1, 33,34). The register signed by the capitulants shows that 47 attended the Chapter, and that all were senior Brothers or Directors.

Decisions

One consequence of bringing forward the Chapter was that the next election of Brother Assistants was also brought forward. Brother Dosithée, who was going blind, asked not to be reconsidered for the post. In his place, the Chapter elected Brother Étienne (Jean Pérotin), 46 at the time and Director of the house in St Omer. Brother Irenée was re-elected first Assistant.

The capitulants also decided on a number of measures to eliminate practices which they considered harmful to community life. These included rearing rabbits and pigeons in school buildings and, in order to eliminate the risk of failings against poverty and teaching gratuitously, the use of tobacco.

They specified the nature and extent of the authority of Brother Assistants when they visited communities.

They decided that "several copies of the Rules of Government would be made . . . and placed in the hands of those for whom they were intended" and that "the Rule of the Brother Director would be printed" and that Directors would be required to read them at the beginning of each month. Another decision they made was to "print the Explanation of the first part of mental prayer, composed by Monsieur Jean Baptiste de La Salle".

1734–1745 inter-capitular period

There is very little information available regarding the life of the Institute during the period between the Chapters of 1734 and 1745. The few facts we know do not amount to much.

As the 1734 Chapter had requested, the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* was printed in 1739, and the *Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute*, in 1745 or so, in the form of a small booklet containing few pages (cf. CL 25, 7).

As the accommodation in the house at Avignon was not suitable for the use to which it was being put, it had become necessary to find new premises. This was a source of concern for Brother Claude, the former Director of novices, who was now both the Director of the house and Visitor. However, new premises were eventually found in 1742 (cf. HSP 1, 107).

This period was marked in particular by conflict between the Brothers and the Jansenists. This can been seen as a consequence of the anti-Jansenist policy pursued by Cardinal de Fleury (cf. page 8). The Brothers were involved because they were seen to enjoy the King's favour, and because of their own opposition to the sect.

Were any Brothers sympathetic to the cause of the Jansenists? Research by Brother Clément Marcel Martinais, as yet unpublished, reveals that a book which appeared in 1741 included a copy of a document notarised on July 4th 1734, according to which Brother Bernard, the first biographer of De La Salle and Senior Master of the schools of Rheims at the time, certified that one of his pupils had been cured in 1728 through the intercession of a Jansenist who had recently died.

When King Louis XIV tried to force the Jansenists (**Jansénistes***) to accept the Bull *Unigenitus* (1713), in which the Pope condemned their doctrine, expressed in Quesnel's *Moral Reflections*, their opposition took the form of an "appeal against an ill-informed Pope to the General Council", which earned those who subscribed to it the name of "appellants". During the Regency, measures against the Jansenists were relaxed, but with the accession of the King to power, pressure was once again applied (see page 8). During this period, their group, which up to that time had consisted mainly of members of the bourgeoisie, many of whom were lawyers, was now joined by an influx of the common people. In the cemetery of St Médard in Paris, at the tomb of a Jansenist deacon to whom miraculous powers were attributed, there were scenes of mass hysteria. In 1731, the King ordered the closure of the cemetery, but this did nothing to cool the ardour of the followers of the deacon Pâris. During the same period, more or less, the Jansenists provided themselves with a powerful means of propaganda in the form of a weekly publication — the *Ecclesiastical News* — which first appeared in 1728.

We read of an altercation that took place in the parish of St Médard, where the Brothers had a school at the time, when, on May 1st 1735, one of the Brothers called a Jansenist an idolater. And then, on February 6th 1744, a letter was published in the *Ecclesiastical News* which made a virulent attack on the Brothers. It was written by a priest from Angers, a Jansenist, who previously had been interned in St Yon.

Conclusion

What we have seen gives us only a very limited idea of how the Institute as a whole fared between 1726 and 1745; and regarding the community and personal lives of the Brothers at this time, information is even more scarce.

Some of the decisions taken by the 1734 Chapter, however, reveal how community life suffered from practices linked with the often difficult living conditions of the Brothers. We are given a similar insight from the following proposition which was not adopted: "because of the lack of charity shown in the allocation of linen to Brothers who are changed from one house to another, it has been decided that, in the future, care will be taken to give them linen that is reasonably good". However, we cannot make any judgments about the quality of normal personal relations in communities simply on the basis of a single Chapter proposition. We are even less able to assess the intensity of the spiritual life or the degree of regularity in these communities. As for the personal lives of the Brothers, evidence is more or less non-existent.

There is great scope for research for anyone willing to sift through existing documents dealing with schools. If this were done, it might be possible to build up a better picture of the Brothers who worked in them.

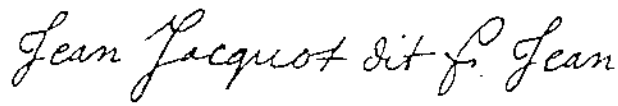
Following this chapter, we should like to sum up this period, which represented a transition for the Institute between a time still closely linked with its "origins" and the rest of the history of the Institute, by sketching the portrait of two Brothers who, while quite dissimilar, complemented each other.

— Supplement One —
Two Representatives of an Era

During the time he was at the head of the Institute, Brother Timothée was surrounded by Brothers who had known De La Salle. The number of these had gradually decreased, and when Brother Timothée died in 1752, there were only about thirty of them left. Of these, some were well known. These were the Brother Assistants, the members of the General Councils and the Directors. Little is known about the other Brothers.

For those who joined the Institute after the death of the Founder, his surviving companions served as witnesses to the first years of the Institute. Of these, Brothers Jean Jacquot and Irenée are particularly representative.

Brother Jean Jacquot



Brother Jean Jacquot is a good example of the kind of person who joined De La Salle at the very beginning of the Institute.

His life

Jean Jacquot was born on October 18th 1672 at Château Porcien in Champagne. He went to the school opened in this small town by the teachers sent there by De La Salle in 1682 (see Bédel, 1996, 38). In October 1686, at the age of 14, he was one of the first, if not the first, to join the group of "little Brothers" formed in Rheims in rue Neuve (see Bédel, 1996, 69). He received the habit of the Brothers in 1688.

In 1690, we find him teaching in a school near the Pont Royal in Paris. His next posting was the school in rue Princesse where his work was much more important (cf. CL 40-1,187, note 2). At the age of 26, on account of his teaching qualities, he was called to the Grand'Maison to assist the Director of novices, Brother Jean Henry, and train the young Brothers to teach (cf. Lett, 41). Subsequently, he spent the greater part of his life in school communities of which normally he was the Director.

On June 6th 1694, he was one of the 12 Brothers who joined De La Salle in consecrating themselves entirely to God in order to ensure, as a Society, the continued existence of the gratuitous schools. The following day, with the same Brothers, he signed the document attesting to the election of De La Salle as Superior of the new Society (see Bédel, 1996, 95).

In the midst of all the difficulties that De La Salle had to endure in Paris at the beginning of the 18th century, Brother Jean remained totally faithful to his Superior. There was, for example, the 1702–1703 period, when attempts were made to appoint some other Superior at the head of the Institute (see Bédel, 1996, 117f); or the period from 1704 to 1706, when De La Salle was attacked by the teachers of the Little Schools and by the writing masters. During this last period, Brother Jean Jacquot, as master in charge of the schools in the parish of St Sulpice, was himself targeted by these attacks (see Bédel, 1996, 131f). Well placed to assess the problems due to the absence of De La Salle during the years 1712–1714, Brother Jean Jacquot would certainly have been one of the Brothers who signed the letter sent to him by the "principal Brothers of Paris, Versailles and St Denis" (see Bédel, 171f).

Role in the Institute

Brother Jean Jacquot belonged to a group of Brothers without whom De La Salle "did nothing" (CL 8, Blain II, 411). Consequently he must have had a hand in drawing up the Rules (see Bédel, 1996, 182) as well as *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, for which his experience would have been particularly valuable.

In 1717, he took part in the General Chapter in which Brother Barthélemy was elected Superior of the Institute. He himself was appointed with Brother Joseph to be one of the Assistants of the Brother Superior. During this time he continued to be Director of the community and schools of Paris, as did Brother Joseph of those of Rheims. On the death of Brother Barthélemy in 1720, the two Assistants administered the Institute in his place and summoned the Chapter which elected Brother Timothée and confirmed them in their function.

In his capacity as Director of the house in Rouen, he took part in the 1725 Chapter, summoned following the granting of the Bull of Approbation. The Superior and the two Assistants offered their resignation at this Chapter, but only Brother Jean's was accepted, and his place as first Assistant was taken by Brother Irenée. Brother Joseph took over as Director of the house of St Yon. The reason for this was that, according to the Bull, the Assistants had to live with the Superior General. Was this why Brother Irenée replaced Brother Jean Jacquot who lived inside the city of Rouen?

As Assistant, Brother Jean Jacquot contributed to the publication, in 1720, of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, whose contents "were constituted and put in order (by the late M. de La Salle) only after a great deal of consultation between himself and the most senior Brothers of the

Institute and the most capable teachers, and on the basis of several years' experience. . . ." (CL 24, Preface to the 1720 edition).

When Brother Bernard was asked to collect "memoirs" and any information that had been gathered with a view to writing a life of M. de La Salle, he asked for the help of Brother Jean Jacquot whose responsibility it also was. While Brother Bernard remained in Paris, this cooperation posed no problem, but when he moved to Rheims, this was no longer so, and we find Brother Jean's Director, Brother Joseph, complaining to his fellow Assistant about his subordinate's absences.

Canon Jean Louis de La Salle, Jean Baptiste's brother, was sent part of the text for his comments. As he did not agree with some passages in the text, he refused to return it till he had seen the complete text which, in the meantime, had been finished by Brother Bernard. Faced with this problem, Brother Bernard sent Brother Jean Jacquot his views in a document entitled *Remarks on the Life of M. de La Salle*. Brother Jean Jacquot wrote to Canon de La Salle on May 4th 1723, clarifying a few points and telling him that the complete text had been sent to him. The complete text, however, did not please the Canon any more than the first had. By the time Canon Blain was asked in 1726 to write the life of the Founder of the Institute, Brother Jean Jacquot no longer seemed to have any responsibility in the matter.

On the other hand, although no longer Assistant, he was involved in the publication of the *Rule* which had been revised in order to conform to the Bull of Approbation. We know this because, in the course of a subsequent dispute between the Superiors and the Archbishop of Rouen (see page 33), he stated that "he had had the Regulations printed" (CL 11, 126, note 2). Perhaps even the Preface of the Rules and Constitutions printed in 1726 (see Bédel, 1996, 211) was his work.

In later years, even if his contribution to the general running of the Institute was reduced, he continued to participate in its work by training the young Brothers entrusted to him in his capacity as Director of various houses of the Institute.

Brother Irenée

Brother Irenée was one of the more colourful characters of the early years of the Institute and of Brother Timothée's term in office as Superior.

His life

Brother Irenée, who would be an important figure in the Institute for 30 years or so, first met De La Salle in Grenoble in 1714. De La Salle had been there since 1713 and was due to leave soon. Shortly before his departure, the Abbé Yse de Saléon introduced the future Brother Irenée to De La Salle, who soon recognised in him the signs of a genuine vocation (cf. CL 57, 267). De La Salle entrusted the task of initiating the young man into the life of the Institute to the Director of the house in Grenoble, and it was there that Brother Irenée received his religious habit and the name under which he would be known in the Institute. The Register of Brothers states that he "entered on May 6th or thereabouts in the year 1714" (CL 3, 54).

The new Brother continued his formation under the guidance of Brother Timothée, who was Director of Avignon at the time. When Brother Irenée was asked to take the place of a Brother in one of the schools in the town, he had problems with asserting his authority over the pupils. The same thing happened in Paris and in Laon, where he was at the beginning of 1717 when Brother Barthélemy came seeking the agreement of the Brothers regarding the calling of an assembly of the "principal Brothers" (see Bédel, 1996, 179). After the election of Brother Barthélemy as Superior General in May 1717, Brother Irenée was put in charge of the novitiate at St Yon, and this is where he worked for the next 30 years. He took part in the 1725 Chapter and was elected Assistant to Brother Timothée. While fulfilling the functions of this new position, he continued to run the novitiate and, at times, the house of St Yon.

For a long time, there was a certain amount of mystery about Brother Irenée. This was due to his background and to the circumstances under which he entered the Institute. These were known only to the Superiors.

Claude François du Lac de Montisambert came from a family of the old nobility. He was born on October 30th 1691 in the château of Tigy, in the diocese of Orléans. He was the eldest of the

family's two boys and one girl. His family had given him a solid Christian upbringing, and his mother had provided him with the rudiments of an education. His father wanted him to be a soldier and so refused to let him learn Latin. In 1705, at the age of 14, he became a lieutenant in the St Menehould regiment, in Champagne. As a lieutenant in the Royal Champagne regiment, he was wounded at the battle of Malplaquet in September 1709. When his wounds were healed, he rejoined his troops. When victory at the battle of Denain in July 1712 changed the course of the war, he left the army without informing his parents.

The explanation for this course of action lies in the fact that, while he was recovering from his wounds, he had undergone some kind of conversion and had renounced his easy-going life in the army and especially his passion for gambling. Having decided to go on pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto, he stopped in Grenoble on his way to Italy. Neither the Capuchins nor the Grande Chartreuse would give him lodgings. The same thing happened at the Trappist monastery of Sept Fons, in the Bourbonnais, on his way back. Returning to Grenoble, he went to make a spiritual retreat at Parménie. The pilgrimage chaplain mentioned him to the Abbé Yse de Saléon who, in his turn, introduced him to De La Salle.

When Brother Irenée joined the Institute, he did not want his family to know he had done so, because he feared they would oppose his vocation. As a consequence, De La Salle did not insist he produce his baptismal certificate, as was normally required of candidates to the religious life. By the time Brother Irenée made his final vows in 1717 he was firmly established in his vocation, and so, in 1728, he had no misgivings about asking the Brother Superior to visit his parents on one of his journeys to check whether an old gambling debt had been paid. Mme de Montisambert, whose husband and two other children had died, was relieved to receive news of her remaining son, who had not contacted her for many years. The visit led to an exchange of letters between mother and son which continued thereafter. In 1733, Brother Irenée was sent by Brother Timothée to visit the houses of the Institute, and this enabled him to spend some time at home with his mother.

Role in the Institute

Brother Irenée was very close to De La Salle in the final years of his life. Besides finding inspiration in his example, he was able to become thoroughly imbued with his teachings, in particular with those he gave the novices on mental prayer (see Bédel, 1996, 187). He would pass on these teachings to successive generations of young Brothers.

As Director of novices at St Yon, it was Brother Irenée's task to train young Brothers at a time when his was the only novitiate, and later, when it was the most flourishing one. Records show that, during the period from 1726 to 1747, some 650 young Brothers passed through his hands. The formation given to the novices by Brother Irenée put them into contact with the school of

spirituality of De La Salle (cf. Rigault II, 161). He took particular care to teach them how to make mental prayer, using for this purpose the material the Founder had put together at the end of his life. He added a personal touch, by basing his teaching about Our Lady on the writings of St Grignion de Montfort, a contemporary of De La Salle's (cf. Latour, *Life of Brother Irenée of the Christian Schools*, MCCLXXIV, RA CE, 302-1/23). Brother Irenée's great influence over his novices stemmed also from his great kindness — he could also be very demanding — and the fact that he made himself totally available to them.

Brothers who made their novitiate elsewhere fell under his influence also, if only indirectly, because he had trained their novice masters. For example, he wrote to Brother Stanislas, the first Director of novices at Avignon, describing how he set about training young Brothers (cf. Rigault II, 160-162). While he was at St Yon, one of his disciples and collaborators was Brother Claude, who also later was Director of the Avignon novitiate.

Brother Irenée's role as Assistant to Brother Timothée was an important one. As has already been said, he was sent in 1733 to visit all the houses of the Institute. On a number of occasions, when Brother Timothée was considering opening a new school, Brother Irenée was put in charge of negotiations. This was the case when Yse de Saléon, Bishop of Rodez, wanted the Brothers to come to his diocese. On other occasions, he intervened to obtain an improvement in the situation of the Brothers, as when in 1744, he signed an agreement with the director of the General Hospital of Rouen, and obtained an extra 400 livres for the group of Brothers who taught in the city schools.

The wide experience he had gained of the Institute as Assistant convinced Brother Irenée that "too many schools were being opened, and that, at times, this resulted in young Brothers not being given enough time to pursue their formation as religious and as teachers" (Lucard II, 158, note 2; cf. Rigault II, 291).

Brother Irenée did not restrict his zeal to his formation of novices. He extended it also to the boarders who were his responsibility for some time. He set up for them the Society or Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, for which, in 1736, he obtained the approval of the Pope in the form of a brief, as well as an indulgence for those who belonged to it. His main interest lay in the "custodial boarders", whose attitudes he tried to change in the course of the conversations he had with them. It was by helping one of these boarders, who had asked him to keep him company, that he caught the disease that would lead to his death on October 3rd 1747, at the age of 56 (cf. Rigault II, 166).

Conclusion

Brothers Jean Jacquot and Irenée were quite different, and yet, each in his own way, lived out to the full his vocation as a Brother of the Christian Schools.

What characterised Brother Jean Jacquot especially was the length of time he was a Brother (73 years), which was as exceptional as the age at which he died (87). What was unusual also was the fact that he spent most of these years teaching in school. Whether or not he was the author of the preface to the 1726 *Rule*, his spiritual life was clearly based on its guidelines: fidelity to the *Rule* and the importance of the obligations of the vows. Even if, for eight years, he participated in the government of the Institute and helped with the publication of works important for the Brothers, his major contribution to the Institute as a whole was undoubtedly the formation of the young Brothers entrusted to his care in the houses where he was Director.

Brother Irenée, on the other hand, was, relatively speaking, only a short time in the Institute (33 years), and died fairly young at the age of 56. His time in class was short and difficult. His main characteristic was the intensity of his spiritual life. His major contribution to the Institute as a whole was the formation of successive generations of young Brothers in the novitiate of St Yon, and his role in the government of the Institute as Assistant for 22 years.

The commitment of both men was complete. In Brother Jean Jacquot it took the form of fidelity over a long period of time; in Brother Irenée, it showed itself as the fervour of a convert.

While each had his strong point — for one, it was teaching, for the other, it was the spiritual life — it did not exclude other aspects of the Brother's life which served to balance the dominant characteristic of each.

They served the Institute in different ways, but by working in association, they were able to give of their best.

The lives of most Brothers at the time tended to resemble that of Brother Jean Jacquot rather than that of Brother Irenée, which is not to say that exceptions did not exist. There is the case of Brother Barthélemy and Brother Claude who, like Brother Irenée, hardly taught at all and were Directors of novices. While these differences have always existed in the Institute, it has been on the understanding that, by association, they complement one another in the pursuit of the common good.

Chapter Two

More Difficult Years (1745–1751)

Under the leadership of Brother Timothée, the Institute had so far gone through a relatively peaceful period, even though the Brothers had some difficulty in ensuring respect for their status as Charity School teachers and for the rights they had been granted by Letters Patent in 1724. Around 1745, however, the Archbishop of Rouen and his supporters added to these problems by claiming the right to exercise control over the Institute. As a consequence, it seems that the last years of Brother Timothée's period as Superior of the Institute proved to be somewhat more difficult. These problems affected mostly the government of the Institute, but they also had a direct impact on the Brothers in general. These problems were also connected with the current political situation.

The nature of the problems encountered

These problems arose mostly from the rights granted to the Institute, in particular, by Letters Patent, and from the different ways in which certain articles of the Bull of Approbation were interpreted.

Various rights granted to the Brothers are contested

In 1724, the Institute had obtained Letters Patent (**Lettres patentes***) from the King, Louis XV. According to a strict interpretation of the document, all that it authorised was "the residence of the petitioners in the house of St Yon". The document implied, however, official recognition of the existence of the "petitioners", that is, of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who are mentioned in the preamble to the document.

The royal decree approved explicitly the acquisition of the house of St Yon. It also granted the Brothers the right "to enjoy and possess all the property and bequests made and donated to them, or which they themselves might acquire. . . ."

The Brothers did not have the slightest doubt that the legal existence of the Institute and its right to possess and acquire property extended to the whole of the Kingdom. Their conviction was further strengthened by the judgment delivered in the "Deliberation of 28

lawyers of the Parlement of Paris regarding the right that the Brothers of the Christian Schools have to possess property throughout the Kingdom, on the basis of the Letters Patent granted to St Yon in Rouen". The judgment was that the Letters Patent, having been duly registered (**enregistrer***), gave the right to receive and acquire property in areas under the jurisdiction (**ressort***) of parlements other than that of Normandy (copy of the document in the town archives of Dole: ref. 1498).

There were areas, however, where the Brothers' understanding of these documents was not shared. Those who contested the rights of the Brothers maintained that, since the Letters Patent had been granted to the house of St Yon, and had been registered only by the Parlement of Normandy, they did not apply to the houses of the Institute in general, and had no force in the juridical areas of other parlements. This view was held by magistrates of a number of parlements and, in particular, by those of the Parlement of Paris.

These magistrates were not concerned solely with upholding the law. Although Letters Patent granted by the King were not a sign of royal favour, they did indicate all the same a sympathetic attitude towards the Brothers, whose educational work was known and appreciated, if not by the King himself, at least by some of the members of his Council. Reducing the scope of the royal decision fitted in well with the desire of members of parlement to restrict the power of the King. It was also a way of opposing him because of his policy regarding the Jansenists.

Members of various parlements who wished to prevent the spread of papal influence in France allied themselves with those who had refused to accept the Bull *Unigenitus*, and whom Cardinal de Fleury had attempted to bring to heel (see Introduction, page 8). This conflict had consequences for the Brothers. Seen as enjoying the favour of the King and opposed to the Jansenists, they drew down upon themselves the disfavour of numerous members of parlements and, more generally, that of "Gallican" (**Gallicanisme***) and often Jansenist lawyers.

Moreover, many of the tax exemptions the Brothers had been granted were now being contested. As Battersby points out, tax collectors were more active and exacting than usual in the years 1744–1748, when France was at war again (cf. Battersby, 1960, 57).

The problems, which these and other similar contestations caused the Institute in this and in the following period, occupied such an important place in the lives of the Brothers, that we feel it necessary to go more deeply into this whole question in the supplement which follows this chapter.

The interpretation given to some articles of the Bull of Approbation

Article XV of the Bull of Approbation reads as follows: "Let General Chapters be held in the place chosen by the Superior General as his residence". Did this mean that the Superior General could not reside temporarily or permanently anywhere else except in the house where he held the General Chapter? Certain ecclesiastics of the diocese of Rouen were of the opinion that he could not.

Moreover, basing themselves on article II of the Bull, which speaks of Brothers as "living in dioceses by permission of the local bishop and under his authority", they believed that, since the Institute had its headquarters at St Yon, it was bound in a special way to the diocese of Rouen. As a consequence, the Archbishop of the diocese had the right to oversee all that concerned the Institute as a whole and, in particular, its General Chapters (cf. Rigault II, 297).

The Superiors had no intention of submitting to this kind of guardianship. This led, of course, to strained relationships with the Archbishop and, especially, with his entourage.

By treating the Brothers as minors, the Archbishop and his entourage showed that they no doubt considered it their duty to watch over a religious institute composed exclusively of lay persons! But their attitude could also stem from the fact that the Brothers, by placing themselves under the authority of the Pope, had sought to free themselves of excessive control by local bishops. This, as can be imagined, was not appreciated by many members of the French hierarchy.

The 1745 General Chapter

1745 was the prescribed date for holding the General Chapter.

Choice of place

The Superior General decided to hold the General Chapter in Rheims. This suited the Brothers from the South of France, who found that Rouen was too far for them to travel. It was also a way of escaping from the control of the Archdiocese of Rouen. With this in mind, as well as the transfer of the headquarters of the Institute to Rheims at some future date, Brother Généreux, the Director of the Brothers' community in Rheims, asked the Archbishop for permission to open a chapel in the house in rue Neuve.

The chapel was blessed on May 21st 1745 in the presence of several Brothers who were due to take part in the Chapter. The Chapter opened on May 27th, the feast of the

Ascension. The document declaring the opening of the Chapter explained that Rheims had been chosen as the place to hold the Chapter "through veneration for the native town of our very worthy Founder, and out of respect for the first house of our Institute". It also hinted at another reason. When the Assembly of Brothers was informed of the permission granted by the Archbishop of Rheims to open a chapel, the minutes recording the fact mentioned that this was so that Holy Mass might be celebrated "not only during our retreat and assembly, but also throughout the year and in perpetuity, so that this house could become a home for old and infirm Brothers, as well as the residence of the Brother Superior General, his Assistants and other officers" (RA CC 200-1/1, 36-37).

In addition to the Superior General, the Assistants and Brother Jean Jacquot, former Assistant and dean of the Institute, 30 Brothers had been elected as delegates to the Chapter, in accordance with article XIII of the Bull of Approbation (cf. Rigault II, 299).

Decisions taken

Of the 19 articles approved by the Chapter in the course of its five sessions, we note the following, by which it decided:

♦ that if the situation of the Brothers in Caen and Moulins did not improve, and if in the latter town "they were not allowed to teach according to our customs and Rules", the Brothers would be withdrawn from these two towns.

♦ that all communities should have a copy of *The Jansenist Library*, which contained a list of all the books which should not be found in a community.

♦ to forbid Brothers to teach outside the prescribed times, so that they could make their exercises without being disturbed.

♦ that Brothers "from beyond Lyons would recite prayers for the dead only for Brothers from beyond it, and those on this side of Lyons, only for those from this side".

♦ that it would consider the possibility of organising a gathering every three years or so for Brother Directors and senior Brothers from each of the two parts of the Institute.

♦ that, because of the problems caused by the presence of boarders in certain houses, only houses authorised to do so were to continue to take in boarders in future.

The Chapter renewed the mandate of the Brother Assistants Irenée and Étienne. In 1747, Brother Irenée died, and after the counting of the "voting slips" by seven Brothers

chosen for this task (a number fixed by the 1745 Chapter), Brother Daniel (Antoine Rodier) was elected as second Assistant. Brother Daniel, born in 1702, had been Director of the house at St Yon. Brother Étienne took Brother Irenée's place as first Assistant, and was also appointed Institute Bursar (cf. Rigault II, 316).

Problems in Rouen and Rheims

Rouen

At St Yon, a certain Brother Polycarpe, who was in charge of the ordinary boarders, lodged a complaint against Brother Timothée with the magistrates of the Parlement, the Royal Intendant, and the Archbishop of Rouen. He accused him of " a lack of submission to ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and of administrative faults, particularly in the running of the custodial boarding section" (Rigault II, 302). These accusations, together with several complaints from the inhabitants of St Sever, led the magistrates to refer the case to royal authority. On June 21st 1745, the Minister d'Argenson asked the Archbishop to make enquiries regarding this matter so as "to enable him to make a report to the King" (quoted in Rigault II, 303).

On July 26th 1745, in the face of the accusations levelled at Brother Timothée, three Directors, Brothers Alexis, Germain, Exupère, and a former Director, Brother Raymond, sent a letter of protest to the Archbishop of Rouen, in which they associated themselves with Brother Timothée in denying that, "by holding (our) their assembly in Rheims, they had wanted to avoid being subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction". They added: "We attest also that, for the last 25 years that Br Timothée has been governing the Institute, we have never found anything to reprove either in his conduct or in his government" (RA CE 252/3: copy certified as being faithful to the original deposited in the Departmental archives in Rouen).

On July 30th, the Archbishop informed the Brothers of St Yon that he would visit their house on August 2nd. He had reason to be satisfied. However, in his judgment based on this visit, dated August 12th, several of the conditions he laid down constituted nothing short of interference in the government of the Institute.

He stipulated that any Brother wishing to speak to him or to his Vicar Generals could write directly to them. He ordered the Superior General to renew Brother Polycarpe's obedience, and gave him directives regarding temporal administration.

Moreover the Archbishop intimated that he suspected the Brothers of wishing to escape his authority. In one of the extracts from the Bull of Approbation quoted at the begin-

ning of the 1726 Rule, the section which mentioned that Brothers sent to a diocese were subject to the authority of the bishop, had been replaced by suspension points. The Archbishop ordered the Superior General "to have the entire text of the Bull printed without delay". Likewise, he wanted changes in a passage in the Rule of Government, which seemed to imply that the Brothers were subject to the authority of the bishop only where the "running of schools" was concerned (cf. Rigault II, 307).

But the most serious aspect of the matter was that, in his instructions, the Archbishop demanded that the Rules and Constitutions be submitted to him for further examination.

Rheims

The attitude of the Archbishop of Rouen inevitably had the effect of strengthening the desire of the Superiors of the Institute to leave Rouen. The plan was to move to Rheims, but this involved finding new premises. This made it all the more urgent to give the properties housing the Brothers' free schools in the town a more solid juridical status than that of belonging to the "Civil Society of the Christian Schools", set up in 1725 by Pierre de La Salle, the brother of John Baptist. It was decided that the solution to this problem lay in obtaining Letters Patent for the house in Rheims. Before such a document could be granted by the royal authorities, the permission of the municipal authorities had first to be obtained, and they insisted on the fulfilment of the following conditions:

"Given that the properties the Brothers have and will have, will be used, in accordance with the wishes of their donors, for the gratuitous instruction of the children of the city of Rheims, the Letters Patent will declare the said town to be their true owner" (quoted in Rigault II, 311). Likewise, no new property could be bought without the municipal authorities being notified.

The Brothers asked the advice of a lawyer or ecclesiastic regarding the conditions set by the municipality. The latter confirmed their view that they could not accept the conditions laid down. Brother Timothée refused to continue negotiations to set up his residence in Rheims. One positive result of these negotiations was the dissolution of the society responsible for the temporal administration of the schools. By common consent, its place was taken by "a relative of the founders and benefactors, and the Regime of the Institute" (quoted in Rigault II, 314).

The 1751 General Chapter

Brother Timothée's health was seriously undermined by the events in Rouen and Rheims.

He fell gravely ill in 1751 and never recovered fully. As a consequence, he decided to call a General Chapter and offer his resignation.

The election of a new Superior

The Chapter began on August 1st 1751 and ended on the evening of August 8th. In addition to the Superior General, the two Assistants, and the two former Assistants, Brothers Jean and Daniel, there were 50 elected Chapter members, most of whom were Directors.

At the first session on August 1st, Brother Timothée offered his resignation. At first, the assembly refused to accept it, but, as the Chapter records show, "the Brother Superior renewed his request and gave such convincing reasons, that the assembly asked for a day's grace to consider the request in God's presence. The following day, after the Mass of the Holy Spirit, . . . the request of the Superior was discussed once more and, after a variety of objections, the assembly accepted the resignation of Brother Superior with great sorrow and regret. . . ." (RA CC 200-1/1, 48). The records continue: "As a consequence of the resignation and of its acceptance . . . the following day, the 3rd of the month, we proceeded, by common consent, to the election of a new Superior by secret ballot . . . , the majority of the votes going to Brother Claude, Director of our house in Avignon" (*ibid.*).

Brother Claude (Pierre Nivet) was 61 at the time of his election. He had entered the Institute in 1726, at the age of 36. Brother Irenée had made him his second-in-command in the novitiate at St Yon, preparing him in this way to become, in his turn, Director of novices in Avignon and, at the same time, Visitor of the South of France.

Brother Étienne was confirmed in his position as first Assistant. Brother Raymond (Jean François Génart), born in 1700, was appointed second Assistant. At the time of his election, he was Director in Boulogne sur Mer.

Decisions

Two questions in particular occupied the attention of the Chapter.

It agreed to set up a novitiate "in the house at Marainville" (former name of Maréville) in accordance with a contract drawn up with the former King of Poland, Stanislas Leszczynski, Duc de Lorraine at the time. It decided also to send two Brothers to St Nicolas in the same province, but this decision was never implemented.

As the decision of the 1745 Chapter regarding the closure of certain boarding sections of schools had not been acted upon, the Chapter decided "that there would be boarders only at St Yon, Marseilles, Mirepoix, Die, Montpellier, St Omer, Montargis, Angers and Maréville". However, the Superior could authorise the opening of other boarding schools.

The Chapter decided also that:

- in order to have Brothers sent to them, founders of schools had to guarantee that each Brother received at least 250 livres per year for his upkeep;
- the seal of the Institute "will be, in the future, an inflamed silver star on an azure shield with the motto *Signum Fidei*. Directors are expressly forbidden to have others made like it".

Conclusion

Brother Timothée died shortly after his resignation, on January 7th 1752. He was almost 70 years old, and had been at the head of the Institute for 31 years. For much of this time, he had worked with Brothers who had known De La Salle, and, in particular, with Brother Irenée, whose death in 1747 affected him deeply. With the death of Brother Timothée, the Institute lost one of its last witnesses of the early days of its history.

Brother Timothée had continued to demonstrate the fidelity he had always shown to the Founder of the Institute during his lifetime, by publishing several works and by continuing to be inspired by his teachings in his guidance of the Brothers. However, it is difficult to say what impact he had on the Institute, as there is little trace of what he said or wrote.

During the time he was at the head of the Institute, numbers had increased considerably. Surviving statistics from an unknown source show that, in 1751, there were 92 communities and 523 Brothers (cf. RA DD 250). In the next chapter we will see that this increase in numbers was accompanied also by an increase in the schools entrusted to the Brothers, proving the figure of 92 communities to be correct, and showing that the number of communities had increased by 64 since 1726. It is reasonable to think, therefore, that the figure of 523 Brothers is also correct.

N° 10

Mémoire

Concernant l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes

Les Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes sont redevables de leur établissement originaire, à Mr de la Salle Chanoine de l'Eglise Métropolitaine de Reims, qui le commença en 1680. Ce Ecclésiastique renonça à son Canonicat, vendit son Patrimoine, et s'occupa pendant 40 ans, à consolider cette bonne œuvre, et mourut au milieu des Disciples qu'il s'étoit associés. L'unique objet de l'Institut est de tenir les petites Ecoles de Charité, où les Frères enseignent aux pauvres Enfans à Lire, écrire, calculer et les Élémens du Christianisme sous l'autorité des Evêques et l'Inspection des Curés des paroisses.

En 1688, ils furent appellés à Paris, pour les Ecoles de Charité du Faubourg Saint Germain. On leur confia depuis celles des paroisses de Saint Etienne du Mont, de la Madeleine de la Ville l'Evêque, et tout récemment celles de St Roch.

The 1776 Memorandum on the recognition
of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools

— Supplement Two —
The Question of Letters Patent

In the last chapter, we saw the kinds of problems the Brothers had to cope with when certain rights and privileges they had been granted were contested.

However, most of the problems the Brothers encountered were not the result of ill-will on the part of certain members of parlements or of other magistrates, but stemmed rather from the King's policy to prevent the spread of what was known as "property in mortmain". We need to study the wider issue the King was trying to solve before returning to the repercussions of this whole question on the Institute.

The overall problem

The difficulties experienced by the Brothers, which we dealt with in the last chapter, were linked, to a large extent, with a more general problem connected with what was called "property in mortmain".

Communities composed of craftsmen, citizens or clerics, as well as institutions such as hospitals and educational establishments, had the right to receive or acquire property. These "corporations" (**corps***) ensured their continued existence by constantly renewing their membership. Their property was not passed on to others, as in the case of individuals who died. It never changed hands, and was called "property in mortmain".

The landed nobility who, by virtue of a privilege going back to the Middle Ages, were paid a transfer tax whenever property in their domains changed hands, were deprived of this income when the owners of property in mortmain acquired more. To compensate for this, the latter had to pay the noble in question an indemnity. The King, who also was deprived of a transfer tax on the same property, "imposed a so-called «amortisation tax» in compensation' (Viguerie, 1995, 1150). He could, however, waive his rights.

Despite the income raised by this means, the King was not in favour of too great an increase of property in mortmain. Legislation controlling this increase had been in force for many years. An edict (**édit***), promulgated in 1666, concerning "the establishment of religious houses and other communities" decreed "that in the future, no college, monastery, religious or secular community can be established . . . without our express permission by Letters Patent, duly registered

in our Parlement courts" (quoted in Rigault II, 58). These could be granted only after extensive consultation with local civil and religious authorities.

This legislation did not prevent the proliferation of the communities and establishments it was intended to control. In August 1749, a new edict confirmed and extended the restrictions contained in that of 1666. It re-iterated the prohibition to set up establishments or communities without authorisation by Letters Patent. An exception was made for charitable works such as charity schools, provided that their establishment did not involve the creation of a "corporation, college or community". Above all, the new edict imposed the necessity of obtaining the King's authorisation for all acquisition of landed property (**biens-fonds***), by owners of property in mortmain (cf. Rigault II, 408).

However, in the case of charitable works, especially those concerned with education, the requirements of the law were tempered by a certain number of measures. In 1710, a royal decision exempted hospitals and charity schools from paying the amortisation tax when they received gifts or acquired property. This decision was confirmed by the Royal State Council in 1738. In July 1762, a royal decree (**déclaration royale***) mitigated some of the prescriptions of the 1749 edict in the case of charitable institutions (cf. Rigault II, 144).

Municipal authorities also shared the concern of the King regarding the increase of property in mortmain. They tried to prevent the proliferation of communities and institutions which would take up too much of the land available within the town walls (cf. Bédel, 1996, 22, and plan of Rheims, 40). Lawyers (**Gens** or **Hommes de loi***), who were often involved in town administration, took particular care to ensure that royal legislation in this matter was fully implemented.

Moreover, when new property was acquired by owners of property in mortmain, the King's tax collectors made every effort to collect taxes, and were known to demand payment even from owners exempted by the King.

The collection of taxes or duties owing to the King was entrusted to "tax farmers". The way they set about their work was as follows. First of all, they advanced a sum of money to the royal treasury, which was equivalent to the year's taxes they were due to collect. Then they proceeded, not only to recoup their money, but also to try to make a profit by collecting more than they had paid the State. Their zeal to serve the interests of the King was all the greater as their own interests coincided with his.

Consequences for the Institute

The Brothers had complied with the 1666 edict by requesting Letters Patent, which were granted on September 28th 1724 (cf. Bédel, 1996, 202-203). They thought, perhaps, that with the recognition of their rights by the King, their future would be problem-free. This was not the case, however. They found that their right to acquire and possess property was restricted, and their right to benefit from certain tax exemptions was contested.

Restriction on their right to acquire property

We can illustrate this point best by beginning with a description of what happened in Rheims. When the Institute decided to provide a new juridical basis for "the property of the Christian and gratuitous schools for the poor children of the City of Rheims" (cf. title of CL 35 and 36), the Brothers knew they could transfer the ownership of this property to the house of St Yon. This was, in fact, the option they had chosen when they accepted a house used by the school in the parish of St Jacques (cf. town archives, Rheims: 692, file 18b, N° 8). As it was, they decided to deal with the matter in a different way.

A Memorandum to consult in order to decide whether the establishment of the Brothers of the Christian and gratuitous Schools for the poor children of this City of Rheims should be confirmed by Letters Patent from His Majesty, which can be dated to 1746, contains the following reasoning: "If we leave the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rheims without giving them approval by Letters Patent, they will clearly have to be looked upon as an offshoot of the house of St Yon. There is some reluctance to accept this option because the house in Rheims not only predates St Yon, but is also the birthplace of the Institute" (town archives, Rheims, *id.*). Apart from the question of precedence, the preference for Letters Patent stemmed especially from the fear of those who supported these schools in Rheims that the control of the school property would be taken away from them, and handed over to persons living further away (at St Yon, Rouen), whose chief interest perhaps lay elsewhere. However, the decision of the Brothers to obtain Letters Patent for the house in Rheims was based on the realisation that the Institute needed to obtain them in order to be able to accept and acquire property outside Normandy.

On the basis of this example we can make two observations.

(1) There was no problem about transferring the ownership of the Rheims property to the house of St Yon. Whether such a transfer was made in Normandy or anywhere else, it could not be contested. Such was the case when the house of St Yon bought a property in Petit Couronne les Rouen (cf. Lucard II, 154); or when the Institute transferred the ownership of the House of the Holy Spirit in Paris from the three Brothers who had acquired it to the house of St Yon. There was

also a gift made to the Brothers in Boulogne on December 3rd 1733, whose ownership was transferred to St Yon in the same way.

There was likewise no problem when "on April 30th 1748, by virtue of the Letters Patent granted to this house in the month of September 1724, Brother Généreux, as the purchasing agent for the Superior General, Brother Timothée, and his Assistants, acquired for and in the name of the house of St Yon, near Rouen, forty-seven acres of ploughing land located in the territory of Dole" (town archives, Dole, file 1498).

(2) There were problems, however, when the Institute tried to insist on its right to acquire and possess property without transferring its ownership to the house of St Yon, as had been envisaged in Rheims. Where this second option was chosen, it was necessary to ask for special Letters Patent, with all the uncertainties that this could entail, as can be seen from what happened in Rheims (see above, page 33).

Elsewhere, the right of the Institute to acquire new property was contested because the Letters Patent granted in 1724 were registered only in the parlement of Normandy, and so the Institute had no legal existence within the jurisdiction of other parlements. And so, at St Denis, the heirs of Marie Poignant had contested the validity of the bequest she had made to the Institute, on the pretext that the Institute was not recognised within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris. In 1733, this parlement ruled against the plaintiffs (cf. Rigault II, 222). This judgment agreed with the line taken in the "Deliberation of 28 lawyers of the parlement of Paris" which we mentioned earlier (see page 28). A copy of this document deposited in the town archives of Dole suggests that it was used by the Brothers in this town to defend the right of the Institute to acquire land within the territory of the town (town archives, Dole: ref. 1498).

In Chartres, on the other hand, the Brothers were prevented from receiving a bequest of 1,000 écus left to them in a will. "It was the opinion of the magistrates that the Institute was unable to acquire personal or real estate outside the jurisdiction of the parlement of Normandy, since the Letters Patent of 1724 had been granted only to the house of St Yon" (Rigault II, 221).

In a dispute with tax collectors regarding the house in rue Roquette, Marseilles, the argument used against the Brothers was the following: "In the first place, the Letters Patent of 1724 cannot be used in Provence because they have not been registered in the parlement of Aix, nor in the finance office of Provence" (RA CK 562/2).

Problems such as these continued to arise till an overall solution was found, at least regarding the houses within the jurisdiction of the parlements of Paris and Toulouse.

The Brothers were affected also by the campaign in France to restrict the spread of property in mortmain. Municipal councils and representatives of royal authority, fearing that the Brothers might receive or acquire too much property, prevented them from taking up residence in certain towns.

In Rennes, for example, the town authorities invoked the 1666 edict and refused the Brothers permission to establish themselves there. The parlement confirmed their decision in 1741. The following year, when the Comte de St Florentin, a Minister of Louis XV, told the municipality that it should allow the Brothers to stay, he had to accept that, in the absence of Letters Patent from the parlement of Brittany, he could not take the matter further.

The right to benefit from tax exemptions is contested

In various places, the right of the Brothers to benefit from certain tax exemptions was contested. These exemptions had been granted, or the Brothers thought they had been granted, by the Letters Patent of 1724. The argument used against them was that these exemptions applied only to the house of St Yon. Other tax exemptions, which the Brothers had in their capacity as charity school teachers, were likewise often contested.

As cases of this kind became more and more frequent over the years, Brother Timothée finally decided in 1745 to have a report drawn up with a view to persuading the Assembly of the Clergy of France to intervene on behalf of the Institute. He commissioned a lawyer from the Royal Council, a certain Bocquet de Chanterenne, to prepare the report.

He begins his report by recalling that "the house of St Yon is the only one with the responsibility of training teachers for the various dioceses of the Kingdom" and that a number of persons "have made funds available in different places in order to set up Christian Schools conducted by teachers drawn from the house of St Yon". The Brothers who taught in these schools were now being asked to pay taxes from which they had been exempted. The author of the report then goes on to describe a dozen or so similar cases.

Rather than simply reproduce this list, it seems more useful to arrange these cases according to the problem involved.

In a certain number of cases, the exemption from the **amortisation tax** was contested:

♦ In Paris, the Brothers had to rent part of their house to some outsiders. The tax farmer wanted the Brothers to pay amortisation tax on that part of the house, even though the rent from it was necessary for the upkeep of the Brothers and the maintenance of the house.

♦ At St Omer, the bishop had bought a house for the Brothers. The tax collectors wanted the Brothers to pay the amortisation tax even though charity schools had been exempted from it.

♦ In Auxonne, two persons left a part of their property to the Brothers, who were asked to pay amortisation tax on it.

♦ In Grenoble, thanks to some gifts, the Brothers were able to buy a house and install a charity school in it. The "tax farmers demanded the payment of amortisation tax even though charity schools had been exempted from paying it".

In other cases, the Brothers were asked to pay an **indemnity to the local noble or to the King**.

♦ At Vire, the "farmers" demanded the payment of an "indemnity", and fined the Brothers for delays in making this payment.

♦ In Marseilles, the Brothers had a house in a district "belonging to the King". They were asked to pay the taxes due to him because part of their house was on his property.

The remaining cases involved **other matters**

♦ At Carcassonne, the Brothers were asked to pay the "taille" tax (**taille***).

♦ At St Denis, the Brothers' right to possess a house was contested. Efforts were made to make them provide "accommodation for soldiers" (**logement des gens de guerre***).

♦ In various places, there was opposition to the establishment of gratuitous schools. In Brest, for example, the local population had been asking for Brothers for 10 years, but the authorities continued to refuse to grant permission.

♦ The bishops of Rennes and Nantes established Christian Schools. The parlement of Rennes was opposed.

The presentation of these facts was followed by a "consultation", drawn up by the author with the collaboration of another lawyer. Both agreed that "the farmers and their assistants cannot . . . under any pretext impose upon the Brothers of the Christian Schools the payment of any amortisation taxes or indemnities . . . imposed by the King, in his capacity as Sovereign or Lord" (Rigault II, 145).

They thought it necessary to refer the matter to the Assembly of the Clergy of France, "since the Christian Schools, in which the first elements of religious instruction are given, belong in a special way to [this] Body". Moreover, it was this Assembly which had obtained a decision in 1710 exempting charity schools from the amortisation tax (cf. Lucard II, 151).

The Assembly of the Clergy took up the matter in 1745 and appointed a commission to examine it. On June 23rd it gave the following judgment: "Regarding the amortisation tax, the demands made of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of St Yon, in the diocese of Rouen, by representatives of the tax farmer, are contrary to the privileges and exemptions granted to them by the King". It asked for steps to be taken to "release the Brothers from any such obligation". All this is reported in the Minutes of the assemblies of the clergy of France (quoted in Lucard II, 153).

Instead of backing up its argument by referring to the exemption from the **amortisation tax** which had been granted to charity schools in 1710, the Assembly based its decision on the line of

reasoning adopted by the Brothers, that is, that they had been exempted from these taxes by the Letters Patent of 1724.

We find this line of reasoning, for example, in a document referring to the Brothers of Boulogne, who had been asked to pay this tax on a gift made in 1733, for the benefit of the house of St Yon. For them "there was no doubt that the terms «taxes» and «indemnities» included the amortisation tax . . . since these Letters contain an exemption from all taxes due to the King without any reservations or exceptions" (RA CK 552-1/10). The tax farmers who collected the amortisation tax did not agree with this interpretation. However, the Intendant consulted by the Brothers granted them the exemption they requested — a proof that this line of reasoning had been accepted. It is nonetheless a fact that, in the Letters Patent of 1724, there is no explicit reference to the amortisation tax.

On the other hand, in these Letters, the King exempted the Brothers from the "rights, duties and indemnities" due to him as feudal lord (**seigneur féodal***), which was contrary to what was demanded of them in Marseilles by the "Receivers and Controllers of the Domain" (RA CK 562-1).

Despite such a clear judgment, similar problems continued to occur. In 1750, the Brothers were asked to pay an indemnity for the property bought by the house of St Yon at Petit Couronne, which was "part of the King's domain" (cf. Lucard II, 154). In 1779, the Brothers in Aix en Provence were asked to pay taxes going back 29 years, plus a fine because of the arrears, for a small house located in the "fief of the King" (cf. RA CK 551-1/10).

On the other hand, it was clear that the Letters did not exempt the Brothers in the case of Vire, because the indemnity demanded of the Brothers was due to a noble and not to the King.

As for the problems in Carcassonne and St Denis, the Brothers could not hope to win their case by invoking the Letters Patent of 1724. Where the "**taille**" tax or the "**accommodation of soldiers**" was concerned, the Brothers' only hope of exemption lay in the decrees exempting gratuitous schools and those who taught in them from these obligations.

In the same way, there was another kind of tax, not mentioned in the report prepared for the Assembly of the Clergy, from which the Brothers could not hope to be exempted on the basis of the Letters Patent. The tax in question, in theory, imposed as a temporary measure, was called the "**one-tenth**" or "**one-twentieth**", because it corresponded to one-tenth or one-twentieth of a person's total income, excluding his salary (cf. Viguerie, 1995, 1442).

Since the clergy had been exempted from this kind of tax, the Brothers of Alès claimed, in 1744, that "as religious authorised by a Bull and by Letters Patent to share all the privileges of the clergy, they should be exempted from paying the one-tenth" (quoted in Lucard II, 145). Their claim was accepted. Their example was successfully followed by other Brothers in the South of France.

In Dole, the Brothers regularly had to pay the one-twentieth on the income from some land they had bought in 1748. Successive Directors put in claims for exemption from this tax. In

support of their claims, they provided documents proving that such an exemption had been granted in Abbeville, Nogent le Rotrou and Moulins. They had recourse even to the Archbishop of Besançon, using a line of reasoning similar to that adopted by the Brothers in Alès.

The reason for the refusal of their claim is written in the margin of the request presented in 1759: "The petitioners are taxed only on the land bequeathed to them in the territory of Dole, and not on their house. There is therefore no reason for any change". Finally, in 1773, they won their case.

Conclusion

The last example can give us some idea of the effect which problems of an apparently administrative nature could have on a community. The Brothers at Dole were taxed because, in 1748, they had acquired some land and a vineyard to provide for the upkeep of the Brothers. They had done so because they had been deprived of income amounting to 600 livres, bequeathed to them by the "founder" of the house, when the latter's will was declared null and void by the parlement of Metz in 1747. The reason why successive Directors put forward claims for exemption was that the taxes demanded laid further strain on the already depleted resources of the three Brothers who taught there. The financial situation was made even more critical by the opening of a novitiate in the house in 1747. When we realise that the Director was also the master of novices up to 1770, we can imagine how tiring the fruitless negotiations with the municipality must have been in addition to all his other worries.

When the Superiors insisted on defending the rights and benefits acquired by the Institute, it was in order to ensure that the Institute could function more effectively, or in order to defend the often meagre resources of the Brothers.

The problems created for the Institute were intended to prevent it from increasing its property too much. Despite the fact that it possessed little property, and that its Brothers rendered a service, the Institute was also the object of the mistrust and envy generally directed at persons with property in mortmain.

Chapter Three

Expansion of the Brothers' Educational Work (1726–1751)

Introduction

During Brother Timothée's generalate, the number of Brothers' schools increased considerably. After the foundation of a number of schools between 1720 and 1723 (see Bédel, 1996, 199), the Brothers established no more schools in new localities for five years. And then, there began a period of great expansion which ended only in 1751.

By this increase in the schools entrusted to them, the Brothers helped to prolong the effects of the Christian renewal in France, and contributed to the spread of education, which characterised the period we are considering here.

The three maps we have included (on pages 46, 49 and 51) show the location of the schools run by the Brothers in 1751. Underlining indicates schools established before 1726. The date of opening is given for the others. Dates in brackets indicate that the house was closed before the Revolution.

Helping to spread the Christian faith

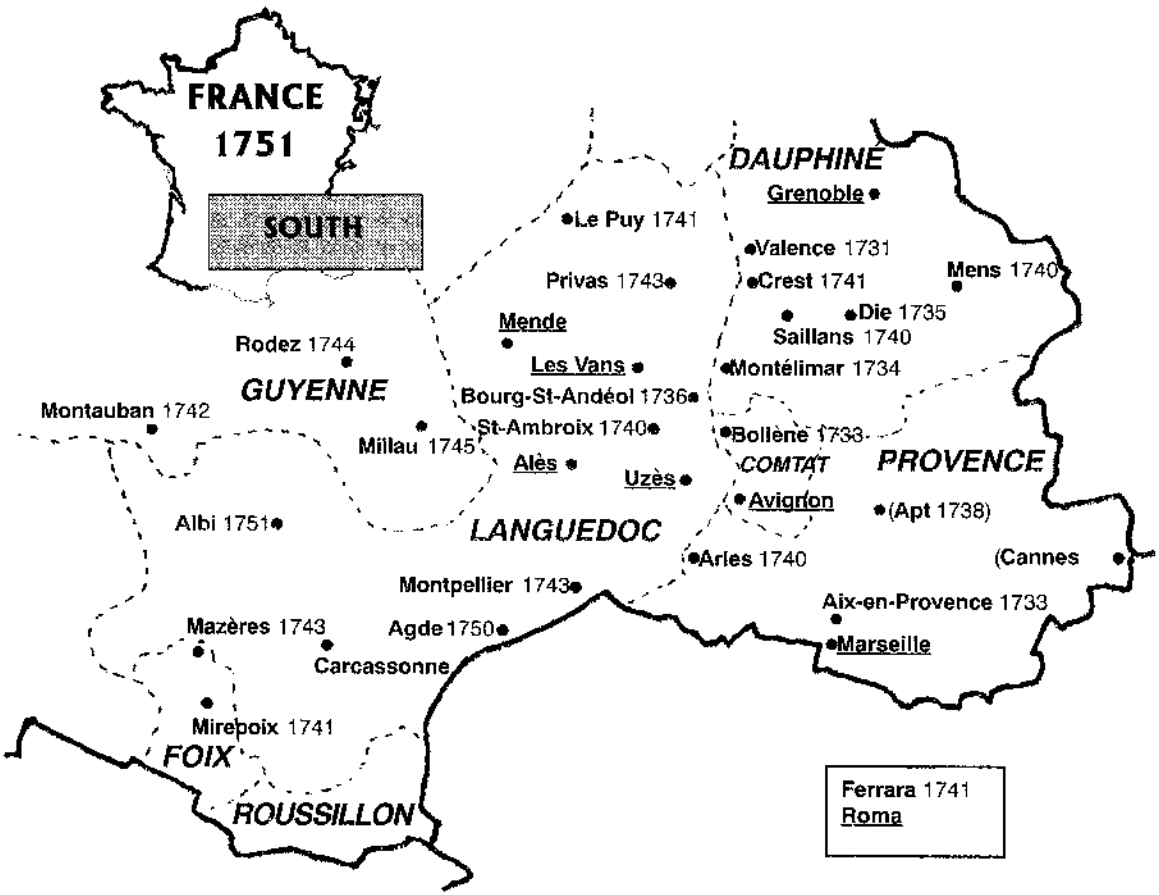
Those who invited the Brothers to take charge of one or several schools, wanted these schools to be accessible to the children of the poor, and to provide them with instruction in the faith. This explains why, frequently, it was members of the clergy who invited the Brothers to come. There were, of course, also lay persons who wished their fellow citizens to enjoy the advantages of having a "Christian school".

In the South of France

In this part of France, it was often the **bishops** who invited the Brothers. The explanation for this lies, perhaps, in the fact that, in the South of France, dioceses had always tended to be small. This enabled the bishops to be in closer contact with their flock, and to be more aware of their needs.

It frequently happened also that these bishops not only provided funds themselves, but also put pressure on the municipality to help. They did so by invoking a royal decree promulgated in 1698 and renewed in 1724, which obliged municipalities to open schools, and authorised them to raise a sum of 150 livres per teacher by imposing a tax on the citizens (cf. Chartier, 1976, 64).

In the case of the Comtat Venaissin, which was part of the Papal States, it was the



Pope's Vice Legate who recommended the municipality of **Bollène** to ask the Brothers to come in 1733.

In dioceses where the Brothers were already established, we find the following:

♦ the Archbishop of **Aix en Provence** provided both the house and the necessary funds to open the first school in his episcopal city. The Brothers took charge of it in 1733.

♦ in 1731, on the recommendation of the Bishop of **Valence** (Dauphiné), the authorities of this town agreed to pay for the upkeep of two Brothers. The same bishop invited the municipality of **Montélimar** to finance a gratuitous school. Two Brothers came to open the school in 1734 (RA CK 562-2/14).

♦ in 1736, in the neighbouring diocese of Viviers, in Languedoc, the bishop called the Brothers to open a school in **Bourg St Andéol**.

In certain parts of Dauphiné and Languedoc, where Protestantism was widespread, the bishops' involvement had a specific aim. Officially, since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Protestants were no longer allowed to practise their religion, and their children were obliged to be baptised as Catholics. In practice, however, a section of the population continued to subscribe to the reformed religion. Schools were considered to be an important means of training children to be Catholics. Consequently, with the backing of royal decrees promulgated in 1698 and 1724, and intended, in particular, to regulate matters in Protestant areas, bishops tried to open as many schools as they could.

The Bishop of **Die**, in Dauphiné, was particularly zealous. In 1735, he obtained two Brothers for his episcopal city. Despite the opposition of a population with Protestant sympathies, he succeeded in placing other Brothers in the villages of **Saillans** and **Mens** in 1740, and in the town of **Crest** in 1741.

In 1740, in the part of Languedoc where the Brothers already had schools in Alès and Les Vans, the Bishop of **Uzès** offered to help the municipality of **Saint Ambroix** to meet the cost of maintaining two Brothers who would replace the current schoolmaster. In 1749, he obtained some Brothers for his episcopal city. In **Privas**, a former Calvinist centre, a vicar general from the diocese of Viviers asked for three Brothers. He restricted himself to informing the municipal authorities of their future arrival. When they arrived in 1743, the authorities refused to accept them. The school survived all the same.

The Bishop of **Montpellier** decided to entrust a school to the Brothers in his episcopal city. They arrived in 1743. Other schools were opened subsequently, one of which was located in the house of the "Propagation of the Faith" for the children of the "New Converts". In this diocese, the presence of the Brothers was perhaps linked also with the bishop's campaign to eradicate Jansenism (cf. *Les Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes et leur rôle dans l'éducation populaire*: one-day seminar, University of Montpellier, Feb. 4th 1981, III, 16). This may have been the case also elsewhere.

Bishops were responsible for the establishment of the Brothers during this period in other parts of Languedoc also: **Carcassonne** in 1738, **Le Puy** in 1741, **Albi** on January 1st 1751.

This was the case also in two other areas where previously there had been no Brothers.

♦ In 1741, the Bishop of **Mirepoix** (in the Comté of Foix) obtained two Brothers for his episcopal city, and prevailed upon the municipality of **Mazères** to help him open a school which was entrusted to the Brothers in 1743.

♦ In 1742, in the eastern part of Guyenne, the Bishop of **Montauban** obtained two Brothers for this town. D'Yse de Saléon, now the Bishop of **Rodez**, obtained some Brothers for his town, probably at the end of October 1744, and helped others to open a school in **Millau** in 1745 (cf. Rigault II, 218).

Some of the schools entrusted to the Brothers were established thanks to the initiative of **lay people**. This was the case in many areas of Provence. Two persons from the town of **Arles** donated funds to the Institute for the upkeep of two Brothers. A school was opened in 1740, despite the opposition of the municipality. The Brothers arrived in **Cannes**, it would seem, in 1745, at the request of a committee which, in 1742, had brought Fr Barré's Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus to the town (*Historique de la Province méridionale* 1, 296).

In the North of France

In the North of France, it was sometimes the **bishop** who invited the Brothers to a town. For example:

♦ in Ile de France, not far from Laon, the Brothers were invited to open schools in **Soissons** (1735) and **Noyon** (1732) by the bishops of these episcopal cities.

♦ in 1728, the Brothers arrived in **Meaux**, a city on the border of Ile de France and Champagne, in response to a request from Cardinal de Bissy, who had great sympathy for their work (cf. Rigault II, 226f).

♦ the Bishop of **Orléans** invited the Brothers to his episcopal city in 1740 to take charge of a school. In the case of **Bourges**, the Brothers arrived there in 1737 at the request of its Archbishop.

♦ in Normandy, five Brothers were sent to **Dieppe** at the request of the Archbishop of Rouen. In 1729, they opened two schools.


FRANCE
1751
NORTHEAST
Calais
Ardres 1738
Boulogne
St-Omer
ARTOIS
FLANDRE
Abbeville 1740
Dieppe 1729
PICARDIE
Guise
Mézières 1733
La Fère 1738
Rouen
St-Yon
Darnétal
Noyon 1739
Laon
Soissons 1735
Rethel
LORRAINE
St-Denis
Reims
St-Germain-en-Laye 1742
Versailles
Paris
Meaux 1728
(Metz 1747)
ILE-DE-FRANCE
CHAMPAGNE
Nancy 1749
Maréville 1749
Fontainebleau 1736
Chartres
Troyes
Lunéville 1750
(Montargis 1750)
Châteaudun 1741
Orléans 1750
ORLÉANAIS
FRANCHE-COMTÉ
Dijon
Bourges 1737
(Issoudun 1741)
Auxonne
Dole 1737
NIVERNAIS
BERRY
(Hérisson 1750)
BOURGOGNE
Estavayer 1750
Moulins
BOURBONNAIS
LIMOUSIN
AUVERGNE
LYONNAIS
Belley 1750

At other times, it was the **parish priest** who wished to establish a "Christian school" in his parish. For example:

♦ In **Paris**, the Brothers who taught in the Parish of St Sulpice had been living in the House of the Holy Spirit since 1722. A new community was established in the parish of Sainte Madeleine: the school had been founded in 1735. The parish priest of St Étienne du Mont obtained three Brothers in 1744. From 1746 onwards, the parish priest of St Sulpice provided accommodation and board for the three Brothers teaching in the Gros Caillou school.

♦ In Ile de France, the parish priest of **Fontainebleau** obtained permission from the King to replace three teachers by Brothers. Two Brothers arrived in 1736. In 1742, three Brothers were sent to **Saint Germain en Laye** at the request of the parish priest.

♦ In **Abbeville**, in Picardy, the parish priest of one of the parishes founded a charity school with the help of a benefactress. The school was entrusted to the Brothers in 1740.

♦ One of the parish priests of the town of **Avranches**, in Normandy, gave the Institute funds for the upkeep of two Brothers.

♦ In Brittany, the Brothers came to **Rennes** in 1738, at the request of one of the parish priests of the town. In **St Brieuc**, the Dean of the Cathedral provided funds in 1746 for the upkeep of three Brothers.

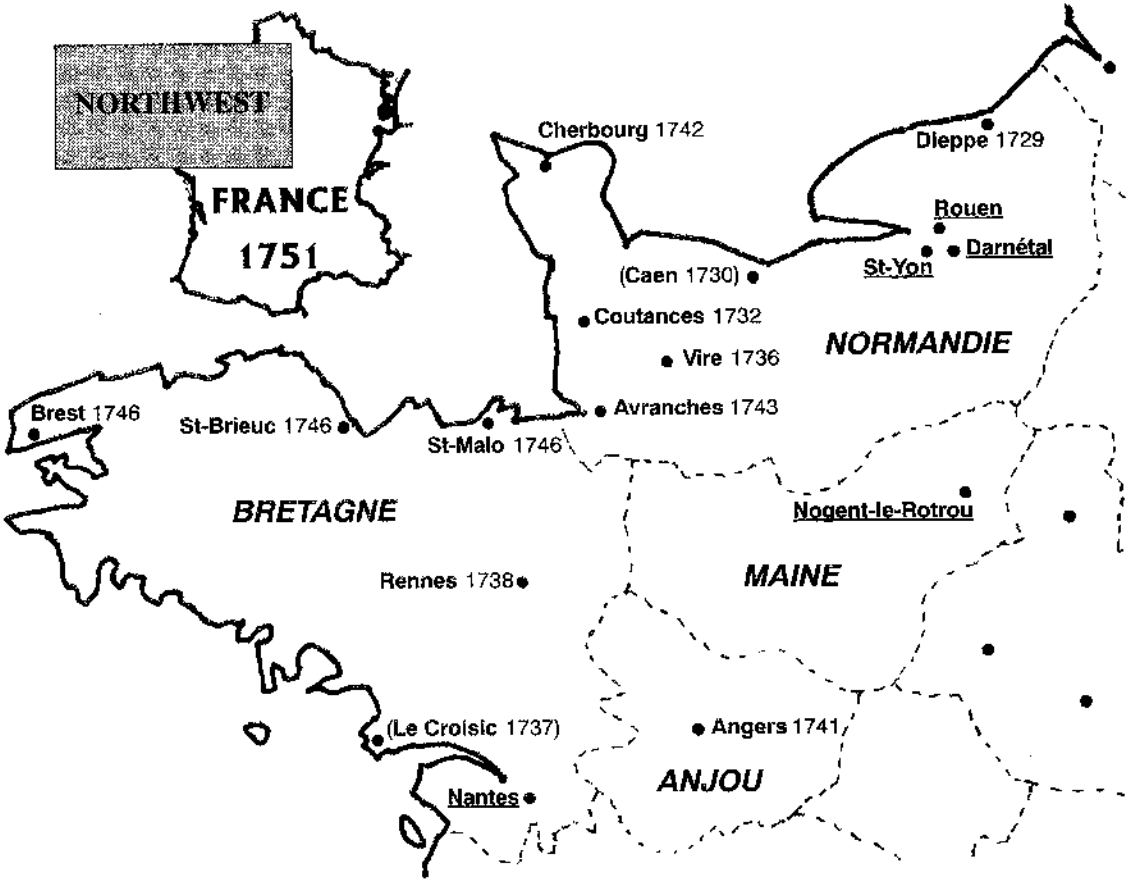
In certain cases, generous **lay persons** provided the means to establish schools for poor children.

♦ The Duc d'Orléans called the Brothers to **Montargis** in 1750, but, through lack of resources, they were obliged to leave four years later.

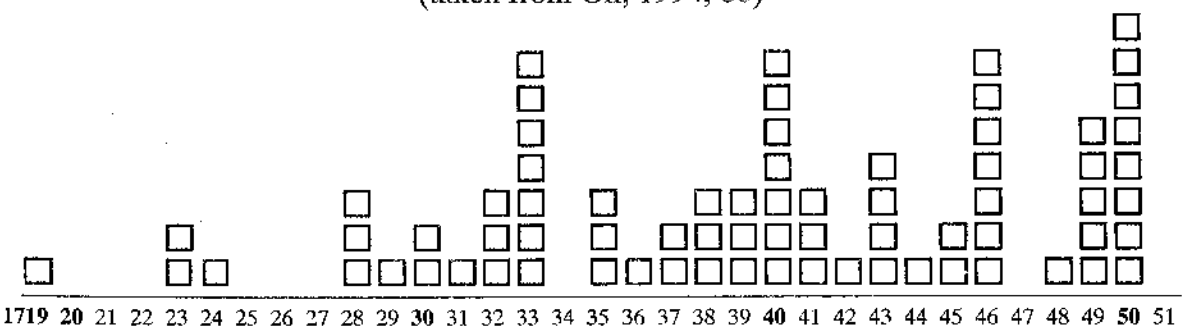
♦ In Normandy, the school confided to the Brothers in **Vire**, owed its establishment in 1736 to the generosity of two persons, who donated the revenue from 24 houses for the upkeep of the Brothers.

♦ A naval lieutenant, a former pupil of St Yon, was responsible for the establishment of the Brothers in **Brest**. In **St Malo**, a person "zealous for the instruction of poor children" was instrumental in the foundation of a school entrusted to the Brothers at the beginning of 1746.

♦ In 1735, a leading citizen of the town of **Dole**, capital of the Franche Comté under Spanish rule, established with the Assistant Brother Étienne, the conditions



Houses opened each year between 1719 and 1751
(taken from Gil, 1994, 86)



under which six Brothers would come to the town and open a school and a novitiate. It was not till 1737, however, that three Brothers opened a school.

Although expressed less clearly, it was evidently the desire to provide Christian education that led Stanislas Leszczynski, the Duc de Lorraine, to draw up a contract with the Institute in 1749. As he said, he wished "to extend his paternal solicitude to the instruction of the poor children" of Nancy, and "at the same time provide for the correction" of persons confined in the "detention centre of Maréville" (RA CK 563-2/3). In 1750, another contract was drawn up with Brother Exupère, Director of the house in Nancy, with a view to establishing a Brothers' school in **Lunéville**.

Outside France

In Italy, after the initial difficulties experienced by Brother Gabriel Drolin, the Brothers' educational work for poor children was eventually recognised. A house was bought in Rome in 1743 in Via della Purificazione. The Archbishop of **Ferrara**, who had known the Brothers when he was Vice Legate in Avignon, asked for some to be sent to his episcopal city to open a school. The school was opened in 1741.

In Switzerland, with the agreement of the local religious and political authorities, the municipality of **Estavayer** drew up a contract in 1750 with Brother Généreux, Director of the house at Dole, to open a school run by the Brothers.

In 1736, Brother Timothée gave a favourable response to a request made to him by the Superior of the "Charon Brothers" who ran a hospital in Montreal, Canada. Two Brothers were sent to Montreal to draw up a contract of association. A draft agreement was signed in 1747, but the matter was not taken any further: as Brother Timothée had rightly feared, the role of the Institute would have been to assume the debts the "Charon Brothers" had been unable to clear.

Making education available to more children

Although the motives which led people to ask for the Brothers were above all religious, they had recourse to them also because they wished to provide the **benefits of instruction** to children who previously had been deprived of them. It is more likely, however, that it was the second motive which prevailed when it was the municipality which took the ini-

tiative of asking for the Brothers. This was clearly the case in **La Fère**, in Picardy, in 1738; and even more so in the town of **Apt**, in Provence, where the municipality had great difficulty in finding teachers prepared to remain for any length of time.

Side by side with authorities which appreciated the work of the Brothers, there were others which feared that the Brothers would acquire property, or, on the contrary, become a financial burden for the towns in which they established themselves. This was true in particular of Brittany.

♦ In Brest, the Parlement of Brittany delayed the official ratification of a bequest made to finance the opening of a school to which it was opposed.

♦ In Rennes, the municipality refused to recognise the Brothers and wanted to make them leave.

♦ The municipality of St Malo accepted the Brothers on condition "they would never become the financial responsibility of the town (quoted in Rigault II, 255).

By accepting invitations to open schools, the Brothers helped to promote the process of **making education available to more children**, a process which, in France, characterised the period under consideration. While we should not exaggerate their contribution to this process, we should not underestimate it either. They established schools in a relatively high number of places. Often in the places to which they went, or where they were already, they ran several schools. Also, unlike other schools, the number of pupils they taught was high.

The teaching of reading and writing should not be confused with education in school, since the former could take place in the home. All the same, the growth in literacy in the 18th century was above all due to the spread of schooling, especially in towns, but also in rural areas.

It would seem that the success of the movement in 18th century France to promote literacy or increase the number of schools varied from region to region. There was considerable success in northern and northeastern France, less so in western and southeastern areas, and very little in the South West of the country.

If we consult the maps provided, we can see that, as far as the Brothers are concerned, the majority of their schools in 1751 were to be found in the North and South East of France. It would be hard, therefore, to deny the contribution of the Brothers to the spread

of schooling in France in the second half of the 18th century, which was such a feature of this period.

While the map shows that the Brothers' schools tended to be in the areas with a larger measure of success, there are some disparities. For example, the Brothers had only one school in Franche Comté, and yet it was an area where schooling was fairly widespread. It was, however, for this very reason that the Intendant had first continued to refuse the Brothers permission to open a school in Dole.

There are also other points worth noting. In the South East, the Brothers had schools in Protestant areas, and in these areas, and in particular in the Cévennes, schooling was much more widespread than in neighbouring regions (cf. Chartier, 1976, 64).

In many instances, especially in Brittany, the Brothers established schools in seaports. There was intense economic activity in these towns, resulting in a dense population. The local schools had a very high proportion of sailors' children in their classes. Some of these schools were long-established, such as those located, for example, in the sailors' district of Calais, in the Lower Town area of Boulogne, or in the St Laurent district near the Old Port of Marseilles. Others had been opened only recently. These included those in the Recouvrance district of Brest, in St Malo and in the Pollet district of Dieppe (cf. Cabantous, 1990, 273).

However, the families earning their livelihood from the sea who sent their children to a Brothers' school gradually felt the need for a special kind of education which would prepare them to take up their parents' profession. In 1744, a representative of the Brother Superior General drew up a contract with the municipality of Boulogne with a view to "opening a class in which would be taught writing, arithmetic, single and double-entry book-keeping and foreign exchange" (cf. RA CK 552-1/10).

All over France there were regional dialects. This was especially true of the langue d'Oc provinces (Provence and Languedoc) and Brittany, and in all these the Brothers had schools. Wherever the Brothers taught, they always used the same methods and, because they came from a variety of regions, could teach only French and in French. By doing so, they helped to promote the use of what was the official language for written texts.

Conclusion

The growth in the number of schools run by the Brothers between 1726 and 1751 contributed to the spread of schooling in France during this same period. The areas where the Brothers had most schools, the North and the South East, were also those where there was most progress in the spread of literacy during this period.

To give a better idea of the increase in the number of Brothers' schools during this period, we have included on page 51 a diagram published by Brother Pedro Gil in volume 4 of the Lasallian Studies series, 86).

The increase in the number of schools was matched by an increase in the number of communities. In the period between 1726 and 1751, communities were established in 25 new localities in the South of France, and 33 in the towns of the North. In addition, there was Estavayer in Switzerland and Ferrara in Italy.

One cannot help noticing the relatively high proportion of communities which opened with only two Brothers, or with three, if they included a serving Brother. This may have been because of the small size of the towns in which their schools were established, which was particularly true of the Protestant areas of Dauphiné and Languedoc. Another reason was insufficient financial support for the community.

The increase in the number of communities brought about also an increase in the number of Brother Directors. It is unlikely that all were first-class individuals. The shortcomings of a Director were particularly harmful when the community included one or more young Brothers, or when novices were sent there for a year to complete their formation after their novitiate properly so-called.

One result of the rapid increase in the number of communities, was that there was a danger of the Institute over-extending itself. Brother Irenée was aware of this possibility and it was a source of worry for him (see above page 26; cf. also Lucard II, 158, note 2). We are perhaps justified in thinking that the expansion of the Brothers' educational work between 1726 and 1751 was not sufficiently controlled.

— Supplement Three —
The Brothers in the General Hospitals

In 1705, De La Salle found himself obliged to provide Brothers to teach the boys and men in the General Hospital of Rouen as a condition for being able to run schools in the town. This situation lasted less than two years (see Bédel, 1996, 142). What is not generally known, however, is that during the 18th century the Brothers returned to work in this establishment and in a few other General Hospitals.

It is worth looking more closely at the work the Brothers did in these General Hospitals in order to put it into its context and to assess its importance in the history of the Institute in the 18th century.

1. The General Hospitals

A certain amount of information about these General Hospitals was given in volume I (Bédel, 1996, 16), but now we need to say more precisely what these institutions were in the overall context of care for the poor during the period commonly known as the "modern era" (16th–18th century).

The almshouse opened in Lyons in 1614 served as a kind of prototype for the General Hospitals set up in the rest of France from mid-17th century onwards (work on the one in Paris began in 1656). With the beginning of Louis XIV's personal reign, "locking up" became the official policy of poor boards (cf. Gutton, 1974, 327). An edict dated June 1662 decreed that "General Hospitals will be established in all cities and large towns of the Kingdom to lock up beggars and train them in piety" (quoted in Gutton, 1974, 328).

The principal motive for creating General Hospitals was to round up poor persons who were ablebodied, that is, capable of working, but considered by their fellow-citizens to be idle because they begged. The Letters Patent which approved "the establishment of the Maison de la Charité in Rheims" speak of "the establishment of manufacturing activities suitable for providing food, maintenance and work for the ablebodied poor who wander around and live in misery in the said city" (Rheims town archives; General Hospital, A1).

In the Middle Ages, the poor person was considered to be a Christ-like figure and was cared for by the people around him, through sentiments of Christian charity. In the first half of the 16th century, an increase in the number of poor people and their tendency to flock to the towns brought about a change in the attitude towards them: people considered them dangerous because they were so numerous and unknown to them.

To counter the threat posed by these poor people to the other citizens, the authorities would regularly, and especially in times of famine, order the poor who were not local to go back to where they came from and obtain help there. This did little, however, to diminish the number of poor people in the towns. It became necessary to have recourse to other means.

As a result, there were very few towns which, in the course of the 16th century and by the beginning of the 17th, had not set up a "poor board" or a "general almonry" which collected funds with a view to organising weekly distributions to the needy of the town, or to give help occasionally (called "passade") to poor people from elsewhere who were not allowed to stay in the town. Contrary to the intentions of those who promoted this form of help, begging continued to be a feature of towns.

At the end of the 16th century and at the beginning of the 17th, a new solution was thought of and quickly gained acceptance. To solve the problem posed by the presence of numerous beggars and vagabonds, it was decided to "lock them up" in institutions where they would be separated from the rest of the population, employed in productive work, and forced to adopt an almost monastic lifestyle. The implementation of this idea led to the creation of institutions known as "General Hospitals" or "almshouses" (Charités).

General Hospitals also looked after abandoned children and orphans. These were taught the rudiments of knowledge and catechism, and were made to work before being finally sent off to be apprentices at the expense of the institution. The document last quoted states that "children, whether boys or girls, will not be accepted into the General Hospital before they are 8 years old", and that "children will be fed in the said General Hospital till the age of 16 or 17, and then they will be sent out to exercise a craft, or some advantageous position will be found for them".

In the 18th century, there were still some institutions which took in ablebodied poor people. It seems, however, that their work, more often then not, took the form of some service to the establishment, and that it no longer had the strictly regulated character it used to have. This is the impression given by the Employment Register for ablebodied beggars at the Troyes Hospital, where the entry for September 14th 1724 reads: "The man Claude Roy, aged 70, . . . offered his services as an employee for the rest of his life" (departmental archives, Troyes, 40 H, Register, 169).

The difficulties encountered and the lack of resources reduced the function of at least certain General Hospitals to that of housing the elderly, the infirm and children. At times they housed only children, as at Dole. This tended to turn these institutions into hospices or orphanages, often in the same house. These were still in existence with very few changes until relatively recently.

2. The Brothers in the General Hospitals

Among the poor people housed in the General Hospitals there were normally children. Statistics show, for example, that, on April 24th 1704, out of a total of 312 persons in the Rheims Hospital, there were 93 boys and 116 girls (town archives, Rheims, General Hospital Register Eb). In the 18th century, the Brothers were called upon to care for the boys of some of these establishments. In the case of three of these, documents exist which give an idea of the situation of the Brothers who were sent to them.

Rouen

At the beginning of this supplement, we recalled how the Brothers worked in the General Hospital of Rouen from 1705 to 1707 (cf. Bédel, 1996, 142). Forty or so years later, the administrators of the same establishment asked the Brothers to return "to instruct the poor boys of the said hospital". The "Régime of the Institute" examined this request in 1745 and, referring to what had happened in the past, not only in Rouen but also in Marseilles and Avignon, as a note in the margin tells us, answered as follows:

> "Having learnt from experience how much living in hospitals damages the Brothers' regular life, they had decided not to make any more available for this work. However, as it seems that His Grace the Archbishop wishes the Brothers to undertake the instruction of the children of the said hospital, through respect for His Grace, the Brothers are happy to undertake this good work. They request the administrators to be satisfied with the Brothers' presence in the hospital from 8 am to 11 am, and from 2.30 pm to 3 pm, and to agree that they then return to their house in Rouen to take their meals and spend the night there like the other Brothers who teach in schools in the four districts of the town" (RA CK 566-3/3).

A document entitled "Some observations on the education of the children in the General Hospital", shows that the Brothers were working in the Rouen hospital in 1750. Some passages from this document are worth quoting. They give us some idea of the thinking behind the provision of education for children in General Hospitals. They show us also that the work of the Brothers was highly appreciated.

"Education must vary according to the different states in which it pleases divine Providence to have children born, and according to the positions they can hope to have in society. While it is a formal obligation for those who have some wealth to provide their children with education suited to their needs, this education must be different in certain regards for those who are born in indigence and whose only resources come from their work, to which they cannot be accustomed too soon.

"A good education for children born in an indigent state must have two principal aims: to teach then to read, write and know the truths of our holy religion; and to train and accustom them to work suited to their age, and to set them to work as soon as possible.

"Regarding the first aim, that of Christian education, we cannot fail to approve the measures recently taken to provide it for the children of the General Hospital. The Brothers of St Yon who work there are very zealous and successful. The progress of the children in the last year offers great hope for the future" (RA CK 566-3/4).

The evaluation of the Brothers' work was positive, but their second period at the General Hospital did not go beyond 1753. The Brothers taught the boys, and Sisters took care of the girls. They disagreed, however, regarding the treatment of the boys. Their difference of opinion related in particular to the place occupied by manual work, if we are to believe a "Memorandum for the Brothers of the Christian Schools charged with the instruction of the poor boys of the Poor Board of Rouen, regarding the differences that have arisen between the said Brothers and the Sisters over the work of spinning, between 1745 and 1753" (RA CK 566-3/2).

The Brothers in their turn wrote a memorandum to consult, in case subsequently it was decided to ask the Brothers of the Christian Schools to undertake the instruction of the children of the Rouen Board for the third time. In the memorandum, the Brothers informed the administrators why they were withdrawing: "It is with much regret that they feel obliged to inform them that the disagreements and opposition they have experienced for the last five years, since the Sisters and themselves have shared authority over their pupils, make it impossible for them to remain" (RA CK 566-3/3). The tone of the document shows that the Brothers liked their work, and that, unlike what happened in the 1705–1707 period, they were not leaving because they were overwhelmed by it.

Avignon

Even though Avignon belonged to the Papal States, organised help for the poor had developed along the same lines as it had in the Kingdom of France.

In the second half of the 16th century, a "General Almonry" had been created to give help to the poor.

This organisation had founded what amounted to a General Hospital, likewise called a "General Almonry" which "in ordinary times housed between 400 and 500 infirm or insane old people, and an average of 60 or 70 abandoned children, the eldest of whom were employed carding wool and spinning, while the youngest knitted stockings. A number of teachers, who were often poorly qualified, instructed these children" (HSP 1, 105).

On June 30th 1733, Brother Marcel, Director of the Brothers' community in Avignon, and acting for Brother Timothy and the Assistant Brother Dosithée, signed a contract with the administrators of the General Almonry. The contract established "that the Superior General of the said Brothers or the religious delegated by him, will send two of his dear Brothers, persons who are experienced, competent and acceptable to the said Rectors and to their successors in the General Almonry, to educate and instruct the poor of the said Almonry, on the condition nothing will be asked of them that is contrary to the practice of the Rules and duties of their Institute" (copy in HSP 1, 356). Two Brothers took up their duties that same month.

"On July 11th 1743, this contract was cancelled and the Brothers withdrew. One of the administrators had attacked them in a public memorandum" (departmental archives, Avignon; Novitiate archives: inventory, general remarks, 6). In HSP 1, 106, it is said that their departure was brought about by the malice of a group of employees who objected to the over-conscientious supervision exercised by the Brothers, which could very well have been true.

A new contract with the Brothers was signed on June 10th 1752, according to which "the Brothers were dispensed from preparing the men for the sacraments, supervising the apprentices working in town, and from dealings with the employed women regarding the children's linen. The two Brothers formed a small community depending on the principal community, which they visited one afternoon per week" (HSP 2, 5).

In the Inventory of the Novitiate Archives referred to earlier, we read that the Brothers remained in the Almonry till 1791. The same information is given in HSP 2, 5. And so, for about 50 years, the Brothers devoted themselves to looking after the children entrusted to their care and only stopped doing so by force of circumstances.

Grenoble

As early as 1619, an assembly of the leading citizens of Grenoble had decided to imitate the pattern set by the Lyons Almonry and set up a similar institution (cf. Gutton, 1974, 302). Like other General Hospitals, the one at Lyons took in children.

It seems that the first two Brothers came to work in this Hospital in 1728. They remained under the authority of the Brother Director of the principal community, which probably means they did not live in the Hospital. In 1735, the Board asked for a third Brother to work in the infirmary, and from that time the three Brothers formed a separate community (cf. HSP 1, 109, 110).

In addition to teaching the 70 children, they also supervised them in the workshops, served them at table and took them for walks. They were in charge of the infirmary, gave religious instruction to the men, and were responsible for the register of the poor they looked after. They could not take in any poor person until the supervisor for the week had registered him and given him an entrance ticket (cf. *id.*).

The Board which administered the establishment was not particularly well-disposed towards the Brothers. In February 1748, it asked for the withdrawal of Brother Auguste who had become blind. In its meeting on September 15th 1764, it registered its surprise at the fact that the Superiors changed Brothers without consulting the administrators (HSP 1, 111). This did not prevent the Brothers from devoting themselves to their humble work. This was the case of Brother Marcelin who, after 30 years of devoted service in the General Hospital, died in 1760 at the age of 64 (cf. HSP 1, 111).

However, absorbed by the multiplicity of their tasks, rarely able to be together, and having no time for their spiritual exercises, the Brothers working in the Hospital in 1772 informed the Superior General of their situation. The Superior informed the Board of his decision to withdraw the Brothers; the Board accepted. The Brothers then changed their mind and asked to stay (cf. RA CK 555/8, register, 111). Two years later, they resigned again, and left the Hospital during the summer holidays of 1774, as attested by the minutes of the Board meeting held on September 9th (cf. *id.*, 112).

Various cases

During their negotiations with the town of **Marseilles** to obtain official recognition for their status, the Brothers presented a petition in which they stated that "since the plague of 1720, they had been established in all the parishes and even in the General Hospital" (quoted in Rigault II, 176). The mention of Marseilles in the note added to the minutes of the "Deliberation of the Regime of the Institute" regarding the request made by the Board of the General Hospital of

Rouen (see above), seems to indicate that, because of the difficulties they had encountered, the Brothers withdrew from the General Hospital of Marseilles before 1745.

Later, in 1761, in correspondence relating to a plan to send Brothers to **Beauvais**, we read that certain Brothers would be required to instruct the children living in the town Hospital (cf. RA CK 552-1/3 or CD 253,254/1). The plan, however, came to nothing.

Earlier, on page 52, a scheme was mentioned according to which the Brothers would join the "Charon Brothers" in the running of a Hospital in **Montreal**, in Canada. One may well wonder how a joint undertaking with the Brothers Hospitallers of St Joseph of the Cross would have worked in practice, since they were exclusively dedicated to the care of the sick.

An article published by Brother Yves Poutet in the *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France* and reproduced in CL 61, throws some light on this question. He writes as follows about these Brothers: "Hospitallers by nature, they followed the practice of the times and took in all the orphans who came to them. Faced with their ignorance, how could they leave them without instruction? As a consequence, teaching very soon became one of their essential functions".

This characteristic made the envisaged association more likely. There was also another element in its favour. As the "Charon Brothers" took in orphans in their Montreal hospital, this institution had at least one characteristic in common with General Hospitals in France, in some of which there were Brothers of the Christian Schools working. What is more, we read in Nive Voisine's work, *The Brothers of the Christian Schools in Canada* (34), that what was explicitly involved in this project was in fact a General Hospital.

Conclusion

The General Hospitals offered the Brothers a type of activity that was perfectly in accordance with their commitment to the service of the poor, since it involved caring for abandoned children and orphans. It has to be noted, however, that the presence and activity of the Brothers in these kinds of institutions were of a limited nature.

♦ It seems that the Brothers were involved only with the establishments mentioned in this supplement.

♦ They were never numerous in these establishments. The highest number involved at any one time was in 1752, when the Brothers working in Rouen, Avignon and Grenoble numbered only seven in all.

♦ The difficulties experienced by the Brothers in the General Hospitals in which they worked did not encourage the expansion of this kind of activity. As we saw earlier, the Superiors had even envisaged not sending any more Brothers to them.

The Brothers seem to have had great difficulty in adapting to these establishments which were so different from their own. Among the reasons for this difficulty, we can note the following:

- The demands of the administrators: their work-load and the other tasks they had to do apart from teaching.
- A different approach to the education of children, especially because of the importance attached to manual work.
- The sharing of responsibility for the children with other persons, requiring the Brothers to change their methods, and imposing greater demands on them.
- Their inability to have a say in the organisation and running of the establishments.

The contribution of the Brothers seems to have been appreciated in the fields in which they specialised, that is, teaching and the Christian education of children.

All in all, the involvement of the Brothers in the General Hospitals was a somewhat inconclusive experiment. Was this due to the rigidity of their methods and of their way of life? What is certain, is that in the midst of all the disagreements that arose with the administrators of these establishments, the Brothers' devotedness to the children entrusted to them was never once called into question.

Brother Assistants up to the suppression of the Institute (1792)

Jean	1717–25	**Irenée**	1725–47	**Daniel**	1747–51	**Raymond**	1751–67	**Exupère**	1767–77
Joseph	1717–29	**Dosithée**	1729–34	**Étienne**	1734–52	**Généreux**	1752–67	**Anaclet**	1767–77
Paschal	1777–92	**Silvestre**	1777–92	**Zachée**	1777–87	**Lothaire**	1787–92		

Supplement One, "Two representatives of an era" (page 21), is devoted to the lives of Brothers **Jean** Jacquot (1672–1759) and **Irenée** (Claude François du Lac de Montisambert, 1691–1747).

Brother Assistants up to 1767

Brother Barthélemy's two Assistants, Brothers Jean and Joseph, knew the Founder well and were consulted frequently by him when decisions regarding the running of the Institute had to be made.

Brother **Joseph** (Jean Le Roux, **1678–1729**). Born at Lerzy, near Liesse (Aisne). Novice in 1679, perpetual profession in 1700. In community in Paris and included in the 1704 condemnation of the Brothers. In 1706, Director in Rouen. Subsequently responsible for visiting nearby communities (cf. LA 135f). Director in Rheims, elected **Assistant in 1717**, but remains Director. From 1725, because of the Bull, goes to St Yon as Director. Dies in Paris in 1729, exhausted from efforts to open a school in Meaux.

Brother **Dosithée** (Claude Longière, **1671–1737**). Rich vineyard owner in Ronne in the Beaujolais region. Advanced classical studies. Novice in 1706 (almost 36 years old), makes his perpetual profession shortly after. Director in Rouen in 1716, in charge of senior boarders at St Yon in 1718, Procurator in Paris in 1725, **Assistant in 1729**. Almost blind, **replaced in 1734**. Procurator for a short while, then retires to St Yon, where he lives "in the perfect love of God and detachment from all things".

Especially from 1747 onwards, the Assistants working with Brother Timothée were Brothers who had never known the first years of the Institute.

Brother **Étienne** (Jean Pérotin, **1688–1752**). Born in the Ardennes. Novice in 1712, Director in Chartres in 1725, and then in St Omer. Elected **Assistant** to Brother Timothée **in 1734**. In 1742, attests that he was cured of an ulcer in the nose in about 1731 after praying to De La Salle. **Resigns in 1752** for health reasons and dies shortly after.

Brother **Daniel** (Antoine Rodier, **1702–1763**). Born in the Isère. Novice in 1719, perpetual profession in Avignon in 1728. In 1724 in Marseilles, in 1736 in Aix en Provence. Director of St Yon, second **Assistant from 1747 to 1751**. Dies in Marseilles in 1763.

Brother **Raymond** (Jean François Genart, **1700–1779**). Born at Lerzy. Novice in 1723, perpetual profession at St Yon in 1731. Director of the commercial school in Boulogne sur Mer. Elected **Assistant in 1751, resigns in 1767**. As a way of trying to resolve existing differences with the Archdiocese of Rouen, the Chapter chooses an entirely new team to direct the Institute.

Brother **Généreux** (Jean Baptiste de Saint). Born in **1705** in the diocese of Boulogne. Novice in Avignon in 1729, perpetual profession at St Yon in 1734. In charge of the schools in Rheims and Procurator General. Elected **Assistant in 1752, resigns at the 1767 Chapter** for health reasons, Director in Orleans.

PART TWO

STABILISATION (1751–1777)

Introduction

It is somewhat artificial to subdivide the history of the 18th century into periods corresponding with the generalates of Superior Generals. The successive generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence, however, corresponded closely with a period during which profound changes took place in Europe and, if not in society as a whole, at least in its more educated sections (see page 4). In France, during this same period, opposition to royal authority became fiercer and prevented reforms taking place in the Kingdom (see page 8).

The Institute was not seriously affected by the difficulties it encountered during this time, but the context in which it found itself inevitably gave rise to some problems. This chapter, therefore, is divided into two parts which, together, cover the whole period under consideration:

Part Two is divided into three chapters

The Institute in a Changing Society

Chapter Four — Assertion of the identity of the Institute

Chapter Five — The Institute in conflict with its times

A Period of Stability

Chapter Six — The Brothers continue their educational work (1751–1777)

Chapter Four

Assertion of the Identity of the Institute

During the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence, the principal facts we know about the life of the Institute relate mostly to the official decisions made by its Superiors. This explains the subdivisions of this chapter. The main task of the two Superior Generals was to assert the identity of the Institute by the positions they adopted.

Brother Claude

The 1751–1761 intercapitular period

Brother Timothée resigned at the 1751 Chapter and Brother Claude was elected in his place. Brother Étienne was confirmed in his position as first Assistant, and Brother Raymond was elected to take the place of Brother Daniel.

In 1752, Brother Raymond "resigned for health reasons". The election of his successor took place according to the procedure already adopted in similar cases. One of the seven Brothers chosen to count the voting slips, Brother Généreux (J. B. de Saint), was elected. Immediately after his election, he was appointed "Director of the Professed Brothers of the House of St Yon and Procurator General". He was 47 years old at the time.

In the period that followed the 1751 Chapter, the Superior and his Assistants do not seem to have encountered many problems in their government of the Institute. There were some difficulties, however, regarding the custodial boarding section at St Yon. As this kind of institution was answerable to the King, he would intervene when problems arose. This limited, of course, the Brothers' freedom of action (cf. Battersby, 1960, 71).

In 1752, a certain Jehanne escaped. Some of the local people attacked the Brothers pursuing him and enabled him to escape. Brother Claude lodged a complaint and the persons involved were fined and forbidden to help fugitives escape in the future.

However, because of the continued attacks on the Brothers on account of the custodial boarding section of St Yon, the King appointed an ecclesiastical and civil commission on June 22nd 1756 "to examine the state . . . of the house and community, and the abuses that might have been introduced" (quoted in Rigault II, 324). Geoffroy de Pontcarré, son of the President of the Parlement and a friend of De La Salle's, was appointed to head the commission, but he did not think there was any point in summoning it to prove that there was nothing to reproach the Brothers with.

A year later, on July 1st 1757, his replacement as Senior President of the Parlement, Hue de Miromesnil, was appointed by a decision of the King's Council to head a new commission. The commission was given two years to prepare a report for the King. It appears that the report was never written (cf. Rigault II, 325).

The 1761 General Chapter

In accordance with the Bull of Approbation, a General Chapter was called at the end of the 10-year period. It was held at St Yon from July 8th to July 13th, and was attended by 45 capitulants. According to Lucard and Rigault, Brother Claude, now 71 years old, offered his resignation, which was not accepted. The official register of General Chapter deliberations makes no mention of this in the minutes of the 1761 Chapter. The minutes of the 1767 Chapter, however, record Brother Claude as saying to the Brothers "that in the previous assembly in 1761 he had urged the assembled Brothers to take his great age into account" (RA CC 200-1/1, loose leaf inserted between pages 66 and 67). Both Assistants were re-appointed.

The Chapter made few decisions. It had the courage, however, to face two particularly delicate problems and to advise the Superior how to deal with them, should they occur. In the case of "someone who had the misfortune to be found guilty of sodomy", the Chapter went so far as to order the Superior "where necessary" to have recourse to those who had authority "to have the delinquent locked up". Regarding the other problem, the Chapter, "aware that a number of Brothers did not observe the rules of temperance, in particular, with regard to drink", asked the Superior to impose penances on them. Were there many problems of this kind? Regarding the first case, the remark "sent away for immoral behaviour" occasionally occurs in admission registers. There is no reason to believe, however, that such cases were any more common then than at any other period.

The Chapter also recalled the conditions which candidates to vows had to fulfil, and when they should make their request. It recommended Brother Visitors to examine carefully any requests that were made.

The 1761–1767 intercapitular period

In the years that followed the 1761 Chapter, trouble flared up again in the custodial boarding section of St Yon. The attitude of the one in charge, a certain Brother Mesmin, led to a riot in 1766, and the troops had to be called in to quell it. It seems that Brother Mesmin was very hard on some inmates and undemanding with regard to others.

Brother Claude had to deal with the claims, if not of the new Archbishop of Rouen, Dominique de La Rochefoucauld, at least of one of the influential members of his entourage, the Abbé Marescot. This cleric claimed that the Archbishop, not only had a right to inspect the house of St Yon, but also had rights of oversight regarding the Institute as a whole.

As a result, no doubt, of pressure from the Abbé Marescot, Mgr de La Rochefoucauld visited the house of St Yon on April 24th 1767. The visit went off smoothly. In the report he sent on May 1st, however, after a few general remarks about the house itself, the Archbishop went on to lay down a number of rules regarding the government of the Institute. The Archbishop, or at least his Vicar Generals, had to be informed whenever a General Chapter was held; the minutes of Chapter deliberations had to be submitted to him for approval; and the Institute accounts, drawn up by the Superior and his Assistants, had to be submitted to him annually.

Compliance with such requirements would have reduced the Institute eventually to the level of a diocesan congregation. And so, when a representative of the Archbishop came with the latter's directives, Brother Claude refused to include them in the minutes of the General Chapter deliberations (cf. RA CD 253,254/2; Rigault II, 330f).

Even before the visit of the Archbishop of Rouen, Brother Claude had decided to call a General Chapter and offer his resignation.

Brother Florence

The 1767 General Chapter

The General Chapter was held at St Yon and began on May 17th 1767. It was attended by 57 capitulants.

The Chapter had no problem in accepting Brother Claude's reasons for wishing to resign. On May 19th, Brother Florence was elected in his place. He was 42 years old at the

time. As the Director of novices at St Yon, he had taken part in the 1751 Chapter. In 1754, he had been appointed "general and special procurator", and in this capacity had been responsible for the management and administration of all the property, income and business of the Institute (cf. Rigault II, 333-334).

Two new Assistants were appointed. The first, Brother Exupère (Michel Fouré), 59 years old, was Director of the house at Meaux. The second, Brother Anaclet (Gabriel Vallée), 47 years old, was in charge of the house at Belley.

Apart from electing new Superiors, the Chapter restricted its activity to clarifying the number of prayers to be said for deceased Brothers, and deciding how circular letters announcing their decease should be sent.

At the end of the minutes of the 1767 Chapter, the register carries the following endorsement: "Seen, examined and approved, at Rouen, May 30th 1767, Dominique, Arch. of Rouen".

The register includes also a copy of Mgr de La Rochefoucauld's directives of May 1st, followed by the signatures of the Vicar Generals Esmangard and Marescot, of the Archbishop's Secretary Aubry, of Brother Florence and of the two Assistants Exupère and Anaclet.

The following comment is inserted between the first two signatures and those of the Brothers: "This directive is null and unlawful. See the Consultations for the years 1770 and 1771".

What made the Superiors and the capitulants accept the inclusion of the directives, read out to them on May 20th 1767, in the minutes of the Chapter? There is no way of knowing. The sentence added as a retraction shows that, even if the Brothers had been obliged to gave way on this occasion, the directives would always remain a dead letter.

The 1767–1777 intercapitular period

Brother Assistant Anaclet, feeling he was inadequate, offered his resignation several times. In 1772, the Superior asked the Brothers responsible for choosing Assistants in the period between two Chapters to consider a letter he had received from Brother Anaclet offering his resignation. The majority of the 70 Brothers who had votes refused to accept his resignation (cf. RA 200-1/1, 79-81).

In **Rouen**, after a period of calm due to the prudent attitude adopted by the Superiors with regard to the Archbishop, Brother Florence encountered the same difficulties as his predecessors had in their dealings with the Archbishop and his entourage. At the end of 1769, a certain Brother Hilaire complained to the Abbé Marescot: having been refused admission to final profession, he now wanted dispensation from his triennial vows before they were due to expire. The Archbishop granted the dispensation. Two other Brothers from St Yon were dispensed from their vows in the same way.

Three canon lawyers consulted by Brother Florence in 1770 agreed that only the Pope could dispense the Brothers from their vows. In another "consultation" in 1771, they declared invalid the directives intended by Mgr de La Rochefoucauld to impose his authority over the Institute. The canon lawyers also stated that "the submission of individual houses did not give bishops authority over the Order itself" (RA CD 253, 254/3; cf. Rigault II, 340).

The Brothers refused to enter into open conflict with the Archbishop of Rouen. In 1771, **Brother Florence left St Yon** for the House of the Holy Spirit in Paris. The Assistant Brother Exupère limited himself to informing the Archbishop of Rouen of his departure.

In March 1771, the Superior General sent a circular to all the Brothers informing them that **he intended to call a General Chapter** in the current year. The 1767 Chapter had restricted itself, practically speaking, to the election of the Superior General and his Assistants.

A memorandum, sent by the Archbishop of Rouen to the Archbishops of Paris and Rheims, expressing "doubts regarding the submission of the Brothers to episcopal authority", was intended to prevent the Chapter from being held in either of those cities. A letter from Brother Exupère some time later indicated that the Abbé Marescot was the author of this memorandum.

The Brothers were advised to refer the question to the Parlement. This would have been imprudent, however, given that the conflict between the members of Parlements and the King was then at its height (see page 8). The Brothers submitted their views to the Archbishop of Paris and to some other bishops. In the end, Brother Florence decided not to hold the Chapter.

On the other hand, he found a solution elsewhere. On the basis of certain provisions in the Bull of Approbation, the Superior General, his Assistants and some Brothers summoned for the purpose, decided **to divide up the Institute into three Provinces**. One of

these Provinces consisted of all the houses "beyond Lyons", and the other two, of houses "on this side".

A circular dated July 26th 1771 informed the Brothers of this decision and announced that Provincial Chapters would be held in each of these newly established sectors. And so it was that, between August 25th and 29th, Brother Florence presided over a meeting in the house at Avignon for the delegates of the Brothers of the "southern province". Similar assemblies were held in Paris for the Brothers of the "western province", and in Maréville, for those of the "eastern province".

The conflict with the Archbishop of Rouen was not yet resolved, however. The Vicar General Marescot produced a memorandum in which he gave vent to all his grievances. At first, the Brothers simply protested against his accusations, and then they prepared a document of their own: *Answer to the observations and remarks communicated to the Brothers of the Christian Schools relating to the problems regarding the directives of the Archbishop of Rouen of May 1st 1767.* This text dated 1772 was sent to the Archbishop of Paris on February 23rd of the same year (cf. Rigault II, 351, note 1).

In **Rheims**, during this same period, new attempts were made to establish the residence of the Superior General in this city, but they were thwarted by the same obstacles as before. The need to obtain Letters Patent for the Rheims house still remained. As the King would not grant these letters unless an agreement already existed with the municipality, the latter wished to take advantage of the situation by imposing certain conditions on the Brothers, on which any financial aid for their schools would depend. The City Council would agree to "the request for Letters Patent on two conditions: that well-off children were not admitted to the gratuitous schools; and that the boarding school, which had been open for 20 years or so, was completely closed down" (Rigault II, 364).

Opening of the 1777 General Chapter

Ten years had passed since 1767 and it was time to hold another Chapter. The Archbishop of Rouen continued to insist that the Chapter be held at St Yon where he could control it. He complained to Louis XVI's minister, Bertin, but the latter replied that "it was difficult to see how one could prevent the Superior from holding the General Chapter in the place he considered most convenient" (quoted in Rigault II, 437).

Brother Florence announced to the Institute that the General Chapter would begin on August 3rd at Rheims. Previously, he had asked some Doctors of the Sorbonne to give an interpretation of the article in the Bull of Approbation referring to the number and qualifi-

cations of capitulants, and now he based the method of electing delegates to the Chapter on the answer he received from them. Each Province was to elect 10 delegates. Five of these had to be Directors of the principal houses, that is, of houses with 7 Brothers or more; and 5, "senior Brothers", that is, those who were at least in the 15th year of their profession (cf. RA ED 227, Register of General Chapters: 1777 to 1873, 8).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described the institutional framework in which the Brothers lived in the period between 1751 and 1777. In the next two chapters, we shall describe other aspects of this same period.

As we can see from the attitude they adopted in their conflict with the Archbishop of Rouen, the two Superiors displayed both prudence and firmness in their government of the Institute.

It is more difficult to judge how much support they gave their Brothers, and what they did to strengthen their vocation. The only evidence we have is a circular from the end of 1772, in which Brother Florence called to order Directors who appeared to have no interest in the spiritual and intellectual advancement of their Brothers, and had allowed the establishment of irregularity in their communities (cf. RA CE 260-1; Rigault II, 294). What is certain, is that the Institute was not weakened under the leadership of these two Superiors.

Since both resigned, it would seem that they both considered their task too heavy for them. In the case of Brother Claude, this is easy to understand: elected Superior General at the age of 61, he was 77 when his resignation was eventually accepted in 1767. Brother Florence's resignation in 1777 is more difficult to understand, since he was only 52. He subsequently played a prominent role as Director of the house at Avignon, and during the Revolution, gave witness by his exemplary life. He died on January 15th 1800 (cf. Rigault II, 502). No doubt the times he lived in were too difficult for him, for, in addition to the problems he encountered in his role as Superior, he had also those connected with the situation in which the Brothers found themselves at this time.

— Supplement Four —
Novitiates and the Perseverance of the Brothers

Admission to the novitiate and the formation given there was so important for the Institute that it is useful to go more deeply into this question, especially at this point in our history, when to the two existing novitiates, those of St Yon and Avignon, was added that of Maréville and, for a number of years, those of Dole and Montauban.

We shall begin by speaking of the formation given in these novitiates. After that, we shall look at the novices themselves, and end with an examination of the rate of perseverance among the Brothers, at least up to the beginning of 1791, which marks the onset of the great upheavals of the French Revolution.

Formation

The basic principle of the formation given to new Brothers is indicated in an article of the 1726 Rules and Constitutions: "No Brother will be allowed to make vows . . . unless he has been at least two years in the Institute, and has tested his vocation for one year in the novitiate, and one year in school" (CL 25, 68).

We have a document produced at the novitiate of Maréville, dated 1787, which sets out in some detail the role of the novitiate:

> "The novitiate is a time set aside for the instruction and testing of the novices before their profession. This time is needed in order to teach them to know Jesus Christ, his precepts, his maxims, his counsels; to understand well the meaning of his Gospel, and to realise the greatness of Man whom God alone can make happy. . . .
>
> "The novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools lasts two years, beginning with the day of their taking of the habit. The Brothers who will be teaching children spend the first year in exercises of piety in order to become imbued with the spirit of the Institute. They spend the second year teaching in school in order to show if they have an aptitude and liking for this holy employment. The year of the novitiate is a year of retreat, recollection and prayer. The novices are made to follow exercises of piety from morning till night, in order to enable them to rid themselves of the spirit of the world, correct their defects and acquire a solid piety" (RA archives, CF 361-2/4).

According to this text, therefore, the novitiate lasted two years, and each year had its own specific aim. There is special insistence, however, on what was called "the year of the novitiate". Regarding this year of novitiate properly so-called, there are several points worth noting.

Duration

All those who entered the novitiate, whether they were going to be "school Brothers" or "serving Brothers", did their formation together, but initially, the duration of the novitiate could vary according to individual needs. At some point later, the duration was made one year for everybody, in order to conform to norms set by the Council of Trent (cf. Poutet, 1995, 111).

Content

Contrary to what the above quotation may have led us to believe, the dual aim of the formation given to the Brothers was, in fact, pursued simultaneously during the course of the year of novitiate properly so-called. This was reflected in the timetable which included activities relating to both of these aims (cf. *Prospectus sur les noviciats de l'Institut*, RA CF 361-1/2; Poutet, 1995, 111).

As regards religious formation, the novices' day was punctuated by the usual exercises and the Office of the Virgin Mary. In addition, they studied the Gospel, were taught and given time to make mental prayer, and were instructed by the Brother Director about religious life and the *Rule*, and initiated into the manner of making recreation according to the *Rule*.

Among the instructions given by Brother Irenée to Brother Stanislas, Director of the novitiate in Avignon, was "to make the novices learn the Method of Mental Prayer". He was referring evidently to the Founder's text. Several of De La Salle's texts were certainly used, in particular, the *Collection*, but we have no detailed information about this. Brother Irenée recommended books for spiritual reading by a number of other authors also. These include *The Sinners' Guide* by Louis de Grenade, *The Devout Life* by St Francis de Sales and the *Treatise on Mental Prayer* by Rodriguez (cf. Rigault II, 161). These texts were doubtlessly used in novitiates throughout the century.

There are a number of manuscript texts in the Generalate archives which can help to give us an idea of the kind of spiritual formation that was given in the novitiate. These texts are in the form of little booklets, intended for the use of postulants in Maréville, containing the essential facts they were required to know about religious life, the Institute, the *Rule*, and in order to prepare themselves for the taking of the habit (cf. RA CF 361-1/7).

The archives possess also three booklets (out of a series of four) containing talks given to the novices at Maréville. The first two constitute a short treatise on the religious life and the obligations of the Brothers. The third is missing. The fourth concentrates more on the apostolic dimension of the Brother's vocation.

Pedagogical formation also was an important part of the novitiate programme. Time was set aside at the beginning of the afternoon, during which, as the Prospectus tells us, "the novices are shown how to teach, and are given lessons on the topics they will have to teach". According to the programme, at the end of the day, "the novices would practise teaching catechism to one another, with each one taking his turn". This pedagogical formation, quite apart from ensuring that each novice understood the material he would have to teach, included also, therefore, an introduction to the theory of teaching and some "experimentation" (cf. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*).

The novices

Who were these novices who received this training? We shall set out what we know about them under a number of headings.

The information that we have about those who entered the novitiates of the Institute in the 18th century comes from the registers of admission. Fortunately we still have those for St Yon and Avignon, but the more detailed of the two registers kept at Maréville has been lost, probably in the fire that broke out in the night of February 21st–22nd 1794.

Regarding the novitiate at Dole, all we have are lists of novices submitted every five years to the town clerk. Unfortunately, the lists are missing for the period from 1752 to 1770. The novitiate opened in 1747.

There is no information regarding Montauban, where there was a novitiate from 1771 to 1778.

We have also an overall list of all the Brothers who made their novitiate at St Yon, or elsewhere, and who were still members of the Institute at the beginning of the year 1791. This list is in the handwriting of Brother Salomon.

The statistics given in this supplement are taken from the sources mentioned above.

Origin of the novices

The first question we should like to consider is the geographical and social background of those who entered the novitiates of the Brothers. However, there is also another question that needs answering first: How did they know about the Brothers?

Those who were in the best position to know the Brothers were evidently their pupils. In the case of some, Brother Salomon, for example, we know that they were pupils at a Brothers' school. Unfortunately, the registers and lists we have do not tell us which novices had been pupils of the Brothers. We can suppose, however, that, if they came from a town where the Brothers had a school, they could have been their pupils, or at least, could have known them.

A rough calculation based on this supposition, shows that this could be the case for about a quarter of the novices at St Yon, and a third of those at Avignon.

This means that the majority of the novices of St Yon and Avignon came from other towns and especially from rural districts. This was the case also in the novitiate in Dole and, as likely as not, in Maréville and Montauban. Most often, others came to know of the Brothers from a member of the Institute. This is borne out by the registers, in which the names of certain villages are constantly mentioned, such as Puisieux in Picardy, Abriès in the diocese of Embrun, and Arçon in Franche Comté.

Certain regions are particularly well represented. The novitiate of Avignon drew a great many of its candidates from the diocese of Embrun, which included the Alpine valleys of Queiras, and from the Briançonnais region. There were very few candidates entering the novitiate in Dole who did not come from the Franche Comté. In both these cases, the areas concerned were very Christian, and had a particularly high level of literacy. In the first case, this was the result of teaching in the home, while in the second, it resulted from the great number of small schools that existed in the area. Teachers from these would also cover considerable distances to teach children elsewhere (cf. Chartier, 1976, 25).

It is not possible to discover the social backgrounds of the novices simply from the registers. Research was undertaken in 1973 by a student of the Sorbonne (cf. RA CG 400/3) on *The Geographical and Social Origins of the Brothers of the Christian Schools before 1789*. He based his work on the *Catalogue of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* which contains information about the first Brothers who entered and remained in the Institute, as well as on those who made their novitiate in St Yon up to the year 1776 (cf. CL 3).

For a number of reasons, the author was able to find additional information only in the case of 161 Brothers out of a total of 1,420 that were listed in the *Catalogue*. He found this information in the baptismal registers of the parishes from which the Brothers came. On the basis of the information he gathered, he was able to publish the table that follows, showing the profession exercised by the fathers of the Brothers in question:

craftsman	36	labourer	14	market gardener	3	sailor	2
worker	23	farmer	13	clerk	3	bourgeois	2
merchant	18	employee	9	lawyer	2	various	11
master craftsman	17	vineyard owner	6	cattle merchant	2	**Total**	**161**

The clearest conclusion one can draw from this table is that the socio-professional background of the 161 Brothers was very similar to that of the pupils they taught. On the other hand, it is difficult to generalise on the basis of these results, which are drawn from too small a sample, and refer solely to St Yon. Moreover, with regard to geographical origins, the high percentage of novices at St Yon coming from an urban background is not reflected in the figures relating to the

overall intake of novices in the 18th century. More extensive research in this field would no doubt produce more precise results.

Admission to the novitiate

The prospectus we have already quoted speaks at some length of the conditions for admission to the novitiate, and at greater length, of impediments to admission. We read that "the most suitable age for entry to the Institute is between 16 and 25". The admission registers for the years 1751–1775, for example, show that, on an average, most novices at Avignon entered between the ages of 15 and 19, and at St Yon, between 20 and 25.

When postulants entered the novitiate, they had to have their parents' permission, especially, according to the prospectus, if they were under 21 years of age. They had to produce their baptismal certificate and a letter of recommendation from their parish priest. When parents could afford to contribute towards board and lodging during the year of the novitiate, an agreement was drawn up beforehand. The postulant had to bring with him a minimum amount of linen, which was listed when he entered.

Individual postulants arrived at the novitiate at various times during the year. Sometimes a number of them would arrive at the same time, especially if they came from the same place. There was no fixed duration for the postulancy. At Dole, for example, it could last anything between a fortnight and two and a half months. Most often, however, it lasted a month and was followed immediately by the taking of the habit.

It was at this point that the new novices were registered under the Brother's name they had been given. This name was often followed by the Christian names, surname, date and place of birth, and date of entry.

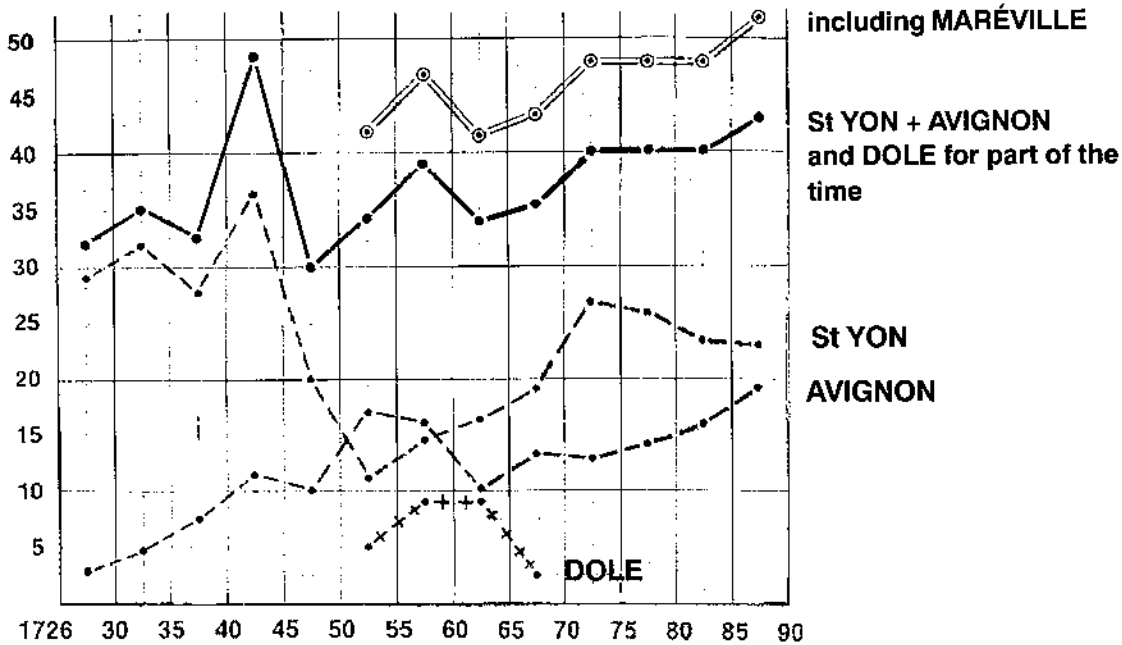
The overall number of novices

The **overall number** of candidates entering the Brothers' novitiates in the 18th century is relatively high.

- ♦ The admission registers of St Yon contain some 1,860 names, of which 1,624 date from the period 1726 to 1790.
- ♦ In the space of 63 years, 776 candidates entered the novitiate in Avignon (cf. HSP 2, 358).
- ♦ At Maréville, the register covering the period 1751 to 1787 contained 501 names. The one we have has 45 names.
- ♦ The register at Dole shows that 121 candidates joined the novitiate in the period 1752 to 1770. It is interesting to note that, of those who entered between 1747 and 1752, 6 were still in the Institute on January 1st 1791, and 15 had died as Brothers before this date.

From the chart that follows, it will be seen that the number of entries **varied** from year to year. The chart indicates the average number of entries per year in each successive 5-year period, for either individual novitiates (St Yon, Avignon, Dole), or for all three taken together. Since only the overall figure is known for Maréville, an average of 13 entries per year has been calculated.

NOVITIATE INTAKE (annual average by 5-year periods)



Among other things, this chart shows:

♦ the big drop in intake that occurred in the St Yon novitiate before numbers picked up again in the period 1770 to 1775;

♦ this drop was compensated for only partially by the increase in intake of the Avignon novitiate and the opening of the one at Dole;

♦ it was the contribution of the Maréville novitiate that caused the overall increase in the number of entries to the novitiate from 1751 onwards.

The perseverance of the novices

The prospectus we have already quoted tells us that "the probationary period lasts two years . . . after which the Brothers are permitted, if they wish, to make vows for three years. On reaching 25 years of age (and usually after five years of community life), they can be admitted to perpetual

vows, if the vocation suits them, and if they apply. To be admitted, they need the majority vote of the finally professed Brothers".

A question which naturally arises, is: How many Brothers completed this process and died in the Institute?

Remarks such as "left" or "sent away" in novitiate admission registers or other documents registering entries, show that, at one time or another, a number of Brothers left the Institute. Other entries in the register have the remark "died". Some of these died after final profession, while for others, it was their premature death which sealed their final and total commitment to the Institute.

Brothers who left the Institute

There was nothing unusual about the fact that not all who entered the novitiate completed their year of "probation", or that some left before making their first vows. Nor was it surprising that some Brothers left after their triennial vows expired.

The registers mention that some Brothers were "sent away" because of some serious shortcoming. Others had to leave because their application to make or renew temporary vows, or to make final profession, was rejected.

The dates of departures were not always noted, and so it is difficult to draw up statistics indicating how many Brothers left at each of the successive stages leading to perpetual profession. Where dates of departure are given, we see that some Brothers left the Institute without making triennial vows, as long as a dozen, or even exceptionally, 15 years after entering the Institute. It is clear also that, for some Brothers, the period of triennial vows continued beyond the point at which perpetual profession was supposed to be made. This was because Brothers, who were not permitted to make triennial or final vows, remained in their existing status (i.e.,without vows or with renewed triennial vows) till such time as they were finally permitted or refused permission to make these vows. The fact that some Brothers were not admitted to vows after their second year of novitiate means that there were, at times, Brothers in the Institute without vows. However, there is no evidence that any of these Brothers without vows remained permanently in the Institute.

Basing ourselves on the dates of perpetual profession recorded in the admission registers of St Yon and Avignon, we can establish, for example, that, by the beginning of 1791, out of the 803 candidates who had entered these two novitiates between 1751 and 1775, 475 had either left or had been sent away, and of these only 34 had been perpetually professed. This relatively low number contrasts sharply, however, with that of departures before perpetual profession. This difference can be seen as the result of a policy which favoured postponing the date of making vows for some, and of admitting to vows only those who furnished sufficient guarantees.

Brothers who died in the Institute

Some of the Brothers who entered the novitiate died before reaching their final profession.

Some of these did not even complete the year of the novitiate properly so-called. The Dole register records the death of four novices between 1752 and 1770.

Others died before making their triennial vows or during the period leading up to perpetual profession. In the case of Brothers who entered between 1761 and 1775, a period during which the date of death of many Brothers happens to have been recorded, one can establish the following:

♦ At St Yon, of the 32 Brothers who died before 1791, 9 had not yet made vows, and 6 had made only triennial vows.

♦ At Avignon, of the 18 who died before the same date, 5 had not yet made vows, and 3 had made only triennial vows.

Other Brothers died prematurely after perpetual profession. Regarding the Brothers who, entering between 1751 and 1775, died before 1791, and the date of whose death we know, we can establish the following figures:

♦ At St Yon, out of 55 Brothers, 17 died before they were 30, 12 between the ages of 30 and 40, 12 between 40 and 50, and 4 between 50 and 60.

♦ At Avignon, for 38 Brothers the figures are as follows: below 30, 11; 30–40, 14; 40–50, 6; 50–60, 6.

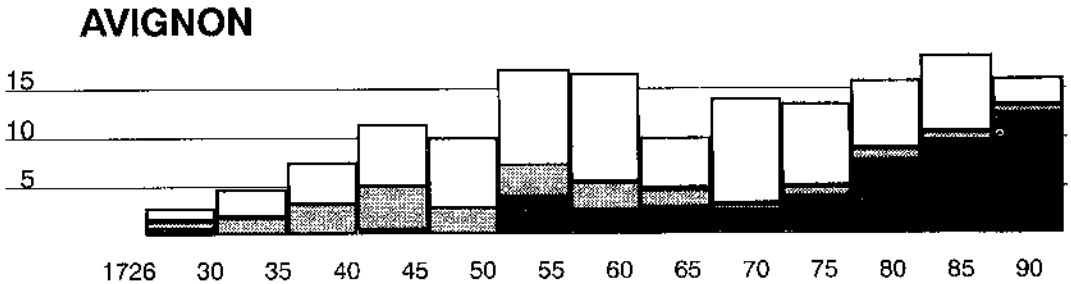
The others died at what was considered at the time an advanced age.

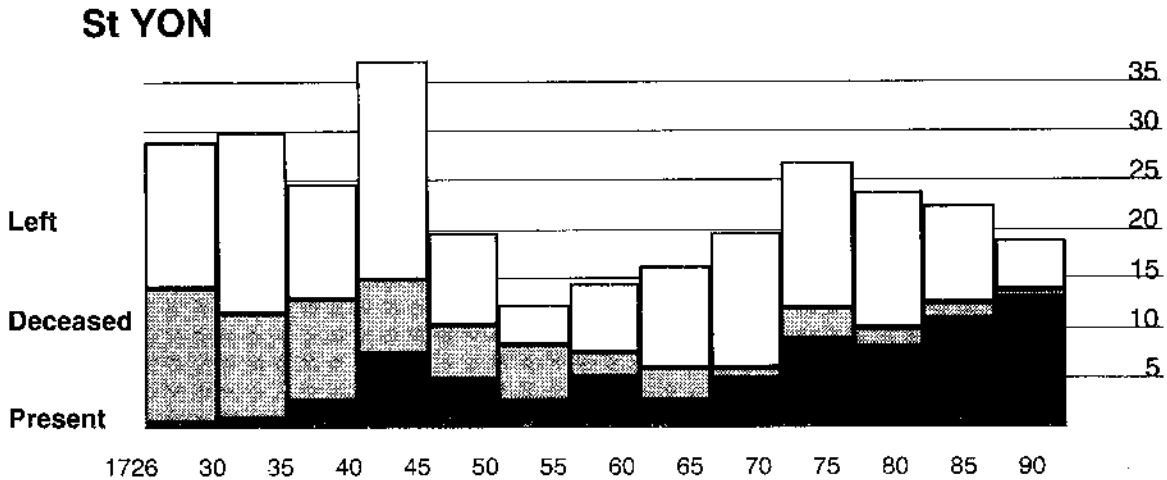
Brothers who composed the Institute in 1791

At any given moment, the Institute consisted of Brothers at various stages of their religious life. Some were in formation, completing their year of novitiate properly so-called, or in their first year in community. Others were at one stage or other of their preparation for perpetual profession. The largest number of them, however, were committed to the Institute by their final vows. The table on the following page shows the figures for the beginning of the year 1791.

We cannot say how many of those who were in the Institute in 1791 would have persevered to the end of their lives if the times had not been so troubled. What we can do, however, is to compare the number of Brothers in the Institute in 1791 with the number of those who entered the novitiates of St Yon and Avignon between 1726 and 1775.

We show this by means of the bar graphs that follow. Each column of the graph represents five years. The average annual entry for each group of five years is indicated by the height of the column. Each column shows what proportion of the Brothers entering the novitiate during the period represented by the column were still members of the Institute in 1791, and what proportion had left or had died.





Conclusion

What clearly emerges from what we have seen in this supplement is that, while the number of admissions to the Brothers' novitiates in the 18th century was high, the number of Brothers who left the Institute was also considerable. There are several possible explanations for this loss.

- It seems, first of all, that more or less anyone who applied to join was admitted.
- On leaving the somewhat austere conditions of the novitiate properly so-called, to go to community, candidates discovered that the normal living conditions of the Brothers also were often quite Spartan, and a certain number of them became disheartened.
- The aim of the discernment process operated by the Institute regarding Brothers preparing for final profession was that, generally speaking, only sufficiently hardened and particularly motivated Brothers should remain in the Institute.

This loss of Brothers weakened the Institute considerably, and slowed down its expansion. We shall see later on that this situation was a source of worry for the Superiors.

Chapter Five

The Institute in Conflict with Its Times

The period during which Brothers Claude and Florence were Superiors of the Institute coincides with a time when royal authority in France was being constantly disputed, and when, in Europe as a whole, there was a change in mentality in the cultured section of society (see page 4). As a part of this context, the Institute could not fail to be affected also, and the Brothers were forced to react to the situation in which they found themselves.

The Brothers in the historical context of their times

We can summarise the repercussions of the current situation on the Brothers under three main headings.

Repercussions of political and religious conflicts

As has already been said (see page 29), the royal patronage, which the Brothers appeared to have, could not fail to draw down upon them the malevolence of the parlement magistrates who opposed the King. And so, certain parlements, such as those of Paris and Brittany, which were particularly hostile to the Brothers, continued to enforce royal decrees as rigorously as ever in their regard. These royal decrees (in particular the 1749 Declaration) were intended to regulate the creation of new religious communities and societies, and the acquisition of property by existing ones. The Brothers continued, however, to have the support of a number of members of parlement, especially in Rouen.

At the beginning of this period, members of parlements supported the Jansenists in their conflict with the bishops over "confession certificates". Bishops insisted that Christian burial could not be given, unless the confessor could testify, by means of such a document, to the dying person's acceptance of the Bull *Unigenitus* (cf. Viguerie, 1988, 192).

The Jesuits, because of their submission to the Pope and their opposition to the Jansenists, were the target of the attacks of both members of parlement and the "philosophes". The Parlement of Paris, basing its judgment on the Gallican principles which it upheld (**Gallicanisme***), declared that an institute established in France could not be governed by a Superior residing in Rome and that, as a consequence, it could not have any legal status in France (cf. Viguerie, 1988, 188).

♦ In 1762, the Jesuits were forbidden to teach in France, and all their schools were closed.

♦ In 1764, the King suppressed the Company of Jesus in the Kingdom of France.

The opponents of the Jesuits turned their attacks on the Brothers also, because they likewise were known for their loyalty to the Pope. They were put in the same category as the Jesuits and even accused of wanting to take their place. This would seem to be the only explanation for the attack made on them by a member of parlement, a certain Rolland d'Erceville, in his Report to the Parlement of Paris (cf. Rigault II, 426).

Repercussions of the prevalent views regarding the social order

The overriding concern of members of the nobility and of senior magistrates, in particular, of those in the parlements, was the defence of their privileges. The "philosophes", sharing the mentality of the bourgeoisie, to which most of them belonged, were in favour of social change to the extent that it benefitted themselves. They were all hostile to anything that could bring about an improvement in the situation of the lower social classes.

It was for this reason that the "philosophes" and their followers attacked the Brothers. For example, La Chalotais, a member of the Parlement of Brittany, reproached the Brothers for "teaching poor people to improve their living standards" (Rigault II, 419). On the pretext of defending the public interest, he attacked "the principle of gratuitous and universal education" (*id.*). He wrote: "The Brothers of the Christian Doctrine have come to destroy everything: they teach reading and writing to people who should learn only to draw and to use the plane and file, and who want to do nothing else . . . ." (quoted in Rigault II, 419).

La Chalotais earned the approval of none other than Voltaire, who wrote to him on February 28th 1763: "I thank you for condemning studies among manual workers. As one who cultivates the land, I request you to send me labourers and not tonsured clerics. Send me especially some ignoramus Brothers to guide my ploughs and to harness them. . . ." (quoted in Rigault II, 421).

Won over by the ideas of the "philosophes", a certain number of intendants or their assistants took advantage of their work to demonstrate their hostility to the Brothers. For example, certain intendants, whose responsibility it was to approve the minutes of municipalities which agreed to provide or increase funds for the upkeep of Brothers working in the locality, refused to endorse the decisions made. Such a refusal could lead to the closure of schools, as happened in Apt and in Cannes, in Provence.

The reasons often given for such refusals reflect the ideas expressed by La Chalotais or others, according to which the teaching given by the Brothers was not only useless, but also harmful. We can find a complete list of these grievances in a report drawn up in 1764 by a certain Granet, Lieutenant General of the Seneschalsy of Toulon, in response to an enquiry from the Intendant of Aix en Provence regarding the state of public education in Toulon.

The Granet Report

The author of this report proposes to show that, if the charity school opened in Toulon had been entrusted to the Brothers, it could also be taken away from them, because of the "dangers" resulting from their presence.

Invoking the arguments used by the "philosophes" regarding the disadvantages of the spread of education, he shows that this diffusion, due to the gratuity introduced and promoted by the Brothers:

- goes against the good organisation of society, which requires "that a high proportion of its members remain ignorant";
- provides knowledge which "is very harmful to poor people";
- makes children who go to school lose their taste for work.

Basing himself on La Chalotais, he points out that:

- in seaports, the teaching given to the children deprives the navy of cabin boys, and the arsenals of workers.

Seeing in the Brothers "the rivals and successors of the Jesuits", as La Chalotais described them, he accuses them of:

- living according to an "unknown and secret Rule";
- accepting the conditions fixed by school founders only to the extent that "they conformed to their Rules";
- reserving the right "to obtain better conditions for the pursuit of their good work", a motive which recalled only too well the *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* of the Jesuits.

Taking up once again the arguments put forward by the lawyers, Granet indicates that the Brothers based themselves unlawfully "on the dispositions of edicts concerning owners of mortmain property", whereas:

- dispensation from Letters Patent is granted only for the purpose of setting up a charity school and not to facilitate the establishment "of a new ecclesiastical body";
- the Brothers' presence in towns to direct schools is only on a temporary basis; they cannot, therefore, establish themselves there as a regular community;
- the Letters Patent granted in Rouen are not valid in Provence;
- the numerous bequests made to them are to the detriment of the hospitals.

It was said also of the Brothers that, although they had renounced the clerical state, they "constitute a part of a body of which they cannot be members".

The report comes to the defence of other schoolmasters by demonstrating that the Brothers act through cupidity:

- they want to have the ownership of the houses they occupy and yet they refuse to see to their maintenance;
- they ask for a retribution "which they call voluntary and which they receive through a third party";*
- their schools, "open to the rich on the payment of a salary", take the place of the schools of other teachers, and destroy them;
- the presence of the Brothers, therefore, causes the disappearance of these other teachers, whereas, in the present circumstances, "an effort should be made to encourage and train teachers from the ranks of the citizens".

The report concludes with an attack on the teaching methods of the Brothers. These methods were "useful" but "uniform", that is, they did not take into account local circumstances. The report claimed also that the Brothers, "having renounced the clerical state in order to devote themselves to ignorance,** claim as their own the right to teach religion. In conclusion, since the Brothers are dangerous in a general way and not competent to fulfil the conditions fixed by the founders of the town school, it would be easy and of great benefit to replace them.

*Since 1761, alms were collected from the local population to provide for the upkeep of two new Brothers (HSP 1, 51).

**Ignorance of the "Humanities", hence the label of "ignoramus" attached to the Brothers.

Repercussions of a religious nature

After the blows it had received recently, Jansenism no longer existed as a political force, but it was not destroyed. Its claim to represent the true Catholic tradition continued to attract like-minded people to its ranks. The *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques* continued to sing their praises and to attack the enemies of the sect, which included the Brothers of the Christian Schools. And so, in 1760, this weekly publication recommended its readers to obtain a copy of a collection of anecdotes published after the death of an ecclesiastic, in which the worst kinds of accusations of immorality were levelled against the Brothers.

In places where the Jansenists were most solidly established, they used the schools run by the Tabourin Brothers, named after their founder, as one of their means of spreading their influence. This founder was one of the "appellants" against the Bull *Unigenitus*. The Tabourin Brothers were an association of unmarried men, without religious vows, under the leadership of a Superior General and a master of novices. Their teaching methods were to some extent similar to those of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and they used even De La Salle's *Rules of Politeness*. The great difference between the two congregations lay in their respective attitudes towards Christian formation and pupil-teacher relations (see Bédel, 1996, 199).

The Tabourin Brothers opened their first school in 1709 in the parish of St Étienne du Mont, in Paris. In 1743 (or 1744), the parish priest substituted the Brothers of the Christian Schools for the Tabourin Brothers. In 1757, the latter ran between 12 and 15 schools in Paris, in the Faubourg St Antoine or nearby, as well as in certain provincial towns, such as Auxerre and Orléans. In the latter town, they had to compete with the Brothers of the Christian Schools (notes of Br Jean Guy Rodrigue, based on the research of Br Marcel Martinais).

Since, for the "philosophes", "anything that plunged humanity into darkness and oppression, anything that prevented it from participating fully in the Enlightenment" (Cabourdin, 1978, 254) was a target to be destroyed, they attacked violently anything that appeared to be an obstacle, such as royal power and the Catholic Church. The Brothers, with their fidelity to teaching the truths of Christianity and to giving their pupils a Christian education, could not fail to be labelled as "obscurantists" and so increase the hostility of the "philosophes" towards them.

As regards education, the "philosophes" were involved in drawing up reforms for the increasing number of schools that had sprung up, especially since the expulsion of the Jesuits from their colleges. According to the "philosophes", the aims of these schools

were such that they precluded the teaching and education of the children and young people in them by ecclesiastics and religious. This included the Brothers, as La Chalotais, in particular, maintained.

The reaction of the Brothers

How did the Brothers react in this situation? We shall try to answer this question by considering how, in practice, they continued to live according to the spirit of the Institute by the practice of the spirit of faith and of zeal.

Fidelity to the Catholic faith

As far as one can see, the Brothers do not seem to have been too disturbed by the attacks levelled at them because of their loyalty to the Catholic faith and the Roman Church.

If the Jansenists continued their violent attacks against the Brothers, it was because the latter remained faithful to the last recommendations of the Founder (see Bédel, 1996, 188), and maintained the position subsequently adopted by the Institute.

The virulence and persistence of all these attacks presupposes that everyone in the Institute shared this same mistrust towards Jansenism.

However, when the Bishop of Uzès drew up a contract in 1749 with Brother Jean Pierre, representing the Superiors of the Institute, he included a clause specifying that if "the Superiors or a large number of Brothers were to allow themselves to be seduced by the heresy . . . the bishops would have the right . . . to expel the Institute" (quoted in HSP 1, 305). Did he do this as a precaution against possible contagion from Jansenism and, if so, was there some reason to fear such a general surrender to the heresy? There is nothing we can find to suggest this possibility.

Given the situation in this bishop's diocese, the heresy in question could have been that of Calvinism, which survived in this area. There is even less reason to believe that there was any risk of the Brothers being won over to this particular heresy.

Should we follow the example of Brother Lucard (II, 288) and number the Protestants also among the enemies of the Brothers? It is true that the Brothers continued to have problems at Mens, but it seems that here, as in other places, these problems stemmed above all from the reluctance of the municipality to increase the salaries of the Brothers. There is no reason to believe that the Brothers were the object of systematic opposition from those who had remained faithful to Protestantism.

In any case, the Brothers, in general, do not seem to have been particularly affected by the new ideas. In the period which concerns us, these ideas had hardly filtered through beyond the cultured sections of society. The Christian renewal movement of the 17th century had reached the faithful only after much delay, and continued to bear fruit among them even in this period (cf. Viguerie, 1988, 10). The Brothers were closer to the common people than to the members of the clergy or of religious orders who subscribed to the ideas that held sway at the time. The Brothers appear to have remained faithful to their religious commitments, even if, as we read in the circular Brother Florence sent to the Brother Directors in 1772 (see page 72), there was still slackness that needed to be fought.

Fidelity of the Brothers to their mission

There is no doubt that the Brothers suffered much on account of the problems caused by the unfavourable attitude towards them of members of parlement and of the King's representatives. They were prevented from doing their work freely, and their community life suffered because of the extra worries this produced, in particular, for the Brother Director. This did not prevent them, however, from pursuing their mission.

Unaware probably of those who advocated the limitation of religious instruction to the teaching of morality, and certainly not in agreement with them, the Brothers continued to teach their pupils catechism and to bring them up as Christians according to Institute practice. In this way, they helped to prolong the effects of the Christian renewal in which they participated throughout the course of the 18th century.

No doubt, some of the Brothers' pupils who had been given this instruction were subsequently won over to the new ideas. It is likely, however, that the Brothers' education did not produce the same results as that of the Jansenists. It is thought, in fact, that when Christians turned away from Jansenism, discouraged by its demanding nature, they turned away also from the sacraments. The de-christianisation of certain areas can be ascribed to this.

Moreover, the Brothers seem to have remained unaffected by the criticism of so-called "enlightened" persons whose concept of the social order remained very primitive. By creating schools for the children of the working classes, the Brothers contributed to their social advancement. Whether they were conscious of this or not, much of what they did anticipated the reforms advocated by some of those who drew up new curricula for schools (see below, page 98).

It is ironic that, by improving the level of instruction of the children of "the artisans and the poor", the Brothers were actually responsible for helping some of these pupils to become aware of these new ideas. Likewise, in the Institute itself, it became difficult to prevent at least some Brothers from being tainted and won over by these new ideas.

Consequences for the growth of the Institute

While the Brothers may not have been directly affected by the transformation taking place in the society of their day, one may well wonder whether the social climate in which they lived affected the growth of their Institute. During most of this period, there was, in fact, a decrease in vocations to the priesthood, although in the final years the trend was reversed (cf. Vigueric, 1988, 280).

According to Rigault, the rate of growth of the Institute slowed down considerably during the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence. He bases what he says on the fact that admissions to the St Yon novitiate decreased during this period. This decrease in the years 1745–1750 to 1765–1770 can be seen on the chart on page 78. On the other hand, if we base ourselves on all the figures we have for the various novitiates, we can establish the following table which shows that, overall, the number of admissions to the novitiate was higher in 1751 to 1775, than in 1726 to 1750:

Admissions to the Novitiate

	1726–1750	**1751–1775**
Saint Yon	699	449
Avignon	176	354
	875	**803**
Dole (1752–1770)		121
Maréville (estimate)		340
		1264

Rigault mentions also the high number of Brothers who left the Institute. We have dealt with this question sufficiently in the supplement on the novitiates, so there is no reason to return to it here except, perhaps, to ask ourselves to what extent the social climate of the day contributed to the increase in the number of Brothers leaving. And yet, if

we look at the chart on page 81, we can see that, proportionally, the number of Brothers leaving was highest in the years when there were most admissions.

In the final analysis, the best way to see what the situation really was is to compare the number of Brothers' houses at the beginning and at the end of the period under consideration. We have information regarding the beginning of this period and we have already given it on page 35. For the end of the period, our information is based on a document dated August 1779.

> This document consists in a table appended to a request for Letters Patent for the house at Mirepoix. Despite the date given, the table uses statistics for the year 1777, to which has been added a list of houses opened between 1777 and 1779.
>
> The document contains some factual errors which need to be corrected, and some additions in a different hand which need to be checked.
>
> In future, we shall refer to this document as the "Mirepoix table".

After checking this document, we can say that, in 1777, the Institute numbered 111 houses, 690 Brothers and 31,208 pupils (this last figure takes into account corrected boarding figures for Maréville; see page 164). This means that, during this period, there was an increase of 19 communities and 167 Brothers.

While this is not a negligible increase, it is all the same relatively low for a period of 25 years. The conclusion we can draw is that, although the Institute continued to grow during the period between 1751 and 1777, this growth was not as fast as might have been expected.

The situation of the Institute was very much better, however, than that of many regular orders of men, which were in the final stages of decline. In 1776, the King set up a "Regular Orders Commission", which suppressed "several institutes and 426 convents or monasteries" (Viguerie, 1995, 1045), because there were so few religious in them.

The fact that the Institute maintained its capacity to grow despite all the obstacles it encountered, shows that it possessed the necessary resources to overcome the difficulties of the times.

Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated mostly on the attacks the Brothers had to endure from a variety of sources. This is due mainly to the way we have treated this question, since we have restricted ourselves mostly to what affected the Brothers.

It appears as if the Brothers were unconcerned by all the things happening around them that were foreign to their way of thinking and acting. Perhaps we have mistaken their attitude in our analysis, but it is a moot point whether their attitude in practice could have been any different. When they dissociated themselves from the Jansenists, they were merely maintaining the position traditionally adopted by the Institute. When the diffusion of the new ideas began to be matched by an increase in the irreligiosity of their proponents, the Brothers could not fail to be mistrustful of what they saw as a threat to the Christian faith.

At the same time, these same Brothers participated, paradoxically, in what could be called "a fight to promote what became one of the most widespread beliefs of the Republicans of the 19th century", in the sense that, in the 18th century, the main promoter of elementary education was the Catholic Church, while the principal opponents of schooling for the common people came from the ranks of "the higher administrative and political echelons of the Kingdom, and from the intelligentsia of the Enlightenment" (Furet and Ozouf, 1977, 75).

Consequently, even if we think that the attitude of the Brothers reveals a certain degree of inertia regarding change, we should be careful not to judge, according to present-day criteria, an attitude adopted in the context of the third quarter of the 18th century in France.

Brother Florence, Jean Boubel, was elected Superior on May 19th 1767 and died on January 15th **1800**. He was born on January 31st **1725** in Paroy (Lorraine), in the diocese of Metz. He and his elder brother, Diez Boubel (Brother Jean de La Croix, 1721–1789), entered the novitiate together on April 25th 1743.

Brother Florence made his final profession in 1750, and became Director of novices at St Yon the following year. In this capacity, he took part in the 1751 Chapter. When he was appointed Procurator of the Institute on November 8th 1754, he continued to be Director of the Holy Spirit community in the parish of St Sulpice, in Paris. Later, he moved to Rouen where, in addition to his work as Procurator, he had responsibility for the gratuitous schools.

Brother Florence was an educator, administrator and an excellent religious. For 10 years, he governed the Institute in the midst of great difficulties. These eventually convinced him that the situation required someone else in his position, and he resigned. His life did not become easier subsequently.

When the Revolution broke out, he was Director in Avignon. On March 1st 1791, he refused to take the oath. In 1794, he was put into prison together with Brother Maurille, but was later released.

— Supplement Five —
Developments in Educational and Pedagogical Thinking in the 18th Century

The 18th century was characterised by certain developments in educational and pedagogical thinking. If we wish to understand the changes which occurred in these two areas, we need to begin by saying something about education and pedagogy in previous centuries.

> The material in this supplement is taken mainly from relatively recent French works dealing with general history or educational and pedagogical history. There are few references to non-French educational and pedagogical experts.
>
> Given the impossibility of dealing with this question in an exhaustive manner, it was thought more practical to restrict ourselves to the narrower field in which the Brothers operated in the 18th century, that is, to France. A more comprehensive survey, including other countries, would, of course, be very useful.
>
> The education of girls will be mentioned only incidentally.

The legacy of previous centuries

The view of children bequeathed by the Middle Ages to succeeding centuries was profoundly pessimistic and negative. Children were not thought of as complete persons, but in terms of criteria which served to define adults: children were incomplete adults. Given this point of view, the purpose of education was to accelerate the growth of the child to full adulthood, by opposing his natural inclinations, and forcing him to acquire knowledge and discipline (cf. Parias, 1981, II, 602).

This view of children was based on certain religious convictions. Children were seen as being deprived of reason and incapable of knowing and loving God. Even cleansed of original sin by baptism, they were no more than a rough draft of an adult, a helpless and disturbing creature,

capable of all kinds of evil (cf. Parias, 1981, 88). The implication of this view for education was twofold:

- children must be given a clear idea of the truths of religion;
- they must be preserved from evil.

This twofold concern is reflected especially in the two types of educational establishments which took on a specific form in the centuries that followed.

The establishment of colleges

In the Middle Ages, the teaching of what were known as the "liberal arts" was given in universities as a preparation for the university courses properly so-called, that is, theology, law and medicine.

In the 16th century, the teaching of the liberal arts:

- continued to be based on the study of Latin but was radically modified under the influence of humanism: the legacy of the Middle Ages was abandoned in favour of that of ancient Rome and Greece;
- there was a growing tendency to teach the liberal arts outside the university context.

The teaching of the liberal arts in school had already been started in the 14th century in the Low Countries by the Brothers of the Common Life. In their establishments, the teaching of the seven liberal arts was spread over eight classes. Other establishments had only three classes.

It was as a result of contacts with these Brothers of the Common Life that certain changes took place in the University of Paris. By the 15th century, colleges, which had been established around the University to provide accommodation first for poor university students and then for scholars, were giving their own courses. At the beginning of the 16th century, there were colleges in Paris teaching some or all the arts. Other towns followed the example of Paris and established numerous colleges.

All these colleges were strongly influenced by humanism and, at a very early stage, took an active part in spreading evangelical ideas and the teachings of the Reformers. In towns where Protestants were numerous, they ran the municipal colleges, which were accessible also to Catholics. Towards the end of the century, they opened schools reserved for their own followers.

Colleges run by the Jesuits were intended initially to serve as boarding schools for the future members of the Company who were following university courses. With time, the colleges themselves began to provide courses. And then, more and more frequently, the Jesuits were asked to open colleges in the countries where they were established, in order to prepare young people for university and, at the same time, to give them a Christian education. The first of these colleges was opened at Messina in 1548. Similar colleges were opened throughout Europe. At the begin-

ning of the 18th century, there were about a hundred of them in France. They served as a model for the schools opened by the Oratorians at the beginning of the 17th century. They had 25 schools in France in the middle of the 18th century.

Originally, the colleges were only day schools, but it was not long before both Jesuits and Oratorians began to take in boarders. They considered this to be "the best possible form of education because, by isolating the boarder, by preserving him from contact with the world, and by keeping him under constant supervision, it was the one most likely to ensure success in the great work of his education" (Parias, 1981, 629).

The birth of primary education

Before the 17th century, there were no primary schools in France comparable with those existing today, and none which taught in French. In the Middle Ages, and as late as the middle of the 16th century, the only primary schools in existence were the so-called Latin or grammar schools. These were not really primary schools, as they catered only for future clerics. From the 14th century onwards, however, cathedral chapters, which had the monopoly of school education, tolerated the teaching of singing and the rudiments of Latin in schools other than their own.

Two factors led to the birth of what was to become primary education.

With the advent of printing, books became more common. One consequence of this was that some parents decided to provide their children with a basic form of education which would enable them to learn to read and write. This education sometimes took place in the home. At other times, it was entrusted to a teacher, who would instruct a group of children in his house.

For the Protestant reformers, the school was also a means of introducing children to the reading of the Bible translated into their mother tongue. At the beginning of the 17th century, in Bohemia, Komensky (Comenius, in Latin), drew up a complete school programme. The way he envisaged the role of the school and its organisation was subsequently very influential in many other countries. In France, in places where they were established in sufficient numbers, the Calvinists set up their own schools, in which learning to read in the mother tongue played an important role.

For the proponents of the Catholic renewal, schools provided an opportunity of bringing children together to teach them their religion more frequently than simply in the weekly catechism lesson, and to teach them to read catechism and prayer books. "Books were now considered to be an essential additional means of interiorising reflectively the Christian faith, as memory alone was not sufficient" (Chartier, 1976, 8). Schools were seen also as a means of protecting children from idleness and its consequences (see Bédel, 1996, 28-31).

During the course of the 16th century, there came into existence the so-called Little Schools, run by private teachers under the supervision of the bishop or his representative, the Precentor of

the cathedral. The number of these schools increased during the 17th century. Innovators such as Jacques de Batencour, author of the *École paroissiale* (1654), or Charles Démia of Lyons, tried to improve the quality and efficiency of these schools.

Many of the exponents of the Christian renewal in France in the 17th century were led, for pastoral reasons and through Christian charity, to encourage the establishment of charity schools accessible to the children of poor families (cf. Bédel, 1996, 28).

Early developments

"From around 1680 onwards, there were signs that the bringing up of children was becoming increasingly difficult. It became common practice in all sections of society to entrust children to a wet-nurse and to leave them in her care for a long time. . . . Parents and teachers no longer exercised their authority with the same assurance as before. Too many children were spoilt" (Viguerie, 1995, 113). The view of children continued to be as pessimistic as ever, but certain of their characteristics now became attractive, and they were seen in a different light. This can be seen from the way children were raised: parents were very accommodating towards them, and often doted on them (cf. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, 1720 edition, 187 [25] in CL 24).

At the turn of the 17th century and during the first part of the 18th, educational institutions that had existed for centuries came under the critical scrutiny of pedagogical experts. The institutions concerned tended to be colleges rather than primary schools.

Colleges

The number of colleges in existence was much the same as it had been in the 17th century, and there had been no increase in the number of pupils. Latin continued to be the basis for the education given there. One of its principal aims was to train pupils in public speaking, hence the courses in rhetoric.

During this period, the studies pursued in these institutions came under increasing criticism. At the end of the 17th century, certain reformers such as Lamy, Fleury and Fénélon, advocated "reducing the amount of Latin, doing away with rhetoric, and introducing mathematics into the curriculum, but their advice was not heeded" (Viguerie, 1995, 110).

The early years of the 18th century saw the publication of a number of treatises on studies. One of the outstanding examples of this type of writing was Charles Rollin's *A Treatise on Studies, or On the manner of teaching and studying the humanities in their relation to the mind and heart* published in 1720. Rollin's programme of studies was original. He advocated studying French authors before turning to the classics. He emphasised the importance of history, and de-

voted a third of his work to this topic. He was responsible for the moralism that was such a prominent feature of education in the 18th century. He believed that learning in itself was pointless: its value lay in its promotion of morality, and in the moral lessons it taught. History was a "school of morality for all mankind" (quoted in Viguerie, 1995, 1342). In later years, the Brothers borrowed from Rollin the "prayer of the teacher before school" (cf. Rigault II, 582).

Primary schools

The most significant development in primary education in the closing years of the 17th century and at the beginning of the 18th was the rapid increase in the number of schools.

Little Schools, run by private teachers and enjoying the protection of the ecclesiastical authorities, increased in number despite their lack of efficiency. These schools were part of a network created and funded by local communities, on the basis of the royal decrees (**déclarations royales***) of 1698 and 1724. This network extended to rural districts, especially in the part of the country north of a line going from St Malo to Geneva, and in areas in the Southeast involved in the fight against Protestantism (cf. Viguerie, 1988, 108). The foundation of charity schools continued, and there was a proliferation of secular teaching congregations for the education of girls (cf. *id.*).

The increase in the number of primary schools was matched by developments in pedagogical thinking regarding teaching methods and, especially, the assessment of attainment. The most widely known educational ideas were those of De La Salle, thanks to the widespread distribution of his *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, first published in 1720 in Avignon (cf. Viguerie, 1995, 109). The Tabourin Brothers (see page 86) seem to have been inspired by this work. There were other authors also, but they tended to write treatises based on practical experience rather than on theoretical considerations.

- "The great discovery of the new educationists was to divide their schools up into classes, corresponding to different levels of attainment, so as to have more control over the progress of their pupils" (Viguerie, 1995, 109).
- In schools where this new approach was used, the pupils were involved with the day-to-day running of their class.
- While it gradually became more common for children to learn to read in French first, in the majority of cases, the practice of making them begin by learning to read in Latin continued till the end of the century (cf. *id.*).

Decisive changes

In the course of the second half of the 18th century, ideas regarding education and teaching underwent some major changes.

In the case of education, the "enlightened" sections of society reflected these changes in their changed attitude towards children. They "now refused to regard them as more evil and more untrustworthy than any other being" (Snyders, 1965, 270).

Instead, childhood was now seen as a time of innocence. "Finding children attractive was a kind of proof that man was not born corrupt, and that he was not intrinsically evil" (Snyders, 1965, 280). The new value placed on children required a new way of relating to them. This led to a view of education which was no longer based on close supervision and restriction (cf. Snyders, 1965, 270).

Those who were most influenced during this period by this change of perspective, were those who were most critical of the education given in the colleges, and who advocated their reform. Criticism was levelled against primary schools also, but the various educational reforms that were aired at the time did not concern them to any great extent.

Plans to reform the colleges

As we have already seen, the colleges had been the target of considerable criticism for many years. In the period between 1760 and 1770, it came to head and a number of radical reforms were proposed. These reforms centred on two aspects: the vocational aims of the colleges and the transmission of values (cf. Parias, 1981, 532).

As far as **vocational aims** were concerned, the colleges were criticised for training pupils only for certain kinds of employment and channelling them away from those where there were more job opportunities. The colleges trained too many pupils for posts in public administration and the legal profession, and too few for professions concerned with economic growth, such as manufacture and commerce (cf. *id.*). Education needed to be organised so that it prepared pupils for a whole variety of professions and not simply for those which were traditionally thought of as "intellectual". At least some shorter form of education should be offered.

Regarding the **transmission of values**, it was the very educational approach of colleges, especially of those run by religious, which was now being questioned. The "monastic" style of education given in colleges was condemned by philosophes such as d'Holbach, Diderot and Helvetius. They maintained that:

- it no longer fitted in with the views of enlightened sections of society regarding childhood;

♦ with the decline of the Church and even of religious ideas, it was becoming incomprehensible and arbitrary: children should be educated through contact with people and things (cf. Parias, 1981, 534).

Education should be closely related to the world in which people lived. Its aim should be twofold: it should teach pupils to be good citizens, who loved the society in which they lived, and who wished to contribute to it; and secondly, it should train pupils for the professions and activities required by society which, with the development of new production techniques and commercial exchange, were becoming increasingly diversified (cf. Snyders, 356).

Numerous works appeared, condemning the shortcomings of colleges and proposing reforms. In the course of the 18th century, 51 educational works were published between 1715 and 1759, and 161 between 1760 and 1789 (Chartier, 1976, 208). The national system of education proposed by Rolland d'Erceville was part of an overall scheme in which the parlements would become the true voice of the nation (*ibid*., 209).

The expulsion of the Jesuits from their colleges led to a general re-organisation of this kind of educational establishment. In 1763, the administration of these colleges was entrusted to local boards. Although the bishops were represented on these boards, the Church lost the control of the colleges to the local leading citizens.

This fact and the controversy surrounding the publication of Rousseau's *Émile* in 1762 led to a general discussion of what constituted the best possible form of education. We can sum up the main points put forward under the headings we used earlier.

The vocational aims of colleges:

♦ Most reformers insisted on the need to increase the amount of science teaching, but they continued to envisage it in abstract terms.

♦ They were not in favour of suppressing the teaching of Latin, but thought it should lose its predominant position in the curriculum.

♦ French should be taught systematically.

♦ History and geography should be taught for their intrinsic worth.

♦ The teaching of foreign languages featured rarely in the study programmes proposed.

It is astonishing how little effect all these recommendations actually had on teaching programmes, even though those responsible for organising courses in the colleges must have been aware of them. The Oratorians, however, who were generally open to new ideas, were among the few who introduced changes in their study programmes, teaching methods and in their general approach to education (cf. Cornaz, 1995, 129-131).

Transmission of values:

♦ Moral instruction should still be given, but in a form that was dissociated from dogma. A fundamental change in outlook required education to be exclusively concerned with promoting an increasingly harmonious organisation of society.

♦ Some reformers advocated structural changes: teaching should be given by lay people; when recruiting teachers, "citizens" should be appointed in preference to members of religious orders and congregations. Education must become the responsibility of the State.

In this respect, changes were already under way. Even in colleges run by religious congregations such as the Oratorians, for example, teaching was increasingly in the hands of lay people. Not all of these were capable of giving instruction inspired by Christian values. The ideas of the philosophes spread not only through education but, in the case of some pupils, also through contact with the views of society at large. This latter influence was no longer balanced by the example and teachings of their schoolmasters. Moreover, the writings of the philosophes found their way into the colleges.

The growth of primary education is deliberately slowed down

"Given the current educational climate, one would have expected great progress regarding primary education and its widespread diffusion" (Viguerie, 1995, 329). As it happened, there was hardly any progress at all in the second half of the 18th century. In the first half, there was a great effort to spread literacy. After 1750, this progress ceased. In the same way, the movement to provide schools for boys slowed down considerably. Provision of schools for girls continued, however. "Primary education for girls was now well organised everywhere, in both towns and rural areas" (*id.*, 329). There is, however, little evidence of progress in methods or curricula.

Why did the movement to spread literacy and to provide schools not make greater progress at a time so set on improving education? There were several reasons which were not unconnected.

The elite of the country feared that the increase in the number of schools would divert children from working in productive industries and commerce. Such fears had been expressed already many years before by Richelieu and Colbert, and now, with the spread of primary schooling, these fears were revived. Their views reflected also the prevalent ideas of the Enlightenment. Voltaire's hostility towards the education of the common people is well documented. Rousseau's objections were based on a different reason: he maintained that "young boys should be left to develop freely and without restrictions" (Battersby, 1960, 70). Moreover, the views of the philosophes had now become anticlerical, and they cast suspicion onto the proselytism of the Church and the kind of teachings it could propagate (cf. Furet and Ozouf, 1977, I, 76).

After 1770, however, more progressive views began to prevail. "Speaking of children in Brest, the Bishop of Léon declared in 1787, that there were many who could have been employed by the navy in preference to foreigners if they had been better instructed" (quoted in Parias, 1981, 394).

The more radical philosophes preached the benefits of knowledge: "Diderot, Helvetius and d'Holbach declared that instruction enlightened a person regarding his duties and therefore led him to practise virtue. This apparently edifying view has to be seen in the more general context of the education of the citizen: ignorance destroys the critical sense, engenders superstition and prejudice" (Parias, 1981, 395).

There was a change also in the type of education that parents wanted for their children. They were now concerned more about the efficient teaching of secular subjects than the benefits of the Christian education their children received in school. "As the original enthusiasm of the Catholic Reform movement to christianise began to wane, so greater importance was attached to the vocational utility of education" (Parias, 1981, 396).

The development of other forms of education

The proliferation of **boarding schools** after 1762 reflected other changes. Merchants and manufacturers, dissatisfied with colleges which were incapable of training their children for the professions they exercised, tended to have their children educated elsewhere. There were some colleges, however, which offered the training they wanted. The Jesuits, for example, offered courses in "hydrography" in some of their colleges, although, it has to be said, the teaching tended to concentrate on the theory of navigation rather than on the practical aspects of steering a ship.

The teaching given in boarding schools, which concentrated more on preparing pupils for professional activities and, in particular, for commerce, were more in line with the expectations of parents who exercised these professions. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of pupils in colleges did not complete the course. Some boarding schools, on the other hand, offered the alternative of a shorter course of studies. Others responded to specific needs, such as, the improvement of military skills.

Boarding schools run by women religious had existed for a long time. These and other more recently established institutions such as St Cyr provided education for girls who were unable to attend colleges. However, unlike the colleges, these establishments aimed to give girls "domestic" rather than vocational training.

The majority of children who frequented primary schools received their vocational training by becoming apprentices. In the 18th century, it was felt that, in the case of some crafts, at least, this preparation was insufficient. To meet the need of specialised training in certain skills, some schools organised **special courses**. Art schools were a typical example of this: they taught technical drawing which required a knowledge of geometry and surveying.

Conclusion

This supplement has tried to describe the developments which took place in education and instruction in the 18th century, and which provided a background for the work of the Brothers.

There is an interesting passage in the work of Furet and Ozouf which gives a broader view of De La Salle's contribution to education in this period. The authors see as a "sign of the times" the fact that one "of the last saints of the Century of Saints should have been a person concerned with the Little Schools". They go on to explain what they mean.

> "What is involved here is teaching the poor in towns that have come to terms with the mediocrity of their charity schools. These manage to survive thanks to the precarious goodwill of the Poor Board, and often teach only a very basic form of reading. The instrument created belatedly by the French Counter-reformation was very modern. It was so modern, in fact, that it was not restricted by its religious and charitable aims. Because of this, the bourgeoisie of the Enlightenment often considered it to be a model on which other vocational schools should be based.
>
> "This shift of purpose and this success owed nothing to chance, but rather reflected the emergence of a demand in society for schools that were better organised, more efficient and socially useful. Not that the proclaimed aims of the Christian Schools differed in any way from those entrusted to them by the pronouncements of bishops or synods. On the contrary, De La Salle never wavered from pursuing the glory of God and the salvation of the young people confided to his Institute. But he saw already that, by teaching poor people to read and write, he would enable them to take their place in society and contribute to the public good". (Furet and Ozouf, 1977, 92-93)

Throughout the 18th century, the Brothers had to maintain a delicate balance between two obligations: ensuring that their schools offered a Christian education, and satisfying the demand for efficient teaching of parents, and of those who supported the schools. How did they do this?

There is no evidence to show that, even in the period when there was the greatest increase in the number of Brothers' schools, that the apostolic aims of these schools were forgotten. Neither is there any evidence that the efficient running of the school did not become, in certain cases, the overriding concern of those who taught in them.

Chapter Six

The Brothers Continue Their Educational Work (1751–1777)

Introduction

As a result of the problems caused by an over-rapid expansion of the Brothers' educational work, fewer schools were opened during the 1751–1777 period, when Brothers Claude and Florence were at the head of the Institute.

In addition, because of the circumstances in which the Brothers were pursuing their educational work, the Superiors of the Institute had to take steps to improve the living conditions of the Brothers working in the existing schools.

Other observations will be made in the course of the chapter.

The expansion of the Brothers' educational work is slowed down

With the election of Brother Claude as Superior General, the spread of the Brothers' work to new localities slowed down noticeably. Between 1751 and 1777, only 20 or so new schools were opened. No doubt this was due partly to the slowing down in the overall growth of the Institute, which we mentioned earlier. However, the main reason seems to have been the wish of the Superiors to improve the formation of the young Brothers, and to reduce the constraints on their own freedom of action resulting from an obligation to provide increasing numbers of Brothers for new schools. In a wider context, the situation in the Institute reflected a contemporary period of consolidation in France regarding the provision of schools for boys (see page 100).

During the generalate of Brother Claude

In southern France

By this time, the Brothers had been in **Avignon** for half a century. In 1752, they returned to the school dependent on the "Almoner General", which they had left in 1743. (See Supplement Three, "The Brothers in the General Hospitals".) In 1754, they opened a school in the parish of Sainte Madeleine, in a district in which the population consisted mainly of "craftsmen and water and earth carriers" (HSP 2, 6).

Most new foundations took place in the part of the Institute which depended on the house in Avignon.

The Brothers opened a school in **Nîmes** at the beginning of January **1754**. This was made possible by the efforts of two persons who had the support of the local bishop.

A school in **Condrieu** (Lyonnais) was entrusted to the Brothers in **1756**. The parish priest had persuaded the town authorities to pay the Brothers out of hospital funds.

In **Bordeaux**, negotiations between the town authorities and the Visitor, Brother Jean Pierre, resulted in the Brothers taking over three schools in October **1758**. In 1760, a fourth school was opened, and the community was split in two. One part remained in the parish of Sainte Eulalie, while the other part moved to the parish of St Louis, to a house in the Chartrons district of the town.

On the receipt of a bequest from two persons in **Toulon**, the town authorities began negotiations to obtain three Brothers. These negotiations lasted several years, and finally in **1759**, they were brought to a successful conclusion.

In November 1760, an agreement was signed between the municipal authorities of the small town of **Montréal** (Diocese of Carcassonne) and Brother Santain, which enabled two Brothers to open a school there in **1762** (see the Mirepoix table). Brother Santain was the Director.

Negotiations between the Bishop of **Cahors** (Guyenne) and the Superior General led to an agreement according to which five Brothers would come to teach in the town, and a sixth Brother would come later to teach technical drawing and basic mathematics (HSP 1, 83-84).

In northern France

The number of houses of the Institute "this side of Lyons" increased slightly.

In **1752**, the Bishop of **Vannes** (Brittany) obtained three Brothers for a new school in his town. He had raised funds for this school with the help of various members of the public, and had obtained the consent of the town authorities.

In **1759**, the Bishop of **Amiens** (Picardy) obtained Brothers for a new school, in which, subsequently, the number of classes rapidly increased from two to three, and then to four and more.

The Brothers arrived in **Sedan** (North Champagne) in **1762**. They were able to open a school here thanks to the generous gift a benefactor had made to the town authorities the previous year.

The Brothers arrived in **Saint Dié** (Lorraine) in **1762**. In 1777, the town was given its own bishop.

In **1766**, the town authorities of **Charleville** (North Champagne) accepted three Brothers to run a school on a permanent basis.

During the generalate of Brother Florence

In the Institute north of Lyons

Thanks to a long-standing endowment fund, a "Christian and gratuitous school" for boys was opened in the small town of **Damery** (Champagne) in **1768**.

In **1768** also, the town authorities of **Sainte Menehould** (Champagne) received a bequest from a priest. Part of this bequest was intended to fund a school run by the Brothers. The school was probably opened later that same year.

In **1771**, the Brothers were invited to **Morhange**. The foundress of the school laid down the condition that the Brothers taught "exclusively in French" (RA CK 562-3/9). The reason for this was possibly because this town was near the German-speaking part of Lorraine.

In **1772**, the campaign begun in 1743 to persuade the town authorities of **Compiègne** (Ile de France) to allow an endowment for the establishment of a Christian school to be used, finally bore fruit. The resistance of the authorities to accept the establishment of new "communities" was finally overcome by King Louis XV during one of his visits to this town.

In **1773**, in response to a request from the parish priest, Brother Florence sent some Brothers to **Carentan** (Normandy). The lack of an agreement with the town authorities resulted in conflict with them over the maintenance of the buildings which housed the school and the Brothers' community.

In **1776**, a school was opened in **Lisieux** (Normandy) on the basis of a contract between the local bishop and Brother Eunuce, delegated for this purpose by Brother Florence.

In **1776** also, three Brothers were sent to **Bapaume** (Artois) to run a charity school.

According to Lucard (II, 358), a school was entrusted to the Brothers in Douai (Flanders) in 1772. There was, in fact, a plan to send Brothers there but nothing came of it (cf. RA CK 550).

In the Institute south of Lyons

On November 1st **1769**, the Brothers opened a school in **Castres** (East Guyenne). At the suggestion of the bishop, the town authorities asked the Brothers to take the place of teachers whom they found unsatisfactory.

In November **1770**, three Brothers opened a school in **Aigues Mortes** (Languedoc). A number of Brothers died prematurely in this town, which was surrounded by marshes (HSP 2, 107).

Outside France

Two Brothers left France for the island of Martinique to take charge of a school in **Fort de France**, which had been opened by a Capuchin. The Brothers arrived there in 1774, even though the Mirepoix table gives 1778 as the date. The Brothers were certainly already there in 1777, since the local *Gazette de la Martinique* describes what the Brothers had accomplished since their arrival (cf. Rigault II, 552).

The effect of existing conditions on the Brothers

In the 18th century, the Brothers were often obliged to work under difficult conditions. These conditions existed already before the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence, but now they were tending to become worse.

Reasons for this situation

In a number of cases, the Brothers lacked funds because of **certain circumstances**.

Some schools had been taken over without a guarantee that the Brothers would receive an adequate salary. For example:

In Rouen, up to 1744, the Brothers were still being paid the 600 livres that had been agreed upon in the time of the Founder. In 1744, they obtained a "gratuity" amounting to 400 livres. But even 1,000 livres per year was not enough to support eleven persons.

Since their arrival in Apt, the two Brothers had been receiving 150 livres each per year. This sum was the minimum that town authorities could ask from the local population for the support of a schoolmaster.

Sometimes, those who founded (**fonder***) a school did not provide for its future:

At Montargis, Duc Louis d'Orléans, who had agreed to pay for the upkeep of the teachers of the school opened in 1750, had "forgotten to stipulate this in his will" (quoted in Rigault II, 392). As a result, the Brothers fell into debt and the school closed in 1754 or so.

In other cases, sufficient funds had been initially allocated, but had been subsequently reduced or blocked.

At Les Vans, the income of 350 livres from the original school endowment, which was already insufficient, was reduced to 210 livres because of a change in rates of interest.

In 1747, the Brothers in Dole were deprived of the annual income of 600 livres which had been guaranteed by the school endowment fund.

The most common cause of the difficulties the Brothers experienced was the **current economic situation**.

Like anybody else, the Brothers suffered from temporary increases in price due to bad harvests. A more important factor, however, was the fact that the relative prosperity enjoyed by the country during this century was accompanied by **growing inflation**. The price of cereals increased by between 50% and 60% during the period that concerns us (cf. Viguerie, 1995, 233). A good illustration of what this meant in practice is given by Chaunu: "In 1726, a manual worker earning 8 or 10 sols a day could buy 10 livres (about 5 kg) of brown bread (bread made from flour containing bran) or 5 livres of white bread. In 1788, for 12 sols, he could buy only 7 livres of brown bread or 3 livres of white bread" (Chaunu, 1971, 359).

When money for the upkeep of the Brothers and the running costs of the school came from income from so-called "rentes", this income never varied in amount and eventually became insufficient. The same thing happened when the Brothers were funded by an "Office" which administered the school, or a charitable institution, or a group of persons, and there was no increase in the funds set aside for their support.

Another factor that sometimes affected the Brothers was the **dilapidated state of the premises** in which the Brothers lived and worked.

At Nantes, the Brothers, whose resources were already inadequate, lived in a house which could collapse any day. Fortunately, the local bishop had obtained some land from the King on the outskirts of the town, and had built a house there for the Brothers. They took possession of it in 1751.

In Dole, the insanitary conditions of the novitiate house led to its closure in 1770.

Through a lack of maintenance, the building housing the school of St Laurent in Grenoble collapsed in 1776, killing several pupils.

Difficulties encountered in trying to improve the situation

During the 1751 General Chapter, the Superiors decided that, in order to keep up with inflation, the Institute would make Brothers available for schools only if they were each guaranteed a minimum annual income of 250 livres.

Another result of this decision was the search for **extra funding** for existing houses.

One way of supplementing old-established and now inadequate endowments was to find new ones. In Nîmes, for example, the upkeep of a fifth Brother was ensured by an endowment provided by a generous donor.

Money raised by the suppression of religious houses or confraternities could be transferred to schools, as happened in Valence and Noyon.

However, the main effort to raise more money was concentrated on **town authorities**. These were asked to increase existing salaries and to help supplement other forms of income which had now become inadequate. In some cases, things went smoothly. In Nîmes, for example, Brother Zachée was able to obtain a grant of 750 livres from the municipality. Often, however, requests for funds were not well received by ill-disposed municipal magistrates. Town authorities, of course, had their own financial problems, but their opposition resulted just as likely from their prejudice against the Brothers.

Certain municipalities refused outright to grant requests.

The Brothers at Le Croisic, who received a salary which was particularly low, found it impossible to obtain an increase. The Superiors withdrew them from the town in 1758.

The Brothers at Bollène had been at loggerheads with the town authorities since 1661. In 1776, the latter refused to grant the Brothers an increase requested by the papal authorities.

In other cases, town authorities imposed unacceptable conditions.

In Rheims, they wanted to limit access to the Brothers' schools solely to poor children. In view of this, they organised a survey of these schools in 1776 to ascertain which pupils should be excluded.

In Troyes, the town authorities ran a similar survey in the Brothers' schools with a view to obtaining fees from families considered capable of paying them. Although the survey was made, no further action seems to have been taken.

Sometimes, when town authorities were prepared to give a favourable answer, they were prevented from granting requests by representatives of the King, the "intendants" (**intendants***) and sub-delegates (**subdélégués***), responsible for supervising the administration of towns.

In 1776, the intendant of Provence not only refused an increase in salary for the Brothers in Apt, but actually suppressed the salary.

In 1775, the same intendant had refused permission to the town authorities of Cannes to increase the salaries of the Brothers. In both cases, the Brothers withdrew from the schools they ran in these towns.

The unwillingness of town authorities or the refusal of intendants to grant these requests was based in some cases on the ideas spread by the followers of the philosophes.

The Intendant of Brittany refused to permit the town authorities of Brest to increase the money allocated to the Brothers by 400 livres. He based his decision on the argument used by La Chalotais that it was preferable for children to sign on for work on ships than to go to school (cf. Rigault II, 429).

In Provence, the Brothers were accused by a member of the Apt town council of depleting the agricultural work force. This accusation was enough to make the intendant take the decision already mentioned elsewhere.

In Italy, the situation of the Brothers' houses was no better.

In Rome, the Brothers lived very poorly and were in debt. Brother Dosithée, the Institute Procurator, was sent to Rome by Brother Florence to obtain an increase in their annual salaries, which he did in 1775 (cf. Meoli, 1995, 68).

In Ferrara, the situation improved thanks to a bequest from Cardinal Crescenzi (cf. Lucard II, 338).

An overall assessment

What we have said about the Brothers' educational work in the 1751–1777 period has highlighted, in particular, the obstacles the Brothers encountered in their work. There were positive aspects, however, which need to be mentioned if we are to have a more balanced assessment of this period.

Negative aspects

The deliberate policy of the Superiors to open fewer schools reflected also the current difficulties experienced by the Institute. These difficulties slowed down the development of certain schools and forced others to reduce the number of classes.

The precarious situation in which the Brothers found themselves forced them to close certain schools. We have already mentioned this when speaking of Le Croisic, Apt, Cannes and Montargis. According to a remark in one of the letters of the Assistant Brother Exupérien (copy in the Rheims town archives, box 692, file 18b), closures took place also in towns such as Hérisson (Bourbonnais) and Issoudun (Berry) where the Brothers had not been established for long.

Positive aspects

In certain places, as a result of strenuous efforts, there were improvements, materially speaking. Elsewhere, the presence of the Brothers was increased by the opening of new classes, as at Mézières and Belley, for example; and by the development of certain boarding schools, such as the one in Marseilles.

In these boarding schools, as well as in some other schools, the teaching given by the Brothers prefigured the technical courses of the future.

In seaports, the power houses of the economy, the Brothers offered courses preparing students for business professions and navigation (cf. Cabantous, "La culture religieuse du littoral," 1990).

The school in St Malo offered courses in accounting, surveying and pilotage (cf. *Établissements des Frères en Bretagne et Anjou avant la Révolution*, 294).

In Vannes, special courses in mathematics and "hydrography" (navigation) were organised for the more able students.

Elsewhere, more "technical" courses were given.

In Paris, a benefactress in the parish of St Sulpice guaranteed sufficient revenue to support a teacher who "would be employed to teach children drawing", that is, technical drawing (quoted in Rigault II, 376).

In Cahors, there was a plan to start courses in "architecture and planimetry", which included teaching in mathematics, geometry and drawing (cf. Rigault II, 378). Similar courses were planned at Castres, which included basic mathematics. The town authorities reserved the right to add book-keeping (accounting) (HSP 1, 97).

In most cases, even when they had problems with the authorities, the Brothers were held in high esteem by the local population.

Some statistics for the end of this period

One of the documents of the 1777 General Chapter shows how the houses of the Institute (including those outside France) were divided up among the three provinces created in 1771. We could hardly have a more trustworthy document, and yet there is no mention of Fort Royal among the houses of the western province (RA ED 227/3: General Chapters from 1777 to 1873).

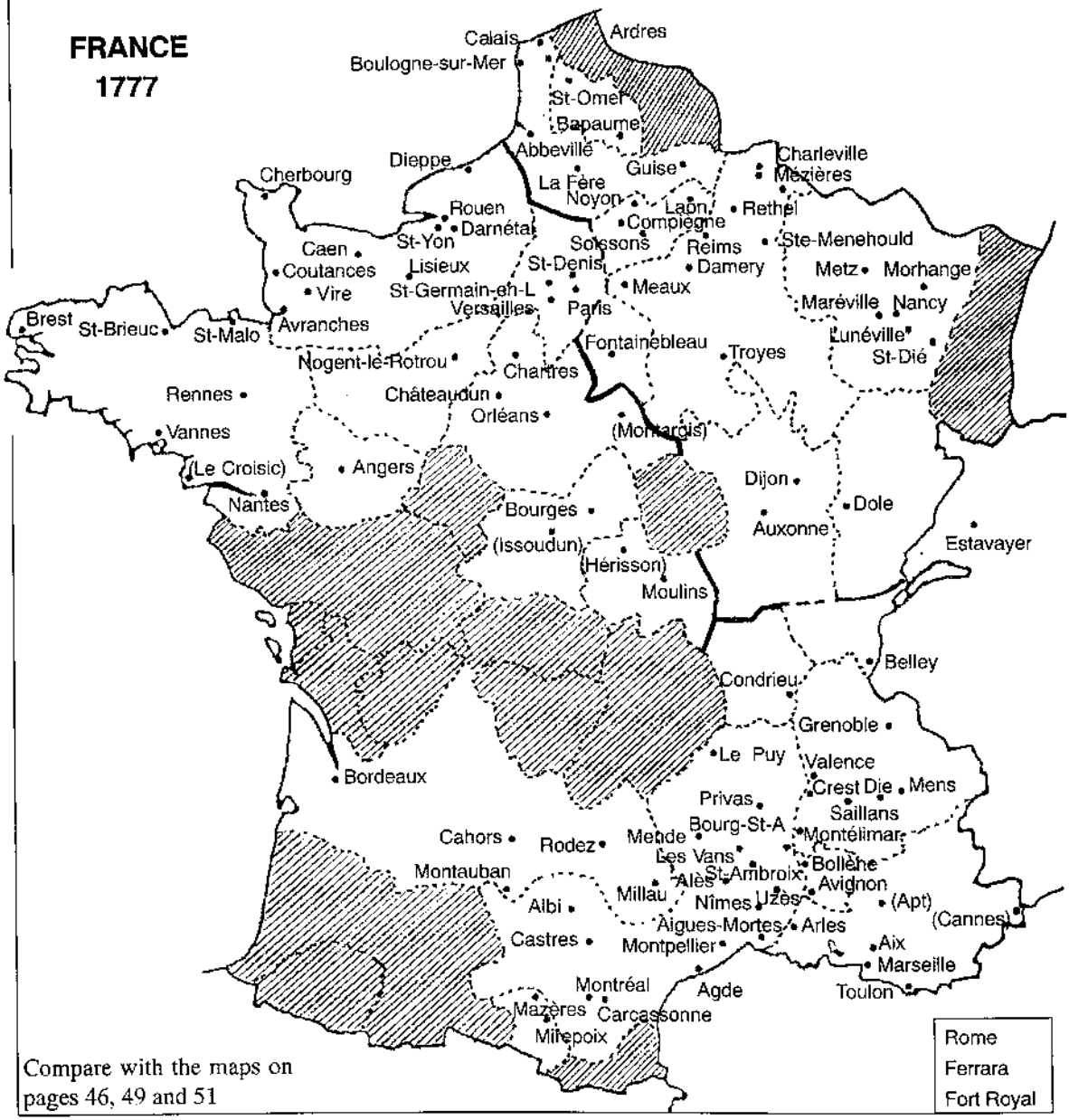
According to this document, at the time of the General Chapter, the distribution of the houses was as follows:

32 in the western province, including 2 at Versailles, 4 in Paris, plus Fort Royal;

33 in the eastern province, including the house at Estavayer;

41 in the southern province, including 2 in Bordeaux, and 2 in Italy (Rome and Ferrara).

The map below gives the location of the houses mentioned in the document drawn up by the 1777 General Chapter. Errors in the dating of the opening of some schools have been corrected. Towns shown in brackets indicate places from which the Brothers had withdrawn. Areas where the Brothers had no schools are shaded. The map indicates also the three provinces created in 1771.



Compare with the maps on pages 46, 49 and 51

Conclusion

At the end of the last chapter, we wondered what effect the opposition encountered by the Institute during the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence could have had on the Brothers.

But this period was also a time during which many changes took place regarding education and religion, and these changes certainly had repercussions on the work of the Brothers. This fact raises a number of questions.

We saw that the Brothers opened fewer schools during this period, and we explained why this was so, as far as the Institute was concerned. But what happened in the Institute happened elsewhere also. After the remarkable progress in the spread of literacy and the provision of schools in the first half of the 18th century, the whole movement ran out of steam after 1750 (cf. Viguerie, 1995, 319). Is there any kind of connection between what happened in the Institute and what occurred everywhere else?

The teaching given by the Brothers remained effective. In Amiens, for example, 34 out of 37 former pupils were able to sign the marriage register with their names. This represented a 92% success rate in the teaching of literacy, a figure which was much higher than anything attained in other schools (cf. Chisick, 1980-81, 52; see below, page 117). We know also that, when the Brothers were asked in certain places to give more advanced teaching to some of their pupils, they were able to do so.

Their ability to do so responded to the expectations of parents who themselves had benefitted from the provision of schools. On the other hand, can we say that there was also an improvement in the teaching offered to the vast majority of the Brothers' pupils? Or was the higher standard of education reserved for the children from families with a higher social standing?

The Brothers remained faithful to the teaching of catechism and continued to train the pupils to be good Christians. The fact that many pupils kept their faith and remained faithful to Christian morals and practices in whatever social position they attained is no doubt one of the Brothers' greatest contributions.

Some characteristics of Christian life in general in this period were due to some extent to the teaching given by the Brothers. By teaching reading to a great many children, they contributed to the success enjoyed by religious books at this time (Viguerie, 1995, 283). The religious formation given to their pupils within a school framework prepared them to consider "their duty of state . . . as the first of all Christian obligations" (*ibid.*, 284), as it

was customary in those days to insist. But were the Brothers aware of the weakening of the Christian spirit and its manifestations, increasingly apparent in certain regions, and among the people who came flocking to the suburbs of towns? Were they able to put their pupils on their guard against this?

Questions such as these indicate that there is still much research to be done on this period which is so full of interesting ideas, people and events.

— Supplement Six —
The Pupils of the Brothers' Schools in the 18th Century

In this supplement, we shall try to show whether or not the Brothers deserved the criticism levelled against them that they accepted too many pupils who could not be considered poor. Our considerations will be based on lists of pupils drawn up by the writing masters during their disputes with the Brothers or in connection with enquiries set in motion by town authorities.

Complaints against the Brothers regarding their school intake

As we saw in the case of Rheims, town authorities wished to ensure that the Brothers accepted pupils only from poor families. This was a way of reducing the number of classes in their schools and, as a consequence, the number of Brothers they had to maintain.

In addition, the teachers of the Little Schools and, in particular, the writing masters, accused the Brothers of depriving them of their livelihood by accepting pupils whose parents, according to them, could have afforded to pay tuition fees.

These complaints were not new: years before, De La Salle and the first Brothers had had to deal with attacks from this same quarter. As can be seen from documents deposited in various municipal archives, the attacks of the writing masters against the Brothers continued throughout the 18th century.

During the generalate of Brother Timothée, this was the case, for example, in the following towns:

♦ Chartres, where, in 1731, the writing masters addressed a petition to the local bishop;

♦ Dijon, where the conflict between writing masters and the Brothers flared up in 1728, 1730 and 1734;

♦ Paris, where the writing masters pursued a protracted campaign against the Brothers (cf. RA CK, 564/5).

During the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence, the writing masters joined forces with the philosophes in their attacks on the Brothers (cf. Battersby, 1960, 70):

♦ in 1762, they lodged a complaint against the Brothers who had been in Bordeaux since 1758 (cf. RA CK, 552-1/9; Rigault II, 427, note 2);

♦ in the same year, the writing masters of Dijon addressed a petition to the town authorities and, to support their claims, included a list of the pupils of the two classes (Dijon town archives G 39);

♦ the writing masters of Rouen complained to the administration of the General Hospital, as we can see from a copy they made for their own register of the deliberations of the administration, dated July 2nd 1762 (cf. Rouen town archives D 341, 240);

♦ a lawsuit was filed against the Brothers in the Paris parlement by the writing masters of Abbeville in 1766, and by those of Amiens in 1768.

In almost all cases, the reasons for the legal action brought against the Brothers never varied.

In a certain number of cases, the writing masters based their refusal to allow others the right to teach "the art of writing and mathematics" on their statutes. This happened in Paris in 1739 (cf. RA CK. 564/5). When the writing masters of Amiens used the same argument in 1766, the Brothers demanded "they should justify this extraordinary claim to have the (sole) right to teach writing" (Chisick, 1980-81, 42).

But the complaint that was almost unanimously made about the Brothers was, as the writing masters of Dijon wrote in 1762, that "the Brothers of the Christian doctrine contravened daily the statutes of their Institution by accepting into their schools children whose parents were in a position to provide teachers for them, which is greatly prejudicial to the plaintiffs" (Dijon town archives, F 19).

The Brothers replied to this charge in the same vein as their predecessors had in 1730, when they wrote "that they are true to their Institute so long as they accept only poor children and the children of artisans. It is not their business to check whether the artisans who send their children to their charity schools are poor. In fact, it is presumed they are when they allow their children to be seen in public in the company of the poor" (Dijon town archives, F 19).

On the basis of their claims, the writing masters demanded that the Brothers should not accept children unless their parish priest had provided them with a certificate indicating that, on account of their parents' poverty, they could attend a charity school. They also insisted that lists of pupils should be regularly made available by the Brothers, and even communicated to themselves, so that they could come to the school and check on the pupils.

The town authorities of Dijon refused to give in to the claims of the writing masters. On the other hand, in both Abbeville and Amiens, the judgments of the Paris parlement supported the claims of both charity school teachers and writing masters (cf. Chisick, 1980-81, 41-42).

How close to the truth were the claims of the writing masters and the opposing claims of the Brothers? We shall try to determine this by examining a number of lists of pupils.

Information provided by the lists of pupils

Dijon

Referring to the list of pupils of two classes which they included with their complaint in 1762, the "Writing Masters, Grammarians and School Masters" of Dijon explained that "all the pupils who are indicated by a cross or a line on the appended list provided by the Brothers are sons of merchants, small businessmen, well-off workers and inn-keepers, and thus all in a position to obtain lessons from the masters" (Dijon town archives, G 39; copy of the list in the RA CK 554/8). Only in a small number of cases was the profession of the father given after the indicated names. In all the other cases, only the surname was given. This makes it impossible to find further information about the parents of pupils by referring, in particular, to the income tax (**taille***) register for the current year. In any case, among the members of the parishes of St Jean and St Philibert, to which apparently the pupils belonged, there could be a number of persons bearing the same name. Moreover, not all the names were listed in the register.

When the profession of the father of a pupil is indicated on the list, it can be seen that the tax paid by some was relatively high, 22 livres, for example, but this was not the case for everyone.

In the final resort, we have to rely on the findings of the writing masters, namely, that:

- in the senior class, the 18 names singled out represent 26.8% of the 67 families listed;
- in the junior class, the 15 names singled out represent 21.4% of the 70 families listed.

Amiens

The research done by Chisick on the Brothers' schools in Amiens in the 18th century uses lists of pupils for the years 1769 and 1779. As at Dijon, these were commissioned by the schoolmasters and writing masters, who had brought a lawsuit against the Brothers, maintaining "that the Ignoramus Brothers had the right to accept only indigent pupils, while the Brothers argued that they were not bound by any such constraints" (Chisick, 1980-81, 40). Finally, a decision of the Paris parlement, dated March 18th 1767, recognised "the right of the Brothers to accept both «the poor and the artisans» into their schools. It was stipulated, however, that the families of their pupils had to be incapable of paying tuition fees, and that they had to be in possession of a certificate to this effect delivered either by the parish priest or by an officer of the town council" (*id.*, 42).

The tables on the next page were drawn up by Chisick on the basis of the above mentioned lists and according to a classification of social groups which, he admits, has its limitations.

Socio-professional background of the pupils of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Amiens

		1769	1779
Group 1	Nobility	*	*
	Liberal professions	1	*
	High office	*	*
	Low office	6	3
	Army officers	*	*
	Shopkeepers, merchants, manufacturers	12	*
	Farmers/manual labourers	1	1
	Bourgeois/independent means	*	*
	Total	**20**	**4**
		(8.55%)	**(3.54%)**
Group 2	Master craftsmen	30	1
	Craftsmen (self-employed)	25	30
	Inn keepers	10	8
	Uncommissioned officers	1	*
	Shopkeepers (food)	21	8
	Millers	3	1
	Gardeners/market gardeners	3	3
	Schoolmasters	*	*
	Master serge-makers	24	*
	Total	**117**	**51**
		(50.0%)	**(41.13%)**
Group 3	Craftsmen (apprentices)	1	*
	Craftsmen (unskilled)	13	10
	Serge-makers	4	6
	Serge-makers (unskilled)	40	18
	Clerks	11	6
	Domestic servants	9	4
	Journeymen/manual workers	2	5
	Porters/boatmen	7	2
	Others	10	7
	Total	**97**	**58**
		(41,45%)	**(51.33%)**
	Total (3 groups)	**234**	**113**
	Not known	7	141
	Grand total	**241**	**254**

(Table: Chisick, 1980-81, 82)

A few words of explanation about the table:

♦ The word "craftsman" (French *artisan*) comes back a number of times. It seems there existed a distinction between "master craftsmen" who employed a number of apprentices (French *compagnons*) or workers, and craftsmen who worked alone or with their wife.

♦ The word "serge-maker" (French *saiteur*) refers to those who made woollen cloth. A "master serge-maker" employed workers and worked on his own account. The term "serge-maker" was applied to those who, either alone or with others, worked for a manufacturer who provided the raw material and distributed the finished goods.

Troyes

In the town archives of Troyes, there are lists of Brothers' pupils drawn up at a time when the town was considering asking for a contribution from families sufficiently well-off to pay.

On the main list, information regarding each pupil is given in the following order: name of his parish, Christian name and surname, Christian name of his father, his father's profession. A column on the right with the heading "contributing" sometimes contained the figure **3** or **6**. Using the professional classification tables included above, we can work out how many parents in each of the three groups were considered capable of paying **3** or **6** livres.

Groups	Professional & social status	Number	Paying 3 livres	Paying 6 livres
1.	Officers (low rank)	2	1	1
	Merchants	8	7	*
2.	Craftsmen	53	22	5
	Shopkeepers (food)	15	10	5
	Vinegrowers	2	*	*
	Manufacturers	49	13	2
3.	Apprentice craftsmen	19	5	*
	Textile workers	89	1	*
	Clerks	6	*	*
	Domestic servants	2	*	*
	Journeymen or manual workers	31	4	*
	Widows	4	*	*
	Guardians of orphans	5	*	*
	Not certain	27	*	*

This classification is at times a little arbitrary. For example, all merchants have been placed in group 1 and all "manufacturers" (hosiers, cloth manufacturers, weavers, spinners) in group 2. Be that as it may, it gives some idea of the professional and social status of the parents of a relatively large number of pupils. It likewise makes it possible to establish that those who were considered capable of "contributing" **3 livres** represented 41.1% of groups 1 and 2, and 5.1% of group 3. Parents capable of paying **6 livres** made up 8.5% of groups 1 and 2.

Rheims

In October 1776, the town authorities of Rheims had a list drawn up of the pupils attending the 3 Brothers' schools — St Étienne, St Jacques and St Timothée. This was done by the "tax officer to establish which of them are able not to attend a gratuitous school" (Rheims town archives, box 692, file 18b, N° 87).

The lists provide information making it possible to identify pupils and parents. By referring to the **Capitation*** Register, it is possible to discover the profession of the pupil's father (or of the person who has charge of him), as well as the amount he had to pay annually in tax.

Of these lists, those referring to the two classes of the St Étienne school are particularly interesting, because, next to certain names, there is a note, dated November 18th 1776, giving an indication of the financial situation of the family (poor, not well-off, etc.). Using this information, as well the information contained in the Capitation Register, we can classify the families of the singled-out pupils as shown in the table that follows.

		St Étienne School					
Tax Paid		**very poor**	**poor**	**not well-off**	**quite well-off**	**well-off**	**very well-off**
Junior class	under 5 livres	3	12	11	*	*	*
	5 livres	*	4	4	*	2	*
	over 5 livres	*	*	1	*	1	2
Senior class	under 5 livres	*	11	4	*	*	*
	5 livres	*	*	1	3	1	*
	over 5 livres	*	*	1	1	1	*

There seems to be a correlation between the amount of tax paid and the observation beside certain names:

- those who were called "poor" or "not well-off" paid less than 5 livres tax;

♦ those who paid 5 livres constituted an intermediate category between "not well-off" and "well-off";

♦ those who paid more than 5 livres were considered, without exception, to be "well-off" or even "very well-off".

Based on simple calculations, this classification is only indicative. However, by extending it to all the pupils of the three schools, Br Aroz was able to draw up a table in CL 36, 81, which can be summarised as follows:

	Situation in 1776					
TaxPaid	**St Étienne**		**St Jacques**		**St Timothée**	
	Sr. cl.	**Jr. cl.**	**Sr. cl.**	**Jr. cl.**	**Sr.cl.**	**Jr. cl.**
under 5 livres	29	43	41	61	39	53
5 livres	11	17	13	16	9	5
over 5 livres	9	33	20	19	8	10

Family circumstances of the Brothers' pupils

Information provided by the lists of pupils gives us some idea of the professional and social status and the financial situation of the pupils' fathers and, in some cases, of other persons responsible for these children.

Social and professional status

The table drawn up for the schools of Amiens is based solely on the social and professional status of the pupils' parents. According to this classification, in 1769, almost 60% of these parents belonged to the first two groups, and just over 40% to the third group. This table highlights in particular the fact that the majority of parents concerned were self-employed, while those belonging to group three depended on others for their employment.

A classification drawn up on the same basis for the schools of Troyes (with the approximations that were indicated) seems to indicate that the situation here was the opposite of the one in Amiens: 41.3% of the fathers or guardians of the 312 pupils belonged to groups 1 and 2, and 58.7% to group 3.

In Rheims, thanks to the information provided by the Capitation Register, parents of pupils can be assigned a social and professional category on the basis of the taxes they paid. It seems that

those who paid more than 5 livres exercised professions classified as belonging to group 2, and, in the case of "manufacturers", to group 1 of the Amiens table. Among those who paid 5 lives we find almost exclusively apparently "self-employed" craftsmen. Those who paid less than 5 livres were above all persons working with wool (carders, spinners, weavers), small craftsmen, or workers or manual labourers working for master craftsmen. These are allocated to group 3 in the Amiens table. We can summarise this information as a percentage by the following table:

Tax Paid	St Étienne	St Jacques	St Timothée
under 5 livres	51.5%	60.0%	74.2%
5 livres and more	48.5%	40.0%	25.8%

On the basis of the social and professional status of the parents, it seems clear that the Brothers normally accepted into their schools a high proportion of children whose parents worked for craftsmen or in the manufacture of textiles. On the other hand, there was also a fairly high proportion of parents who were self-employed craftsmen, shopkeepers or "manufacturers". As for the higher categories of group 1, they included a few parents who were almost exclusively "manufacturers" or "shopkeepers" and who, most often, manufactured or sold textile products.

Financial situation

Although the financial situation of parents is not unconnected with their social and professional status, it does not reflect it exactly. This was particularly true at the time which concerns us, and is highlighted by the information we have about the pupils of Troyes. We see that parents of pupils included in group 2 or even 1, were not all considered capable of "contributing" even 3 livres.

The explanation lies in the fact that, from a financial point of view, there was no clear demarcation line between those who constituted group 2 of the classification table and those who constituted group 3. Family expenses, unforeseen situations or unexpected economic circumstances could cause a person, considered capable of earning his livelihood, to find himself suddenly in temporary or permanent financial difficulties. In the light of this, and on the basis of the information gathered by officials in Troyes, we need to distinguish, on the one hand, between the 20% and the 3.5% considered capable of paying 3 or 6 livres respectively, and, on the other hand, the other 76.5%.

These percentages reflect fairly closely those resulting from the calculations made by the writing masters themselves in Dijon. The same is true of Rheims, if, basing ourselves, like Chartier

et al. (1976), on the work of Br Aroz published in CL 36 (82), we consider as "poor" all parents required to pay 5 livres or less in tax. This approach gives us the following figures:

Tax Paid	**St Étienne**		**St Jacques**		**St Timothée**	
	1776	1779	1776	1779	1776	1779
5 livres and less	71.4%	85.2%	77.1%	80.1%	85.5%	88.8%
more than 5 livres	28.6%	12.8%	22.9%	19.9%	14.5%	11.2%

These figures reflect local situations. They show, however, and this is confirmed by those who conducted the enquiries, that the number of pupils who, for financial reasons, should not have attended the Brothers' schools, amounted to about 25%. This figure could be considerably lower, as in the St Timothée school in Rheims.

Conclusion

The material examined in this supplement shows that, because of the family background of the pupils, the social structure of all Brothers' schools was more or less similar.

There were children whose parents worked for others. These parents, and this was the case everywhere, were journeymen or porters, hired when they were needed; or manual workers or apprentices, working for master craftsmen. In towns, where the main source of work was the textile industry, a great many parents who worked for manufacturers or merchants sent their children to the Brothers' schools.

From the financial point of view, the situation of all these parents was precarious, in the sense that their survival depended almost entirely on their being able to work. For example, at the end of the *Ancien Régime*, a daily salary of 20 sols enabled a person, normally speaking, to buy 10 livres (about 5 kg) of bread, and this was enough to feed a fairly large family. However, there were days each week when there was no work. On an average this occurred twice a week, counting Sundays and feastdays. This fine balance could easily be upset by a sudden rise in prices, unemployment or illness, and in this case, parents were no longer able to provide for the needs of their families. Even if these families were not classified as being permanently "poor", they could very easily join that category. In any case, their living conditions were certainly those of poor people.

The higher salaries were above the average, the better the situation. The lower they sank below it, the more precarious it became. Many people with work still needed to be helped regularly.

Some of the parents who sent their children to the Brothers' schools were self-employed. At the bottom of the scale, there were craftsmen who needed few skills and cheap tools, such as cobblers. Higher up the scale, there were more highly skilled craftsmen (builders, ironworkers, carpenters) and merchants, such as bakers, who sold the goods they produced. At the top of the scale came the master craftsmen who employed several workers.

At the bottom of the scale, these self-employed parents whose livelihood depended on their work were still in a very precarious financial situation. Higher up the scale, the situation improved in the measure that profits from work made it possible to save enough money to cope with all but exceptional emergencies. In rare cases, there were pupils in Brothers' schools whose parents were managers of industrial enterprises (often related to textile production) or involved in commerce. Such parents were really well-off.

The proportion of parents in one or other of the two main groups just described depended on the town concerned, and on particular schools in a town. There was normally a higher proportion of parents from the first group than from the second.

Overall, the percentage of parents who found themselves habitually in a precarious financial situation, and of those whose situation could easily become similar, was considerably higher than the percentage of those whose situation was not threatened by circumstances. As we saw earlier, even those opposed to the Brothers normally calculated that 75% of the school population belonged to the first group.

By comparison with the early years of the Institute, did the percentage of "children of the artisans and the poor" in the Brothers' schools become lower in the course of the 18th century? It is difficult to say. Even if this were the case, the figures we have given tend to show that, almost a century after the founding of the first "Christian Schools", there was no sign of a reversal in tendency.

Part Three

Consolidation (1777–1790)

Part Three is divided into four chapters

Chapter Seven

The Generalate of Brother Agathon (1777–1787)

Introduction

The General Chapter of 1777 accepted the resignation of Brother Florence and elected Brother Agathon in his place. It made a great number of decisions which the new Superior communicated to the Brothers.

On the basis of guidelines laid down by the Chapter, Brother Agathon was able to give fresh impetus to the Brothers as a whole. He was likewise able to solve some of the problems which had hampered the growth of the Institute in the preceding period.

The General Chapter of 1777

Convoked by Brother Florence, the General Chapter opened on August 3rd 1777 in Rheims and ended on August 18th.

Elections

Brother Florence offered his resignation to the assembly on August 10th, explaining his decision as follows: "The experience of more than ten years as Superior General has proved to me so many times and in such a striking manner that I am absolutely incapable of exercising this function. As a consequence, therefore, and for the good of the Institute and for my own in particular, I feel in conscience obliged to offer you my resignation" (RA ED 227 — Reg. B: General Chapters 1777–1873, 17). After some deliberation, the capitulants accepted the resignation.

The same day, Brother Agathon (Joseph Gonlieu), already chosen as president of the assembly in the preceding deliberations, was elected Superior General. He was present at the Chapter in the capacity of "senior Brother" of the western province. He was 46 at the time. Not long before, he had been called to Paris, where the Superior General had been

living since 1771 in rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs. Before that, Brother Agathon had proved his competence in particular as a teacher of "hydrography" at Vannes, and as the Director of the house in Angers. He had organised the transfer of the latter community to the La Rossignolerie property.

Next, the Chapter proceeded to elect new Assistants to replace Brothers Anaclet and Exupère. The former had said from the outset of the Chapter that he would refuse another term, and the second was almost 70 years old. From the several Brothers eligible, the Chapter chose Brother Paschal (Louis François Demarquet), born in October 1728, and Brother Sylvestre (Barthélemy Thévenin), born in 1729.

There was now too much work for only two Assistants. Brother Florence had already taken the matter in hand by asking the Holy See for permission to increase their number. In a rescript (**rescrit***) dated July 11th 1777, Pope Pius VI gave the General Chapter permission to elect four Assistants. The Superior General, however, thought that three would be enough, that is, the same number as there were provinces in the Institute. In the election of the third Assistant, the majority of votes went to Brother Zachée (Jean Philippe Legrand), born in January 1720.

The three new Assistants all came from the southern province. At the time of their election, they were respectively Directors of houses in Cahors, Arles and Montpellier. Of the three, only Brother Sylvestre originally came from this part of the Institute.

The work of the Chapter

By comparison with previous General Chapters, the one held in 1777 was quite remarkable for the amount of work it accomplished. Its deliberations resulted in 91 decisions which were subsequently published in the form of a printed booklet. Some of these decisions confirmed those of previous Chapters. The questions touched on by these decisions enable us to see what were the main preoccupations of the capitulants.

- ♦ Articles I–XVI had to do with the admission and formation of young Brothers.
- ♦ Articles XVII–XXV dealt with the financial provisions for the formation of the young Brothers, and decent living conditions for old and infirm Brothers.
- ♦ Articles XXVI–LXX were concerned more specifically with Brother Directors.
- ♦ Articles LXXI–LXXXII confirmed some existing directives and promulgated various others.
- ♦ In articles LXXXIII–LXXXVII the decision to create three provinces was confirmed.

♦ The final articles LXXXVIII–XCII dealt with Chapters. In particular, they included a decision to hold provincial Chapters every ten years in the interval between General Chapters, as well as the date of the next General Chapter.

As a final measure, it was decided that copies of the Rule of Government approved by the Chapter would be sent to novitiates and Brothers would study it before making their religious profession. Also "the rules of Directors and sub-Directors of houses and those of Directors of novices would be printed and sent to all the houses of the Society". It was decided also that the Brother Superior would write "a circular letter addressed to all the Brothers of the Society, containing all the points mentioned in the memoranda and letters which were sent to the General Chapter and read at various sessions, as well as other matters raised at the Chapter which it was not possible to include in the above mentioned articles".

Implementation of the decisions of the Chapter

In accordance with the directives given by the General Chapter, Brother Agathon sent the following documents to the various houses:

♦ the decisions of the Chapter and the circular letter mentioned earlier,

♦ the Rule of Government and the rules of Brother Directors of houses and novitiates.

He called provincial chapters. For example, in a circular to the Brothers of the southern province, dated February 6th 1784, he announced "that there will be a provincial chapter this year in Avignon during the Whitsun holidays: 1° in order to fulfil the directive contained in article 89 of the last General Chapter; 2° to hear what your zeal will prompt you to suggest for the good discipline of the Institute" (RA CD 260-1/8).

As soon as an opportunity presented itself, he withdrew Brothers from schools to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to studies.

The impetus given to the Institute by Brother Agathon

The means used

Wishing to maintain contact with the Brothers, the new Superior undertook **to visit the houses** of the Institute. In 1779, he visited those in the West and centre, and in 1782, those of the East and South (cf. Battersby, 1960, 94, 96).

While we have no **circulars** written by the Superior Generals previous to Brother Agathon, in the latter's case, we are fortunate enough to have some, and they have the added advantage of being printed. Some of these circulars are concerned especially with admission to vows. Others are devoted to various topics for reflection. Three of them, entitled *Instructive Letter*, go more deeply into certain matters. We shall look at them more closely in a special supplement.

Although administrative **letters** written by Brother Agathon are relatively numerous, few personal letters sent to Brothers remain. It is difficult, therefore, to assess the extent of his personal correspondence with the Brothers, who were supposed to write regularly to him.

Another concern of Brother Agathon was to pass on to the Brothers the **heritage of the Founder** of the Institute. He tried to comply with the instructions of the Chapter to publish a new edition of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, but in spite of all his efforts, he failed to do so. He undertook also to produce a new edition of the *Collection*. With the intention of giving the work "more force and clarity", he made some excessively radical changes in it. He was aware of what he was doing, since he altered the title to read *Treatise on the Obligations of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (cf. RA xBN 701-1/24).

Like Brother Florence, he instructed the Brothers to look for any material relating to the Founder which could serve to promote his canonisation. The new *Lives*, however, written by Garreau (1760) and De Montis (1785), added little to what was already known. Brother Agathon insisted also that objects which had belonged to the Founder should be preserved and, by a decision dated June 4th 1783, forbade the Brothers to give any of them away or to let any be taken without his permission (cf. Rigault II, 469).

His major concerns

He was particularly concerned about **admission to the novitiate and to vows**.

From the period 1770–1774 onwards, there was an increase in the number of entries to the various novitiates. With a few fluctuations, figures remained constant during the ten-year period between 1777 and 1787. However, the number of those who left or were sent away remained high. In 1786, the Assistant Brother Paschal produced a document in which he tried to analyse the reasons for this.

Regarding admission to vows, Brother Agathon recommended great caution. We still have several of the circulars he sent to the communities with the lists of Brothers, drawn

up by each province, requesting to pronounce or renew vows. He insisted in these circulars on the duty of the professed Brothers to give their opinion about the Brothers requesting to be admitted to vows. He drew attention also to the qualities that should be present, and to the defects which could justify refusing a candidate admission to vows. The circular of March 1782, for example, gives a telling description of a Brother who, it seems, changed with the mood of the times.

His thinking on this matter is probably best expressed in his circular of February 1778. Wishing to stress the importance of the opinion of the professed Brothers, he wrote to them as follows: "The Brothers who exemplify most perfectly the spirit of their state will always be its greatest support, honour and glory. Our attitude must therefore be to associate with us by the bonds of vows only those whom we recognise to be worthy of our approbation by the qualities of their heart and mind, and by their talents for the employment they will have to exercise, or, at least, by their aptitude to acquire them". He then added: "You know, my very dear Brothers, how much harm a candidate, with ingrained bad habits, lacking in regularity and of a disagreeable nature, can cause in a community".

There were two pitfalls to be avoided: "false zeal and soft indulgence". Everything had to be taken into account. The Superior went on to make the following recommendation: "Make sure that in the notes you send you do not state as facts and certain truths what are simply your doubts, imaginings, conjectures, suspicions and impressions" (RA CD 260-1/9). The Superior stressed just as strongly the complete freedom the Brothers must have when requesting admission to vows.

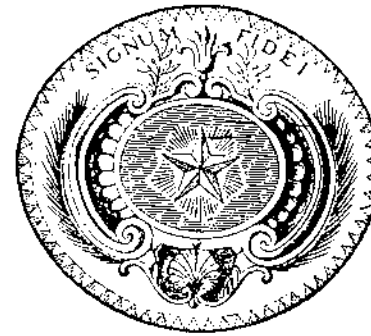
Another point Brother Agathon regularly returned to in his circulars was the **role of the Brother Directors**.

The circular of October 1777, which was sent with the results of the General Chapter, began by reminding the Brother Directors of their duties towards the Brothers of their communities. It called upon them to be "above all inspired by tender, affectionate and attentive charity", and to support "by their presence the community exercises". It reminded them that "they are the soul of regularity [which] has no vigour unless they give it life by the practice of all the religious virtues . . . words have little effect if they are not backed up by example". It told the Brother Directors also that "everything that has to do with divine worship must be the object of your zeal . . . and however numerous our prayers may be, they should always remain fervent and respectful". It reminded them to ensure that silence was observed, and to demonstrate both their community spirit and poverty, by not allowing themselves things they would refuse the other Brothers (cf. RA CD 255-1/21).

Writing to the Brothers of the southern province after the provincial chapter of 1784, the Superior General stressed their role regarding the young Brothers, as well as the importance of their own presence at exercises for the formation of the other Brothers.

He did not fail to mention also the **duties of the Brothers**.

The circular dated October 19th 1777 and sent after the General Chapter outlines the principal qualities the Brothers should try to develop, mentioning "love for their Brothers, simplicity in their obedience, and fervour of their spirit". It is worth quoting a particularly fine passage about fraternal charity.



Reproduction (actual size) of the seal printed on the first page of a collection of Br Agathon's circulars, 1787.

> "Fraternal charity is the basis of this peace and of this union of mind and hearts, which was such an admirable characteristic of Christians from the very beginning of Christianity. It is this charity which distinguishes the disciples of the Saviour, and which is the source of all kinds of blessings in a community. It is this mutual love which makes possible the accomplishment of the law of Jesus Christ, by bearing with the defects, imperfections and weaknesses which are an inseparable part of human nature. When charity is well established in a heart, it makes a person affable, gentle and obliging; it inspires honourable, affectionate and sincere behaviour; it is communicative, always ready to help others in every way and on every possible occasion. What a fine sight it is, and how edifying, to see a Brother eager to offer his fellow Brothers the means to serve the Institute and the public well, and who perfects his own knowledge of the material he takes pleasure in communicating to them, considering it is his duty to render them all the services he can, and which they have a right to expect of him! Only charity can inspire such noble sentiments and make a person find his own happiness in that of others. There is no purer pleasure for a noble soul than to be obliging for no other motive than the general or personal good of his Brothers, which is always preferred to one's own. Charity does not put on disdainful, haughty or conceited airs; it is ingenious, flexible and natural; it insinuates itself into a person's mind, makes friends, and makes itself

all to all. It is as far removed from indifference and scorn, as it is from particular bonds and friendships, which the saints regard as a source of division, intrigue, grumbling and disorders in a community" (RA CC 200-2/11).

Some outstanding problems are settled

A number of problems which had not been solved during the generalate of Brother Florence were settled after Brother Agathon became Superior General.

The question of Letters Patent

A plan to transfer the Angers community to another house served as the point of departure for a process which eventually led to the legal recognition of the Institute within the jurisdiction of the **Parlement of Paris**.

The Brothers' plan to move from their house in the Lesvière district of Angers involved the purchase of the La Rossignolerie property made available to them by the local bishop. This transaction could not go ahead until the Brothers obtained Letters Patent from the King, and this they could not do without the approval of the town council.

In February 1771, when Brother Agathon was Director of the house in Angers, he asked the town council to include the Brothers "in the group of religious establishments which enjoyed freedom of the city or, at least, to give them a certificate of good conduct" (quoted in Rigault II, 480). The town council had considered it "its duty to oppose the granting of Letters Patent . . . as well as the acquisitions" the Brothers had in mind (quoted in Rigault II, 481). In the years that followed, the situation evolved. The town council gave its permission and in March 1773 a draft purchase agreement was drawn up. The contract was approved when the new King Louis XVI granted Letters Patent in December 1774.

When the Parlement of Paris was asked to register the Letters Patent it refused, saying that the Letters Patent of 1724 and the Bull of Approbation were not valid within its jurisdiction, and that, as a consequence, the Institute had no legal existence in it. In response to the demands of the Parlement, the Brothers drew up a document listing the houses in the provinces over which the Parlement had jurisdiction.

The document in question, drawn up in 1777, gives various details about the schools entrusted to the Brothers before this date in the provinces of Ile de France, Picardie, Champagne, Orléanais, Berry, Bourbonnais, Anjou and Lyonnais. The jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris extended to some other provinces also.

This document is kept in the National Archives in Paris (series L 963, n°1). Its title is *Mémoire historique et détaillée des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes dans le ressort du Parlement de Paris*. There is a copy of this document in RA CJ 502/5.

A new request for Letters Patent was drawn up. This time, the document did not refer simply to Angers but to all the 37 houses included in the list. (In Rigault II, 482, the number of establishments is given as 38. This number is probably explained by the fact that there were two communities at Versailles). The King signed these Letters Patent on March 10th 1777, but the Parlement of Paris registered them only on May 26th 1778. The process started by Brother Agathon when he was Director in Angers was successfully completed after he had become Superior General.

In the southern province, Letters Patent had been granted for specific houses in Montpellier, Marseilles and Mirepoix. As for all the other numerous houses within the jurisdiction of the **Parlement of Toulouse**, Letters Patent were obtained as a consequence of a problem concerning the house in Nîmes.

The problem was a longstanding one. The Brothers had bought a house from a certain Caumette. After some years, this person claimed that the house was his property, on the pretext that the Brothers had no legal existence within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Toulouse, and therefore could not acquire a house in it.

It was thought that the surest solution would be to obtain Letters Patent for the house in Nîmes. The process was set in motion and, in January 1778, was successfully concluded with the granting of "Letters Patent confirming the establishment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Toulouse" (text in RA CK 568/3). The Parlement of Toulouse registered the Letters Patent on March 11th 1778. By this document legal existence was granted to the 22 houses of the Brothers in Languedoc, the Comté de Foix and in a part of Guyenne.

Given the importance of the Parlements of Paris and Toulouse, what had been achieved in their jurisdiction would certainly help the Brothers to solve similar problems elsewhere. In a circular dated May 28th 1778, Brother Agathon invited the Brothers to thank God for

the acquisition of these two documents, and asked them to pray for the King and those who had contributed to the successful conclusion of the negotiations (cf. Rigault II, 485).

Transfer of the Centre of the Institute

Although Brother Florence left St Yon in 1771, a decision had not been taken regarding a permanent residence for the Superiors. The Maison du St Esprit in Paris was not suitable. Rheims was out of the question, and a return to Rouen was not a possibility. The reason for this was that, even though there was less tension now between the Brothers and the diocesan authorities, St Yon was considered to be too far away for the Brothers in the southern and eastern provinces.

Under Brother Florence, negotiations to take charge of a school in Melun had opened new possibilities. With a view to setting up the new school in a former Ursuline convent, the Superior and the Assistants signed a lease on August 18th 1774 with Cardinal de Luynes, Archbishop of the diocese of Sens, to which Melun belonged.

The aim of the Superiors in acquiring the house was to establish the Centre of the Institute there. This required the King's authorisation. This was granted in November 1775, but was accepted by the Parlement of Paris only on June 3rd 1778, following the registration of the Letters Patent relating to the Brothers' establishments within the jurisdiction of this parlement. On the following July 6th, the Institute became the owner of the house.

Towards the end of 1780, after some renovations, the Superiors took up residence in what was to be known as the Maison du Saint Enfant Jesus. Brothers went there to complete their formation, and old Brothers such as Brother Exupère, to end their lives. There is no evidence to suggest that a novitiate was ever opened in this house.

Conclusion

By 1787, after ten years as Superior General, Brother Agathon had accomplished a number of important tasks. In particular, he had strengthened the administration of the Institute which no longer had to fight constantly for the right to exist.

By his directives to the Brothers and especially to the Brother Directors, he had tried to consolidate the Institute. How did the Brothers react to his efforts to give the Institute a

new impetus? It is difficult to assess. More research is needed if we are to answer this question with any degree of certainty.

There is some indication, however, that personal relations among the Brothers were characterised by the kind of fraternal charity so strongly recommended by Brother Agathon. Correspondence between Brothers is marked by great cordiality and even familiarity. For example, there is the letter written on October 10th 1785 by Brother Gontran, Director of Montauban, to Brother Jean François of Rodez. It begins as follows: "Are you dead? Are you alive? I really do not know. Since I visited you, I have had no dear news from you. Hasten to send me some so that I can pass it on to your dear parents". The writer then goes on to speak of the changes due to take place in the communities of the southern province, including his own (RA CG 406-1/5).

We can glean a certain amount of information about the Brothers from the obituaries of the period. We have also a notebook in which a certain Brother Vivien noted down, towards the end of his life, his impressions of a number of Brothers he had known "since the month of June 1773" (RA CG 406-1/18).

> Some names are followed by an O or an X. The Superiors, for example are assessed as follows: Agathon, Superior General XXX, Zachée XXX, Lothaire XXX, Philippe de Jésus O, Salomon, personal secretary of Brother Agathon, martyr, XXX.
>
> We read also:
>
> ♦ Br Léandre: very excellent Director and Good Shepherd.
>
> ♦ Br Amand de Jésus: infinitely virtuous, an example for the Institute, died at Rheims at the height of the Revolution, at the age of 90.
>
> ♦ Br Anthère has great talents: writing, arithmetic, drawing, pastel work . . . and especially for instructing young people and for teaching others to teach without becoming emotional, without punishing. I was trained by him and, after God, I owe him a great deal.

Of the 140 Brothers mentioned, there are very few who are not praised. Even if we allow for a certain tendency which comes with age to embellish the past, we still have here a valuable source of information which deserves to be taken into account.

On the other hand, it is quite clear that the Institute continued to be weakened from the inside by the departure of many Brothers. In the supplement that follows this chapter, we shall consider this question in the light of a document drawn up by the Assistant Brother Paschal.

— Supplement Seven —
The Memoir of the Assistant Brother Paschal

On June 6th 1786, Brother Paschal, the first Assistant of Brother Agathon, sent a manuscript document to Brother Prudence, the Director of the St Yon novitiate. The document was entitled: *Some thoughts about the causes of the desertion of our young Brothers, and about the means of countering them, at least partially.*

This document is worth considering not only because of its contents, but also because it throws light on the question of the perseverance of the Brothers and on the views that prevailed in the Institute, at that time, regarding formation.

The contents of the document

Brother Paschal's text is 46 pages long (RA CF 359/22). It was transcribed during the 1988–1989 SIEL (International Lasallian Studies Session), which makes the text very much easier to read.

The general plan given by the author divides the work into two parts:

(1) A survey of vocations based on wrong motives.

(2) The kind of formation young Brothers should receive.

There is little point in reproducing the whole text. A summary based on the author's plan will be adequate for our purpose.

"Causes of the desertion" of the young Brothers

The first part has the following heading: "Defective vocations, the primary cause for the lack of stability among young Brothers".

There follows a series of examples of young men who enter the Institute "without a tested vocation". There are those who come:

1. to enjoy a better life, materially speaking, than in their "poor family";
2. to ensure they are provided for for the rest of their lives;
3. following the example of a relative or of some acquaintance;
4. to escape from manual labour, or simply on a whim;
5. with a taste for piety, but who believe they can achieve sanctity by simply putting on a habit;
6. with a true vocation, but who do not stay through a lack of support.

It is rare for candidates with such motives "to persevere, or, if they remain in the Institute, to become persons of any worth".

It is possible, of course, for defective vocations to be rectified, but, generally speaking, one can say that "you can tell a tree by its fruit". Consequently, "those who are approached by postulants requesting to join us, must take the precaution of testing their vocation and of trying to guess the true motives which inspire them". As for the master of novices, "he can never take too many measures to discover and to be certain of the reasons for which a young man enters the novitiate".

If masters of novices do not succeed in modifying the dispositions of the young people who come to them, the consequences are as follows:

1. Those who came to ensure they are provided for are initially happy and fit in with novitiate practices. Once they start teaching, however, they quickly lose the habits acquired. If they do not have the support of "an enlightened and charitable Director", the temptation to leave becomes stronger in the measure that their skills improve.

2. Those who come to escape "manual labour" are quickly disillusioned. When they begin teaching, they find difficulties in everything they do. Left to themselves by the Director, they wonder whether they should remain or not. If they think they can "make their fortune in the world", they leave. If they do not leave, they stay "without any taste for the value and the excellence of their state".

3. Those who enter without really knowing why, enjoy the activity. If they are not given guidance, their vocation, which is not one at all, but which could become one, does not last very long.

4. Unless prudent guidance is given to those who think that, once "they have embraced a state which consecrates them to life of piety", there is nothing else to do, they either quickly become "exhausted by excessive devotion", or, once they begin teaching, they become disillusioned by their experience or by the examples they see around them. They decide to leave "because they feel called to another state".

5. Even those who enter with a true vocation "either do not persevere, or they never become what they ought to be, because in general, the education of the young Brothers is inadequate".

The means of countering the "causes of desertion"

The second part of the text begins with the question: "What remedy should be used to put right such a generalised deficiency?" The remedy suggested is twofold: "the instruction of the novices; support and the completion of this instruction by Brother Directors". The text that follows, however, refers only to the first point.

The opening remark of the author indicates the three aspects he intends to develop: "A religious is not born as such. He is born a man, becomes a Christian and finally becomes a religious".

The first aspect: the human formation of the novices

One must begin the instruction of the novices "by teaching them their duties as reasonable and free beings . . . by making them admire this incomprehensible union of body and soul. They need, therefore, to be given some clear notions about:

- what we call senses and sense organs;
- the "intellectual and affective faculties of the soul";
- what "is called attention, reflection, reasoning, consideration, motive, end, the intention one has when performing an action".

The next step is to draw the attention of the novices to the "Creator who gave us intelligence and made us capable of loving". "This great God knows the infinite extent of his perfections . . . and his love can have no other object. Since he has given us existence, he has done so through love of himself". We have to conclude from this that "God wishes us to use our intelligence to know and admire him, and to use our will to love and obey him".

The consequence of what God is in himself and of what he should be for us is the existence of "natural religion" and "natural laws" which are binding on all mankind. Before giving them "lessons in perfection", one needs to explain to the novices "what is meant by fairness, uprightness, natural honesty". They need to be given also "an understanding of the social virtues which are another aspect of natural law".

The principles of natural law, however, "seem greatly corrupted in primitive nations. These same principles are likewise violated in the best regulated countries". The corruption of the principles of the natural law gave rise to the need for a "positive or written law". This law, however, "was not able to give people the perfection they were capable of attaining by the fact of their creation, but which their unfortunate origin no longer permitted them to". Mankind needed help, therefore, "which would make it possible for it to do what its weakness made impossible. Mankind was granted this help by the Incarnation".

These considerations regarding the first aspect of the formation of novices are followed by a number of **objections and answers** formulated by the author to show the soundness of what he had just said. He lays great stress especially on the purpose of this first aspect of formation, which is intended to make the novices understand their human nature more fully. In the section that follows, the author goes on to develop and clarify these ideas.

The second aspect: "the establishment of Jesus Christ in them"

Brother Paschal begins by linking this section with the previous one by recalling God's plan of salvation.

> "Since the fall of Adam, which was also the fall of the whole human race, mankind has been incapable of performing by itself any work deserving supernatural merit. To do so, it needs the help of grace, so called because it is given freely to mankind so that it can perform good works of a supernatural order".

But "Adam, and the whole human race in his person, had no sooner fallen from a most happy state into the greatest of misfortunes, than a saviour was promised him". The coming of the saviour was prepared. "As soon as he came on earth, he overturned the system of self-love, that is, of human passions". Thirty years of hidden life were "spent earning for us the precious grace which would enable us to open our eyes to the three concupiscences. . . . Whether we follow Jesus Christ in his public life . . . or consider him at the end of his time on earth, his practical and his theoretical lessons are an absolute condemnation of all human passions".

The author goes on to give some practical advice. "When this preliminary instruction has disposed the soul to feel and appreciate this divine doctrine, the young person should be given a copy of the *New Testament* and the *Imitation of Christ*. However, without this preliminary preparation, these books will remain incomprehensible".

The moment has now been reached when the novices can be given "a clear idea of the sanctity to which all Christians are called, and even more so, all persons who have been chosen and called to a more eminent form of perfection than that of the ordinary faithful". In the following passage, he explains this in greater detail.

> "They have to be taught that sanctity is something essentially interior, as St Paul teaches when he writes to his followers, telling them to walk in the spirit. By this he means, to further the work of Christian sanctity to which they are called, by perfecting more and more the interior man of the spirit and heart. Jesus Christ wants his true adorers to do so in spirit and truth. Life hidden with Jesus Christ in God consists in this. At baptism we were buried with Jesus Christ, that is, we were dead when we entered the baptismal font, but we came out of it alive with grace, just as Jesus Christ left the tomb alive and glorified. Our old man, that man of sin, was, as it were, drowned in the sacred waters of baptism. The passions of the world — pride, ambition, vanity, love of riches, love of worldly pleasures, love of luxury and fine ornaments, thirst for human glory and the esteem of others, in a word, self-love, the hallmark of the old man — all these passions are alien, or ought to be, for a Christian. And so St Paul encourages us to walk along a new path, one that resembles the life of our risen Lord. There is yet more. According to the same apostle, we have been grafted onto the body of Jesus Christ, that is to say, onto his

mystical body which is the Church. This comparison offers a good explanation of the true nature of the sanctity which we, as Christians, are obliged to embrace. A graft draws all its nourishment and its sap from the stock into which it has been incorporated. In the same way, all our own merits, when they are cut off from Christ, have no value for heaven. United by faith and charity to our adorable head, we produce the fruits of life, of eternal life. The graft lives only thanks to the life of the stock onto which it is grafted. A Christian, therefore, should live only with the life of Jesus Christ. Observing all due proportions, he should think, judge and become attached to the same things as Our Lord thought about, judged and became attached to.

"What solid subjects for meditation! They are also truths of such great necessity in practice, that the Holy Spirit teaches us in the letters of St Paul that the heavenly Father will recognise as his own only those who make themselves conformable to the image of his Son. For this reason, we must look upon poverty, riches, sufferings, pleasures, honours, high ranks, grandeur, humiliations, the question of salvation, eternity that awaits us, etc., in the same way as Jesus Christ regarded them; and we must judge them as he judged them and as the Gospel judges them. In this way, faith dissipates our darkness and corrects our errors. Man in his new creation, with his new way of seeing, feeling and acting, by his transfiguration in Jesus Christ, that is the art of sanctity, and there is no other. It is an art which makes the old man disappear and models the new man on the one who was created in justice, Jesus Christ. All the rest, all the practices, however numerous, if they do not tend to bring about this interior renewal of the mind and heart, are all illusory and completely useless".

Third aspect: formation in the spiritual life

The third section begins with the following observation: "Exterior practices are not lacking in the novitiate, but interior guidance may well be lacking". Given this, there follows an invitation to have recourse to two means in order to become interior:

♦ The use of the maxims from Scripture in the *Collection* to inspire sentiments of faith when performing the main actions of the day. There are also "other good motives which should not be neglected".

♦ The use of the examination of conscience, a practice recommended by St Ignatius Loyola, to help the novices to know themselves better.

Next, the author gives a series of warnings against various "**illusions and errors** into which those with little experience of the ways of salvation often fall", and a number of **maxims** "which should be strongly impressed upon the novices".

"1. We advance in piety to the extent we do violence to ourselves.

"2. We must be satisfied with the common and ordinary duties of the community, but we must acquit ourselves of them in a manner that is neither common nor ordinary.

"3. Never do things with more perfection than when you are alone and God alone witnesses what you do".

Brother Paschal concludes that novices trained in this way "would have solid principles, but, in order to be completely confirmed in their state, they would need to be supported and even perfected by the Brother Directors in the principles they acquired in the novitiate". The result of this would be "that 15 out of every 20 Brothers would remain in the Institute, and they would all be able to fulfil its duties to the satisfaction of the public".

What we learn from this document

This document contains information about the reasons why young Brothers left and about the formation they received in the time of Brother Agathon. It also raises a number of questions which it is not always possible to answer within the framework of this text.

Reasons for the departure of young Brothers

We mentioned earlier the high number of Brothers leaving by comparison with those entering the novitiate. The situation does not seem to have improved with the arrival of Brother Agathon at the head of the Institute. The problem was still acute when Brother Paschal wrote his document.

As the title indicates, the purpose of the document was to analyse the reasons why too many young Brothers were leaving. A number of reasons were found, the majority of which had to do with **the insufficiency or absence of motivation on the part of the candidates**.

When we read Brother Paschal's text, we are given quite an unflattering picture of many of the candidates. Those classified in 4 or even 5 of the 6 or 7 categories listed seem to have motives which have little to do with a religious vocation. What was the situation really like? We are probably justified in thinking that even the often poor living conditions of the Brothers could appear attractive to young people who were worse off. Others, attracted especially by the work of teaching and the social betterment that this represented, were most likely not put off initially by the demands of religious life, since as Christians, they were already used to many similar obligations.

Was the Institute too lax regarding admission of candidates? Brother Paschal implies that there was hardly any preliminary selection procedure when candidates applied to be admitted, and it was left to Directors of novices to provide the necessary discernment.

Brother Paschal stresses also another reason which he believes explains the lack of perseverance among the young Brothers: **the lack of support on the part of Brother Directors**, responsible for continuing the formation begun in the novitiate. In many cases, insufficient motivation could have been remedied if the Brother Director had known what to do. What was most serious was that young Brothers who could be said to have a "true vocation" were leaving because there was insufficient follow-up once they left the novitiate.

What was the situation really like? As has already been said, the large number of communities and, therefore, of Brother Directors, made it unlikely that they were all of the same high standard. Judging by the frequency with which they were reminded of their duties, in particular by the Superiors and the Chapters, it would seem that the deficiencies mentioned by Brother Paschal were real. Many of the Brother Directors were full of good will, but they allowed themselves to be taken over by the multiplicity of their activities. What we know of a certain number of them, in particular, of those who were responsible for large communities, to which, in theory, young Brothers were supposed to be sent, leads us to believe that many of them were men of high quality.

Formation of the novices

Brother Paschal's text contains a complete formation programme for novices, divided into three stages.

Stage One. Formation in Christian life and religious life must be based on a knowledge of what a person is in himself and in relation to God. The author begins, therefore, by considerations of a philosophical nature, speaking of anthropology and theodicy (natural theology). He uses terminology common at the time and based on current concepts. In this he was similar to many of his contemporaries who saw natural knowledge as a path leading to faith.

On what did Brother Paschal base his thinking? No doubt on his reading and on the studies he had pursued. It would be interesting to discover his sources. What was his expertise in this field? At times, it appears as if he has difficulties in understanding his material. He seems aware of this, since, on occasions, he feels the need to develop his ideas a second time. On the other hand, perhaps the concepts in use at the time were not sufficiently clear.

> There is a course in philosophy (in RA, classified by error as NC 130/2) which may be connected with this section of the text. Was this course written in order to enable the ideas developed by Brother Paschal to be applied? Did Brother Paschal himself write this course? Unfortunately, we are not in a position to answer either of these two questions.

One cannot help noticing the abstract character of the presentation of this part of the formation programme. The author is well aware of this, and that is why he repeats certain things. He is aware also of the novelty of what he is proposing. This can be seen from the answers he gives to the objections he raises.

Stage Two. Brother Paschal begins by insisting on the incomparable superiority of revealed religion over natural religion, and of the "perfect law of charity of Jesus Christ" over natural law. He has no doubt about this, even though he had to be conscious of the various schools of thought which were violently opposed to the Church at the time.

Next, "to consider the mainspring of things", as he says, he examines the question of grace. What he says is free of both laxism and rigorism. He follows the path traced out for him by the Founder of the Institute, at a time, it is true, when the debate on this whole question had lost much of its virulence.

There follows a general survey of salvation history which, as was common in those days, is considered more from a spiritual than from an exegetical point of view. One wonders whether Brother Paschal is following current usage or whether his thinking is original, when he goes on to advocate some preliminary instruction as an introduction to the reading of the *New Testament*, the *Imitation of Christ* and other books.

The points of spiritual doctrine which he then picks out and backs up by Gospel and, more generally, by New Testament references, tend initially to advocate withdrawal from the world. They also visualise sanctity in terms which distinguish between "the Christians in the world" and those who are called to higher levels of perfection, according to categories established at the time. The scriptural basis is particularly noticeable when Brother Paschal describes what he calls "the essence of sanctity" in the passage we quoted earlier, a text which was clearly the fruit of deep personal experience.

Does this text have its roots in the spiritual teachings of St John Baptist de La Salle? Not directly, probably. It does illustrate, however, the benefits of assiduous reading of the New Testament, so strongly recommended by the Founder.

Stage Three. The final paragraph of the previous section sets out the purpose of stage three and puts it into the context of the other two stages:

> "After these capital truths which can give the novices clear ideas about the nobility of man and the sanctity of the Christian, he [the novice master] should teach whatever concerns perfection, fidelity in little things, fidelity to obedience, to the rules, to acting through a spirit of faith, etc. They will understand these things, and feel the difference they make. They will commit themselves seriously to them and will draw from them notable benefits for their souls. And this is the third part of their education".

For Brother Paschal, it is at the end of a whole preliminary process that spiritual formation properly so-called should occur. The current tendency in novitiates was to concentrate solely on this latter type of formation.

Stage three limits itself to advocating two means that novices should use in order to "give an interior motivation" to what they do, and not restrict themselves to the "exterior practices of the novitiate".

The first of these means is to accomplish all actions with a "sentiment of faith". The author recalls that for each of these actions, the *Collection* suggests a "maxim taken from Scripture". He thinks, however, that this is not enough. In this paragraph, he bases himself on what was the practice "among the novices of a famous body that no longer exists" — an obvious allusion to the Company of Jesus.

With an explicit reference to St Ignatius, founder of the Jesuits, Brother Paschal proposes the second means, the practice of the examination of conscience. He sees in this practice a means to help novices to know themselves and, by doing so, to "reform themselves". He thinks that one way of introducing the novices to this practice is for the Director of novices to make an examination out loud during mental prayer, several times a week.

The third part of this text concerning the formation of the young Brothers is shorter and less dense than the others, but it ends with a presentation of the principles of spiritual direction by the refutation of "illusions and errors". This procedure may seem somewhat strange, but the considerations it gives rise to, reveal a solid experience of spiritual direction. We can judge for ourselves from his refutation N° 3:

> "Certain persons envisage sanctity and make it consist in many vocal prayers and in going to communion more frequently than the rest of the community.
>
> "Error. True devotion consists in accomplishing perfectly what is obligatory, unseen by anybody and without the applause of self-love.
>
> "We should sacrifice to God all thoughts of self-complacency, and strive to acquire perfect moderation, and evenness of temper in all situations. This is what God looks upon with pleasure in a soul which strives to become more and more united with him, through the destruction of the old man. Frequent prayers unaccompanied by victories over self, and frequent communions without an increase in fervour, have never made a soul perfect, nor consequently, have they ever led to sanctity".

These words reflect a reaction against the ever-present tendency to limit oneself to exterior practices which do not lead to a conversion of the heart.

Brother Paschal knew that, after a year away from the world, the novice was going to return to it, even if he kept away from it in his community. The remarks he makes about this problem reveal that what he feared above all was that the young Brother would find in his own community

examples which were contrary to what he had been taught, and a "lack of guidance on the part of the Director".

Could the formation advocated by Brother Paschal actually produce the fruits he attributed to it? It is difficult to say. In any case, the programme would have had to have been implemented to make any such assessment possible. The last instruction manuals produced at Maréville (see page 73) seem to have been inspired in part by this programme.

Conclusion

As a reaction to the steady haemorrhage of young Brothers, the Assistant Brother Paschal proposed a plan in which formation in the spiritual life was preceded by the formation of the person as a reasonable and free being. By advocating this approach, he was basing himself to a large extent on the concept of natural religion and morality, and in this he was in step with his times.

Brother Paschal's plan gave Jesus Christ a central position in the formation of the novices. The New Testament inspiration of the second part of the text is no doubt what is best about it.

In the final analysis, without the principles of spiritual direction which conclude the section, the third part would have been the weakest part of the text as a whole. It seems to reflect the deficiencies of a theology which no longer impinged on the everyday life of an age in the throes of a profound spiritual crisis, even if not everyone was affected by it.

Was this a suitable plan for the formation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools? Apart from one reference to the *Collection* regarding a specific point, the text makes no allusion to the teachings of the Founder of the Institute. And, even though the plan reveals an awareness of what awaits the novices at the end of their first year of probation, its aim does not seem to be to prepare religious who will be involved in the apostolic ministry of education. In conclusion, one could say that this interesting attempt to provide Brothers with a formation more suited to contemporary conditions was already somewhat out of touch with its times when it was written.

Chapter Eight

Gratuitous Schools

Introduction

During his generalate, Brother Agathon devoted as much energy to the work of the Brothers' schools as he did to the government of the Institute. These two aspects of his generalate were, of course, closely related, but for the sake of convenience we are treating them separately.

Although the number of gratuitous schools always remained much higher than that of boarding schools, it is still important to say something about both types of school during the period which concerns us, that is, 1777 to 1787.

In this chapter, we shall concern ourselves only with the gratuitous schools. Boarding schools will be dealt with in chapter nine.

For Brother Agathon and for the rest of the Institute, gratuitous schools remained a priority. For example, the contract signed at Langres on March 22nd 1787 regarding the opening of a new school stipulated expressly that "the children of the artisans and the poor . . . will always be admitted by preference" (quoted in Rigault II, 517).

The deliberate policy to open fewer establishments, and to obtain better living conditions for the teaching Brothers, demonstrates Brother Agathon's concern to ensure the quality of the Brothers' schools.

Decisions regarding new schools

In its decree N° XXII, the 1777 General Chapter decided "not to receive or accept new establishments for a period of at least ten years, except in cases where there was no choice". The reason given for this was to have "Brothers superfluous to needs so as to keep only good candidates". This made it possible also to replace sick or tired Brothers more easily, and to release Brothers for studies. Likewise the growth of certain establishments, especially boarding schools, made it necessary to increase the number of Brothers in existing schools.

During the inter-capitular period of 1777–1787, only six new schools were definitely entrusted to the Brothers. Of these, some were the result of earlier negotiations. During this period, a number of plans were shelved and various offers were refused. (For the location of the schools referred to in our text, see the map showing the dioceses of France on page 221.)

New schools

In the **southern province**:

♦ The town authorities of **Pont Saint Esprit** (diocese of Uzès) asked the Visitor, Brother Bénézet, to provide three Brothers. According to the "Mirepoix table", the school was opened in **1778**.

♦ At **Chalabre**, the Bishop of Mirepoix put pressure on the town authorities to call the Brothers. In all probability, the school opened in **1777**, after the General Chapter, since it is not mentioned in the document showing the distribution of houses among the three provinces.

♦ The bishop who had brought the Brothers to Castres was "abbot, count and spiritual and temporal lord" of **Aurillac** (Auvergne). As such, he invited the municipality of this town to entrust a school to the Brothers. It opened in October **1778** (cf. Lucard II, 498).

In the **eastern province**:

To the houses mentioned in the decrees of the 1777 Chapter, three new ones were added:

♦ Two Brothers arrived in **Commercy** (Lorraine) in **1784** (cf. Rigault II, 515).

♦ In **Langres**, the Brothers took over two schools on November 1st **1786**. They were brought there by an archdeacon of the town, the brother of Denis Diderot, the Encyclopaedist.

♦ Also in **1786**, a school was opened in **Montdidier**, thanks to the Bishop of Amiens.

Projects in abeyance

It seems that a number of projects drawn up in the years 1777 to 1787 were not implemented by the end of this period.

We have two documents listing the houses the Brothers had in 1787.

♦ There is a document (see page 149) drawn up, it seems, by Brother Salomon sharing out the expenses of the Chapter among the different communities. In this document, there is no mention of the houses in Caen, Metz, and St Étienne du Mont, Paris.

♦ We have also a document showing the distribution of the houses of the Institute among the three provinces, drawn up by the Chapter of 1787. However, there are discrepancies between the minutes of the deliberations contained in the Register of the Chapters from 1777 to 1783, and the circular in which the decrees of the Chapter were published. For example, St Étienne du Mont, Paris, is mentioned in the first and not in the second. In one, three new houses are mentioned: in the other, six are mentioned. Neither document mentions Caen and Metz. These were certainly closed by then.

Regarding the new houses listed as existing in **Castelnaudary** (diocese of Carcassonne), **Honfleur** (diocese of Lisieux), **Tours, Blois, Lavaur** (diocese of Castres) and **Nevers**, they were not open at the time of the General Chapter, since they are not mentioned in connection with the sharing out of the Chapter expenses. They were included, however, in the document giving the distribution of houses among the three provinces, presumably because a successful conclusion of current negotiations was expected.

The refusal of certain offers

In 1780, a "consul" of the town of **Perpignan** (Roussillon) contacted Brother Agathon and offered to replace a teacher, who had just died, by some Brothers. As the conditions laid down by the Institute could not be met, the offer was refused (cf. Lucard II, 489).

In the same way, a request from the leading citizens of **Mazan** (Comtat Venaissin) could not be accepted. When the Brother Superior replied to their request on August 29th 1783, he gave the following reason: "We are no longer in the same position as our older Brothers were, whose primary aim was the spread of the Institute. The Institute has grown to such an extent that we can hardly provide the number of Brothers required for the houses we already have" (quoted in Rigault II, 500).

Improvement in the situation of the Brothers

The Brothers teaching in gratuitous schools were normally able to live on the salaries provided. The question of salaries was always raised when negotiations took place regarding

10. Tableau des Maisons pour la repartition des Frais du Chapitre général, premier tenu à Melun en 1787.

	Frais fixes par Maison Matrice	Frais par Maison Filiale	Total pour chaque Maison		Frais fixes par Maison Matrice	Frais par Maison Filiale	Total pour chaque Maison
Abbeville	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	Meaux	4		9 4
Agde	4		9 4	Mende	2		4 12
Aiguesmortes	3		6 18	Mezières	4		9 4
Aire	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	Milhaud	4		9 4
Alais	4		9 4	Mirepoix	3		6 18
Alby	4		9 4	Montdidier	3		6 18
Arlens	9 37 13 9	20 16	58 7 9	Montauban	10	41 17 6	23	64 17 6
Angers	40 167 10	92	259 10	Montélimart	3		6 18
Arvres	2		4 12	Montpellier	12	50 5	27 12	77 17
Arles	8 33 10	18 8	51 18	Montréal	3		6 18
Aurillac	4		9 4	Moulins	5		11 10
Auxonne	4		9 4	Morhange	3		6 18
Avignon	30 125 12 6	69	194 17 6	Nancy	12	50 5	27 12	77 17
Avranches	3		6 18	Nantes	11	46 1 3	25 6	71 7 3
Bayeaume	4		9 6	Nismes	10	41 17 6	23	64 17 6
Bellay	6		13 16	Noyon et le Ro.	3		6 18
Bellena	2		4 12	Noyon	4		9 4
Bordeaux St Eulalie	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	Orleans	12	50 5	27 12	77 17
Bon L Charbon	5		11 10	Orivat	2		4 12
Boulogne	9 37 13 9	20 16	58 7 9	Reims	24	100 10	55 4	155 14
Bourges	6		13 16	Rennes	5		11 10
Brest	5		11 10	Rithel	5		11 10
Calais	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	Rodez	4		9 4
Caors	8 33 10	18 8	51 18	Rome	5		11 10
Carcassonne	5		11 10	Rouen	11	46 1 3	25 6	71 7 3
Carentan	3		6 18	Saillans	2		4 12
Castres	5		11 10	Selas	6		13 16
Chalabre	3		6 18	Soissons	6		13 16
Charlemagne	6		13 16	Stavayer	3		6 18
Charleville	4		9 4	St Ambroise	3		6 18
Chartres	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	St Antoni	3		6 18
Chateaudun	4		9 4	St Brieuc	3		6 18
Cherbourg	2		4 12	St Denis	3		6 18
Commerci	3		6 18	St Dizier	3		6 18
Compiegne	3		6 18	St Esprit	3		6 18
Condrieu	3		6 18	St Germain	6		13 16
Coutances	2		4 12	St Malo	3		6 18
Crest	2		4 12	St Omer	17	71 3 9	39 2	110 5 9
Dameri	2		4 12	St Rich	5		11 10
Domfal	4		9 6	St Sulpice	14	58 12 6	32 6	90 16 6
Die	2		4 12	St Victor	14	58 12 6	32 6	90 16 6
Dieppe	9 37 13 9	20 16	58 7 9	St Yon	80	335	184	519
Dijon	8 33 10	18 8	51 18	St Madeleine	4			9 4
Dole	3		6 18	St Michel	4			9 4
Semur	6		13 16	Toulon	6			13 16
Fontainebleau	4		9 4	Troyes	11	46 1 3	25 6	71 7 3
Grenoble	6		13 16	Vesoul	4			9 4
Gravelline	3		6 18	Valence	5			11 10
Guise	4		9 4	Vannes	6			13 16
Lapoe	3		6 18	les Vans	2			4 12
Langres	6		13 16	Versailles N.D.	7	29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3
Laon	5		11 10	St. St. Louis	5			11 10
Lédury	7 29 6 3	16 2	45 8 3	Vires	2			4 12
Lisieux	8 33 10	18 8	51 18					1952 2 9
Luneville	5		11 10					2156 13 3
Marseille	64 268	147 4	415 4				Total	4108 16
Marseille Roquille	16 67	36 16	103 16					
Idem Prial	24 100 10	55 4	155 14					
Mauxeres	3		6 18					
Meaux	5		11 10					
			2136 13 3					

the establishment of the Brothers in a town. Contracts signed in the name of Brother Agathon by one or two delegates (the Assistant, Visitor or the Director of a neighbouring house) were always very precise on this point. The Brother Superior ensured subsequently that the conditions of the contract were respected.

These conditions are listed in a prospectus dated 1783 (RA CH 451/8). The residence of the Brothers must be "suited to community and religious life". Classrooms must be "well lit, well aired, adjoining and sufficiently large". A thousand livres will be needed for furnishing. The "allowance for food", if it is "wholly in cash", must not be less than 400 or 500 livres, depending on the town or on the price of food" (quoted in Rigault II, 500).

Despite the improvements made during the generalate of Brother Florence, the material conditions of the Brothers remained unsatisfactory in a certain number of old houses. With the help of his Assistants, Brother Agathon undertook to improve matters. This was a great relief for the Brother Directors who often were not in a good position to negotiate with the local authorities.

The results obtained

In most cases, the salaries of the Brothers were raised. For example:

- In 1783, the Brothers in St Germain en Laye obtained an increase of 300 livres from the parish priest.
- In 1781, Brother Agathon helped the Director of the house in Ste Menehould in his negotiations with the municipality to obtain a salary of 350 livres per Brother.

In other cases, the improvements had to do with the community and school premises. For example:

- In Grenoble, the house in the parish of St Laurent was rebuilt two years after its collapse in 1776.
- In Dole. On May 11th 1781, Brother Agathon wrote to the town authorities asking them to contribute to the cost of rebuilding the house in which the Brothers lived. The authorities offered 6,000 livres. The property was handed over to the authorities who paid for its reconstruction.

The situation of the Brothers could be improved also by the provision of a serving Brother for houses where there was none. Brother Florence, for example, had tried in vain to convince the municipality of Auxonne "to provide a salary for a fourth Brother to do temporal work" (RA CK 551-2/14). This request was no doubt granted in the time of Brother Agathon, since the number of Brothers in the community increased from three to four.

Some problems remained, however. For example:

♦ In Rennes, between 1777 and 1787, through a lack of resources, the number of classes dropped from eight to five, and a school had to be closed in the town (*Establishments of the Brothers in Brittany and Anjou before the Revolution*, 287).
♦ The school in the Recouvrance district of Brest did not reopen on October 1st 1787, because the intendant refused to authorise the building of a house for the Brothers teaching in this district, to which access was difficult.

The settlement of the principal problems still outstanding

In **Rheims**, the granting of Letters Patent valid within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris, and the shelving of the plan to set up the Superior's residence in this town, smoothed the way for finding a solution, with the help of the municipality, regarding the provision of sufficient funds for the Brothers.

On February 19th 1778, after consultation with his Assistants, Brother Agathon submitted a number of proposals to the municipality of Rheims (cf. Rigault II, 504). The town authorities continued to insist that the condition for a favourable decision was the closure of the boarding school opened by the Brothers. The Superiors were prepared to close the school, but they made their decision to do so depend on the size of the grant allocated to them by the vote of the municipality: the Brothers could not survive without the income from the boarding school.

The town authorities wished to rid themselves of all financial responsibilities, or at least, to limit their contribution. Consequently,

♦ They asked the King to allocate the revenue from property belonging to the Jesuits for the upkeep of the schools. The Minister Bertin rejected the request in 1780.
♦ They thought of imposing school fees on well-off families but, as we read in the minutes of their deliberations on November 2nd 1780, they gave up the idea (cf. Lucard II, 323).
♦ The town council asked the Archbishop to send away during the 1780 holidays "children whose father and mothers paid four deniers and more in poor tax **(taxe des pauvres*)**" (cf. CL 36, 89).

Finally, the council had to agree to the "temporary" maintenance of the boarding school. Various gifts made it possible to reopen three classes that had been closed since 1774, and in 1782, to open a fifth school in the parish of St Pierre le Vieil (cf. CL 36, 90; see the

facsimile of the contract drawn up between the parish and the Brothers on March 31st 1783: CL 36, 92-94).

In **Rouen**, difficulties with the Archbishop had complicated things when the Superiors applied to the town authorities for help to improve the living conditions of the Brothers (cf. Battersby, 1960, 80). Brother Florence and his Assistants had finally come to an agreement which guaranteed the annual payment by the General Hospital of 2,400 livres. In 1777, however, this sum was not enough to pay for the upkeep of eleven Brothers.

In 1783, Brother Agathon informed the administrators of the General Hospital that he was withdrawing the Brothers the following September unless a new agreement was drawn up regarding the salaries of the Brothers. The administrators of the General Hospital and the town magistrates appealed to the Parlement. On August 29th 1783, the Parlement ordered the Brothers to "maintain the schools as in the past" (quoted in Rigault II, 508).

The Superiors of the Institute decided to appeal against this judgment. They had a memorandum drawn up in support of their case and had it printed in 1785 (text in Lucard II, 453f). On August 5th of the same year, the Parlement of Rouen confirmed its judgment. Brother Agathon then decided to submit his case to the King's State Council in order to have the decision of the Parlement quashed. On December 15th 1785, a memorandum setting out the irregularity of the decision of the Parlement was submitted to the Minister Vergennes by Brother Philippe de Jésus, the Institute Procurator (cf. RA CG 406-1/5).

The matter was brought to a close on July 14th 1787 by a decision by which the King "in Council . . . has annulled and annuls the decision given by the court of Rouen in full session on August 29th 1783". The Brothers were obliged, however, to maintain their schools for a further three months. At the end of this period, if the General Hospital had still not provided the funds necessary for their upkeep, they could close down their schools. As it happened, in April 1788, the municipality finally agreed to contribute, and the Brothers continued to run their schools.

Solution of the most acute problem

In Boulogne, as in other places, the Brothers' community had insufficient resources. In addition, a proportion of the funds they received from the municipality came from an obligatory contribution from parents of pupils, which was collected at school.

The Superior General refused to accept this practice, and there followed a dispute with the municipality.

In an undated letter, most probably written at the beginning of April 1780, the Director, Brother Maur, informed the municipality that, if it did not pay the Brothers properly, only four of them, apart from the one teaching the commercial class, would remain.

Very much opposed to the reduction in the number of classes, "the town assembly" decided there was only one solution: to continue collecting the obligatory contribution from parents, but not in school. The Brother Director thought this was an acceptable solution.

In a letter sent from Caen and dated September 5th 1780, Brother Agathon informed Brother Maur that he refused to accept this decision because it also was opposed to gratuity. He gave his reasons, based on the opinion of a "doctor of the Sorbonne", in a subsequent letter sent from Angers and dated October 22nd.

The municipality then sent the Superior General a memorandum it wished, in its turn, to submit to the "doctors of the Sorbonne". Brother Agathon passed on the memorandum as requested, including with it his views on the matter. The theologians consulted decided in favour of Brother Agathon.

The document expressing their legal opinion was sent to Boulogne in May 1781. The municipal magistrates considered it for some time and, when they met on the following August 10th, they decided "the sum of 2,700 livres would henceforth be paid to the Brothers. The contribution of the municipality would be reduced if the Brothers received donations or bequests" (quoted in Rigault II, 497). This is what actually happened shortly afterwards.

The importance of the question raised by this whole business justifies the inclusion of a supplement on the defence of gratuity following this chapter.

Conclusion

One could say that never before had the Brothers found themselves in a situation so conducive to their work of christianisation and education:

- Their manner of perceiving and practising gratuity had been reaffirmed.
- In most cases, they could devote themselves to their work without having to worry about their material situation.

Did the work of the Brothers expand in the course of the ten years we have considered? Given the lack of other information regarding both 1777 and 1787, we can judge only

from the growth in the number of communities serving exclusively gratuitous schools, as well as from the number of Brothers in these communities. We have based our information for 1777 on the "Mirepoix table", and for 1787, on the document showing the distribution of the cost of the General Chapter.

Brothers in communities serving exclusively gratuitous schools

	1777					1787				
Number of Brothers	**2–3**	**4–6**	**7–9**	**10 &+**	**Total**	**2–3**	**4–6**	**7–9**	**10 &+**	**Total**
Communities	39	35	12	7	**93**	36	41	12	10	**99**
Brothers	102	166	88	90	**446**	96	205	85	120	**506**

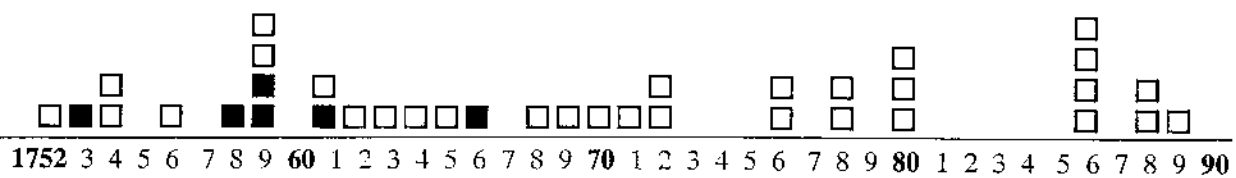
If we distinguish in both 1777 and 1787 between two groups, one made up of communities of between **two to six** Brothers, and the other of communities of **seven or more**, we can conclude that between 1777 and 1787:

- ♦ Communities with fewer than seven Brothers continued to be clearly in the majority.
- ♦ Communities of between two and six Brothers, as well as those with seven and more increased in number.

Not all Brothers taught. Despite this, we can note that:

- ♦ Overall, there was an increase in the number of Brothers per community.
- ♦ The total number of Brothers increased by 60, and six new communities were founded. These were positive if not outstanding results.

To give a complete picture, it would have been necessary, obviously, to take into account Brothers teaching in gratuitous schools, who were members of a community responsible also for a boarding school.



Houses opened between 1752 and 1790; those which were closed before 1790 are indicated in black (diagram based on Gil, 1994, 88.)

— Supplement Eight —
The Defence of Gratuity

In preceding chapters we have seen that town authorities were often unwilling to contribute towards the upkeep of the Brothers. Some municipalities, as a way of lightening the financial burden for themselves, considered demanding a contribution from parents they judged "well-off" and, in some cases, they actually did so. This challenged a principle of fundamental importance for the Institute, and the Superiors manifested their opposition unequivocally.

A particularly clear case of this occurred in Boulogne, where a dispute arose between the "Régime" of the Institute (the Superior General and the Assistants) and the municipality. It offered the Superiors an opportunity to state their position regarding gratuity.

The overall problem

Cause of the difficulties

A fair amount has already been said about the difficult situation of many Brothers' communities in the 18th century, and the efforts of the Superiors to improve it. Whatever the nature of these difficulties, no Brother ever agreed to waive the obligation to teach gratuitously in order to overcome them.

One reason for this was that, while the Brothers suffered from the changes and the unpredictable nature of the economic situation (see page 107), they did so in the knowledge that many children in their schools suffered from them much more than they did (see page 122). The Brothers did not want to prevent children from coming to their schools for financial reasons.

In practice, however, the problems that arose in connection with gratuitous teaching did not involve these pupils. Other teachers and municipalities did not challenge the right of the Brothers to teach the poor, but they wanted to force them to restrict the intake of their schools to this type of pupil. In certain cases, the Brothers were allowed to accept only pupils who had written permission from the parish priest or the town authorities.

The reason why Brothers were attacked because of gratuity, was because they accepted into their schools children from families judged capable of paying for the teaching given to their children. The Brothers considered that it was not their business to discover which of their pupils were poor and which were not. In any case, they were not in a position to judge the real

circumstances of families. In cases where children were clearly from "well-off" families, as long as their parents accepted that they had to mix with poorer children, the Brothers did not refuse them entry, on condition, as they said, they did not take the place of less well-off children.

Problems arose, therefore, when other teachers attacked the Brothers to force them to refuse entry to children capable of paying for their teaching; or when municipalities, to reduce their contribution to the upkeep of the Brothers, wished to exclude from their schools the children of quite well-off families, or to make them contribute to the cost of their children's education.

The principle is challenged

The Brothers were committed to a principle which obliged them to teach all their pupils free of charge, whatever the financial situation of their families. Despite all the difficulties this could cause them, they continued to defend this principle. In particular, they opposed any attempt to exact payment from families considered capable of doing so.

When the dispute arose in Boulogne in 1780, and when already a similar problem existed elsewhere, Brother Agathon consulted a "doctor of the Sorbonne . . . very well informed about the Institute" (RA CF 362/14) to obtain support for the position he was defending. The doctor in question is said to have been an ecclesiastic by the name of De La Baume.

It seems that De La Baume's answer was based essentially on the Bull of Approbation. He showed that gratuity was an essential point of **Rule** for the Brothers. The *Rule*, he said, "such as it is quoted in the Bull, which establishes the law, states: 5 — that the Brothers teach gratuitously and that they receive neither reward nor gifts from the pupils or their parents".

Regarding the **vow** "to teach the poor gratuitously", it confirms the *Rule*, even if the matter of this vow is more restricted, since it is "limited to the gratuitous instruction of the poor". The Brothers are therefore obliged by the *Rule* to teach both poor and rich gratuitously, the vow reinforcing this obligation where the instruction of the poor is concerned.

> This interpretation based on article 9 of the Bull raises a problem of its own. The text of the 1726 *Rule*, which brings the original *Rule* into line with the Bull, mentions in its turn a vow "to teach gratuitously" (CL 25, 68; chap. XVII, art. 1) and uses the same terms in article 8 of chapter XVIII, which defines the obligations of the different vows. And so, in the new *Rule*, the limitation of the obligation of the vow to teach the poor gratuitously no longer occurs

Asked to give his opinion about the tax imposed solely on the parents of "well-off pupils or of those thought to be so", De La Baume stated that: "No doubt, by accepting this practice, the Brothers would not break their vow to teach gratuitously . . . but they would break an important

law, a constitutive law of the Institute which, by imposing on them the obligation of teaching gratuitously, especially the poor, imposes on them also that of teaching the rich gratuitously". Whatever the value of this interpretation may be, its author nonetheless reaffirmed very clearly the principle according to which the obligation for the Brothers to teach gratuitously applied to all their pupils. The traditional position of the Institute on this matter was confirmed (see Bédel, 1996, 140).

Dispute with the municipality of Boulogne

We have already described the various stages of this dispute. We limited ourselves, however, to giving the bare facts so that we could go into more detail here regarding the arguments used by both sides, and the position that was adopted at the close of the dispute.

It is possible to give a more detailed account of this dispute thanks to documents concerning this matter in the town archives of Boulogne sur Mer. Brother Agathon had included De La Baume's answer with his letter dated October 22nd 1780 (see page 153). The municipality responded by sending Brother Agathon a memorandum and asking him to pass it on to the doctors of the Sorbonne. The Superiors of the Institute integrated this memorandum in the document in which they developed their own arguments. They sent this document to the Sorbonne, without previously sending a copy to the municipality of Boulogne. When the town authorities subsequently received the answer from the Sorbonne together with Brother Agathon's text, they were not happy with the way the latter had acted. Boulogne is not mentioned by name, but there is no doubt that both documents refer to it.

A copy of these documents made by Brother Lucard can be found in RA CF 362. The present supplement is based on the copy of these documents.

The point of view of the municipality

The municipality tried to justify its reasons for imposing the payment, and to show that the method of collecting it could be accepted by the Brothers.

The municipality began by recalling that the revenue coming from the original endowments was already insufficient. The opening of new classes and the need, therefore, to support more Brothers had aggravated the situation. The town did not have enough funds to increase the annual sum allocated to the Brothers. This being so, the municipality envisaged imposing a contribution of six livres in two separate payments "for children whose parents could afford it, without the Brothers being in any way involved in its collection".

It was said, however, that the Brothers considered this way of funding their upkeep to be contrary to their *Rule*, whatever the means used to collect money, and whatever the amount. The municipality tried to argue that the solution it advocated did not in any way clash with the obligations of the Brothers.

It began by saying that "the gratuity prescribed by their Institute is not and cannot be an absolute and properly so-called gratuity", since they still had to be provided with the means to live.

It maintained that in cases where the only solution available to towns is to tax their citizens, the gratuity of schools is not affected. Moreover, the *Life* of M. de La Salle says that to encourage the spread of gratuitous schools, "our Princes authorise the collection of money in town and country parishes to provide for the upkeep of men and women teachers of gratuitous schools".

If it is allowable to use this method to provide for their upkeep, the Brothers should not worry about the way in which it is implemented. Regarding the solution adopted by the municipality, and which still has to be authorised by the King's State Council, the question on which the "Sorbonne Council" has to makes its views known is whether "the procedure proposed is contrary to the statutes of the Brothers, and whether they can or cannot accept this procedure without infringing them".

The municipality went on to say that whatever the method of collection and whatever the amount collected, the Brothers still found the whole procedure unacceptable. And yet there was a great difference between the Brothers collecting the tax personally, and the fact that their upkeep depended on this tax. According to the proposed procedure, they would receive funds for their upkeep, whatever sum was collected.

The method of payment "could not be considered as payment properly so-called for lessons". It would be different "if the funds received were of the same order as the normal remuneration given to private teachers".

The position of the Brothers

The Superiors of the Brothers responded to the arguments used by the municipality of Boulogne without referring to it directly. They tried to show that, whatever method was used, the solution proposed did not respect the principle of absolute gratuity they were obliged to uphold.

The Régime believed that, if the proposed method of funding the Brothers were adopted, the school would cease to be gratuitous. "The Brothers would then be mistaken for mercenary teachers".

The reason why the Brothers do not open schools unless their upkeep is assured, is to enable them to give gratuitous teaching to both poor and rich. And, if the Rule says nothing about how funds for their upkeep should be raised, "it condemns totally all those who would expect the

Brothers to obtain from their pupils what is needed for their upkeep", whether directly or indirectly.

The Régime opposed not only "the procedure by which only rich pupils were taxed", but also the imposition of a tax on all the citizens. Such a tax could turn the people against the Brothers and displease the other teachers. If taxation is the only way the municipality can find to provide for the Brothers, it might as well call upon the services of the teachers: there were many towns calling for the services of the Brothers.

Leaving aside questions of principle, the Superiors went on to list a number of problems which would arise if they adopted the proposed procedure:

- ♦ If there was not enough room for all the well-off and poor children, would there not be a danger that, in order to provide fully for the upkeep of the Brothers, preference would be given to rich pupils?
- ♦ The "ashamed poor, people who had fallen upon hard times because their business had failed" would not send their children because they would be asked to pay and they would not be able to.
- ♦ The poor could be given the impression that the Brothers preferred those who could pay — it was inevitable that those who paid would be identified; and if the Brothers punished the poor pupils, their parents might think "that, because they paid nothing, they were not liked by the Brothers".
- ♦ Those who paid would want "to enjoy impunity from punishment for their misdemeanours"; and if one of them were expelled, his parents would claim an injustice had been committed because they had paid.

The Superiors then put forward another set of reasons to show that the proposal of the municipality of Boulogne was contrary to what the Brothers wanted when they entered the Institute.

They pointed out, in particular, that the Brothers who were in the town schools in question had expressed their displeasure "ever since the schools had stopped being gratuitous on account of the taxes the pupils had to pay", and that the Superiors had been able to persuade them to remain in these schools only by promising them that the situation would not last.

The "Decision of the Council of Conscience of the Sorbonne"

It was under this heading that the document containing the conclusions of the doctors of the Sorbonne, dated May 4th 1781, was sent to the Superiors (RA CA 101, 103-2/8). It concentrated principally on the methods proposed by the municipality to collect the tax.

The method proposed by the municipality of Boulogne was unacceptable because it was contrary to the obligation the Brothers were under to teach gratuitously, an obligation stated clearly

in the Bull of Approbation, "contracted in formal terms by the vows they pronounce", and indicated by their *Rule*. "The procedure in question destroys totally the gratuity of the teaching".

By committing themselves to teach gratuitously, the Brothers do not refuse to receive whatever is necessary for their upkeep, "but, if their teaching is to be gratuitous, it is essential that none of their pupils and none of their parents pay the teachers anything for the lessons they receive". In spite of the precautions taken, the procedure proposed would result in the teaching given by the Brothers ceasing to be completely gratuitous.

On the other hand, the views of the "council" differed from those of the Superiors regarding the imposition of a tax on all the citizens of the town, because such a tax would be paid by everybody and not only by the parents of the pupils.

The members of the "Council of Conscience" then took up the arguments put forward by the Brothers regarding the dangers that could arise if certain parents were obliged to pay for the teaching given their children.

Conclusion

The dispute with the municipality of Boulogne gave the Superiors of the Brothers an opportunity to restate how gratuity had always been understood by the Institute from its very beginning (see Bédel, 1996, 133).

The Brothers taught gratuitously; that is, they asked for nothing from their pupils in return for the teaching they gave them, unlike those the documents call "mercenary teachers".

Others, and not the parents of the pupils, should fund the Brothers' upkeep.

♦ The town authorities had rightly stressed this point, but their understanding of gratuity was mistaken when they claimed that, because of this point, what the Brothers practised was not "absolute gratuity".

The upkeep of the Brothers could be funded by endowments. Moreover, by virtue of the "Royal Declarations" of 1698 and 1724, municipalities had the authority to impose a tax on "the community of inhabitants" to ensure a minimum stipend of 150 livres per teacher.

♦ The municipality of Boulogne was right to refer to this legal disposition.

♦ When the Superiors objected to the imposition of a tax on all the citizens in order to provide for the needs of the Brothers, it seems as if they envisaged a tax being levied specifically for that purpose. For the "doctors of the Sorbonne", a tax levied on all the citizens was not contrary to the principle of gratuity.

The Brothers accepted the poor into their schools as a priority, but they did nor refuse entry to the children of "well-off" families. Teaching, however, was gratuitous for everybody.

♦ De La Baume recalled that, according to the Rule, the Brothers were obliged to teach all their pupils gratuitously. The vow "to teach the poor gratuitously" served only to reinforce this obligation towards the pupils from poor families.

♦ This obligation to observe gratuity applied also to boarding schools. While a variety of services provided in them were charged to the parents, the teaching given by the Brothers was free of charge.

The practice of extending gratuitous teaching to all pupils prevented the creation of differences among them.

♦ Any preference that there might be, had to be reserved for those most in need.

♦ This complete gratuity gave the schools a public character (that is, accessible to all) which the Brothers considered very important.

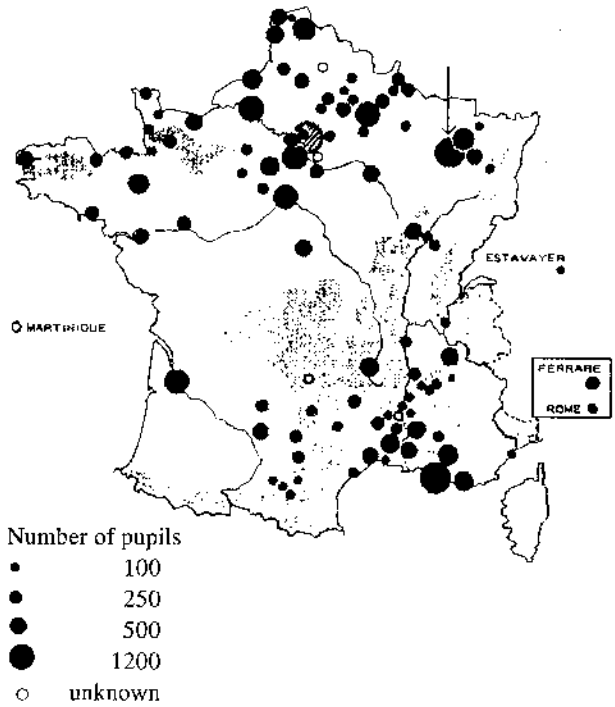
Although the texts analysed do not show it, gratuity had also an educative and spiritual dimension.

♦ Considerations of a pecuniary nature were not supposed to exercise any influence over relations in school.

♦ The aim of the Brothers was not only to teach the rudiments of knowledge, but also to form Christians. This essential aspect of the Brothers' "ministry" could not be anything but gratuitous, for, as St Paul tells us, the Gospel must be announced free of charge.

Brother Agathon would remind the Brothers of all these different aspects of gratuity in the third part of the circular he sent to the whole Institute on January 1st 1784.

Brothers' pupils in 1779



This map, taken from CNDP 1789, "I was a child in 1789", contains a mistake regarding Maréville (indicated by an arrow), which actually had between 150 and 200 boarders. Dotted lines show present-day frontiers (Savoy, Nice).

Chapter Nine

A New Impetus Is Given to Boarding Schools

The first boarding school had been opened by De La Salle for the Irish boys whose parents had followed King James II of England into exile (see Bédel, 1996, 106). Later, when he arrived in Rouen in 1705, he had accepted to take in boarders at St Yon. This was in response to a request from the business people of the town and the surrounding area, who wished to give their children an education which would prepare them for the profession they themselves pursued. With time, a "corrective" and a "custodial" boarding section was added. These served also to obtain extra funds for the care of old and infirm Brothers, the Superiors and the novices. Later on, in 1749, the Brothers took charge of a house in Maréville, which they transformed into another St Yon.

During the generalate of Brother Timothée, a certain number of houses which lacked financial resources had taken in boarders. Because of the problems that ensued, the General Chapter of 1745 had tried to prevent the spread of this practice, and the 1751 Chapter restricted the number of these houses to nine.

Of these boarding schools, the one at Montargis quickly disappeared (1754). Those in Die, Mirepoix and Montpellier seem to have limited themselves to taking in boarders who followed lessons with the other pupils. Other boarding schools offered specialised courses. This was the case of those at Marseilles and St Omer. At Angers, the Brothers had initially been invited to run a "custodial" boarding section. They had also opened a normal boarding school, but the co-existence of these two sections in a house ill-suited to their needs created many problems.

In the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence, the Brothers in Nantes and Rheims opened boarding schools as a way of obtaining money for their upkeep. In addition, the Brothers took over a school founded by a Capuchin at Fort Royal on the island of Martinique in the West Indies.

It is clear, however, that other houses continued to take in boarders. In a letter dated April 6th 1774, the Assistant Brother Exupère wrote as follows: "Since 1767, we have closed down more than 25 boarding schools. At the same time, we have withdrawn the Brothers from the schools at Montargis, Issoudun, Hérisson. At Caen, we have closed down the boarding school, sold the house and decided to withdraw the Brothers. At Nantes, where there is a school with 70 boarders, we have given notice of our withdrawal during the holidays" (copy in the town archives, Rheims, box 692, file 18b).

During the generalate of Brother Agathon, boarding schools began to flourish: facilities were extended and improved, and their educational and pedagogical goals were more clearly defined.

The development of the boarding schools

Under Brother Agathon, the Brothers' work in boarding schools took on greater importance. This was not because the number of these establishments increased. In fact, during this period, only one new boarding school, modelled on those at St Yon and Maréville, had only just started functioning by 1787. Even so, the overall number of boarding schools was not changed, since Mirepoix was closed down and its boarders transferred to Carcassonne. The development that took place consisted in the construction of additional buildings and an increase in the number of boarders. Not all boarding schools were affected in the same way. In this connection, we need to make a distinction between the fully organised boarding schools and the others.

Fully organised boarding schools

By these we mean boarding establishments which functioned independently of the gratuitous schools run by the Brothers, and which had their own resident community. Such establishments could be very large, housing, at the same time, old or infirm Brothers and novices. We shall examine each of these establishments in the order in which they were created, and assess their growth from 1777 onwards.

St Yon

Major construction work was completed by 1740, and in 1778, the buildings underwent extensive interior renovation (cf. Würth, 19 , 79). From 1782 onwards, the number of "custodial" boarders began to fall (*ibid.*, 28). In 1786, the number of boarders incarcerated "by order of the King" numbered 80 — 23 of whom (mostly insane) had been there for more than ten years (Rigault II, 538). If we base ourselves on the figures given by Lucard for 1790, the overall number of boarders was 530. Even if the "custodial" boarders were included, this figure represents a considerable increase in the number of ordinary boarders.

Marseilles

Brother Bénézet, who had been responsible for setting up the Marseilles boarding school in its new premises, had paid for all the work involved by the time he handed over responsibility to Brother Macaire in 1771. This enabled the new Director to concentrate on improving the curriculum, setting up laboratories and building up the library. The Marseilles boarding school became in some way the model for other similar establishments run by the Brothers. By 1777, the number of boarders had risen from 104 to 160. This was a high figure, given that each boarder had his own room (cf. Prevot, 1964, 80).

Maréville

Maréville had been the headquarters of the eastern province since 1771. In 1778, major building work was undertaken under the supervision of Brother Salomon, who was the community bursar at the time. While the work was being done, the section for ordinary boarders remained closed. It was reopened in 1786. It is difficult to know to what extent each boarding section benefited from the work that was done. According to the Mirepoix table, there were 1,304 boarders at Maréville. It is much more likely that the figure should read 304, and that it includes both custodial and ordinary boarders.

Angers

The expansion of the boarding school at Angers placed it among the establishments we have called fully organised, despite the fact that a single community of Brothers had responsibility for both the boarders and a gratuitous school in the town. Negotiations begun by Brother Agathon when he was Director at Angers were concluded successfully in 1778 by the purchase of the La Rossignolerie property. Building work completed in 1782 made it possible to set up a custodial and a normal boarding section. In a letter dated November 1778, Brother Salomon mentions that the community numbers 44 Brothers, that there are "about 60" custodial boarders, and that in the normal boarding section, there were "about 180" boarders between the age of 7 and 15.

Fort Royal

The premises of the Fort Royal boarding school were extensive enough to accommodate more boarders, but for this to be possible the community needed to be increased. Around 1780, Brother Agathon sent Brother Dosithée, the former Institute bursar, to Fort Royal, accompanied by two other Brothers who had been trained at St Yon. The community suffered a number of deaths, and Brother Dosithée asked for "trained teachers, with a good head, a good character and, above all, virtuous", as Brother Agathon himself had written once to his predecessor Brother Florence (Rigault II, 553). According to the figures provided by Lucard, there were 138 pupils at Fort Royal in 1790.

Carcassonne

It was envisaged that the boarding school planned for Carcassonne would fulfil in the southern province a function similar to that of St Yon and Maréville, except for the fact it would not have a custodial section. A draft contract was drawn up in February 1786 for the purchase of the "Charlemagne farm", a piece of agricultural land below the mediaeval walled city. Work started on drafting ambitious building plans. In August 1787, the boarders from Mirepoix arrived and were installed in an old building that had been renovated for them.

One way of assessing the growth of the establishments we have been speaking about is to compare the **number of Brothers in each community** in 1777 (the Mirepoix table) and

in 1787 (the list with the distribution of General Chapter expenses). This is worth doing even if the figures for St Yon and Maréville do not have the same significance.

	1777	1787
St Yon	100	80
Maréville	30	64
Marseille	12	24
Angers	14	40
Fort Royal	?	14
Charlemagne	*	6

Other boarding schools

By these we mean smaller boarding schools run by Brothers who lived in the same community as other Brothers who taught in gratuitous schools. Generally speaking, these boarding schools never developed to the same extent as the other establishments we have mentioned.

It is difficult to know how many boarders were actually involved. The documents we have, which give figures for this type of boarding school, make no distinction between boarders and other pupils. In a letter written by Brother Vivien some years later, we read that the boarding school in Rheims had 80 pupils just before the Revolution and, according to HSP (1, 271), the one in Montpellier had 90 pupils in 1779.

The only way we can tell if there was any growth in the communities in question is to compare **how many Brothers there were in them** in 1777 and 1787. The table below provides the relevant figures.

	1777	1787	
Saint Omer	13	17	
Die	2	2	
Mirepoix	5	(3)	transferred boarding school
Reims	14	24	
Montpellier	12	12	
Nantes	10	11	

The task assigned to boarding schools

From the outset, St Yon had its own specific programme of studies and its own approach to education. Boarding schools created subsequently modelled themselves closely on what was done at St Yon, but what was done there was the fruit of experience rather than the result of theoretical considerations.

On the basis of past experience, Brother Agathon produced a number of texts in which he codified what was general practice in boarding schools. A certain amount of information can be found in the "Permissions Register of St Yon". In 1778, Brother Agathon asked for a list of "Regulations for Boarders" to be drawn up (RA CF 362/2). His thinking regarding boarding schools is best summed up, however, in a draft of *The Conduct of Boarding Schools* which was intended to complement *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*.

A passage in this text defines in general terms the task assigned to boarding schools and, at the same time, highlights certain aspects relating to study programmes and to the education that should be given in them.

> "The principal aim of boarding school teachers is to instruct their pupils well in the Christian and Catholic religion; to teach them to be pious, virtuous and well-behaved; and by their constant instruction, to induce them to adopt and preserve its spirit and its practices. In addition, they will teach them the rules of politeness and civility; to read both manuscripts and printed material well; embellished writing, normal calculation as well as that of exchange rates; bookkeeping; commercial theory; spelling, French grammar, drawing, the rudiments of mathematics, geography, hydrography and history. The teachers will also take pains to form their mind, character and judgment. That is the task of boarding school teachers. These are their obligations towards the young people entrusted to them. They are also the purpose of their profession. It is for them a matter of justice, conscience, honour and salvation" (RA BM 651-3/3).

Study programmes

The text we have just quoted gives a **list of subjects** to be taught in the Brothers' boarding schools. Not every establishment, however, would teach them all. On the basis of some documents we can give some idea of what happened in practice.

The "Tableau de Rouen" for 1774 states that, at St Yon, "everything relating to finance, military affairs, architecture and mathematics was taught; in a word, everything a young man can learn apart from Latin" (quoted in Rigault II, 539).

A smaller establishment, such as the one in St Omer, announced in a kind of prospectus that pupils were taught "to read perfectly and on the basis of principles; to read ancient and modern writing, embellished writing, spelling, arithmetic, foreign exchange, arbitrage, simple and double entry bookkeeping, the rudiments of geometry and algebra, ornamental and figurative drawing, civil and military architecture, land-use planning, landscaping, hydrography and gnomonics (triangulation)" (quoted in Rigault II, 542).

Information about the boarding school at Marseilles furnishes us with the following details about its programme of studies: "French, arithmetic, accountancy and geography are the basic subjects taught. If parents so wish, to this can be added «the rudiments of geometry and algebra, some figure, ornamental and landscape drawing», the basics of architecture and navigation. «Teachers are available also for music, dancing, the use of arms and foreign languages»" (Rigault II, 561).

The list of subjects contained in the extract from the draft of the Conduct of Boarding Schools served to establish a sort of model programme of studies for the Brothers' normal boarding schools. This text enables us also to highlight some of the **characteristics of the study programmes** followed in boarding schools, and to mention some of the adaptations that sometimes became necessary.

One part of the programme was intended to give and improve a basic knowledge of reading, writing and counting. In Marseilles, for example, the pupils were divided up into three classes according to the standard of their writing, and between three and a half and four hours were devoted per day to the teaching of this subject. Spelling, grammar, drawing and history were considered less important than the more basic subjects.

The rest of the subjects taught had to do with running a commercial business, either directly, such as the calculation of foreign exchange rates, bookkeeping, commercial theory; or indirectly, such as geography, hydrography (especially in seaports, as a preparation for navigation). Elsewhere, local conditions led to the teaching of land surveying, for example, and architecture.

The standard of teaching can be judged from certain books used by the Brothers, which have come down to us (cf. Prevot, 1964, 51, note 1).

We can judge it also from the work of the pupils. For example, "An exercise book of 250 pages, unblotted and beautifully written, contains theoretical and applied arithmetic followed by a course in accounting. On the first page we read: «Auget de Saumur, window merchant», and on the last «this arithmetic book was finished on January 31st 1786, at the La Rossignolerie school of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Angers»" (Rigault II, 532).

The importance attached to the quality of the teaching given by the Brothers in their boarding schools explains the concern of the Institute to train the Brothers to do their work competently. And so, in some boarding schools, groups of Brothers attended courses given by experienced Brothers and took advantage of the facilities they offered. A scholasticate for advanced studies was set up at Melun.

Regarding the study programmes followed in boarding schools, it is difficult to visualise that these courses were given to relatively young pupils. For example, the boys in the boarding school in Marseilles were aged between 7 and 14 inclusively (cf. Rigault II, 560), and the general tendency during the course of the century was to lower the age of admission of pupils. Perhaps the teaching given was in preparation for a subsequent period of apprenticeship.

Type of education

The passage we have quoted from the draft of *The Conduct of Boarding Schools* shows clearly what lay behind Brother Agathon's thinking when he defined the educational purpose of boarding schools. The Brothers' basic aim had to be to give their pupils a **Christian education** which would be reflected in all their behaviour.

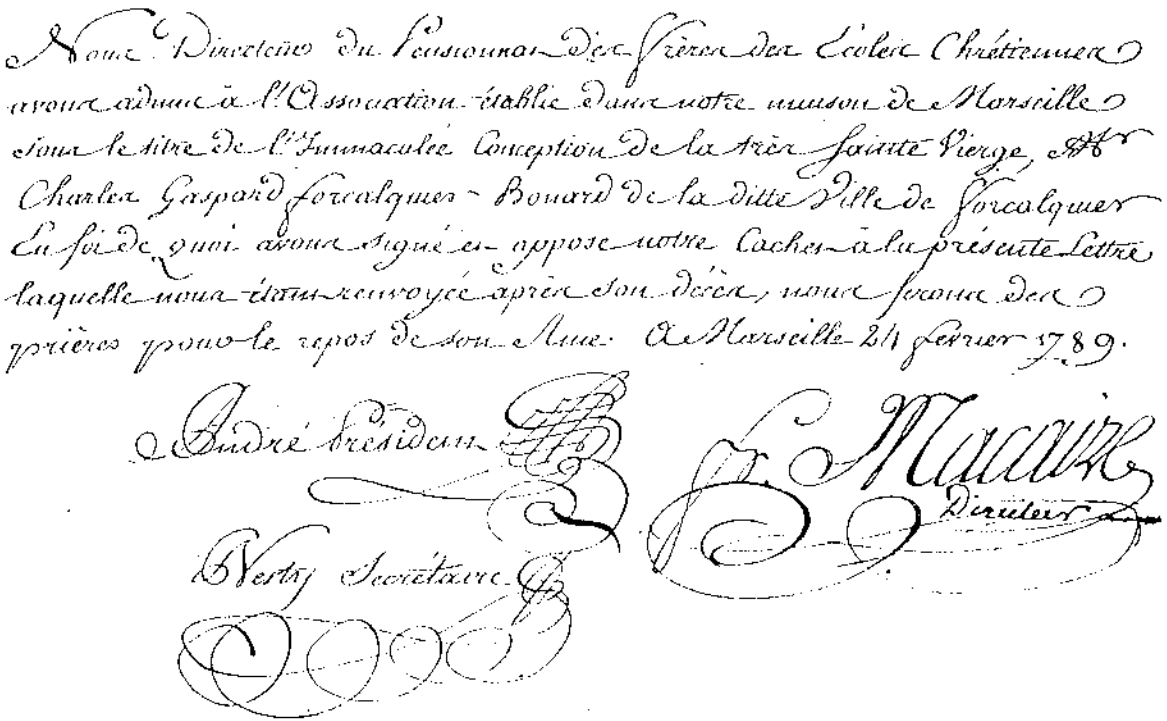
School prospectuses stated this purpose very clearly. The Instructive Memorandum on the boarding establishment directed by the Brothers of the schools in St Omer stated that it was a school giving "Christian education" and that very great importance is given to "exercises of piety" (cf. Rigault II, 542).

This characteristic of the Brothers' boarding schools was recognised by the civil authorities. In the Letters Patent granted to the boarding school at Marseilles, we read that the Brothers will continue to give the children "of the principal merchants . . . a suitable and Christian education".

If by developing scientific and practical teaching in their boarding schools, the Brothers were following in the footsteps of a number of thinkers of the period, they were certainly not following those who wished to divorce this teaching from the Christian religion. The teaching of the latter under the form of catechism was given with as much care as it was in the gratuitous schools. We are given some indication of this by a "short text apparently written in the days of Brother Agathon . . . and which can be called the *catechism of Brother Primaël*. Its questions are brief and clear. The answers likewise expressed in concise sentences full of the purest essence of Christianity. . . ." (Rigault II, 533).

The place given to exercises of piety in the life of the boarders is strongly emphasised in what Rigault writes about the boarding school in Marseilles: "Here, as in all the other boarding schools, the exercises of piety provide a framework for daily life, support it and supernaturalise it. At a time when their number does not daunt the robust faith of families . . . the boarders' regulations reflect closely and, to a certain extent, merge with the *Rule* of the Brothers" (Rigault II, 562).

At Marseilles, pupils who wished to, could lead a more intense Christian life by joining the "Congregation of the Blessed Virgin". A similar group called the "Congregation of the Immaculate Conception" was started up at the boarding school in Montpellier (cf. Rigault II, 563).


Nous Directeur du Pensionnat des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes avons admis à l'Association établie dans notre maison de Marseille sous le titre de l'Immaculée Conception de la très sainte Vierge, Mr Charles Gaspard Forcalquier - Bonard de la ditte Ville de Forcalquier. En foi de quoi avons signé et apposé notre Cachet à la présente Lettre laquelle nous avons renvoyée après son décès, nous faisant des prières pour le repos de son Ame. A Marseille 24 février 1789.

André Président

Vestry Secrétaire

Directeur

Diploma given by the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin, Marseilles boarding school, 1789, taken from *Institute Bulletin*, 1912, 296.

The Christian education the boarders received was intended **to have an effect on their whole life**. Consequently, the aim of teachers in boarding schools had to be, not only to instruct their pupils well in their religion and to train them to be pious, but "by their constant instruction, to induce them to adopt and preserve its spirit and its practices".

"In addition, they will teach them the rules of politeness and civility", the text continues. As we know, De La Salle was convinced that both of these two aspects of education should serve to permeate a person's everyday life with the Christian spirit.

A little further on we read: "The teachers will also take pains to form their mind, character and judgment. . . ." And so, the task of the teacher is to educate the whole person of his pupils.

If these directives of Brother Agathon were never actually published, they certainly reflected the concern the Brothers had to train their pupils in such a way, that they could, as Brother Agathon wrote in his manuscript, advise them when they left school "to dare to be always taken for a Christian", and "to make their devotion consist in acquitting themselves well of all their religious duties and their duties of state" (quoted in Rigault II, 606).

Conclusion

The question remains why, during the generalate of Brother Agathon, boarding schools, which involved only a small percentage of the Brothers' pupils, should have developed in the way they did, as shown by the number of Brothers assigned to this work.

It is true, of course, that the courses provided by the Brothers offered an alternative to study programmes consisting solely of the "humanities" which, at that time, were being called into question. The Brothers, however, did not claim to offer a substitute. The aims of their education were quite different: in fact, the courses they offered were more practical than theoretical. As for their insistence on Christian formation, it was matched by nothing similar in the colleges, even in those run by religious.

It is possible, of course, that when Brother Agathon was Director of the Lesvière house, he saw the conditions in which the boarding school in Angers was run, and realised its educational possibilities for children. Or he may have thought, like many other Brothers that, because children remained longer in boarding schools and could be better supervised, the Brothers' education could have a more profound influence on them. However, given the lack of information, we are reduced to making suppositions.

Whatever the truth may be regarding what we have said, it is clear that the new impetus given to boarding schools was beneficial for the Institute. The improvement in the professional training of certain Brothers had an effect in other areas also, as, for example, when these Brothers were made Directors of communities and/or were given responsibility for special classes in gratuitous schools.

From a negative point of view, the increase in the number of Brothers assigned to boarding schools slowed down the process of opening new gratuitous schools. It is possible also that a distinction began to be made between Brothers in boarding schools and those teaching in gratuitous schools. If this was the case, what did the Brothers feel about this distinction? Once again we have to say that we do not know.

— Supplement Nine —
The Writings of Brother Agathon

Much of what Brother Agathon wrote for the Brothers has come down to us. Apart from his circulars and correspondence, there are also several other texts such as *Six pieces of advice for a young Director* (RA CD 255-1/28), or *Advice the Brothers should give their pupils so that they spend the day in a Christian manner* (RA CD 255-1/5). We know also that he recast and completed the *Collection*, and that a revised draft of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* remained at the manuscript stage.

In 1784 and 1785, Brother Agathon wrote three circulars to the Brothers, each of them bearing the same title: *Instructive Letter from Brother Agathon Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to all the Brothers*. It would seem that the Superior General wished to emphasise in this way the special importance he attached to what he wished to say.

The *Instructive Letters*

As we shall see from the subjects he treated, there were areas which caused Brother Agathon a certain amount of worry.

The first letter

The first instructive letter sent to the Brothers was dated January 1st 1784 and can be seen in RA CD 260 under two forms: as a booklet containing 88 pages in 12mo, and as part of a small book of the same format (320 pages), which contains the first two instructive letters and a conclusion common to both. The 1784 letter had three aims: "(1) to dissipate the mistaken ideas that have been voiced about stability in the Congregation; (2) to remedy or prevent negligence in teaching; (3) to prevent even the smallest abuses that could creep into the practice of gratuity in schools" (Rigault II, 466).

The **first part** of the letter answered the objection that the Institute lacked "stability" because the Brothers made only simple vows. It seems it was mostly persons outside the Institute who believed that the Institute lacked solidity because simple vows did not create the same bonds as solemn vows. On the other hand, some of the Brothers also may have been led to doubt the value of these vows.

The Brother Superior pointed out that the Bull of Approbation had given the Institute a solidity it had not had before, especially because, since the granting of the Bull, the Brothers pronounced the three "vows of religion" as well as that of teaching gratuitously. Even if they were simple vows, they were no less binding than solemn vows.

In addition, if Brothers, unlike the "Regulars", could be dispensed from their vows, they pronounced perpetual vows only after a relatively long period during which they could test their vocation.

Although Brother Agathon did not say so explicitly in **part two** of his 1784 letter, he clearly wanted to condemn the tendency of some Brothers to neglect the teaching of catechism and the Christian formation of their pupils. One of the aims of the letter was "to remedy or prevent negligence in teaching". The text makes it clear that the "teaching" referred to is instruction in the truths of the faith and in "the things necessary in order to lead a Christian and virtuous life". As the letter points out, a Brother who neglects this teaching neglects one of his "most sacred duties" and fails especially to fulfil "the obligation of the vow he has made to teach".

Chapter XVIII of the 1726 *Rule* (CL 25, 69) refers to a "vow to teach children gratuitously and to conduct schools by association", whose first obligation, it says, is that the Brother "commits himself to devote himself entirely to the instruction of children and to bringing them up as Christians". This explains, perhaps, why Brother Agathon shifted the emphasis from teaching gratuitously to simply teaching.

Part three devotes quite an amount of space — 30 pages or so — to the gratuity of teaching. The reason for this becomes clear when we think how vigorously Brother Agathon defended gratuity when it was threatened. The letter shows how "the obligation of gratuity is certain and essential" for the Institute (29). It recalls the basic principle on which it is founded, that is, that "none of the pupils or their parents pay their teachers anything for the lessons they receive from them" (40). After pointing out "the advantages that gratuitous teaching brings", the letter concludes by saying that all the reasons put forward for receiving remuneration or presents are vain pretexts.

The second letter

Brother Agathon's second instructive letter is dated January 1st 1785, and states its purpose as follows: "And so, having explained the vows of stability and of teaching gratuitously, it is now appropriate to explain also those relating to poverty, chastity and obedience".

One of the things the letter reveals is that the Brothers were confused to a certain extent regarding the obligations of their vows. There was a need to explain what made their vows different from solemn vows, and to point out which characteristics they shared. Most of the letter, in fact, is devoted to the vow of poverty.

Part one begins with a judicious remark about the difference between voluntary poverty and imposed **poverty**. "The latter has many disadvantages", Brother Agathon adds very laconically. He was very much at pains to show the difference between the solemn and the simple vow of poverty. While the obligations of the vow defined at the beginning of chapter XVIII of the 1726 *Rule* were common to both kinds of vow, what made them different stemmed from the fact that, unlike solemn vows, simple vows did not oblige a religious to renounce any possessions he might have, but required him to hand over to others all income accruing from them.

Part two, relating to the vow of **chastity**, concentrated above all on showing that the difference between the simple and the solemn vow did not lie in the obligations of these vows, which were the same, but in the fact that, according to Church legislation, recognised also by the State at that time, the solemn vow made a marriage null and void when it was contracted by a person with this vow. Apart from that, the Superior said he did not wish to go into the "disastrous consequences" for a Brother who violated his vow of chastity. He did, however, recall the measures indicated in chapter XX of the *Rule* that would come into force in such an eventuality (cf. CL 25, 71).

Part three begins by recalling that **obedience** can be considered either as a virtue or a vow. In the light of current thinking, Brother Agathon thought it necessary, regarding the virtue, "to dissipate the unjust contentions of those who have sought, in particular in recent years, to make obedience a crime and to make it an object of scorn" (206). And he added that the person who makes profession of obedience "does not become an automaton because of his vow" (207).

As far as obedience to the *Rule* was concerned, the Brother Superior believed that while the Brothers, unlike the Franciscans, did not formally profess to obey the *Rule*, the points of *Rule* contained in the Bull of Approbation imposed a greater obligation than the others. Regarding obedience due to Superiors, the letter states clearly that the obligation to obey in virtue of the vow applies to what is in accordance with the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute.

The conclusion to the two letters raises a question regarding what Brother Agathon called the "nature of the Institute". There were those who, basing themselves on a decision delivered by the "Gentlemen of the Sorbonne" in 1777, according to which the Brothers were not religious with solemn vows, concluded that the Brothers were not religious at all because they pronounced only simple vows. Having recognised that the Sorbonne statement had been quoted correctly, Brother Agathon went on to refute some of the conclusions that certain persons had drawn from it.

The Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher

In February 1785, Brother Agathon published a text intended to complement the letters of January 1st 1784 and 1785, even though the subject matter was quite different. It was an explanation of the *Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher*, as listed in the *Collection* (CL 15, 6 = R 5). It is hard to see why Brother Agathon produced this text for the Brothers. Perhaps, he wanted to see them behaving towards their pupils in a way "which would make them esteem, love, respect and fear them", as he says in his conclusion (177).

His commentary was based on his experience, itself nourished by *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*. He found inspiration also in a number of contemporary writers such as Charles Rollin. The first chapter of the latter's *École Paroissiale* described the "qualities of the schoolmaster", and recommended twelve qualities to the Tabourin Brothers. Ten of these qualities are among those recommended also by De La Salle.

After defining each of the qualities, the text goes on to show how they apply to the "good teacher". It then lists a number of opposite defects. The texts ends with quotations from Holy Scripture.

The text as a whole paints an idealistic portrait of the Christian teacher, showing how faith should inspire his relations with his pupils. Some of the qualities listed, however, such as his gravity, silence, patience, reserve, are more to do with his pedagogical approach properly so-called. Others, such as humility, zeal, piety, etc., are more to do with the requirements of the mission entrusted to the teacher (cf. *Lasallian Themes 3*).

What is striking is the emphasis put on gentleness: no less than a third of the text is devoted to an explanation of this quality. One quotation will be enough to set the tone for this section of the text: "It is a general principle that love is bought by love. The teacher must first of all and above all have for them [his pupils] the feelings of a father, and consider himself to be taking the place of those who have entrusted them to him. In other words, he must borrow from them the deep feelings of goodness and tenderness which are natural to them".

The Brother according to the *Instructive Letters*

According to the *Instructive Letters*, the Brother of the Christian Schools has two distinctive characteristics: he is a religious and a Christian teacher.

The Brother is a religious

A reading of the Instructive Letters reveals that one of the principal concerns of Brother Agathon was to remind the Brothers that they were religious.

In the first part of the 1784 letter, he stressed this point by recalling that, ever since the Bull of

Approbation, the Brothers had been pronouncing the three "vows of religion". He went on to explain that these "three simple vows, which have as their object the three counsels of perfection . . . procure a kind of solid and irrevocable life as soon as they become perpetual" (8). Since this kind of life was the characteristic of religious life, there was no doubt in Brother Agathon's mind that the Brothers were religious.

Since being a religious presupposed pronouncing and observing the three traditional vows, it is easy to understand why the Superior established a very strong link between these vows and the religious character of the Brothers, and why he spent so much time in his second letter on explaining the obligations of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Because there were those who doubted that the Brothers had this character, Brother Agathon needed to show the Brothers that, even though they pronounced only simple vows, they were still religious. He did this especially in the conclusion common to the first two letters, by answering the Brothers who did not consider themselves religious because they did not make solemn vows (see above). His response to them consisted of three points.

♦ In the first, he showed that the decision of the "Gentlemen from the Sorbonne" was intended solely to refute the idea that the Brothers were religious with solemn vows and therefore members of a "Regular Order".

♦ In the second, he had no hesitation in affirming that "although we have made only simple vows . . . our state has all the characteristics, all that is essential, in a word, all that constitutes a truly religious state" (264). He added that this had not been the case before the Bull of Approbation, because the Brothers at that time did not pronounce the three vows of religion" (271).

♦ In the third point, he recognised that although the Institute was a true "Religion" (religious congregation), the vows of the Brothers did not have "the civil consequences produced by solemn vows" (see above).

The question arises whether there were many Brothers who had doubts about their religious character, and whether there was a real danger of their doubts influencing negatively the other Brothers. As far as we know, there is no reason to think that the situation was so serious. It seems we need to look elsewhere for an explanation of Brother Agathon's insistence.

On a number of occasions, Brother Agathon refers to those he calls "our Senior Brothers". As far as we can see, these were the Brothers who received the Bull of Approbation and who were the first to make the three vows of religion. In their eyes, the papal approbation had placed the Institute in the ranks of "Religious Orders", and the fact of their having pronounced the three vows of religion enabled them also to consider themselves religious. It was on the thinking of these "Senior Brothers" that, 60 years later, Brother Agathon based his arguments. This seems to show that the shift in emphasis evident in the preface to the 1726 *Rule*, as was indicated in the concluding section of *The Origins* (Bédel, 1996, 211), was not without influence on the life of the Institute in later years.

The Brother as a Christian teacher

Although Brother Agathon does not actually use the expression "Christian teacher", this is, in fact, what he describes when he gives the characteristics of the Brother in the second part of the 1784 letter and in the explanation of the *Twelve Qualities of a Good Teacher*.

As we have already said, when Brother Agathon wrote in his 1784 letter that he wished "to remedy or prevent negligence in teaching", it was clearly his intention to call to order the Brothers who were not making the required effort to instruct and form their pupils in the Christian faith. He wished to remind them that what was involved here was one of the characteristics of the Brother of the Christian Schools. And in support of what he said, he added that "the reason why our Institute is asked to supply schoolmasters is clearly that we are expected to give Christian and civic instruction that is superior to what is given by ordinary teachers" (18).

It is in particular through the portrait he paints of the "good teacher" that Brother Agathon describes most clearly the characteristics that should distinguish the Brother as a teacher and educator. This portrait, which is taken from De La Salle, recalls the image of the Good Shepherd. The "good teacher", therefore, is a Christian teacher who discovers in the Gospel the secret of relating to his pupils and of working with them. There is no doubt that Brother Agathon was convinced that the Brothers to whom he was writing had to be first and foremost the kind of "good teachers" he had described.

What Brother Agathon was describing, therefore, when he spoke of the good teacher was more the Christian educator than the schoolmaster. This is made quite clear when he describes the good teacher as a person into whose hands Jesus Christ has entrusted a certain number of children, not simply to make them "good writers, great arithmeticians, skilful calculators . . ." but "to make true Christians of them" (157).

If we restrict ourselves to what Brother Agathon said about the Brother as a teacher in his 1784 letter and in the explanation of the *Twelve Qualities*, we are given the impression that the Brother's role is essentially to give a Christian formation to his pupils. This one-sided view of the Brother is somewhat surprising when we remember Brother Agathon's great interest in pedagogical matters.

In reality, of course, what he advocated for the Christian education of the children and their "instruction in the things of salvation" would inevitably have a positive effect on the Brothers' teaching properly so-called and increase its quality and efficacy. Brother Agathon was aware of this, but this is not what he was thinking of in his explanation of the twelve qualities, and this explains the emphasis we find in the text on what was connected with the Brothers' work of evangelisation.

On the other hand, a circular written in 1786 does touch upon school matters, as its title makes clear: *Observations of Brother Agathon Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on the public interrogations which are held at the end of the school year*. These "interrogations" were in

fact real examinations which took place in public. There was a danger, however, that the preparation they required would take up too much of the Brothers' time and lead them to concentrate their attention on the more gifted pupils. The Superior asked them, therefore, to limit themselves to something more simple. This circular did not carry as much weight as the *Instructive Letters* of the previous years.

To have a complete picture of how Brother Agathon envisaged the Brother as a teacher we would need to have his revised edition of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*. This was never completed, and all we have are some manuscripts which give us some idea of what the work might have been like. It is difficult to say, however, what form the definitive text would have taken. This being so, we shall not say more about it here.

Conclusion

The three *Instructive Letters* are all different. It is important, however, to consider them as forming a single unit. While much is said about Brother Agathon's pedagogical writings, when it comes to his letters, attention is focused on the first one and the second one is quickly dismissed, as we find in Rigault's work. And yet, it cannot be dismissed, because the way in which the obligations of the vows are treated in it reflects the importance which appears to have been given to the vows in the Institute throughout the 18th century.

In this supplement we have emphasised the two aspects which seem to characterise the way Brother Agathon envisaged the Brother of the Christian Schools. To the extent that it was not possible to give a more detailed treatment of the question, there may have been some over-simplification, and this should be borne in mind.

The two aspects were treated separately, which is what Brother Agathon did. He did, however, establish some kind of link between the different letters. We have already mentioned what he said at the beginning of the letter dated January 1st 1785. In the foreword to the explanation of the *Twelve Qualities* he writes as follows: "It would be of little use to us to know the obligations the vows impose on us, if we were ignorant of the means we need to fulfil as we should the purpose of the Institute, which is the instruction of children".

If the link he establishes here is somewhat artificial, there are several passages which show that, in the thinking of the author of the letters, the various separate components were supposed to form a single whole. And so, when he speaks of "generosity", he says that the Brother, in order to be in a better state to teach well, "consecrates himself to God in a state in which he renounces all the goods of the world by the vow of poverty, the most lawful pleasures by that of chastity, and his own will by that of obedience" (169). In the same way, when the vows of poverty and chastity are explained in the second letter, each of these vows is linked by the author to "the instruction of the poor".

"Benedict XIII obliged us to add the vow of perpetual poverty to those that our senior Brothers made. This vow suits our state perfectly, for two reasons.

First reason. It makes us fulfil much more effectively the principal purpose of our Institute which is the instruction of the poor.

(1) By its very nature, it removes all the obstacles which could hinder the spread or the preservation of the gratuitous schools, because it obliges us to have a very modest lifestyle.

(2) By its nature also, the vow of poverty removes whatever might prove difficult regarding teaching the poor. The less help the poor have to obtain instruction, the greater the need to provide it for them. But when teachers have made a vow of poverty and are faithful to it, they willingly undertake the task of teaching them. They love them, they take pleasure in them. The poor in most need become the object of their affection.

(3) When we practise poverty, by reason of having made the vow, we are in a position to form the poor in the Christian virtues. Our lessons, confirmed by our example, will make their education more solid and durable.

Second reason. As a means of maintaining the gratuity of teaching, the vow of poverty is a saveguard and a powerful brake. You know, my very dear Brothers, the fundamental reasons which led our Founder to forbid us to receive any kind of present from our pupils" (190-192).

"A special reason which should make us keep our vow of chastity inviolably, is that this virtue makes our function very honourable in the eyes of men and very useful to the poor.

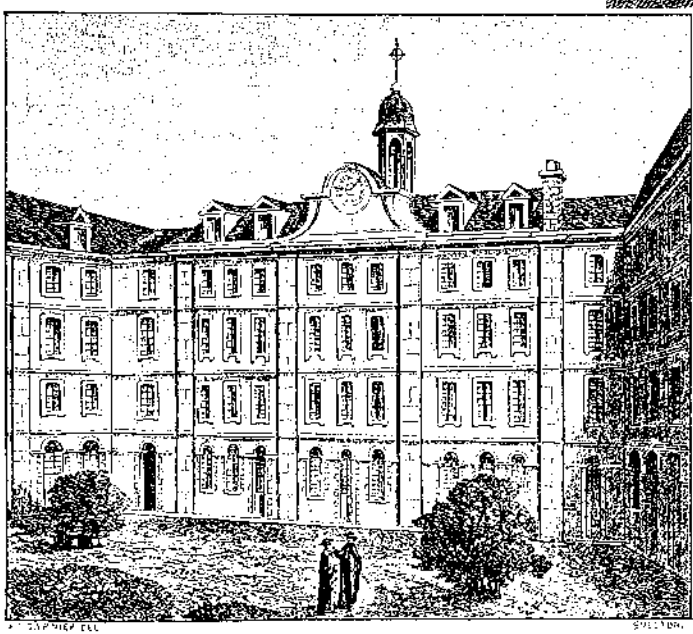
(2) The vow of chastity makes the instruction of the poor more fruitful. Mercenary teachers can certainly teach children properly. We know a great number of them who acquit themselves of this function very worthily. Nevertheless, quite apart from the fact that they do not come to the help of the poor who have the most need of it, can they (with all the "encumbrances of marriage") be always and completely occupied with the care of those entrusted to them? What freedom do we not have, on the contrary, to devote ourselves to teaching? No distractions, no worries. This function, moreover, is not a secondary purpose for us: we seek to fulfil nothing else but our one and only task. What eagerness should not the parents of the pupils, and especially the poor, have, to send their children to our schools? What docility will they not inspire them to have in order to learn our lessons; and what care to benefit from them, seeing that we sacrifice the most legitimate advantages so as to devote ourselves without reserve to a task that is as arduous and tedious as that of instructing children and of bringing them up well?" (198-200).

Finally, we have the enthusiastic words with which Brother Agathon ends his explanation of the *Twelve Qualities*. He says to the Brothers: "Let us place great value on the happiness we have that, having embraced one of the most austere forms of religious life to be found in the Church of

Jesus Christ, we have in addition something several of them do not, that is, the precious advantage of instructing others and of working for the salvation of souls" (181).

Brother Agathon, 1731–1798, Joseph Gonlieu. We have already given much space in this book to his activities as Superior General. We add here a few biographical details.

Born near Noyon, he entered the novitiate in 1747 and made his perpetual profession in 1756. He was responsible for the junior boarders at St Yon and taught accountancy. In October 1792, Brother Agathon gave the following summary of his "curriculum vitae" to the "administrators of the Council of the Department of Seine et Marne": he had spent his religious life, "partly in the Little Schools, partly in teaching the rudiments of mathematics in the port of Brest, and hydrography in the school at Vannes, partly in being superior of the house in Angers and in building up the magnificent establishment of La Rossignolerie" (quoted in Rigault II, 439).



Former boarding school of La Rossignolerie in Angers

Chapter Ten

The Institute on the Eve and at the Beginning of the French Revolution (1787–1790)

Introduction

The 1787 Chapter did not change Brother Agathon's status as Superior General.

The situation of the Institute, on the other hand, would shortly change considerably as a result of the events taking place in France. Initially, however, things seemed to go well: the life of the Institute was not affected, and the schools continued to function. These first few years which coincided with the beginning of the Revolution can be treated, therefore, as part of the immediately preceding period.

1. The General Chapter of 1787

As the ten-year interval between General Chapters ended in 1787, a new capitular assembly was due to be held in that same year.

Preparations

In preparation for the convocation of the Chapter, Brother Agathon had approached the Holy See in 1786 in order "to obtain a clear interpretation and reconciliation of articles 3 and 13 of the Bull of 1725" (Rigault II, 613). In brief, he asked for a confirmation of the solution adopted in 1777 regarding the composition of the Chapter. The confirmation he requested was granted by Pope Pius VI in a rescript dated August 11th 1786. The decision of the Holy See was registered by the Parlement of Normandy on January 9th 1787.

A circular dated January 17th 1787 informed the Institute that the General Chapter would be held at Melun on May 4th next. It indicated likewise the procedure to be followed for the elections. Brother Philippe de Jésus, Procurator General of the Institute, prepared a memorandum in which he drew attention to a number of questions which he thought deserved to be considered by the Chapter.

The work of the Chapter

When the Chapter met, its composition was as follows: 3 Brother Assistants, 15 Brother Directors of the "principal houses", and 14 elected "senior" Brothers. Brother Évariste, Director of the Mirepoix community, did not attend because of sickness and was not replaced.

Before moving on to the election of Brother Assistants, the Chapter decided that they would remain in place "till such time as it became necessary to elect their successors" (RA ED 227, General Chapters from 1777 to 1873).

It asked also for the procedure followed for the election of delegates to the Chapter to be confirmed by a rescript from the Pope. On being informed by the Superior General that he had already obtained such a document, the capitulants decided to include the text of the rescript in the register of General Chapter documents.

The Chapter renewed the mandates of Brother Assistants Paschal and Sylvestre. Brother Zachée, having resigned, was replaced by Brother Lothaire, secretary to the Superior General. This latter position was given to Brother Salomon, who had already been appointed secretary to the General Chapter.

The decisions of the three previous Chapters were examined, and some changes were made in those taken in 1777. These decisions and the new ones adopted by the Chapter were condensed into 74 articles.

The last years of peaceful growth (1787–1788)

Follow-up to the General Chapter

In October 1787, Brother Agathon communicated the decisions of Chapter to the communities in a circular entitled *General Instructions for the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (RA CD 260-1/20). Some of the points mentioned in the written notes sent to the Chapter had not led to any decisions, and the Superior General had been asked to explain the position of the Chapter regarding these questions.

In the *General Instructions*, Brother Agathon referred to a number of cases in which faults against the *Rule* had been mentioned. He dwelt longer on certain points. For example, in relation to remarks made about ways of governing, he answered that "it is easier to

say what would be best for the general good . . . than to find it". He pointed out also that Brothers should not wait for a General Chapter to say what was going wrong.

With regard to working in schools, he considered the granting of extra holidays, or time spent speaking to parents and other persons, as a kind of disservice to the pupils; and giving them work during school hours, to be a form of "injustice". He considered quite irregular the fact that certain Brothers were concerned more about being "writers, mathematicians and draughtsmen" than about acquiring "a knowledge of religion or true piety".

While the *General Instructions for the Directors of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (RA CD 260-1/19) applied to the Directors what had been said to the Brothers in general, they also indicated, at somewhat greater length, how Brother Directors should run their communities. They needed to watch over the regularity of the community, but, equally, they were expected to provide for the needs of the Brothers, become well acquainted with them, make sure they lived in harmony, and ensure that the serving Brothers were not looked down upon by the others. They should keep their Sub-Directors informed, and make the Brothers interested "in the good of the house in which they lived".

Others points mentioned referred to the Director's necessary contacts with outsiders. They should not result in his being absent frequently from the community. He needed to be discreet when referring to the Brothers.

The detailed nature and clarity of this text shows that Brother Agathon, like De La Salle whom he quoted, was convinced that "the Institute is in the hands of the Directors: it is they who work constantly to build it up or to destroy it" (RA CD 260-1/19).

Other activities of Brother Agathon

There is little direct evidence to show what Brother Agathon did during this period. From other sources, however, it is clear that the Superior General continued to be concerned by the same questions as before.

In 1787, he endorsed the conclusions of a report entitled *Reflections on government in relation to the house at Maréville* (RA CK 563-2/6). The Director of this vast establishment, Brother Jean Marie, was involved in a great number of activities. As a result, his role as Director of the large community suffered, and laxity had begun to appear in the community. The report justified, unfortunately, the preoccupation shown by the Chapter regarding the role of Directors, and the special circular Brother Agathon had sent them.

From Brother Salomon's correspondence with his family, we know that in November-December 1788, the Superior, accompanied by his secretary, visited the communities in Ile de France, Normandy, Picardy, Orléanais, Anjou and Maine (cf. Rigault II, 617). We see that Brother Agathon's solicitude for his Brothers remained as strong as ever.

New developments regarding schools

At Charlemagne (Carcassonne) building work continued. The vast scope of the plan can be judged from a surveyor's report issued in 1788.

After the 1787 Chapter, plans to send Brothers to a number of places were implemented.

In **Bayeux**, Normandy, negotiations begun at the end of 1780 were successfully concluded when a contract was signed on April 4th **1788** by the local bishop and Brother Philippe de Jésus, the Procurator of the Institute. In the course of the same year, a school was opened by Brother Damien and two other Brothers.

In **Toulouse**, with the support of Archbishop Loménie de Brienne and the municipal authorities, Letters Patent were obtained from the King in 1785, which authorised the establishment "of gratuitous schools for the children of the common people and of citizens who were not well-off" (quoted in Rigault II, 521). The contract signed in June 1788 indicated that initially a community of five Brothers would be set up in Toulouse. The school began functioning in March **1789**.

A list drawn up by Brother Salomon in 1789 (RA CL 602-2/7) does not include the houses which the 1787 Chapter had decided to allocate to one or other of the provinces, which seems to indicate they had not yet been opened. Probably, in the case of some, and definitely in the case of the rest, they were never opened because of the social upheaval that was about to take place.

♦ There is no further information regarding plans to found communities in Blois and Castelnaudary.

♦ In Lavaur, decisions reached by the town authorities on August 3rd 1788 were due to be submitted to the Institute for approval (RA CK 561-2/10). No further action seems to have been taken.

♦ In Nevers, the foundation stone of a school destined for the Brothers was laid in 1788. Circumstances prevented the Brothers from taking over the school.

♦ In Tours, a parish priest who, on his own initiative, had asked the Brothers to come, wrote in 1818 to say that he had obtained Letters Patent, but that "the Revolution came and our arrangement fell through" (RA CK 568/6).

♦ Despite what Rigault says (II, 519), the school at Honfleur was not opened, since it is not mentioned by Brother Salomon.

♦ Of the five schools the Brothers were due to take over in Arras (Artois), two were on the point of opening in October 1789, but the Brothers never came.

The Institute at the beginning of the French Revolution (1789–1790)

When King Louis XVI convened by edict the "States General" on August 8th 1788, no one could foresee the events that would come about as a result of this decision, nor the changes that it would entail. And so, as the year 1788 came to an end, the Brothers had no way of foreseeing the terrible upheaval their Institute was about to experience.

The Brothers and the preparations for the "States General"

In France, the "States General" were assemblies composed of representatives from the three "orders" (Clergy, Nobility, Third Estate), that is, representatives of the three social groups into which French society had been divided up since the Middle Ages (cf. Bédel, 1996, 2). These "States" advised the King but had no power to make decisions. They were convened when it suited the King, and this had last happened in 1614. Whatever the overall number of those taking part, each "Order" had the same number of delegates, and its representatives held their deliberations separately.

It was this ancient form of assembly that King Louis XVI was now calling upon to find solutions to the financial problems of the Kingdom. He had made changes, however, in the traditional composition of the assembly, by doubling the number of representatives from the "Third Estate", that is, from the social group to which most of the population belonged.

The preparations for the States General took place at a particularly difficult period in the history of the country. There was a poor harvest in 1788, and prices rose as a consequence. A slowing down of commercial activity and a harsh winter in 1788–1789 resulted in widespread unemployment. With the end of winter, civil disturbances broke out in all

parts of the country. "Peasants and workers ransacked grain warehouses, held up wagons transporting corn, threatened the nobility who claimed their payments and the intendants who symbolised the collection of taxes" (Furet, 1989, 73). The Brothers in Melun helped to forestall such disturbances by distributing alms (cf. Rigault III, 12).

It was against this background that the elections for the States General began in March 1789. Assemblies were held in the chief town of each bailiwick (**bailliage***) and elected two delegates per Order. One consequence of the Bull of Approbation of the Institute was that the Brothers were included in the Order of the Clergy. Each community appointed one member to take part in the clergy bailiwick assemblies. The communities in Nancy and Maréville, for example, chose their Brother Director as their representative (departmental archives, Nancy, L 57, B 3). Each assembly also drew up "registers of grievances", in which members of each Order could submit their grievances and their wishes to the King.

Among the "registers" drawn up in 1789, there were some which requested "better organisation and development of studies at all levels", or, in more precise terms, "the opening of primary schools" (Rigault III, 13). Some mentioned the Brothers and praised their competence and zeal, or recommended they be put in charge of all the schools in the town. The register drawn up by the clergy of Orléans was particularly explicit on this point. "In Melun, Sens, Montreuil sur Mer and Toulouse the same kinds of requests were expressed, and yet in Sens and Montreuil, the Brothers were known only by their reputation" (Rigault III, 14).

Repercussions of political changes on the Institute

The protocol observed on May 4th 1789 during the opening procession and during the presentation of delegates to the King demonstrated clearly a desire to maintain the traditional distinction between the three Orders. In his opening speech on May 5th, the King asked the delegates to concentrate in particular on the financial situation. However, a completely new slant to the proceedings would be given by the attitude of the representatives of the Third Estate.

Emboldened by their numbers and the sympathy of some delegates of the two other Orders, the representatives of the Third Estate expressed the desire that all deliberations take place in a single assembly, in which all delegates would have a right to vote. Also, they wanted this assembly to draw up a plan to introduce widespread reform.

On June 17th, seeing that their demands were not going to be met, the delegates of the Third Estate constituted themselves into a "National Assembly". They were joined by the clergy delegates and then by a minority of the nobility. The King gave way under this pressure and, on July 7th, ordered the delegates of all three Orders to meet together.

As the National Assembly saw its task in terms of producing a constitution for the Kingdom, it became known also as the "Constituent Assembly".

During the first fortnight of July, troop movements and the replacement of various ministers gave the impression that Louis XVI was opposed to the changes taking place. The result was an insurrection in Paris. The taking of the Bastille on July 14th 1789 is remembered, however, more for its symbolic value than for any real importance it may have had.

Even before the Paris uprising, towns had begun electing new town councils. In rural areas, the increased presence of vagabonds on the roads, caused by the harsh winter, created an atmosphere of fear and violence, which was kept alive by word of mouth. On the night of August 4th, in an attempt to settle the unrest, the National Assembly decreed equality of taxation for all, the abolition of feudal rights, and the suppression of the payment of tithes (**dîme***)to the clergy. The feudal regime was abolished in France.

As the harvest drew near, food became scarce and expensive. The Brothers in Melun gave away remaining stocks of grain to bakers (Rigault III, 12), but this did not prevent some sections of the population from being ill-disposed towards them.

As the situation showed no signs of improving, Brother Agathon sent a circular to the Brothers on August 23rd. Travel was to be restricted as far as possible during the holidays, even in the case of a change of community or the annual retreat. Vows would not be made. The Brothers were warned to be very careful when they spoke to others, and "not to allow any outsider to say anything in our houses that was critical of anybody" (quoted in Rigault III, 17).

By this time the Assembly had begun its work of drawing up a constitution. On August 26th 1789, it adopted the "Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" as a preamble to the future constitution. One of the fundamental characteristics of this

Declaration was the affirmation of the rights of the individual. Between the individual and the State there must be no intermediary body, whether it be a corporation, confraternity, religious congregation, etc.

The application of these ideas, inherited from both the "Gallican" magistrates and the "philosophes" of the 18th century, led the Constituent Assembly to decree a number of measures:

♦ On October 28th 1789, the making of monastic vows was suspended.

♦ On November 2nd, the property of the clergy was put "at the disposal of the Nation".

♦ On February 13th 1790, solemn vows were forbidden and monastic orders were suppressed.

"Secular congregations" (**congrégations séculières***) involved in social work were spared for the time being. However, from the beginning of 1790, the authorities in various places treated the Brothers as if they belonged to a Regular Order or to the clergy, and required them to furnish an inventory of their possessions. Likewise, the Brothers found that they were affected by a decision made by the Assembly on March 26th 1790: officials came to their houses to draw up a list of the Brothers living there, and to ask each Brother individually whether or not he intended to remain a religious. Such visits made in Nancy and Lunéville are documented (cf. RA CK 563-1/1 and 561-2/17).

In the face of this pressure from the authorities, the Superiors began to fear that the Institute would be suppressed. It was in the light of this that they published a brochure with the title, *A general idea of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*", and sent a circular to the Brothers, dated May 12th. The supplement entitled "The Institute in 1790", which follows this chapter, is based on these documents.

As the future of the Institute became increasingly uncertain, the Brother Superior decided to make a direct approach to the members of the Constituent Assembly to try to obtain some guarantee that the Institute would continue to exist, or if this were not possible, that the Brothers would receive pensions.

This approach took the form of an "address", which Brother Philippe de Jésus, the Procurator General, and 18 Brothers of the Christian Schools from Paris, submitted to the National Assembly in July 1790. It appears, however, that nothing came of this move. At the end of October 1790, another "address", signed by the Superior General, the Assistants and the Procurator of the Institute, was sent to each member of the National Assembly (cf. Rigault III, 45, note 3). In the light of a decision made by the Assembly at the end of

February, regarding "what will be paid to any religious who declares he wishes to leave his house" (quoted in Rigault III, 45), the aim of the Superiors was to obtain the most favourable conditions possible for the Brothers in case the Institute ceased to exist.

In the final analysis, what Brother Agathon and the other Brothers feared in 1790 actually came about two years later. Their fate, however, had already been sealed when the National Assembly adopted the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" on July 12th 1790.

Repercussions of some decisions of the National Assembly on the Brothers' schools

When, as we said earlier, the Brothers had to draw up an inventory of their possessions, they were nevertheless allowed to continue using them. There were other decisions, however, made by the National Assembly, which reduced the resources which enabled the Brothers to live and to run their schools.

- ♦ On the night of August 4th 1789, the collection of the tithe was suppressed. This affected the Brothers because many parish priests funded them out of this source of income.
- ♦ Fixed income from property held by the clergy funded many endowments allocated to schools. The State had taken possession of these properties and was holding back the payment of the income due.
- ♦ The suppression of the city toll (**octroi***) in February 1790 reduced the resources of the town councils funding the Brothers' schools.

The local authorities created by the National Assembly in 1789, in line with the new administrative structure of the country which divided it into communes, districts and departments, were moderate on the whole.

Certain municipal authorities tried to ease the material situation of the Brothers, which had deteriorated with the increase in prices and the loss of sources of income. This was the case in Le Puy, St Brieuc, Laon and Orléans. However, there was always the possibility of opposition at higher administrative levels (cf. Rigault III, 39).

In Dole, the reconstruction costs had not been all paid by 1790. As the Brothers could not obtain any help from the municipality, they turned to the departmental authorities. On September 23rd, these latter obliged the municipality to reimburse the 1,000 livres the Brothers of Auxonne had lent their fellow Brothers, and to pay the wages owed to the workers (cf. town archives, Dole, 1498).

At the end of 1790, the greatest threat to the Brothers' schools was posed by the decisions made by the National Assembly regarding religious matters.

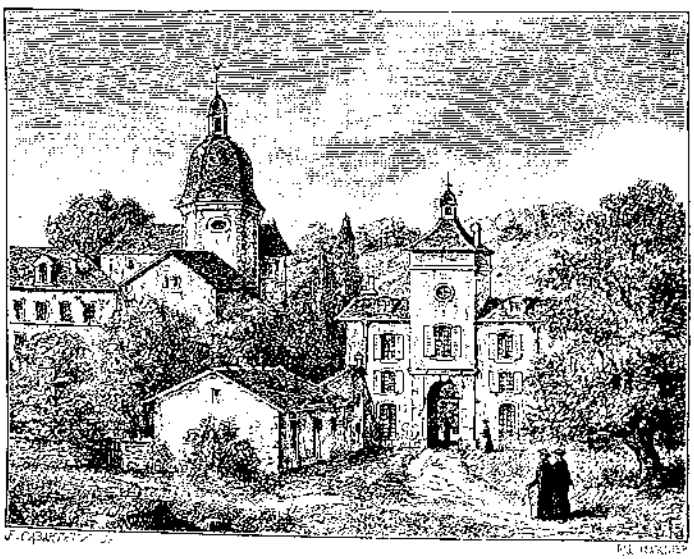
Conclusion

By treating in a single chapter the two parts of the period we have been studying, we have been able to highlight the contrast between the situation of the Institute in 1788 and in 1790.

In 1788, the Institute was still benefiting from the momentum given it by the election of Brother Agathon as Superior General. The 1787 General Chapter had endorsed what was positive in the Institute and had proposed means to remedy what needed improving. The number of novices was satisfactory. The schools were flourishing: the building work on the Charlemagne property was going ahead; and, among the new foundations, Toulouse seemed to have a very promising future.

In 1790, the momentum which had carried the Institute along for 13 years had been lost. The Superiors and the Brothers were worried as it became increasingly clear that the Institute faced suppression. In various places the Brothers had to cope with troublesome interference and ill-feeling. There were few admissions to the novitiates. Some of those who could not make or renew their vows left.

And yet, it is still possible to assess the position of the Institute at this point when it faced almost total destruction.



Maréville (Lorraine) in the 18th century

— Supplement Ten —
The Institute in 1790

In the history of the Institute, 1790 is a date which marks an important turning point. In the course of this year, the Institute began to feel the effects of the events which had been affecting France for the past year. All the same, generally speaking, it continued to survive and to continue running its schools. From the following year onwards, things would not be the same.

What makes it interesting to try to assess the situation of the Institute in 1790 is the existence of relevant documents. After examining these documents, we shall try to pick out the main characteristics of the Institute at this date.

The sources of our information

Because of the current situation, the Superiors produced a number of documents intended either for the Brothers or for outsiders.

The circular dated May 1790

On May 12th 1790, worried about the uncertain future of the Institute, Brother Agathon sent the Brothers a circular. He told them he had no further information regarding what the National Assembly intended to do about the "secular congregations" (**congrégations séculières***)and, consequently, about the Institute.

The main purpose of the circular was to inform the Brothers whether or not triennial vows would be renewed on the following Trinity Sunday. Some young Brothers, in fact, had asked if they could renew their vows. Others, on the other hand, uncertain about what they should do, had said nothing. While the renewal of vows did not affect the perpetually professed, this was not the case for those with triennial vows who, as was customary in the Institute, extended their commitment on this occasion for a further year (cf. CL 25, 68).

Brother Agathon's answer reveals his respect for the authorities of the day. He told the Brothers that, if they could foresee the intentions of the National Assembly regarding the Institute, they would have to conform. However, since they did not know them and could not foresee what they would be, it was prudent "to suspend the renewal of triennial vows this year" (RA CD 261-1/24).

General Idea of the Institute

After the National Assembly suppressed the "Regular Orders" on February 13th 1790, there was a real danger that it would proceed to pass laws putting an end also to "secular congregations". It was at this point that the Superiors published a text intended to make the Institute better known especially to their new political masters.

> There are two copies in the Generalate archives of the *General Idea of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. The first (CL 600/26) is a photocopy of 12-page text in-12°, printed in Paris, whose original can be found in the National Archives (cf. Rigault III, 4, note 1). The second copy (CL 600/29-1), with the same title, has 43 pages in-12°, and was printed in Angers. This latter copy develops more fully the sections it has in common with the Paris copy, and gives additional information relating to the house in Angers.

The text begins by stating clearly the reasons for its publication and giving an outline of its contents:

> "As the Brothers of the Christian Schools fear, perhaps unjustifiably, that they will be caught up in the general suppression of religious orders, or suffer changes in their vows, constitutions and regime, they feel it necessary to inform the public regarding 1° their Institute, its origin, its purpose, its organisation and its regime; 2° their material situation; 3° the need and usefulness of the charity schools; 4° the answers to the objections that are levelled against it". The Angers text includes three other points relating to the school in that town.

Addresses to the National Assembly

The circumstances which led to these two "Addresses" being sent to members of the National Assembly were described in the previous chapter (page 189).

> These two texts can be found in RA CL 600/25. The first text, seven pages long, in-12°, printed in Paris and entitled "Address to the National Assembly on behalf of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", was signed by 18 professed Brothers from Paris, and by Brother Philippe de Jésus, Procurator General of the Institute. The second text, three pages long, in-8°, printed in Melun, was entitled "Address to the National Assembly. From the Regime of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". The printing costs indicated in the account book of Melun (RA CB 153) are dated July 29th and October 31st 1790, and so we know exactly when these texts were published.

In the first "Address", the Brothers expressed their fear that their Institute might disappear. If that should happen, they asked that its members be given "a pension in proportion to their age" and, a note in the margin adds, "services".

The purpose of the second "Address" was to ask that they be treated in the same way as the orders which had already been suppressed.

Profile of the Institute

The documents we have mentioned above make it possible for us to describe the situation of the Institute in a year which was the last one in which it could function more or less normally.

"Moral state"

It is especially the circular dated May 12th 1790 which enables us to obtain some idea of what it calls the "moral state" of the Institute.

The circular begins by stating that there are some Brothers with triennial vows who have said they wished to renew them, and that there are others who have remained silent. When it goes on to speak of the possible consequences of not renewing these vows, it becomes clear that not all these **young Brothers** think along the same lines.

Speaking of the Brothers with triennial vows, the circular notes, on the one hand, that "the suppression of the renewal must not in any way weaken the resolution of those of them who have a true vocation"; and on the other, that if this suppression was for some "an opportunity to abandon their state", there was no reason to regret this fact, because "it is only those who have no vocation or who have lost it by their infidelities and their laxity who leave us". There follows a description of these latter Brothers, which is similar to what Brother Paschal wrote in his memorandum. When it comes to speaking of the Brothers who have a true vocation and who run no risk of leaving, the circular adopts quite a different tone.

Turning its attention to **the Brothers as a whole**, the circular mentions "some laxity in regular observance in some of our houses", and says that "the events of the time trouble, agitate and worry certain weak spirits". In such circumstances, the Brothers need to give one another mutual support, and not let themselves be swept off their feet, so that, even if they were certain that the Institute would soon be dissolved, "none of them should have occasion to desire it or to reproach us with having brought it upon ourselves by our laxity or our lack of zeal for the instruction of children". The circular goes on to say, however: "Even if there are some hotheads, some weak and discouraged spirits, some ill-intentioned and untrustworthy Brothers, and some whose imagination has run riot, these are few in number".

Even if the description is sometimes laboured, the situation does not seem to have been exaggerated or embellished. This is confirmed by subsequent events.

Fundamental elements

The *General Idea of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* is particularly valuable because it highlights the elements which the Brothers considered to be absolutely fundamental for their Institute, and which, consequently, had to be preserved by every means possible.

The vows

Among the motives which led the Brothers to make their Institute better known, was the fear that their vows would be suppressed, in the same way as the solemn vows of the "regulars" had been. For this reason, the *General Idea of the Institute* begins by showing how the vows of the Brothers were different from solemn vows: they were simple and perpetual; they could not be made before the age of 25, and then only after five years of community life; no one could be obliged to make them "whatever his age". It adds that these vows did not deprive the Brothers of "either their competence under civil law, nor of the possession of their patrimonial property". What is more, the Brothers could be dispensed from their vows.

The purpose of the document, however, was above all to emphasise that making vows was the means of ensuring the cohesion and continued existence of the Institute. "Without vows, they [the Brothers] could neither rely on those who joined them, nor subsequently commit themselves to provide them for any place. They could not even have any, because no one would embrace a state without either an assured future or resources. Consequently, without vows, they could not continue to exist".

Unity

The Brothers were concerned also with removing the threat of suppression which hung over the Institute. Aware that the politicians of the time had a great aversion for all kinds of "constituted bodies", they took great pains in their *General Idea of the Institute* to show that they could not be likened to "certain learned ecclesiastical bodies". "Within the State, they hardly represented the shadow of a corporation".

Having stated that the number of children taught gratuitously by the Brothers was a motive for their being allowed to continue rendering this service to the Nation, the text stresses the absolute necessity to maintain "their unity as a society in the form in which it exists". In support,

it lists the advantages of its system of government, provided by the "General Régime" of the Institute.

The first "Address to the National Assembly" based its case on the fact that, when the State had taken possession of Church property, it had not touched that of charitable and teaching institutions. Believing that they too could be counted among those running such institutions, the authors of the "Address" wrote: "We like to flatter ourselves that the National Assembly will be good enough to allow us to enjoy the advantages of our association".

The social role

This modern expression sums up well what is said in the *General Idea of the Institute* under the headings: "Need and Usefulness of the Charity Schools", "Usefulness of the Gratuitous Schools and of the Instruction of the Poor", and "Supposed Disadvantages of the Instruction of the Artisans and of the Poor". The text develops broadly these themes, which the Brothers had so much at heart. It does so in general terms, using a line of reasoning already adopted in other circumstances. It highlights, nonetheless, the degree to which the Brothers were attached to their role as Christian educators and effective teachers of the children "of the artisans and the poor".

In their first "Address to the National Assembly", the Brothers expressed their fear that their Institute might disappear and, in their own support, they stressed the disinterestedness with which they contributed to "the general good of the country and of religion". They expressed also their desire to carry on working in this way, if possible, for the rest of their lives.

Some figures

The documents we have been examining in this supplement also contain information about the property and resources of the Institute, and provide us with some statistical data.

Property and resources

When the Superiors distributed copies of the *General Idea of the Institute*, or sent their two "Addresses" to the members of the National Assembly, one of their main preoccupations was the provision of a pension for the Brothers in the event of the Institute being suppressed. In support of their claim for a pension, the second part of the booklet is devoted to demonstrating that, if the Institute were suppressed, it did not have the resources necessary to provide for the future of its members. It gave the following figures:

♦ The funds provided for the upkeep of a Brother of the Christian Schools amounted to between 300 and 500 livres, which was just enough to provide for his needs.

♦ Income from boarding schools served to maintain: 80 novices, who paid nothing for their keep, and about 30 who paid for their first year's keep (the total figure refers to the two years preceding first vows); 30 or so young Brothers doing studies; old and infirm Brothers; Brothers used as supply teachers.

♦ To meet these expenses "necessary for its continued existence", the Institute had acquired the houses known as St Yon, La Rossignolerie, Charlemagne; houses in Marseilles, Montpellier, part of the house in St Omer. In these houses it had put up buildings and opened boarding schools. In addition, it possessed houses in Paris (rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs), Dieppe, Nîmes, Alais, Montélimar, Melun and Marseilles (La Roquette).

♦ The income from endowments set up by the Institute "would not give each one 3 louis of 24 livres each". A note mentions 60,000 livres per year.

Statistical data

The *General Idea of the Institute* and the first "Address to the National Assembly" state that "The Brothers of the Christian Schools form an association within the Kingdom of about 1,000 members distributed among 116 houses". It is said also that nearly 450 Brothers "are employed in charity schools". The total of 116 houses corresponds with the figure given in the list drawn up by Brother Salomon in 1789. According to that list, there were 883 brothers at that time.

We can compare this figure of "about 1,000" with those given in the document drawn up at the beginning of 1791 (see page 75). The table that follows is based on this document. It shows how many Brothers who had made their novitiate at St Yon, Montauban, Dole and Maréville were still in the Institute on January 1st of that year. The figures for Avignon are dated April 12th of the same year.

Novitiates	Professed	With triennial or no vows	Total
St Yon	242	108	350
Montauban	9	*	9
Dole	60	*	60
Maréville	107	93	200
Avignon	138	107	245
Totals	**556**	**308**	**864**

According to these figures, the total number of Brothers in 1790 was fairly short of "about 1,000". In 1791, novices cannot be added to this figure because the novitiates were no longer functioning, and those who had made their novitiate in 1789-1790 were already included. Perhaps it was thought that a figure rounded up to 1,000 would be more impressive than an exact figure based on a constantly changing situation.

Volume II of Brother Lucard's "Annales" contains another set of figures for 1790. According to him, there were 920 Brothers, 35,713 pupils and 123 "establishments". These figures call for some comment.

♦ The number of "establishments", or more exactly, "houses" does not correspond with the figure given above. Several of the "establishments" included in his list do not appear on the one drawn up by Brother Salomon, either because they had been closed, as in Cannes and most definitely in Caen; or because they had never been opened, as was the case in Douai, Arras and Tours.

♦ As in the statistics given for 1779, the number of boarders at Maréville is certainly incorrect.

♦ In the Generalate archives at present, there are no statistics for 1790 which can corroborate those of Brother Lucard. This explains the phrase "according to the list drawn up by Brother Lucard" which is used whenever his figures are referred to.

Conclusion

The texts on which our research was based in this supplement were written in response to immediate circumstances. In those which were intended for the constituted authorities, the Brothers clearly tried to present their case in a light that was likely to attract the sympathy of these authorities. This can be seen when they refer to the vows or to the society they formed. Their insistence on the service they rendered by running gratuitous schools is also easily understandable. They stressed also, for example, "their resemblance to the class of people for whom they were especially established" (*General Idea*, 6).

It is interesting also to note how the Brothers introduced into their texts vocabulary and expressions which had come into use since the beginning of the Revolution. They go so far as to speak of the "supreme being" in an attempt, one must imagine, to make themselves understood by those whose religious sentiments were limited to a vague deism. There is one page in particular which is striking in this regard. It contains questions such as the following: "If the artisans and the poor do not learn to read, how will they become acquainted with the rights of man?" and "In a

legislation which gives all men equal rights . . . is there still room for men who are indifferent and neglected?" (21).

Despite this, the texts show clearly that the Brothers were still faithful to the path traced out for them by their Founder.

♦ When they presented their Institute at the beginning of the *General Idea of the Institute*, they stated: "The constitution of the Brothers of the Christian Schools forbade them accession to the priesthood and the exercise of any function in the church". As this posed no problems, they did not stress this point subsequently.

♦ We saw that the Brothers attached a great deal of importance to the maintenance of their "society", to the way it functioned, and to its form of government.

♦ The indication of the number of Brothers "employed in charity schools", and the emphasis on the fact that the Brothers "teach gratuitously" enabled the Brothers to highlight the contribution of the Institute to Christian education and to the instruction of the children "of the artisans and the poor".

It is hardly surprising that the *General Idea of the Institute* stresses, in the way it does, the role played by the vows, when we remember the importance that seems to have been given them in the Institute in the 18th century. Perhaps we see more clearly in this document than anywhere else, the extent to which these vows were considered to be an indispensable means of ensuring the cohesion and permanence of the Institute.

Brother Assistants from 1767 to the suppression of the Institute (1792)

In an attempt to defuse the conflict with the Archdiocese of Rouen, the 1767 General Chapter accepted the resignation of Brother Claude and his Assistants. The two new Assistants of Brother Florence came from Chartres. Their temperaments differed greatly: Brother Exupère had an impetuous nature and was lively of speech; Brother Anaclet was prudent and showed moderation.

Brother **Exupère** (Michel Fouré, **1708-1782**). Novice in 1732, final profession in 1736. Director at Nancy, Maréville and St Omer; Procurator General. Brother Exupère was Director at Meaux when he was elected Assistant to Brother Florence in 1767. After 1777, he was at Melun where he died in 1782.

Brother **Anaclet** (Gabriel Vallée, **1720-1789**). Novice in 1738, also Director in Nancy, then in Belley. In 1771, as Assistant, he accompanied Brother Dosithée (Nicolas Tirode) to Rome to clarify the situation. After 1777, he was at St Yon and then at Nîmes where he died in 1789.

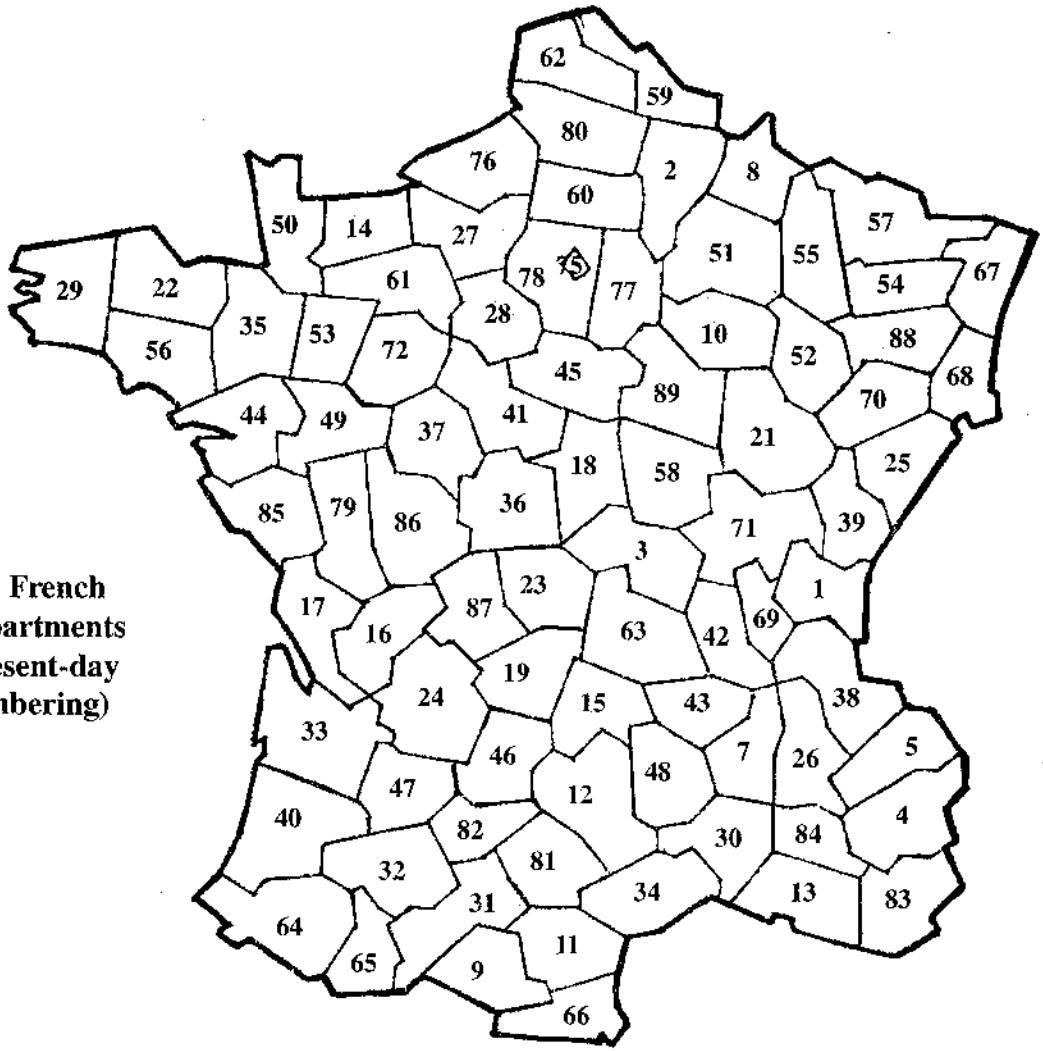
In 1777 also, a completely new team takes over at the head of the Institute. Brother Agathon has three Assistants, one of whom will be replaced in 1787.

Brother **Paschal** (Louis François Demarquet). Born in **1728** in the diocese of Noyon. Novice in 1747, final profession in 1754. He was Director in Cahors when he was elected Assistant in 1777. (See his Memorandum page 136ff.)

Brother **Sylvestre** (Barthélemy Thévenin, **1729-1799**). Born in Grenoble, novice in Avignon in 1748, final profession in 1755. He was Director at Arles when, in 1777, he was chosen secretary to the Chapter and elected Assistant.

Brother **Zachée** (Jean Philippe Lagrand). Born in **1720** in the diocese of Cambrai. Novice at St Yon in 1735, final profession at Avignon in 1742. **Assistant from 1777 to 1787**. He was Director at Montauban when, in 1791, his community refused to take their pupils to Masses celebrated by juring priests.

Brother **Lothaire** (J. B. Claude Clerc, **1739-1809**). Novice at Dôle in 1760, perpetual profession in 1766. Director of the novitiate in Maréville, Secretary General, then **Assistant in 1787**. In 1791, he took refuge with some Sisters. He returned to the Brothers shortly before his death (cf. pages 266 and 271).



The French Departments (present-day numbering)

1 Ain 2 Aisne 3 Allier 4 Bases-Alpes 5 Hautes-Alpes 7 Ardèche 8 Ardennes 9 Ariège 10 Aube 11 Aude 12 Aveyron 13 Bouches-du-Rhône 14 Calvados 15 Cantal 16 Charente 17 Charente-Inférieure 18 Cher 19 Corrèze 20 Corse 21 Côte-d'Or 22 Côtes-du-Nord 23 Creuse 24 Dordogne 25 Doubs 26 Drôme 27 Eure 28 Eure-et-Loir 29 Finistère 30 Gard 31 Haute-Garonne 32 Gers 33 Gironde 34 Hérault 35 Ile-et-Vilaine 36 Indre 37 Indre-et-Loire 38 Isère 39 Jura 40 Landes 41 Loir-et-Cher 42 Loire 43 Haute-Loire 44 Loire-Inférieure 45 Loiret 46 Lot 47 Lot-et-Garonne 48 Lozère 49 Maine-et-Loire 50 Manche 51 Marne 52 Haute-Marne 53 Mayenne 54 Meurthe 55 Meuse 56 Morbihan 57 Moselle 58 Nièvre 59 Nord 60 Oise 61 Orne 62 Pas-de-Calais 63 Puy-de-Dôme 64 Basses-Pyrénées 65 Hautes-Pyrénées 66 Pyrénées-Orientales 67 Bas Rhin 68 Haut-Rhin 69 Rhône 70 Haute-Saône 71 Saône-et-Loire 72 Sarthe 75 Seine 76 Seine-Inférieure 77 Seine-et-Marne 78 Seine-et-Oise 79 Deux-Sèvres 80 Somme 81 Tarn 82 Tarn-et-Garonne 83 Var 84 Vaucluse 85 Vendée 86 Vienne 87 Haute-Vienne 88 Vosges 89 Yonne.

PART FOUR

DESTRUCTION (1791–1804)

Part Four is divided into four chapters

Chapter Eleven

Two Crucial Years for the Institute (1791–1792)

Introduction

The National Assembly had passed laws relating to religious matters as early as 1790. In particular, on July 12th 1790, it had adopted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. This law, however, began to be applied properly only from the beginning of 1791.

At the same time as the implementation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was beginning to produce results, the Assembly, which had already suppressed the Regular Orders, was preparing to dissolve the "Secular Congregations" and, hence, the Institute. However, the laws relating to this measure were passed only on August 18th 1792.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy and its repercussions on the Institute

When the French Revolution began, there was nothing to suggest that the Catholic Church had in its midst a number of diehard opponents. There were, in fact, many members of the clergy and laity in France who supported the reforms. In 1789, the clergy delegates were the first to support the Third Estate when it set itself up as the National Assembly. The break between quite a considerable part of the Church in France and those who gave their unconditional support to the Revolution would be brought about by the determination of the Assembly to impose new rules on the Church, which those who were most attached to the Catholic faith could not in conscience accept.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy

Before we consider how the authorities began applying this law only in January 1791, although it had been passed in 1790, we need to spend a little time examining its contents.

In its campaign to rationalise the administration of the country, the Assembly sought also to rationalise the organisation of the Church: it created a diocese in each of the 83 new administrative areas called "departments", and these dioceses were grouped into 10 archdioceses. In addition, the number of parishes was reduced.

In line with the spirit of the age, bishops were to be elected by their "department", and parish priests by their "district" (a sub-division of the department).

There were many lawyers in the Assembly. "Hostility towards Rome and to all papal interference was widespread among its members, as was opposition to any kind of court of appeal against the decrees of the Assembly" (Furet, 1989, 94). In response to the pressure exerted by these lawyers, the Assembly pushed its "Gallicanism" to the limit by decreeing that the bishops would receive their powers from the archbishops, and would simply inform the Pope of their appointment "as a sign of the unity of faith and communion they were bound to maintain with him" (Bannon, 1992, 13).

Since the clergy had lost their former sources of income, the State assumed responsibility for bishops and parish priests, who in this way became "ecclesiastical employees".

While this scheme was still under discussion, the parish priests who were members of the Assembly had been mostly in favour, while the bishops had had their reservations. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy was adopted by the Assembly on July 12th 1790. The two bishops who were members of the Royal Council urged the King to promulgate the Constitution. He did so, signing the document on August 24th, when it became law. A few days later, he received a confidential letter from Pope Pius VI who, however, hesitated to make his official position known.

The law was published, but was not applied immediately. Among the supporters of the Revolution, there were those who were impatient about this delay. Among Catholics, the opposition to the law was growing. Archbishop Boisgelin of Aix, speaking in the name of the bishops in the Assembly, including the more liberal and the more Gallican ones among them, published a document on October 30th 1790, entitled: "A Statement regarding the principles involved in the Civil Constitution of the Clergy". In it he set out clearly what could and what could not be accepted.

The Assembly decided to precipitate matters. A decree dated November 27th 1790 obliged bishops and parish priests in office to take an oath of loyalty to the nation, to the law and to the King, and to support with all their strength the constitution decreed by the Assembly and endorsed by the King.

In the wording of the oath, which was included in the decree of the Assembly, the term "Constitution" was ambiguous. Was it referring to the Constitution of the Kingdom or to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy? It seems clear that the word referred to the constitutional document drawn up by the Assembly. As this document included the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the decision to take the oath or not reflected agreement or opposition to this latter document.

The Pope stated his position by means of two briefs, the first dated March 10th 1791 and the second the following April 13th. He condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and threatened to suspend from their functions the "jurors" who did not retract. The Catholics of France were divided into two camps: those who supported the "constitutional clergy" and formed a national Church in favour of the Revolution; and those who supported the "refractory" clergy and remained faithful to the Pope and were opposed to the Revolution. There were also. of course, those who changed sides.

Repercussions of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy on the Institute

The implementation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy posed an immediate problem for the Brothers: what should their attitude be towards the clergy elected according to the Constitution?

Br Agathon sent the Brothers a document as a guide, entitled: "Regarding the line of conduct the Brothers of the Christian Schools should follow with regard to unqualified bishops and parish priests". In his document, the Superior General did not give general directives, but invited the Brothers to consult ecclesiastics who were loyal to the Pope and to ask them what their conduct should be. As for himself, he said that to support the constitutional clergy "would be an abomination, and that there could be no justification for a Brother of the Christian Schools abandoning his Founder's attachment to the Holy See and to the body of bishops" (quoted in Rigault III, 69).

These directives were useful because the Brothers were forced to face this problem. In Paris, the Brothers refused to take their pupils to Masses celebrated by priests who accepted the Constitution of the Clergy. In the face of the hostility this aroused towards them, they withdrew from their schools.

On April 15th 1791, the Brothers at Noyon were asked to explain why they refused to take their pupils to Mass. Brother Aubert, the Director, justified his attitude by saying that:

"While we do not take our pupils to offices celebrated by constitutional priests, we leave them free to attend them alone or with their parents. We adopt the same attitude towards Jewish or heretical children when we have some in our classes" (quoted in Rigault III, 94).

At Versailles, the Brothers declared to the Town Council that they had come "to claim the freedom of opinion decreed by the National assembly". They said they were ready to continue with their work, but on condition they were dispensed from taking their pupils to Mass.

The obligation which bishops and priests had to take the oath did not apply to the Brothers. This was recognised by two delegates from Brest on February 9th 1791. They added, however, that, if the Brothers wished, they could take a civic oath "open to all citizens" (quoted in Rigault III, 54).

This was the oath which the Brothers were supposedly asked to make, if we believe a document of a later date in which the Brothers are accused of "not taking the oath ordered by the law of December 26th 1790" (RA CK 564/13).

On March 22nd 1791, the Assembly made it obligatory for all persons to take the civic oath if they worked "in an educational establishment, and, if they were ecclesiastics, to take the oath proper to public ecclesiastical employees" (quoted in Rigault III, 54).

The last part of the quotation above makes a clear distinction between the "civic oath" and the oath required of "public ecclesiastical employees". While the wording of these two oaths was slightly different, the obligation they imposed was the same. In future, when it is a question of either of these oaths in the present work, we shall refer to them as "constitutional oaths" for the sake of simplicity. In any case, both oaths referred to the Constitution.

In response to the opposition this new measure aroused, the Assembly decreed on April 15th 1792 that those who refused to take the required oath would lose their job. The Brothers, at least those who worked in gratuitous schools, could not escape the obligation to take the oath. On the other hand, the Tabourin Brothers, who ran schools which were not considered to be public, were exempt from the obligation.

With a view to providing his Brothers with guidance and support, the Superior General consulted a certain ecclesiastic who wrote for them "Some thoughts about the traps that ill-intentioned persons try to set for the religious beliefs and good faith of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" (RA CD 254-1/27).

The writer indicates first the appropriate attitude to adopt towards "false pastors, unqualified priests, schismatics". Next he speaks about the obligation to take the oath. Whereas the decree of November 27th 1790 did not concern the Brothers, this was not the case for that of March 22nd 1791. Since "the articles of the Constitution of the Clergy were part of the Constitution of the State, they were all also the object of the civic oath". Since, on several points, the National Assembly had taken up a position "opposed to the dogmas of the Catholic Church", the only possible attitude towards the oath was to refuse to take it.

This long text envisages what the consequences of such a refusal could be, and then gives a certain number of directives if it becomes clear that the dissolution of the Institute is inevitable. Brother Agathon obviously endorsed this text since it was he who sent it to the Brothers.

To what extent did the directives communicated in this way to the members of the Institute serve as a guide for them when it came to making significant decisions? There is no way of knowing. We do know, however, that some Brothers followed them even to the point of heroism. This was not so in the case of others. As we need to go into this whole question in greater detail, we shall do so in the supplement that follows this chapter.

The process that led to the suppression of the Institute

As early as 1790, even before the consequences of the vote for the Civil Constitution of the Clergy began to take a concrete form, Brother Agathon had perceived the threats to the continued existence of the Institute. As a consequence, he had taken steps to ensure that the Brothers would have the means to survive if the Institute disappeared. However, the decision leading to the suppression of the Institute would be made only after quite a long process.

The last months of the National Assembly

From the outset, the intention of the National Assembly had always been to round off its legislation in religious matters by the suppression of the "Secular Congregations". It hesitated, however, to legislate in this matter. Many of the members of these congregations were involved in charitable works or education, and it would be difficult to replace them. As far as the teaching congregations were concerned, the Assembly wanted to set up a system of State education before moving against them.

Talleyrand, who was responsible for drawing up an overall educational plan for the country, submitted his report to his colleagues only in September 1791. On September 14th, the Assembly restricted itself to approving it in principle. Talleyrand asked the Assembly to examine his plan, set out in 35 articles, on September 25th. The Assembly, however, decided to postpone the discussion till the next legislature. This Assembly, which replaced the States General in 1789, dissolved itself on September 30th 1791.

In the meantime, the constitutional bishop of Oise had drawn up a report on the congregations, in which he proposed that the teachers "employed in houses of education" should be kept on in a private capacity till they could be replaced. The report never came up for discussion.

The Legislative Assembly in its one year of existence

The Legislative Assembly, provided for by the Constitution of 1791, began its work on October 1st 1791, with the firm intention of legislating in the two areas we have indicated. With this in view:

- ♦ On October 14th it set up a "Committee of Public Instruction". The role exercised in this committee by Condorcet was similar to Talleyrand's in the previous Assembly.
- ♦ On October 23rd, Fauchet, the constitutional bishop of Calvados, invited the Assembly to pass a law to suppress the surviving religious congregations.

The threat of suppression had now become more real for the Institute. Brother Agathon asked the Sovereign Pontiff to establish a simpler method of dispensing the Brothers from their vows. On November 15th 1791, he received an answer from the Sacred Penitentiary which granted his request. The Superior set about once again to look for ways of ensuring that the Brothers had an adequate pension in the eventuality of the Institute's suppression. He sent a reprint of his 1790 memorandum with a postscript to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

Other steps followed. A letter sent to a number of Assembly delegates asked for the passing of "the decree of suppression to be hastened" and, after the dissolution, for the property belonging to the Institute "to be considered as belonging to the Nation" so that, in exchange, the State could allocate a fixed income to the former members of the Congregation.

At the beginning of 1792, Br Philippe de Jésus made contact with some influential members of the Assembly. Among these there was Brissot, who was connected with the family of Brother Salomon, and Condorcet himself. However, this contact did not produce any immediate effects.

Condorcet's Plan

Seeing education as a means of forging unity among the population, the various Revolutionary assemblies entrusted certain of their members with the task of drawing up plans for a system of education. These plans sought to extend the benefits of instruction to the population as a whole, and to broaden the curriculum to include all branches of learning. Condorcet's plan in his Report on Public Instruction stands out because of the means he advocates to achieve this dual purpose.

Taking as his premiss the statement that "society must provide State education for its citizens" (quoted in Prellezo and Lanfranchi, 1995, 2, 188), Condorcet draws a certain number of conclusions.

♦ Instruction must be gratuitous for everybody, its cost met by the State. The State (and no longer the Church as before) must exercise control over it. Instruction, however, cannot be obligatory, because, like freedom, it cannot be imposed.

♦ Girls must benefit from instruction to the same extent as boys. In addition, Condorcet advocated mixed education for boys and girls, something the Church had always forbidden up till then. This same negative attitude would appear in a number of subsequent plans.

♦ The plan proposed five levels of instruction. At the lowest level, there would be primary schools, one for every 400 inhabitants. These would be followed by secondary schools — "institutes" and "lycées". The final stage of education would be provided in a "National Society for the Arts and Sciences".

For each of these levels, Condorcet provided a programme of studies based on the ideas developed previously in plans inspired by the ideas of the "philosophes".

During this same period, on February 10th 1792, a report on secular congregations was submitted to the Assembly by the former Oratorian Gaudin. He had much praise for the Brothers, but he considered that "their association, founded under the patronage of the Jesuits, had always shared the latter's fanaticism and intolerance" (quoted in Rigault II, 206). The Assembly postponed a consideration of this document. It probably wished to give Condorcet enough time to draw up his plan for a national system of education.

On April 6th, another former Oratorian claimed that a report on the religious congregations should be given priority. The wording of the report was so violent that both Condorcet and Brisson objected to it and had reservations. Torné, a constitutional bishop, won the support of the Assembly when he suggested that religious congregations should be considered similar to corporations "which a truly free State could not tolerate in its midst" (quoted by Rigault III, 209).

The Committee of Public Instruction then proceeded to help Torné to give his ideas a more concrete form. In the course of the same week, Condorcet presented his plan for the organisation of education.

The examination of the proposed law on secular congregations continued from the end of April till August 1792. The Procurator of the Institute continued to lobby members of the Legislative Assembly. He concentrated in particular on Brissot in the hope of obtaining a better settlement for the Brothers after the dissolution of their Institute.

In August 1792, one event followed another in quick succession. The uprising on August 10th brought about the fall of the monarchy. On August 14th, the Assembly created the new oath of "liberty and equality". The promises of loyalty to the King in previous oaths no longer applied. The Legislative Assembly decided to make way for a "National Convention", whose task would be to draw up a new Constitution.

On August 18th, the Convention passed a law which suppressed secular congregations and confraternities. Article 1 read as follows: "Lay congregations such as that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools . . . are extinct and suppressed from the date of the publication of the present decree". The usefulness of teaching congregations was recognised, however. Article 6 imposed the following obligation: "All members of congregations employed at present in the public education sector" are obliged to continue "to exercise their functions in a private capacity", until the definitive organisation of the educational system.

The size of the "payment" made to members of suppressed congregations depended on whether they were placed in category 1 or 2: those placed in category 2 received only half the amount given to those in category 1. "The members of the secular congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools" were placed in the second category, despite all the efforts made by the representatives of the Institute to ensure better treatment. However, perhaps all their efforts were not in vain, since the payment granted to the youngest and eldest Brothers was increased.

However, the law also said: "Members of secular congregations who were obliged to take the civic oath or the oath proper to ecclesiastical employees as stated in the decrees of November 27th–December 26th 1790, March 21st–23rd and April 4th–6th 1791, and who cannot produce evidence that they fulfilled this formality, have no right to any payment". Those who qualified to receive a pension (but who were not public employees) would now have to take the new oath in order to benefit from it.

Extract from the law of August 18th 1792

Heading III, Chapter II. Lay Congregations. § I. Lay persons employed in education.

"Art. 1: The members of the secular congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools will receive a payment which is half of the payment allocated to the first category . . . namely:

"1° Fifty livres per year paid as a one-off sum for those who have lived in the congregation for five consecutive years and less;

"2° Ten livres pension for each year in the congregation for those who have been in it for 10 years inclusively;

"3° Finally, fifteen livres for each year in the congregation for those who have been in it more than 15 years.

"The maximum total of individual payments will be 900 livres" (RA CL 601-2/11)

Conclusion

Because of the obligation to take the constitutional oath, a certain number of Brothers who had refused had to leave their schools and, in many cases, leave the Institute. After the suppression of the Institute, all the Brothers were in the same situation: sooner or later they would have to disperse, even if some remained together to run schools or continue to lead some form of community life.

They had to find the means to survive. This meant, in particular, trying to obtain the pension granted by the law of August 18th 1792, either requesting it as a group, or doing so individually. Those who were entitled to a pension had to clarify their own position regarding the "liberty and equality" oath if they wished to claim it.

As time passed, they had to choose between leading lives as close as possible to the state they had embraced on entering the Institute, or opting for a different state of life by marrying. The period that followed would be particularly revealing in this regard.

Your dealings with us at all times are a very flattering testimony that all the trouble we have taken to deserve your trust has not been in vain, and we find a new proof of this in the letter that you did us the the honour to write to us on the 4th of this month.

We would double, Gentlemen, if it were possible, our zeal and exactitude in the fulfilment of all our duties in order to continue to benefit from your benevolence, but however much we may wish to procure this advantage for us, we have to inform you, Gentlemen, that we are firmly resolved not to contract any other obligations apart from those we undertook at the foot of the altar, consecrating ourselves to God to procure his glory and the public good as far as we are able.

It is with these dispositions that we have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, Gentlemen, your very humble and very obedient Servants.

At St Malo, this 6th day of July 1792

Brother Auguste, Director of the Christian School
Br Moniteur, Professed; Br Luc, Professed.

— Supplement Eleven —
The Brothers and the Constitutional Oath

According to the terms of the decree of March 22nd 1791, Brothers who taught in gratuitous schools were considered to be exercising their profession in establishments belonging to the department of "public instruction". By virtue of this decree, they were therefore required to take the "civic oath".

Brothers who worked in boarding schools or who did not teach did not have to take the oath. However, local authorities in various places insisted on the Brothers taking the oath.

In either case, the Brothers were faced with the choice of submitting to the law or refusing to do so. Faced with such a choice, how did the Brothers react, and what were the consequences for them? We shall try to answer these questions in this supplement.

The various attitudes adopted by the Brothers

All we can do in this supplement is to give a few examples of how the Brothers reacted when they were asked to take the oath.

Brothers who refused to take the oath

Sometimes the refusal to take the oath went hand-in-hand with a refusal to have dealings with constitutional priests. For example, in May 1791, Brother Amand de Jésus, Director of the house in Toulouse, told the municipal officers that he could not "have the children taken to Mass" unless it was celebrated by a priest who had not taken the oath. He added that he would not take an oath which was "repugnant to his conscience". The six other Brothers in the community drew up a declaration in the same vein and signed it (RA CL 60161/15).

At Vannes, the five Brothers were summoned to take the oath on May 26th 1791. Their refusal was recorded as follows: "They will not take the oath prescribed by the law for public employees, and they will never recognise M. Le Masle as bishop of Morbihan" (quoted in Rigault III, 101).

The refusal to take the oath was unanimous in many communities. For example, the Brothers of St Brieuc informed the mayor on May 18th 1791 that they preferred to give up their school rather than take the oath (cf. Rigault III, 101).

The Brothers in St Malo were left in peace for a long time. Finally, on July 6th 1792, Brothers Auguste, Moniteur and Luc wrote to the municipal authorities, saying: "We would double, Gentlemen, if it were possible, our zeal and exactitude in the fulfilment of all our duties in order to continue to benefit from your benevolence. However much we may wish to procure this advantage for ourselves, we have to inform you, Gentlemen, that we are firmly resolved not to contract any other obligations apart from those we undertook at the foot of the altar, when we consecrated ourselves to God to procure his glory and the public good as far as we are able" (quoted in Rigault III, 119; see the illustration on page 212)

The town authorities of Rouen insisted on the Brothers at St Yon taking the oath, even though they were not obliged to do so by the law. On June 3rd 1791, the 60 Brothers at St Yon were summoned to state their intentions individually. The refusal to take the oath was unanimous. In the report, it was noted that the Director of the house, Brother Aventin, "declared that he had no intention at all at present to take the oath". Another Brother said that he would not take the oath "for the time being" (quoted in Rigault III, 108-109).

A community's unanimity in refusing to take the oath did not preclude reservations on the part of individuals. For example, when the Brothers in Rheims were asked on June 21st 1791 to state their intentions regarding the oath, two of them declared that they were unable to do so till such time as the Assembly declared what the fate of the Institute would be; and a third Brother said he was not prepared to take the oath "at this particular moment".

Not all communities were unanimous in refusing to take the oath: a certain number were prepared to accept the law. This was the case at Amiens, where two out of eight Brothers took the oath.

Brothers who took the oath

Brothers in some communities agreed to take the oath but voiced reservations which, in their eyes, restricted the significance of their action. An example of this is provided by the six Brothers of Lisieux who, when they took their oath on June 4th 1791, swore that they would be "faithful to the nation, the law, the King, and would uphold the constitution, decreed by the National Assembly and endorsed by the King, in all that was not contrary to the rights of spiritual authority, nor to the Catholic, apostolic and Roman faith, in which we wish to live and to die" (quoted in Rigault III, 104). The town authorities refused to accept the wording of the oath. In Laon, on the other hand, the town authorities accepted the Brothers' formula which contained reservations, because they wanted to keep them in the town (cf. Rigault III, 98).

There were communities in which all the members or the majority decided to obey the law and take the oath.

Brothers who took the oath and those who refused to do so

Is there any way of assessing what proportion of the Brothers who were ordered to take the oath accepted or refused?

In the second volume of the *Annales de l'Institut*, Brother Lucard wrote: "There were only three or four Brothers in the Institute who took the oath" (580, note 2). Evidently, he did not carry his research very far.

In one of the articles Brother Frédebert Marie wrote on Brother Agathon for the *Bulletin of the Institute*, he tried to establish what was the attitude of the Brothers who were ordered to take one or other of the oaths forced upon them by the law in the years 1791 and 1792. Regarding the constitutional oath, which is our concern in this chapter, the author lists 70 places where the Brothers were ordered to take the oath. Of the 583 Brothers he mentions, it would appear that 75 obeyed orders (*Bulletin*, 1938, N° 1).

Using much of this same research in a book he published on Brother Agathon in 1957, Brother Frédebert Marie makes a few corrections. Melun is no longer given as a house where the oath was taken, and at Le Puy, only one and not eight Brothers took the oath.

Rigault, in volume III, recognises the value of this work. However, on the basis of his own research, he concludes, for example, that at Auxonne, the truth was not that five took the oath, but that four refused to do so. He challenges also the figures for those who took the oath in communities such as those in Chateaudun and Rodez. He reduces the overall number who took the oath to 50 or so. On the other hand, he does not give the number of the Brothers who refused, nor of those who were ordered to take the oath.

On the whole, the results of all this research are not very satisfying. Even though we cannot go deeper into this question in the present work, it would be useful, all the same, to pinpoint some facts which would make it possible to offer an assessment that was more precise.

First of all, there is little point in trying to establish some kind of relationship between the Brothers who took the oath and those who were still in the Institute at, say, the beginning of 1791. Not all the Brothers were required to take the oath.

Big communities, such as those of St Yon, Avignon and Maréville, have to be treated as special cases. Generally speaking, the Brothers in them were not required to take the oath. The number of Brothers in these communities is so great that they cannot be put on the same footing as communities whose Brothers were involved in "public instruction".

If we could work out what proportion of the Brothers who were working in schools and, therefore, had to take the oath, actually took it, then we would have some facts on which to base our conclusions. An attempt has been made to obtain this kind of information. On the basis of research into original documents, copies and quotations (taken mostly from material in the Generalate archives), it became possible to make a list of Brothers in 40 communities, who taught exclusively in gratuitous schools, and to ascertain their attitude to the oath. Of the 200 or so Brothers in these communities who were ordered to take the oath, only 27 did so without any reservations.

In Dijon, several Brothers were at loggerheads with Brother Dominique, their Director, whom they accused of not teaching the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of persecuting the Brothers whose opinion differed from his own. On April 17th 1791, five Brothers took the oath in various churches in the town. One Brother refused to do so, but changed his mind and took the oath on May 22nd. Only the Director refused to take the oath. Probably the serving Brother refused also (cf. Rigault III, 92).

Elsewhere, the community as a whole took the oath. In Toulon, Brother Stanislas, the nephew of Brother Bénézet, persuaded the four other members of his community to follow his example and take the oath. On March 27th 1791, he sent a letter to the town authorities of Avignon, his native town, saying he congratulated it on wishing to "walk in the footsteps of the famous lawgivers whose names would go down in history for having injected new life into the French Empire" (quoted in Rigault III, 89).

In Bayeux, Brother Damien — of whom Brother Agathon expected great things — declared to the town council on May 27th 1791 that he wished to continue teaching and was prepared to take the oath. The two other Brothers in his community followed his example.

From the evidence we have been able to gather, with all its limitations, it seems clear that the number of Brothers who refused to take the oath or did so with reservations is decidedly higher than the number of those who took it.

The consequences for the Brothers

The Institute felt the effect of the position adopted by the Brothers regarding the constitutional oath well before the decision was taken to suppress it. This is clearly stated in a letter begun by Brother Salomon on April 8th and finished on April 15th 1791, in which he writes: "They say that the Assembly will deal with us between Easter and Pentecost. It will doubtlessly announce our suppression, which will already be well under way, given the dispersion of the Brothers in the various towns where they are or will be persecuted" (quoted in Rigault III, 133).

Each time a law regarding religious matters was applied, the Institute suffered the effects.

When the Regular Orders were suppressed, the Institute was harassed in several towns, even though it did not belong to that category: inventories were made of the goods of the community, and the Brothers were asked whether they intended to remain religious or not. This happened in Nancy and Lunéville. The same thing happened in Albi, when the four Brothers were questioned on August 20th 1790 and refused to abandon their religious state (cf. RA CL 601-/2/3).

One of the effects of the threat of suppression which hung over the Institute was the departure of a certain number of Brothers, especially of those who had made no vows since 1789. This was the case in Rheims where, after 21 Brothers had taken the oath, six Brothers without vows "had considered it opportune to withdraw from the Institute" (cf. RA CL 601-1/13). We read in a letter

from a certain young Brother Seine that "he had had the happiness of belonging to the Institute for four years" — an indication of the pain felt by some Brothers at having to leave the Institute (RA CG 406-1/7). Given these departures, the novitiates, one after the other, closed their doors.

However, it was the implementation of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy which had the greatest effect on the Institute. This was due in particular to the attitude adopted by many Brothers to the clergy and the constitutional oath. We can give a few examples of the effect the different attitudes had on the Institute.

Brothers left voluntarily

Among the Brothers who took the oath, there were some, such as Brother Damien in Bayeux, who, it would seem, were motivated by a desire to continue teaching in a place where they were appreciated. However, even in cases such as this, by accepting to be bound by the religious laws of the National Assembly, these Brothers became members of a Church considered schismatic by the other Brothers, and by doing so left the Institute.

When these Brothers were sufficiently numerous, they continued to run their school or schools. If they were in a minority, they could join other Brothers in the same situation. In some cases, former Brothers came to take the place of those who had been dismissed.

At times, Brothers who had taken the oath were invited by the authorities to take the place of those who had been dismissed because of their refusal to do so. A typical case is that of Auxonne, where the town authorities contacted the Brothers of Dijon (considered as a group unconnected with the Brothers of Rouen, that is, of St Yon), with a view to replacing the four Brothers who had been dismissed from their posts (cf. town archives, Auxonne, R 1-1). Two Brothers came from Dijon, and were joined by two others who had already left the Institute. They all continued to be called Brothers, but this did not alter their true position as regards the Institute.

In some cases, these oath-taking Brothers were ordained priests by constitutional bishops, as was the case of Brother Grégoire (Gebelin Michel), ordained in Carcassonne (RA CL 601-2/17).

It has been said that the Brothers taking the oath were about 50 in number. This is a relatively small number. The Institute was nonetheless affected by this loss, which was all the more painful because of the attendant circumstances.

Brothers obliged to leave

When a majority of Brothers in a community took the oath, those who had refused had no alternative but to leave. This was the case of Brother Dominique at Dijon. The circumstances of his departure did not prevent his leaving Brother Eustase, his successor as Director, an exemplary set of accounts (RA CL 601-1/7).

The refusal to recognise the constitutional clergy, to take the oath, or to take the oath with reservations, brought with it the penalty prescribed by the decree of April 17th 1791. In most cases, Brothers who were guilty of one or other of these misdemeanours were dismissed from their schools and replaced by other teachers. Even when a part of the population objected to these changes, as happened in Moulins, the local authorities insisted on enforcing the law.

And so, throughout 1791 and in the first months of 1792, the Brothers were dismissed from one school after another. Rather than give a detailed description of these events, it seems preferable to analyse their consequences. The first consequence was that the Brothers suddenly found themselves without resources. In addition, the Brothers' living quarters and the school were often in the same building, and so when they were dismissed from the school they had to leave their community house also. If the house belonged to the Institute, its right to own it could be contested. The argument used was that, since it was Church property, it belonged to the State. This was the case in Abbeville and Montauban. In Paris, the Superiors took a stand against the departmental authorities, who maintained that since the Brothers had not taken the oath and had stopped teaching, "the Nation could take note of this fact and confiscate the house and all their property" (Deliberation of May 27th 1791: National archives Series S, N 7046, copy in RA CL 601-2/12).

The same document states that "since April 3rd, two guards had been posted . . . as much to ensure the personal safety of the Brothers as to protect their property". The threats mentioned were real, and this fact explains why most of the Brothers deserted the Maison du Saint Esprit in the parish of St Sulpice. The Brothers in Versailles were in a similar situation, as we read in a letter written by Brother Salomon between April 8th and 15th 1791 (cf. Rigault III, 83).

Deprived of resources, obliged to leave their houses with very little warning, the Brothers were forced to withdraw. Some sought the hospitality of friendly families. Many returned home. For example, the Brother Director of the community in Toulouse asked for a pass to enable the Brothers "to return quietly, each to his home area" (quoted in Rigault III, 150). On June 24th 1791, Brother Vivien (René François Gaudenne) received an obedience authorising him to go wherever he wanted (RA CD 255-1/7). He remained in contact with Brother Agathon, who entrusted a trunk to him containing objects and documents going back to the time of the holy Founder (cf. Rigault III, 216). Some Brothers went abroad. Some joined the Brothers in Italy, or in Estavayer in Switzerland. The Brothers in Avranches went to the island of Jersey.

Generally speaking, town authorities gave Brothers who had to leave a small sum of money to cover their travel expenses and the purchase of secular clothing. Others gave them the equivalent of their wages for a longer or shorter period. In most cases, the Brothers were allowed to take their personal possessions with them and share out among themselves the furniture of the house where they had lived.

Other authorities, on the contrary, were particularly unpleasant towards the Brothers who left.

There were instances also, however, where Brothers who had refused to take the oath were maintained in their school, because the town authorities were slow to replace them. In some cases, the reason for this was simply that the authorities would have to pay other teachers more, or because they were waiting for the law suppressing congregations to be passed. In any case, it was a precarious situation: local administrators were always in danger of being replaced by others with different political views. These varying attitudes on the part of authorities explain perhaps why some Brothers did not leave immediately.

In some places, the Brothers were spared: sometimes even, as happened at Les Vans, they were not obliged to take the oath. Usually, Brothers who worked in boarding schools did not have to take the oath and could stay where they were. For example, for a long time, the Brothers at Nantes, St Omer and Angers were not worried. At Maréville, it seems that the presence of custodial boarders was sufficient reason to maintain the presence of the Brothers. Even though the Brothers at St Yon had refused to take the oath, they were allowed to continue their work for a certain time. In Marseilles, on the other hand, the Brothers, who had refused to take the oath, were obliged to send their boarders away and leave.

Overall, fifty houses were lost to the Institute by the departure of the Brothers.

This is the figure given by Rigault (III, 162). He describes what happened only in the case of twenty or so of these houses. The Generalate archives give information about twenty or so others, so the figure given is probably accurate.

It is not possible, however, to say how many Brothers were obliged to leave the Institute in 1791 and in the first months of 1792. When, on January 4th 1792, Brother Philippe de Jésus, the Institute Procurator, was asked for information by the secretary of the "Property Committee", he replied that the Institute consisted of 500 professed Brothers, 220 Brothers with triennial vows, 80 who "had completed their probation and worked for at least 4 years in school" (quoted in Rigault III, 202). If we compare these figures with those drawn up at the beginning of 1791, it would appear that there were 60 or so fewer Brothers in the Institute in 1792. These figures are no more than approximate.

When Brothers had to leave the Institute, did they always do so with the Superior's permission? Did they continue to keep in contact with the Institute once they left? How many hoped to rejoin it once circumstances permitted? All one can say is that situations and personal attitudes varied. Many more changes would come about, first, as a result of the legal suppression of the Institute in August 1792, and then, because of other circumstances.

Conclusion

In describing the events above, we have been careful not to make an *a priori* judgment regarding the attitudes of the Brothers towards the constitutional oath. In particular, we have avoided calling the oath "schismatic", and considering as such those who obeyed the law. In reality, however, it is difficult not to make an implicit judgment which reflects the opinion held at the time regarding those who took the oath.

When Brother Stanislas, the Director of the Toulon community, wrote to the town authorities of Avignon on March 27th 1791, it was not only for the purpose of congratulating them: it was also to ask them to intervene and help settle a financial problem between himself and Brother Florence, the Director of the house in Avignon. Brother Stanislas said he feared that "our Brothers will not give us our pensions, because they have been calling us schismatics and apostates ever since we took the oath they refused to take" (RA CL 601-2/14). There can hardly be a clearer illustration of what the feelings were of those who refused to take the oath towards those who took it.

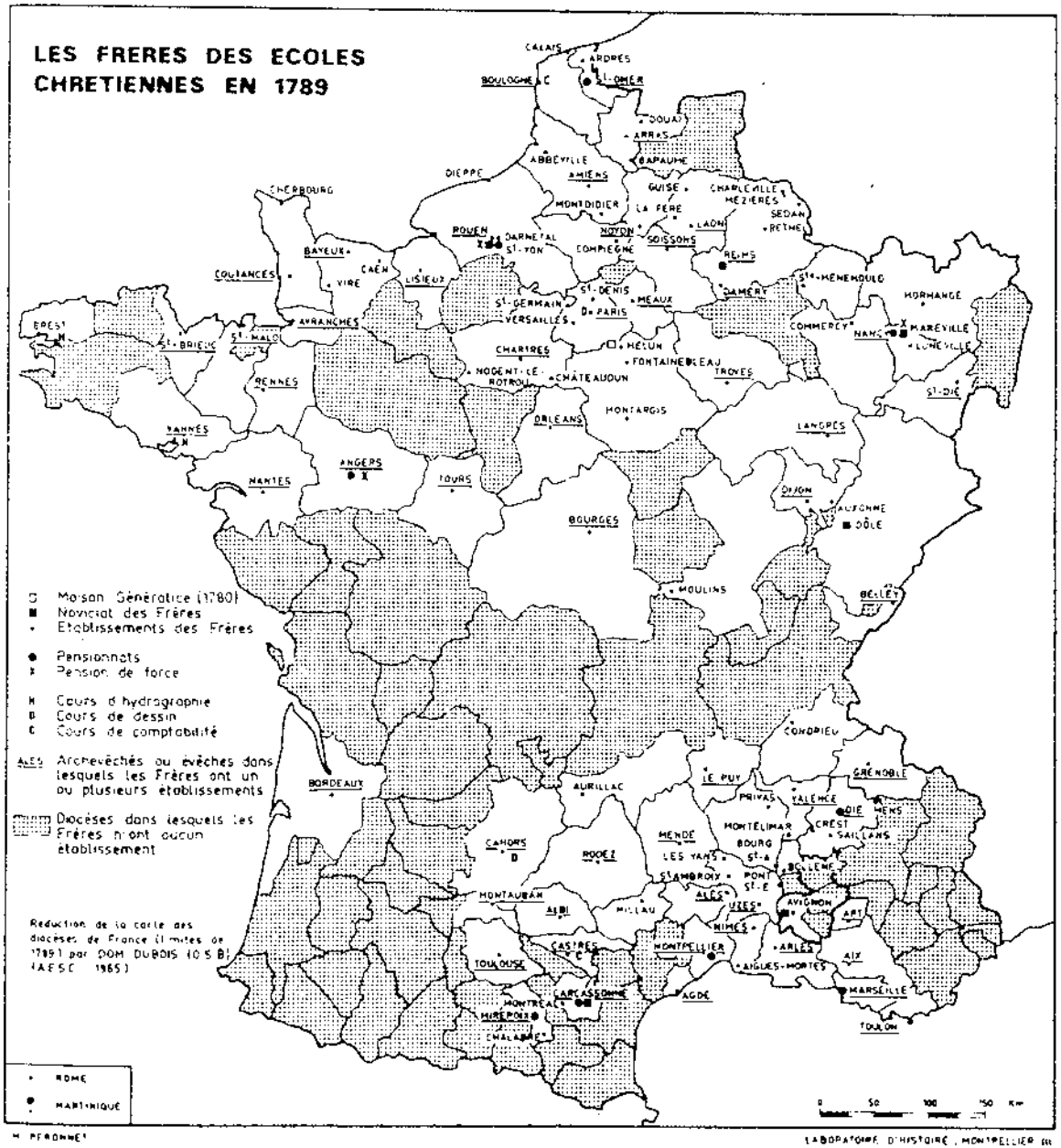
The fact is that, even if the term "constitution" was ambiguous in the wording of the oath, those who took the oath were well aware that they had to take up a position regarding the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

In one case at least we find an explicit mention of the Civil Constitution. In the official document recording the taking of the oath at Dole on June 5th 1791, it appears that Brothers Barthélemy and Michée used the following formula: "I swear to be loyal to the nation, the law and the King, and to uphold the Civil Constitution of the Clergy". Even if this was a copyist's error, the mistake is significant.

Agreeing to take the oath meant cutting oneself off from the Church which was in communion with the Pope and, for the Brothers, it meant leaving the Institute. Instructions sent out by Brother Agathon were very clear on this point.

While we are justified in thinking that some of the Brothers who refused to take the oath were influenced by their companions when making their decision (the same is true, of course, of those who took it), in the case of most, the overriding reason for their decision at this decisive moment is to be found in their profound conviction that it was not possible in conscience to obey the law.

The witness of fidelity thus given by these Brothers is without doubt the best response there is to the question we have asked ourselves at various times regarding the quality of the commitment of the Brothers who persevered in the Institute in the 18th century.



This map published in the booklet "The Brothers and their role in popular education" (Montpellier, 1981) includes some errors: the houses in Douai, Arras and Tours were not yet open; the novitiate at Dole had been closed, while the one at Carcassonne had not been opened yet; Nantes had a boarding school, but the one at Mirepoix had been transferred to Carcassonne; the house at Caen was closed, as were those at Apt, and Montargis; houses in Carentan, Mazères, Estavayer and Ferrara are not indicated. The names of towns which are underlined are archiepiscopal or episcopal sees in which the Brothers had one or several establishments. Avignon should be underlined as an episcopal city, but Damery should not be.

Chapter Twelve

The Brothers at the Height of the Revolution (1792–1794)

Introduction

With the passing of a law on August 18th suppressing the Institute in France, the Brothers had to cope with a new situation. The repercussions of this law began to make themselves felt in the final months of 1792. The Brothers had to decide how to react to the prescriptions of law which affected them. In particular, they had to make up their minds how to respond to the new "liberty and equality" oath.

Just over a month after the law was passed, the Legislative Assembly was replaced by the National Convention. The Legislative Assembly had already begun adopting harsher measures regarding those who refused to take the oath. With the National Convention in power, the situation of the latter and of all Christians loyal to the Pope became increasingly difficult in the period 1793–1794, which marked the high point of the French Revolution.

Consequences of the law suppressing the Institute

The law passed on August 18th 1792 stipulated two things in particular which affected the Brothers.

- Those who worked in "public instruction" had to continue doing so in a private capacity till such time as the educational system was properly organised.
- The Brothers could obtain pensions under certain conditions.

The obligation to continue teaching in a private capacity

This obligation concerned, obviously, only the establishments from which the Brothers had not yet been dismissed.

Brothers working in boarding schools should not have been affected since they were not involved in "public instruction" and were not obliged to take the constitutional oath. What happened in practice, however, was that the Brothers in the St Yon and Marseilles boarding schools were in fact required to take the oath.

The Brothers at the La Rossignolerie house in Angers had refused to become "public employees" and to take the constitutional oath. When the law was passed on August 18th 1792, they were allowed to continue teaching in a private capacity on condition they took the "liberty and equality" oath. The following September 4th, the 27 Brothers took the oath in the presence of the town authorities (cf. RA CJ 502-1).

In one of his letters, Brother Salomon wrote in reference to St Omer, that some town authorities had "promised the Brothers that they would be left in peace till the Assembly passed a decree deciding our fate. They promised also that they would not ask them to take the oath, nor force them to take their pupils to the parish church". The law suppressing the Institute put an end to situations such as these. At St Omer, for example, two days before the law was passed, the town authorities decided to make all persons involved in public instruction take the oath.

This decision was aimed in particular at the Brothers. As all 16 Brothers refused to comply, on August 18th, they were told "to close immediately the doors of all their public schools to children who were not boarders". The Brothers were not offered the opportunity to continue running the schools in a private capacity. It appears that they chose this moment to close down also the boarding school (cf. RA NC 304-1: History of the St Omer District, 165).

In Orleans, the Brothers who had been dispensed from taking the first oath, took the second in order to be able to continue teaching in a private capacity, even though they stayed together. In 1793, however, they were forced to disband for continuing to teach catechism (cf. Rigault III, 254).

There were various places where the Brothers were kept on despite the fact they had refused to take the constitutional oath or had expressed reservations about it. This was the case in Laon, for example, where the authorities had accepted their conditional oath. On August 30th 1792, however, the authorities affixed seals to the doors of the Brothers' houses "given their stubborn resistance to executing the law and their uncivic behaviour", and even put them in prison. They were allowed out only when they had sworn the required oath of "loyalty to the nation, and to uphold liberty and equality, or die defending them" (quoted in Rigault III, 240; cf. RA CK 561-2/8). They were sent back to their school and even kept their religious names.

Elsewhere, in similar situations, the Brothers refused to take this same oath. In Rennes, for example, two town officials came to the Brothers' house on August 25th 1792 and ordered the five members of the community to take the new oath. The Brother Director refused, giving as his reason that "he would never act against his conscience". Three other Brothers followed his example. The fifth said he wished to regain his liberty. They all had to leave the town. In Grenoble, the situation was more or less identical.

The liberty and equality oath

This oath was created after the fall of the monarchy and imposed on State pensioners and public employees on August 14th 1792. The law passed on August 18th required members of suppressed secular congregations to take this oath if they wished to obtain the pension stipulated by the law.

The situation created for the Brothers by this new oath was different from the one they had had to face when they were required to take the constitutional oath.

♦ Authoritative sources, such as, in particular, M. Emery, the Superior of the Sulpicians, maintained that the oath could be taken without hurting one's conscience. The Pope did not condemn it: he said simply that if any doubts existed, it should not be taken.

♦ The Brothers, now abandoned to their fate, were allowed to take the new oath in order to obtain their pension and provide for a future that the suppression of the Institute had rendered uncertain.

This explains why a relatively high number of those required to take this oath agreed to do so. In the issue of the *Bulletin of the Institute* already quoted, Brother Frédebert Marie puts the number of those taking the oath as 65 out of 121. He speaks of 14 houses where the Brothers were required to take the oath. As in the case of the constitutional oath, it is difficult to check the accuracy of these figures.

Requests for pensions

Brothers who fulfilled the necessary conditions to obtain a pension, and who had remained together up till then, put in their request collectively. We have the list of Brothers drawn up at Maréville and another one for the Brothers "resident in the District of Nancy in October 1792". These documents were submitted to the District authorities and indicated the amount each Brother had the right to receive for his pension (copy in RA CK 563-1/7).

We know also what pension was granted to "the citizen Brothers of the former Christian Schools of the house in Melun" (copy in RA CL 601-2/19; cf. Rigault III, 234). As the Brothers concerned subsequently received their pensions, one has to suppose that they took the so-called liberty and equality oath.

At St Yon, the situation was very different. When the 60 Brothers at St Yon had been wrongly required to take the constitutional oath, they had refused. When they applied for the pensions stipulated by the law of August 18th 1792, their request was refused by the Departmental authorities. On the other hand, they obtained permission to postpone their departure from the house till December 1st 1792.

At Nantes, the Brothers had been allowed to remain in their establishment till such time as the educational system had been organised. On November 2nd and 8th, the Departmental authorities decreed that it was opposed to providing for the upkeep of the Brothers even on a temporary basis; and at the same time, the District authorities declared that these religious had "always refused to take the oath. According to article 1 of section V of the law of August 18th, this fact deprives them of any right to a pension" (quoted in Rigault III, 250).

Brothers living on their own tried also to have their right to a pension recognised. The tribulations of Nicolas Jannot (Brother Aldric) show that this was not always easy to do. He began by fulfilling all the requirements of the law of August 18th. On January 7th 1793, he asked for his identity documents to be certified. They were finally registered on April 23rd. In the meantime, he had had to make seven or eight journeys to Nancy to settle the question of his pension, but had had no success. Finally on May 16th, his dossier was returned to him, and he was asked to "produce documents certifying that he had taken the oaths required by the laws passed on March 22nd and April 17th 1791". We do not know if he was able to produce the required documents, nor whether, after so much trouble, he obtained what he wanted (RA CL 601-1/16).

Brothers who had taken the constitutional oath seem to have had no difficulty when they applied for a pension for the time they were in the Institute. This was true, for example, in the case of Citizen Guibout (former Brother Eustase of the Dijon community) whose request was examined on June 15th 1793 (RA CL 601-1/8).

Repercussions of the repressive measures

Consequences of the legislation adopted by the Legislative Assembly

As early as the last few months of 1791, the Legislative Assembly had begun to adopt harsher measures against those who were known as the "non-jurors".

♦ On November 29th 1791, ecclesiastics who were required to take the oath and had refused were declared "suspect".

♦ On May 27th 1792, Departmental authorities were authorised to deport (more correctly, send into exile abroad) these recalcitrant ecclesiastics, if they had been denounced by a certain number of citizens.

♦ On August 26th 1792, the Legislative Assembly decreed that ecclesiastics who had refused to take the constitutional oath would be deported to Guyana, if they did not leave the Kingdom within a week. The same went for those who, while not obliged to take the oath, had "caused problems".

This final decree was a harsher version of one passed in May and never applied because the King had imposed his veto. In the meantime, however, the King had been "suspended from his functions" following the riot on August 10th. The rioters called for the execution of those who refused to take the oath and, on August 11th, the hunt began for non-jurors. Those who were caught were imprisoned in various parts of Paris. On Sunday September 2nd and on the following day, in an atmosphere of tense excitement as the Prussian army advanced on Paris, groups of armed men went from one place of imprisonment to another, massacring bishops, priests, religious and other persons they found there. Brother Salomon was one of the victims.

Among the non-jurors who had to go into **exile** as a result of the law passed on August 26th 1792, there were several Brothers of the Christian Schools. Among those whose departure is documented we can mention the following:

♦ On September 6th 1792, the town authorities of Pontarlier issued a passport to Jean Claude Delacroix who, as Brother Anatoile, had last taught at Bordeaux. The document allowed him to travel to Estavayer in Switzerland. It made no mention, of course, of the fact that he was going there to join the Brothers in that town (RA CL 601-1/17).

♦ Charles Turpin who, as Brother Dominique, had been Director of the house in Dijon, stated in a document subsequently that he had been "deported by virtue of

the law of August 26th 1792 for having refused to take the oath required of him as a public employee". He too had made his way to Estavayer.

♦ Brother Casimir (Claude François Besançon) was issued with a passport for Holland on September 29th 1792. He went as far Gyzeghem in Belgium. Other Brothers went to Belgium also: Brother Jonas (J. B. Mairez) went to Verviers, and three other Brothers to Saint Hubert.

Repercussions of the policies of the National Convention

The National Convention which replaced the Legislative Assembly on September 22nd 1792 continued to apply the measures adopted by its predecessor. By the end of 1792, a great number of priests had left the country, and those who remained had to go into hiding to escape the sanctions of the law.

The spring of 1793 was marked by a new threat of invasion and by uprisings in various towns such as Lyons and Toulouse, or in certain areas such as the Vendée. The reaction of the Convention to these threats was to adopt dictatorial powers and impose its authority by governing by means of the "Reign of Terror".

On January 21st 1793, the King, Louis XVI, already deprived of his powers and then sentenced to death, had finally been guillotined. The National Convention abrogated the constitution adopted on June 14th 1793 and created a "Committee of Public Safety". It entrusted the task of keeping order to a Committee of General Security. It set up a Revolutionary Tribunal in spring 1793, which backed up the activities of the Committees, and sent officials with roving commissions and unlimited powers, either to various Departments or to the army. "Watch Committees" were set up also throughout the country. These had the power to arrest "suspects" and bring them to trial in criminal courts which had the power to condemn them to death.

The measures adopted against those who were considered "enemies of the State" were reinforced:

♦ The law of September 17th 1793 decreed that all "enemies of freedom" should be guillotined. These "enemies" included all priests and religious who had not taken the oath.

♦ On October 21st 1793, it was proposed that all ecclesiastics who had not taken

the oath prescribed by the law, and even constitutional clergy who had been denounced for "uncivic" behaviour, should be deported to the west coast of Africa.

These measures can be explained partly by the progressive adoption of policies aimed at de-christianising the country. The republican calendar had replaced the Christian one. The cult of Reason was instituted.

> In the republican calendar, the seven-day week was replaced by a ten-day one called a "decade". The tenth day was called "décadi" and was a day of rest. The names of saints were suppressed and replaced by names of everyday things, such as plants and animals. The year was divided into 12 months, each consisting of 30 days. "Supplementary days" were added to make up the 365 or 366 days of the year. The months were grouped according to the seasons, and had names which reflected them.
>
> Where documents or events are dated according to this calendar, this will be shown. Where possible, the corresponding date in the Christian calendar will be given also.

In the spring of 1794, Robespierre took control of the Convention and changed its policy regarding religious matters by setting up the Cult of the Supreme Being. Under his direction, the "Reign of Terror" reached its peak.

On Thermidor 9th, Year 2 of the Republic (July 27th 1794), a revolt by the majority of the members of the National Convention against Robespierre led to his condemnation and execution.

The Brothers who had refused to take the constitutional oath were affected by the measures adopted by the Convention against non-juring clergy. Gradually, however, even those who had not been obliged to take the first oath, or who had taken the liberty and equality oath, found that they too were under suspicion and threat (this was the case also for ecclesiastics in a similar position). And so, a number of Brothers suffered as a result of the repressive measures directed against all those whose attachment to the Church of Rome rendered them "suspect" or "enemies of the State".

Brothers who had not taken the oath were constantly under the threat of arrest and imprisonment. Sometimes, however, it was some other reason which made them liable to be imprisoned.

Among the Brothers who were imprisoned, the first we must mention is Brother Agathon, who was arrested in Melun under the name of Sufflet on July 23rd 1793, "in order to be handed over to the members of the Committee for General Security of the

Convention" (quoted in Rigault III, 278). The Melun Committee asked the Orleans Committee to examine the personal possessions and papers Brother Agathon had had transported to a village close to that town. Two letters received from Italy no doubt increased the suspicion under which the Superior found himself.

On July 27th 1793, Brother Agathon was transferred to Paris. The Committee for General Security of the Convention, before which he had to appear, had him incarcerated in the prison of Sainte Pélagie. On October 23rd 1793, he was moved to the Bicêtre hospital. He was released from hospital (under his real name of Joseph Gonlieu) on Priarial 25th, Year 2 of the Republic (June 13th 1794). He was then put in the Luxembourg prison. Although the Reign of Terror was at its height, Brother Agathon escaped death. In the aftermath of Thermidor 9th, the Committee of General Security signed his release papers on September 22nd 1794.

On a "list of all the persons to be deported and at present incarcerated in the prisons of Avignon" dated March 31st 1794 are included the names of Étienne François Bouhélier and Jean Boubel, imprisoned by a warrant dated Pluviôse 29th, Year 2 (February 17th 1794). The persons in question were respectively Brother Maurille, Sub-Director of the house in Avignon till its closure, and Brother Florence, Director of this house and former Superior General. They were released a few months later and took refuge with a baker in the town, who had looked after them before their arrest and during their time in prison (cf. RA CL 601-1/18).

Among other Brothers who were imprisoned, there were two in Le Puy. One of them, Pierre Borie (Brother Paul de Jésus) was a native of the town, and had returned there with a passport dated September 26th 1792. He had refused to take the oath, and this is probably why he spent eight months in prison. The second, J. B. Faure (Brother Servule), had taken the oath in Toulon, but no doubt he had retracted and so had been sent to prison.

We know of the imprisonment of B. Delvincker or Delvainquier (Brother Lucain) of Tourcoing (Département du Nord) in the prison of Ste Claire in Bourges from a petition demanding his release dated Pluviôse 9th, Year 2 (January 28th 1794), which he sent to a "representative of the people". He was imprisoned "despite the fact he had taken the liberty and equality oath and had always upheld the law" (quoted in Rigault III, 288). He won his case, and the town authorities admitted that there was nothing to prove that he was "dangerous".

From 1793 onwards, the relatively tranquil life of the Brothers at Maréville was shattered by a series of dramatic events. On February 17th 1793, Brother Jean Marie and some

other Brothers were arrested. The charge against them was that they had provided false papers to some non-juring priests who had taken refuge with them. The case against them was dismissed on August 19th. On February 21st 1794, the Brothers still living in the house were evicted. That same evening, part of the house burnt down. The Brothers were suspected of arson and 14 of them were arrested. In January 1795, after 11 months in prison, they were released from prison for lack of proof.

It would seem that relatively few Brothers who refused to take the oath went into exile. Those who remained ran the risk of being **deported** in virtue of the law of August 26th 1792 or the decree of October 21st 1793.

Among those who remained, there were some who were due to be deported but who were saved from this fate. One of these was Brother Florentin de Jésus (Jean Rouzeaud) of Aurillac. On November 17th 1793, the Departmental authorities decided that the prisoner "will be transported to the west coast of Africa without delay" (quoted in Rigault III, 289). However, thanks to the intervention of some friends he was saved from deportation.

On the other hand, there were other Brothers who had to suffer the full rigour of the law.

On April 3rd 1793, the town authorities of Moulins referred to Brothers Roger, Léon and Bertauld in their minutes, saying they belonged to the "fanatics" who were liable to be deported to America. The District authorities, in their turn, also declared that the three "having been dismissed from their employment because of uncivic behaviour must be deported". Jean Clément Proisy (Brother Bertauld) was able to escape, and initially only Pierre Faverge (Brother Roger) was imprisoned. He was joined in prison by Jean Mopinot (Brother Léon) on June 11th 1793. On the same day, Brother Roger was sentenced to deportation.

On November 24th, the Departmental authorities decided to send 51 prisoners to Rochefort in two groups. Pierre Faverge was in the second group. After an exhausting and humiliating journey, the prisoners finally arrived at Saintes on December 14th 1793, and they stayed there for three months. In April 1794, those due to be deported were loaded onto the ship *Les Deux Associés*. Pierre Faverge was joined subsequently on the ship by Jean Mopinot who had travelled in a third group of prisoners.

Another group of prisoners condemned to deportation left Meurthe for Rochefort on Germinal 12th, year 2 (April 1794). In this group there were four Brothers of the Christian Schools: Brother Aventin (Pierre François Vaillant) who had taught at Lunéville, and three

Brothers from the Nancy community: Brother Jugon (Jean François Melnotte), Brother Donat Joseph (Claude François Trimaille) and Brother Uldaric (J. B. Guillaume).

In June 1794, a seventh Brother arrived from Moselle with a group of priests. He was Brother Pierre Christophe (Christophe Scheck) who had been arrested in his home village. He and his companions were put aboard the ship *Washington*.

The ships, confined to harbour by the English fleet because of the war, remained at anchor off Rochefort. The conditions endured by the prisoners awaiting deportation were horrific. Brother Léon died on May 21st 1794, Brother Uldaric on the night of August 27th–28th, Brother Pierre Christophe on September 6th and Brother Roger on September 12th 1794. When the survivors were set free, they included Pierre Vaillant, Claude Trimaille and Jean Pierre Melnotte.

Only one Brother was actually sentenced to death as a result of the repressive measures adopted by the Convention. This was Brother Moniteur (Maurice Martinet) who belonged to the St Malo community at the time of the Revolution. Together with Brother Auguste (Jean François Dravenel), the Director of the community, and Brother Luc (Alexis Ville), he had refused to take the constitutional oath. On January 19th 1793, the three Brothers were evicted from the house. Brother Luc left the area immediately. Brother Auguste tried to stay, but eventually returned to his home town.

Brother Moniteur hid in the town itself or in the neighbourhood. The risk was great because of the laws regarding non-jurors. On March 8th 1794, he was arrested in the vicinity of St Malo and spent several months in prison.

Despite the lull which followed Thermidor 9th, priests and other non-jurors continued to suffer the full force of the anti-religious laws. In the case of Brother Moniteur, the Rennes Tribunal sent him first to a detention centre known as Tour la Montagne. A document recording this transfer speaks of "Maurice Martinais, ex-ignoramus Brother and non-juror of the oath, found hidden in France, and Pierre Michel, farmer at Grande Rivière and former mayor of Paramé, accused of harbouring this fanatic" (quoted in Rigault III, 323).

They were sent back to prison on Vendémiaire 8th (September 29th 1795). Brother Moniteur was interrogated on the 14th. The same day, the criminal court of Rennes condemned him to death. The following October 6th, he was executed together with three priests.

Conclusion

The application of the law of August 18th 1792 had a particularly important consequence for the Brothers belonging to the Institute at the time of its suppression, because it created certain distinctions:

- between those who had already been dismissed from their school, or who were dismissed subsequently because they had refused to take one or other of the oaths imposed by the law, and those who were allowed to continue teaching in a personal capacity on condition they took the liberty and equality oath;
- between those who could not obtain a pension because they had not taken the constitutional oath when they were ordered to do so, and those who were not obliged to take the oath and who could claim a pension.

While we are not in a position to know how the Brothers perceived this discrimination, it is clear that an even wider gap existed between the different types of former members of the Institute, which was not necessarily related to the discrimination we have mentioned.

Of those who were faithful to their vocation as Christian teachers and continued, either individually or with others, to run schools, there were some who abandoned religious life and married. This was the case in Fontainebleau, for example. There were also others, such as Brother Aventin, the former Director of St Yon, whose situation was more precarious, and who did the same.

Other Brothers, despite circumstances, made every effort to continue leading a life in keeping with their religious commitments. For example, there was the case of Brothers Florence and Maurille who continued to follow all the exercises prescribed by the *Rule* in the house where they lived. As in the case of these two Brothers, this fidelity caused some to be imprisoned. For others, it led to death.

However, this was not a prerogative of only the Brothers who remained in the Institute. On July 6th 1794, the court in Béthune (Department of Pas de Calais) condemned to death and executed "Guislain Florent Pronier, teacher, ex-Brother of the Christian Schools, married, a native of Puisieux, for having ignored the law concerning oaths for priests, and for having declared he would never teach the principles of the Revolution". Born on October 28th 1757, he entered the novitiate of St Yon on May 26th 1776 and received the name of Brother Terence. He made his perpetual profession in 1785. The novitiate admission register has the note: "left with a dispensation from the Pope on April 30th 1790" (cf. RA CL 601-2/19).

— Supplement Twelve —
The Martyrs

The preceding chapter gave some idea of what certain Brothers had to suffer because they refused to obey the various anti-religious laws passed by successive revolutionary governments.

Some of these Brothers have been declared "martyrs"; others have not, but they deserve nonetheless to be remembered with those whose sufferings have been officially recognised by the Church.

The Brothers put to death

As far as we know, three Brothers were put to death during the Revolution: Brothers Salomon, Moniteur and Raphaël.

Brother Salomon

When Brother Salomon wrote the following words to one of his sisters on August 15th 1792, he was unaware of the fate that awaited him that very day. He wrote: "Let us endure with joy and thanksgiving the crosses and afflictions that he will send us. As for myself, I am not worthy to suffer for him, for I have not yet encountered any problems, and yet there are so many confessors who are suffering" (Guilhem, 1990, 210). That same evening, Br Salomon was arrested and taken to a former Carmelite convent which had been transformed into a prison. The convent already held 150 "suspects". The majority of these were priests, but there were also some bishops. Among the "suspects", Brother Salomon found Brother Abraham (J. B. Estève) who had been arrested the previous day.

The armed band which broke into the convent on the afternoon of Sunday September 2nd began by massacring the prisoners in the garden who had not managed to escape. The others were subjected to a summary trial: any prisoner who had not taken the constitutional oath was immediately executed. We do not know the details of Brother Salomon's death, but there is no doubt that he was one of the victims of the massacre. Brother Abraham, on the other hand, managed to escape.

Brother Salomon's death was not at odds with his life. Nicolas Le Clercq was born on November 14th 1745 in Boulogne sur Mer, where his father ran a business in the busy harbour

district of the town. Unlike his four brothers, Nicolas went to the Brothers' school. This fact, together with the Christian upbringing he received at home, prepared the ground for his future vocation.

His father, on the other hand, intended Nicolas to take over his business at some time in the future. With this in view, he had him follow the course in commerce in the Brothers' school, and then arranged for him to work, first for a tradesman near Boulogne, and then for a businessman in Paris. Nicolas felt ill at ease in this business environment, especially in Paris. He returned to Boulogne and decided to follow the example of his former teachers.

On March 25th 1767, he entered the novitiate of St Yon. He spent the second year of the novitiate at Rennes under the direction of Brother Vincent Ferrier. He made his triennial vows in 1769 in Rouen, where the future Assistant, Brother Sylvestre, was Director. In September 1770, he was sent to the boarding school at Maréville. He made his perpetual profession in 1772.

Up to this point, Brother Salomon's life had followed a fairly predictable course, but now this changed. He was appointed to be second in charge of the novitiate in Maréville, where Brother Lothaire was Director. In 1773, he became Director of novices. His life took a different direction in 1777 when he became the house "procurator". In 1780, Brother Salomon began studying and following courses in mathematics, first at Maréville and then at St Yon, in preparation for teaching in the scholasticate in Melun. In 1787, having completed the required 15 years of profession, he took part in the Chapter and became its secretary. He then became secretary to the Superior General.

It was in this capacity that he accompanied Brother Agathon to Paris in 1791. He subsequently lived alone in the Maison du St Esprit which had stood empty since the departure of the Brothers who had run the schools in the parish of St Sulpice. Even though he wore secular clothes, Brother Salomon could not go unnoticed, in particular, since he frequented chapels served by non-juring priests. It was, therefore, on account of his commitment to the service of the Institute and his attachment to a Church that remained loyal to the Pope, that he was arrested on August 15th 1792.

We are fortunate to have 138 of the letters sent by Brother Salomon to various members of his family. They give us an insight into what inspired him throughout his life, and reflect the different stages of his life as well as contemporary events. They reflect, in particular, the events of the final years of his life when he became personally affected by the political changes occurring in France.

His letters were filled also with considerations of a spiritual nature. They reveal "how Brother Salomon envisaged Christian life in the context of the 18th century" (Guilhem, 1990, 116). In a style typical of the period, his letters reveal the great attachment of the author to his vocation, as well as the intensity of his spiritual life. One can say that the way Brother Salomon lived his life prepared him for the martyrdom which crowned it.

Brother Moniteur

The account given by Brother Lucard of the condemnation and execution of a certain Brother Martien by the criminal court of Rennes (cf. Lucard, 1883, II, 640) is based on the reminiscences of Mgr Bruté, first bishop of Vincennes in the USA. Research undertaken to confirm these facts has enabled us to establish that the person in question was Brother Moniteur (Maurice Martinet), born on April 27th 1750 in Mézières (Department of the Ardennes), where he may have attended the Brothers' school. He entered the novitiate at Maréville on November 15th 1772, and made his perpetual profession in 1778. He joined the St Malo community in 1787.

Initially, the town authorities had played for time, and it was only in 1792 that Brother Moniteur and his two companions, Brothers Auguste (Jean François Dravenel), the Director, and Luc (Alexis Ville) were required to take the oath and had refused. On January 19th 1793, the Brothers were ordered to leave their house and the town. Maurice Martinet used his permit to go only as far as Dol de Bretagne, possibly because the area beyond was unsafe on account of the "Chouans" who were at war with the revolutionary government, or because he found it difficult to leave a town to which he was greatly attached. He returned to St Malo where, at first, he lodged with families he knew. Later, he went into hiding locally and was finally discovered and arrested on March 8th 1794 (see chapter twelve.)

During his interrogation at Rennes, Brother Moniteur declared that he "had not taken any of the oaths required by the law". This was enough for the court to find him "guilty of avoiding deportation and, in punishment, it condemned him to death" (quoted in the *Bulletin of the Institute*, 1910, 24).

We know little about Brother Moniteur but, what is certain, is that he must have earned the loyalty of the inhabitants of St Malo and its surroundings to have been able to pursue his apostolate among their children, despite the great risks this presented both for him and for them.

Brother Raphaël

While the deaths of Brother Salomon and Brother Moniteur are well documented, the evidence we have regarding the way Brother Raphaël was put to death in Uzès is less certain.

Born and baptised at Bouhans (diocese of Besançon) on January 22nd 1720, Jacques Pataillot entered the novitiate at Avignon on April 10th 1750, and made his perpetual profession in 1757. He was in the community of Uzès from 1771 to 1782, and in 1789 obtained permission to spend his last years in this town. According to Brother Lucard's account (cf. 1883, II, 639), when his three fellow Brothers were obliged to leave Uzès, Brother Raphaël, now 72 and suffering from rheumatism, went to live with one of his former pupils.

When, in October 1793, it was discovered where he was hiding, a bloodthirsty mob of revolutionaries came to arrest him. Brother Raphaël recognised some former pupils among the mob, and urged them to fear the judgment of God. At this, the mob fell upon him and killed him.

The account given after the Revolution by Brother Jean Louis, based on information provided by "persons worthy of trust" and reported by Rigault (cf. II, 316-317), differs regarding the date of the events and some other details, but essentially refers to the same facts.

For Brother Lucard, at Uzès "the hatred of the Huguenots for Catholics was fired by what happened that day" (Rigault II, 317). According to Brother Jean Louis, however, those who attacked Brother Raphaël "had been his pupils, and included both Catholics and Protestants" (quoted in Rigault II, 317). No doubt the explanation for the change of attitude in some of the former pupils Brother Raphaël had tried to form in the Christian faith should not be sought in their religious allegiance.

The Brothers on the prison ships of Rochefort

Seven Brothers were incarcerated on the ships that were used as prisons. We are given some idea of what they had to suffer in a letter Brother Philippe Joseph (Nicolas Bienaimé) received in spring 1795 from his brother, who was a priest and who had been imprisoned on the *Washington*. "We endured there more or less everything a person can possibly be made to suffer. We lay hours on end on wooden boards, squeezed against one another, piled on top of one another. We could hardly breathe, but what was there to breathe? We were each forced to remain in a space 14 inches wide and just over 5 foot long. We had to stay there for as long as 16 hours without being able to leave to breathe some fresh air". These few lines are enough to indicate the tone of the rest of this letter which is kept in RA CG 406-1/6 and which is quoted at length by Rigault (III, 314-316).

There was a Brother also on the same ship. This was **Brother Pierre Christophe** (Christophe Scheck), born on September 6th 1737, at Hoste, in the German-speaking part of Lorraine. According to Br Lucard, he entered the novitiate at Maréville in 1766, and made his perpetual profession in 1776. On a list of "imprisoned priests . . . sentenced to be deported" his name is given as Schaique Christophe, ex-Brother cook and gardener, of the former Christian Doctrine, 57 years old, imprisoned for not having taken the oath of August 14th 1792 (copy in RA CL 605-2/3). Since the possessions of those sentenced to deportation were confiscated, a certificate drawn up by the town authorities of Hoste indicates that "Christophe Schaeck, Brother, has nothing . . . and at present renders service as a poor man" (*idem.*; literal quotation in Rigault III, 306).

He was sentenced to be deported on April 17th 1794, and arrived at Rochefort in June. Imprisoned first on the *Bonhomme Richard* and then on the *Washington*, he died on September 6th as discreetly as he had lived. We have no information about him, and the Abbé Bienaimé makes no reference to him.

Two Brothers from Moulins and four from Nancy were imprisoned on the *Deux Associés*. Conditions on board caused the death of three of these Brothers. The information we have on each one of them from the survivors who described their sufferings, enables us to see how the way they spent this last period of their life, reflected the way they had lived previously.

The elderly **Brother Léon** was the first to die, on May 21st 1794. Jean Mopinot was born in Rheims in 1724, and was baptised in the church of St Jacques on December 12th. He entered the novitiate of St Yon on January 14th 1744, and made his perpetual profession in 1749. In 1791, together with the other Brothers of the Moulins community, he had refused to take the constitutional oath. A list drawn up on March 31st 1794 includes his name among those due to be deported for not taking the oath. He should not have been on the list since the deportation law did not apply to persons of his age. He should have been put in a detention centre with non-jurors who were 60 years of age and over, or who were infirm.

The conditions on board the prison ship were such that he died within a short time. One of the survivors, Labiche de Reignefort, had nonetheless the following to say about him: "I know of no better way of praising Brother Léon than to say that he was a saint. He had this reputation among us, and it was well deserved. His death only confirmed this high opinion. At a very advanced age, this holy man had kept all the sprightliness of youth" (*Relation N° 1*).

Brother Uldaric, one of the Brothers from Nancy, fell a victim to the summer heat, despite the fact he was relatively young. J. B. Guillaume was born and baptised at Fraisans (at the time, in the diocese of Besançon) on February 1st 1755. He entered the novitiate at Maréville on October 3rd 1785, and pronounced his first vows in 1788. When he was interrogated with the rest of the community on January 21st 1791, he made the following fine statement: "I, the undersigned, J.B. Guillaume . . . declare that I love my state and wish to persevere in it till I die, with the help of God's grace" (quoted in Rigault III, 305).

Together with the other Brothers of his community, he refused to take the constitutional oath. Although other teachers took their place, the Brothers did not move out of the town. In his book *Les martyrs de la foi*, the Abbé Guillon wrote the following about Brother Uldaric: "His concern for the children of the poor in Nancy was unchanged, and so he remained in the town for their sake, and continued to instruct them in their faith secretly, and to teach them the art of reading and writing" (Rigault III, 262).

These activities led to his arrest in 1793, and, on January 27th 1794, he was sentenced to deportation as a "non-juror". On board the prison ship his health deteriorated rapidly and he died on August 27th of the same year, at the age of 39. Brother Lucard has the following tribute to Brother Uldaric, but we are not sure on what evidence it is based: "Brother Uldaric edified the others by his peace of mind and his charity towards all the other prisoners on the *Deux Associés*. Sick priests and the elderly were the special object of his respectful ministrations: he willingly

became their infirmarian and unselfishly contrived to be of service to them". Such an attitude could not be anything else but a reflection of the charity which constantly inspired this Brother.

Brother Roger was the Director of the house at Moulins when he was sentenced to be deported at the end of 1793. He was sent to Rochefort and, in April, was imprisoned on the *Deux Associés*. Pierre Faverge was born on July 1745 and was baptised immediately because he was in danger of dying. He entered the novitiate on August 30th 1769, and made his perpetual profession in 1778. Labiche de Reignefort remembers Brother Roger as follows: "He was pious, zealous for the instruction of youth, and an exceptional administrator, held in high esteem at Moulins. Among his other skills, he could write beautifully" (*Relation N° 1*).

Abbé Guillon tells us that on the ship, "to occupy his time in a way that was useful to his companions in misfortune, he humbly mended their shoes". Brother Lucard completes this description by saying that he was always in a good humour, looked after the sick and encouraged the depressed, and entertained his companions "by speaking about such things as cosmography or navigation" (Lucard, 1886, II, 646). When the prisoners on the *Deux Associés* were moved elsewhere, Brother Roger was put on the *Indien* where he died on September 12th 1794. He was in his 50th year.

There are no similar descriptions of the other Brothers who survived the terrible conditions on board the prison ships, but they should not be forgotten. Brother Avertin (Pierre François Vaillant) was born at Puisieux (Picardy) on November 20th 1762 and entered the novitiate of St Yon on May 31st 1781. Brother Donat Joseph (Claude François Trimaille) was born at Arçon (Franche Comté) on October 8th 1740 and entered the novitiate of Dole on October 10th 1763 (according to the list drawn up by Brother Salomon in 1791). Brother Jugon (Jean Pierre Melnotte) was born near Nancy on December 10th 1767 and entered the novitiate of Maréville on August 30th 1785. Like Brother Uldaric, he had not yet made his perpetual profession when he was deported.

Conclusion

Of the Brothers who were put to death during the French Revolution, Brother Salomon was beatified as a martyr on October 17th 1926 with the other 190 bishops, priests and religious who were massacred in September 1792. There is no doubt that Brother Moniteur would have been beatified also, if information about his life and the circumstances of his death had been available when the cause was introduced. To say that it is most unlikely that Brother Raphaël will ever be declared a martyr, even though he was one, is not to minimise in any way his virtue and merits.

Although some 547 persons died on the prison ships in Rochefort, only 64 of them were beatified as martyrs on October 1st 1995. This was due to the very strict rules that were applied when their cause was examined, for it was necessary to prove that it was the living conditions of

their captivity which brought about their death; and that "the heroicity and constancy of the deportees" remained unchanged "throughout the length of their sufferings and up to the moment of their death" (RA CL 605-1/18). Thanks to the testimony of firsthand witnesses, Brothers Roger, Léon and Uldaric were recognised by the Church as martyrs. With similar testimony, there is no doubt that Brother Pierre Christophe also would have been officially declared a martyr.

The same can be said about the Brothers who died obscurely in prison. No doubt some of these also, inspired by their faith, died as true martyrs. But that is God's secret.

The actual number of Brothers officially recognised as martyrs, or considered as such even without this recognition, is not really important. What is important is to respond to the witness of their fidelity which culminated in the gift of their lives to God. Given the circumstances in which they were put to death, or which brought about their death, there is no doubt possible regarding the reasons which led them to offer the supreme sacrifice of their lives.

All these Brothers, except for Brother Raphaël, were arrested, put to death, or sentenced to be deported, because they had not taken the oath. Of these, Brother Salomon had never been required to do so. It is probably true to say, however, that they were all victims also of the explosion of anti-religious violence which took place half-way through 1792 and which, coupled with an official policy of de-christianisation, reached its peak during the Reign of Terror.

Even though, of course, many people were executed for political reasons during the Revolution, in the case of the Brothers and of innumerable other Christians, it was because of their unshakable faith that they had to endure the consequences of the repressive laws adopted by the Legislative Assembly and the National Convention.

Our Brother martyrs are proposed to us for our veneration and imitation as "witnesses to the faith" — for the witness they bore by their daily lives which were crowned by the manner of their death.

Chapter Thirteen

The Brothers and the Institute in the Final Years of the Century (1794–1799)

Introduction

The end of the Reign of Terror did not mark the end of the Revolution. While the National Convention remained in power and during the period of the "Directory" which followed, religious persecution continued, but in a spasmodic manner.

The Brothers dispersed throughout France continued to suffer the effects of the anti-religious laws. But now, even the Brothers who had fled abroad to neighbouring countries such as Italy, where the Institute continued to exist, felt under threat as a result of the victories won by the revolutionary armies.

During this same period, the members of the suppressed Institute who had remained faithful to their vocation as Christian teachers contributed to the reorganisation of education which was taking place in France at that time.

The situation of the Brothers in France

Thermidor 9th marked the end of the most violent period of the Revolution. However, those who had put an end to the dictatorship of Robespierre continued to be fervent supporters of the Revolution and wished to consolidate what it had achieved. What they wished to avoid above all was a return to the pre-revolutionary political system (the *Ancien Régime*) and the monarchy. This was especially so, because the majority of them had voted in favour of the execution of Louis XVI.

On Fructidor 5th, Year 3 (August 22nd 1795), the surviving members of the National Convention adopted a new constitution which shared out power between two Assemblies

and a Directory composed of five members, and which stipulated that membership of the Assemblies and of the Directory would be partially renewed each year.

As a way of ensuring that the system they had set up would continue to promote their policies, the members of the National Convention had decided that 2/3 of them would be members of the two Assemblies. As members of the Assemblies, they set about eliminating all those who appeared either too moderate or too extreme in their views.

One consequence of this pressure was that there were changes in political thinking. Periods of repression alternated with periods of relative calm. This was noticeable especially where anti-religious legislation was concerned, but also in educational matters.

The effect of policies pursued regarding religious matters

Although **religious persecution** did not stop with the end of the Reign of Terror, it did **diminish**. Prisoners were set free, there were no more arrests, and "suspects" were no longer condemned in as arbitrary a fashion as before.

Brother Agathon was one of those who benefited from this easing of pressure. On September 22nd 1794, the "Committee of General Security" of the National Convention set free a group of 43 persons which included "Joseph Gonlieu, teacher". It was likewise during this period that Brothers Frumence and Maurille were released from prison in Avignon.

It was probably also as a result of this easing of pressure that Joseph Hubert Massillon (Brother Cajétan), arrested in St Omer on September 4th 1794, was released almost immediately. One of the members of the newly formed "Revolutionary Committee" in St Omer objected to his release, and sent a copy of the record of his interrogation to the "Representative of the People in the Pas de Calais". This document reveals very clearly the dispositions of this Brother who had refused to take the oath, because "he believed that in conscience he could not do so", and because his decision was dictated by "God, conscience and his religion" (RA CK 567/12).

For the date Prairial 8th, Year 2, the Avignon prison register records the presence of "Joseph Rigue, ex-ignoramus Brother". This was Joseph Ricou (Brother Fidèle). The end of the Reign of Terror probably saved his life, but he died in the military hospital on January 14th 1795 (RA CL 601-1/21).

On Vendémiaire 5th, Year 4, (October 5th 1795), a royalist uprising was put down in Paris. This led to an immediate **clamp-down by the authorities**, accompanied by a

resumption of religious persecution. On October 25th 1795, a law passed against priests during the Reign of Terror was re-activated. The following day, the National Convention was dissolved. The majority of the members of the two Assemblies and of the Directory were antireligious.

A number of Brothers were affected by this resumption of religious persecution. Claude Faure (Brother Illuminat), a former member of the Avignon community, who had already been imprisoned in Grenoble, was arrested again on Brumaire 5th, Year 5 (November 1796), for "having preached". He was released a month later (cf. Rigault III, 290).

In the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium), now "re-united" with the French Republic, Brothers Julien, Agapet and Michel, who ran a school at St Hubert (Belgian Ardennes) were arrested as *émigrés* and as such were liable to be executed. While they were in prison in Brussels, the Nancy town authorities confirmed that they had left with all the necessary papers, and this saved them.

The first renewal of Assembly members in March–April 1797 increased the number of moderates, and calm was restored. The repressive laws re-activated in 1795 were abolished.

A number of Brothers who had been obliged to leave France took advantage of the lull to return. These included Jean Claude Delacroix (Brother Anatoile), who had gone to Estavayer, and Claude François Besançon (Brother Casimir), who had left St Omer to go to Belgium. When Belgium was invaded by the French, he had fled to Germany. In 1797, he returned to France. On March 20th, he was in the Department of Doubs. Both Brothers, however, would suffer as a result of the political changes which occurred shortly afterwards.

With the *coup d'état* of Fructidor 18th (September 4th 1797), power passed into the hands of the most intransigeant and the most anticlerical members of the Directory and of the two Assemblies. They remained in power until the *coup d'état* of Brumaire 18th–19th, Year 8 (November 9th–10th 1799), by which Bonaparte put an end to the political rule of the Directory.

The Fructidor *coup d'état* brought in its wake religious persecution which was particularly fierce. Jean Claude Delacroix had to go into exile once more. All his attempts to have his name taken off the list of *émigrés*, on which he had been included by mistake, were rejected by hostile French authorities (RA CL 601-1/17).

Claude François Besançon (Brother Casimir), tried to regain his civic rights by going to the authorities with a false document declaring that he had remained in France throughout all the preceding period. His real papers were discovered, however, and he was arrested on July 14th 1798. He died a week or so later in prison.

Persecution extended even beyond the frontiers of France properly so called. Jean Baptiste Mairez (Brother Jonas), who had returned to his work at Verviers, was arrested in November 1798. The authorities believed he was a non-juring priest. He was first imprisoned in Liège and sent back to his own Department of Haute Saône. He appeared before the military commission in Besançon on May 14th 1799. The commission dropped all charges against him and referred his case to the ministry of police. In the meantime, he remained in prison. As he wrote later, describing his tribulations following his arrest, he was still there on August 12th 1799. In fact, Besançon was his 27th prison (RA CG 406-3/5). It was only after the fall of the Directory, on March 15th 1800, that the Minister of Police Fouché ordered his release.

Contribution of the Brothers to the re-organisation of education

On May 30th 1793, the National Convention had adopted the principle that primary school education would be funded by the State, but it was only after Thermidor 9th that any practical steps were taken to implement it.

In October 1794, the law of Brumaire 27th, Year 3, drawn up by Lakanal, stipulated that there should be one primary school per 1,000 inhabitants; and that men and women teachers should be chosen by the local population. During the Revolution, however, they would be appointed by an "educational selection committee". It said also that textbooks "composed and published by order of the National Convention" would be used in these schools. It added that this law did not "infringe the rights that citizens had to open private and free schools under the supervision of properly constituted authorities" (quoted in Rigault III, 374).

The most important law, however, was the one drawn up by Daunou and adopted by the National Convention on Brumaire 3rd, Year 4, (October 25th 1795), on the eve of its dissolution. Regarding primary education, the law advocated the former system, under which teachers were funded by the local community and, except in the case of gratuitous schools, received payment from parents. The law stated also that a quarter of the pupils could be non fee-paying.

Despite everything, there was no improvement in the state of primary education. The situation would have been much worse, if "parents had lost the right to have recourse to the teachers of their choice" (Rigault III, 380). The relative tolerance shown towards religion made it possible to bring back Christian education under the cover of private schools.

It was against this general background that many former members of the Institute worked and contributed to the re-organisation of education, either by teaching in State schools, or by opening private schools.

Teaching in State schools

In a certain number of cases, Brothers had simply put on secular clothing and continued to run the school. This happened at Guise, where Balthazar Lemaître (Brother Justin) continued as headmaster and kept the school functioning with the help of Hugues Porteret (Brother Basile) and Jean Pierre Decaisne (Brother Antoine Bernard). At a certain point, Brother Justin had to retire because of old age, but as his replacement proved to be unsatisfactory, he took over the position again and continued working till his death on June 25th 1797.

At Laon, the Brothers were put into prison during the 1794 holidays because one of them had made some imprudent remarks. The mothers of their pupils protested so much that the authorities let the Brothers take up their work again. They had never stopped having Mass celebrated, but the law of February 21st 1795 authorising religious worship enabled them to regularise their position. After the re-organisation of the educational system, the Brothers were classed as "primary school teachers" and listed under the name of "former Brothers of the Schools". In a number of places, Brothers who had become secularised, probably after the suppression of the Institute, had remained in their schools. At Fontainebleau, for example, the town authorities had decided to keep the five Brothers till such time as education was properly organised. Four of the Brothers married, but they all continued to live in the same house. This situation continued till the end of the Revolution.

During the same period, former members of the Institute applied for recognition as teachers in the state educational system. For example, Louis Proisy (Brother Maurice) was accepted as a teacher in the public sector on May 4th 1795, even though in the past, he had refused to take the constitutional oath. At the beginning of 1795, the educational committee of the Department of Cher approved the applications of Jean Parmentier, Jacques Lepouce and J. B. Delvainquier (RA CL 600-1/4). The latter had once been Brother Lucain and had been put in prison in 1794. Of the other two, the first had been in Bourges before, and the second had left Meaux to return to his native town. Both married in Bourges.

The opening of private schools

A certain number of Brothers escaped the obligation of taking the successive oaths that were imposed, by opening private schools. By doing so, it was easier for them to offer an education that was in accordance with the practices of the Institute, and to instruct the children in the faith of a Church which was in communion with the Pope.

Some Brothers opened private schools after obtaining recognition as teachers in the public sector. For example, Pierre Boniface Hignon came to Compiègne with his brother, like himself, an ex-member of the Institute, to take over the Brothers' school. In 1796, he left it to open a private school in the same town.

At Angers, Charles Antoine Villemot (Brother Romain) and A. Godefroy (Brother Symphorien) left La Rossignoleric, which had fallen into decay, and opened a school with a clearly defined Christian character.

Given the favourable circumstances, a number of such schools were opened.

♦ François René Gaudenne (Brother Vivien) opened a school in Rheims and so fulfilled a plan he had been nurturing since 1796.

♦ Nicolas Bienaimé (Brother Philippe Joseph) opened a small school in Elbeuf.

♦ Pierre Blanc (Brother Bernardin) re-opened the former Brothers' school in Castres and then opened a boarding school.

♦ In August 1796, Antoine Radier (Brother Patrice) opened a boarding school on the premises of the Marseilles boarding school. With him, there were Mathieu Faure (Brother Thomas d'Aquin) and Jean Renaud (Brother Candide de Jésus).

Opposition to the Brothers' involvement

The anti-Christian policies adopted by the authorities following the Fructidor *coup d'état* had repercussions on education. A hunt was organised in search of "dens of superstition", as schools run by Christian teachers were called.

These repercussions affected a number of schools in which the "former Brothers of the Christian Schools" had remained, or had been recognised as **teachers in the public sector.**

After the Fructidor *coup d'état*, the Brothers at Laon became worried. In October 1797, the Departmental authorities decided to evict them from their house. The town authorities,

on the other hand, continued to support the Brothers. A year later, however, the Brothers were asked by them to give up teaching because of "their age and infirmities".

At Orléans, J. B. Lemoigne, a former Brother, was ordered by the town authorities to close his school because he had refused to obey the law which imposed the oath of "hatred for the monarchy". Citizen Cendre (Brother Libère) likewise lost his right to teach.

In March 1798, in Mende, the pupils of Pierre Rocher (Brother Édouard Marie) were found in possession of a copy of the *Duties of a Christian towards God* and of a book of Psalms. As a result, the school was closed. The school re-opened more or less secretly and, the following autumn, other copies of the same books were found as well as a diocesan catechism. A fine was imposed.

Private schools were subject to close scrutiny. For example, a "register of teachers" drawn up on Thermidor 12th, Year 6, notes that "François René Gaudenne, former Brother of the Schools, batchelor", against "whose morals there are no accusations, has left his school permanently" (quoted in Rigault III, 403). The reason for his departure was probably because he was not prepared to comply with all the regulations.

When Nicolas Bienaimé was threatened with the decrees enacted after Fructidor 18th, he wrote a very self-assured letter to "the citizens entrusted with the administration of the canton" and, as a result, the local authorities left him in peace. The letter in question can be found in RA CL 601-1/24), and is quoted at length by Rigault (III, 416).

When, in the course of a Youth Festival, the new town council of Castres noticed the absence of the teachers and pupils of a school opened by Pierre Blanc (Brother Bernardin), it decided it was its duty "to use legitimate means . . . to rescue the future generations from the hateful influence of prejudice, by means of which servile souls still seek to prevent their flight to freedom" (quoted in Rigault III, 428). The private school was closed immediately by the authorities.

Two former Brothers who had opened a school in Angers, preferred to stop teaching for a time rather than take the oath imposed after the Fructidor *coup d'état*. They re-opened the school after Brumaire 18th.

The Institute lives on in Italy

In Italy, after some initial difficulties, the Institute consolidated its position during the course of the 18th century, and even expanded as a result of the French Revolution.

From 1758 onwards, the Brothers' community in Rome was in the Trinità dei Monti district, on the Via Felice. Funds from Pope Pius VI enabled the Brothers to open a third class in 1787 (cf. Meoli, 1995, 75).

In 1789, in a **motu proprio*** dated January 14th, the Sovereign Pontiff informed the Brothers that he intended to give them a new school in Piazza San Salvatore in Lauro, in the Ponte Sant Angelo district of Rome. The plan was to build a house with accommodation for a maximum of eight Brothers and four classrooms. "In three of these classes only catechism, reading and arithmetic would be taught. As for the fourth . . . the Pope reserved the right to decide whether the pupils should be taught drawing or French (quoted in Rigault III, 332).

In Ferrara, a town belonging to the Papal States, the Brothers had been running a school since 1741.

From 1791 onwards, as a result of the anti-religious laws adopted in France, a certain number of Brothers came to Italy (Br Meoli gives some names on page 80). The Trinità dei Monti Memorandum states that "In the month of January 1793, we were given permission to have 18 religious in the house, given that 8 of our Brothers had had to leave their country because of the Revolution that had occurred" (RA CK 575-2/1); quoted in Rigault III, 333). On April 25, the number of Brothers had risen to 20.

The arrival of these Brothers from France made it easier to staff the school in Piazza San Salvatore in Lauro. The school opened on November 4th 1793. A motu proprio dated February 14th 1794 gave the final indications how the school should be organised. In particular, it stated that the "principles of drawing" would be taught in the fourth class by "the architect Andrea de Dominicis".

At Ferrara, thanks to the arrival of the French Brothers, Br Euloge de Jésus was able to open three schools and release some Brothers to teach Italian, in particular, to *émigré* French priests (HSP 2, 335). There were 15 Brothers in the community (cf. Meoli, 1995, 82).

The French Revolution affected also the Brothers in Italy. The trial and execution of King Louis XVI in January 1793 was very much resented in Rome. On January 3rd, a French diplomat, a representative of the Revolutionaries, was blamed for what had happened and was killed. Given the atmosphere in Rome, there was a danger that the habit worn by the Brothers would draw attention to their nationality, and so the Pope suggested they adopt the dress worn by ecclesiastics (cf. Meoli, 1995, 76).

The Institute was in danger of disappearing because there was no longer any provision for the training of new members. In a motu proprio dated February 26th 1794, Pius VI

announced his decision to set up "a novitiate in his domains" in which "especially Italians" would be trained. This novitiate, which was located in Orvieto, was opened in December 1795. The Pope appointed Brother Rieul (or Fratel Regolo), who had arrived in Ferrara in 1785, as its Director.

The Brothers in Italy did not know what had happened to Brother Agathon, and events in France were such that it was supposed he was unable to act as Superior General. Pope Pius VI took the initiative by "appointing a Vicar General in the person of Brother Frumence" (Meoli, 1995, 82). The Decree *Inter graves*, published in Rome on August 7th 1795, announced this decision and also explained the reason for it.

At the same time, the Sovereign Pontiff appointed Brother Frumence Superior of the house of San Salvatore in Lauro, Brother Philadelphe Director of the house near Trinità dei Monti, Brother Euloge de Jésus Director of Ferrara, Brother Rieul Director of Orvieto and Brother Dominique Director of Estavayer.

The Brothers in Italy had reason to hope that they would not have to suffer the same fate as their fellow Brothers in France had suffered and were still suffering. In 1796, however, the first threat appeared in the person of Bonaparte when, during his conquest of Northern Italy, he invaded a part of the Papal States. On June 23rd, an armistice was signed at Bologna between Bonaparte and the Pope. The latter had to give up all rights to Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin, and accept the occupation of Ferrara and Bologna. The Brothers in Ferrara do not seem to have suffered as a result of the presence of French troops in the town.

After the Fructidor *coup d'état* in Year 5, however, the Directory tried to attack the Pope, not only as a head of State, but also as head of the Catholic Church. A disturbance outside the French Embassy served as a pretext for a military intervention and, on February 10th 1798, Rome was occupied by the French army. Pius VI fled from the city and took refuge in Tuscany. Tuscany fell into the hands of the French in March 1799, and the Pope was made prisoner on March 21st. Taken to France, he died at Valence (Dauphiné) on August 29th 1799.

When the French troops entered Rome, the Brothers thought they were in danger and dispersed. Some went back to France, others took refuge in the communities of Orvieto and Ferrara, which remained open (cf. Meoli, 1995, 83). Brother Frumence, accompanied by one or two Brothers, went to Vallerano, near Viterbo, where the Institute had inherited a property. The Revolutionary armies eventually withdrew, and Brother Frumence and the other Brothers returned to Rome before the end of 1799.

In January 1798, shortly before the French troops entered Rome, Switzerland was invaded by the Republican army. The Brothers in Estavayer seem to have dispersed even before the area was invaded. One of the Brothers who stayed in the town was Jean Claude Delacroix, who was given a certificate by the "Sub-Prefect of Estavayer" on March 26th 1799, "attesting to his good life and morals" (RA CL 601-1/17). The house in Estavayer was never re-opened. In August 1800, Charles Turpin (Brother Dominique) "deported by virtue of the law of August 26th 1792", requested permission to return to France (RA CL 601-1/7).

Conclusion

One thing that is demonstrated by the period we have been studying is the ability of some, if not of all Brothers, to take up life again after a number of years during which they had been persecuted and had been obliged to go into hiding.

This was particularly true where running schools was concerned: the Brothers wasted no time in returning to their former pedagogical and apostolic activities. As for religious life, there was no similar rebirth: many of the private schools had been opened by men with deep convictions, but in isolation.

The divisions which had appeared among the Brothers because of the choices they had made do not seem to have altered much in the period under consideration. The situation, however, was less clear-cut and stable than it seems.

For example, on October 4th 1795, Brother Genet, who was in Avignon, sent a retraction of the civic oath to the town authorities of Aigues Mortes, saying that he had taken it "in a moment of terror and in prison" (RA CL 601-1/18; Rigault III, 125).

Jean Pierre Martel (Brother Corentin Marie), having "submitted to the civil laws of the Republic" was awarded an "ecclesiastical pension". Thanks to this subsidy, he tried to teach the children of his village gratuitously, even though he had to accept some alms. He showed similar fidelity by following the daily programme of Institute exercises (Rigault III, 406).

Louis Saragennet (Brother Vaubert) joined the Dijon Brothers who went to re-open the Brothers' school in Auxonne after taking the oath. He became completely secularised, married twice, but none of this prevented him from being an object of great veneration for the inhabitants of this small town (cf. Rigault III, 406).

The Institute remained firmly anchored in Italy. The decision of the Pope to place a Vicar General at the head of the Institute and to open a novitiate in Orvieto provided great support for the Brothers, and encouraged them to believe in the continued existence of the Institute in the form in which it had been founded and in which it had survived during the course of the 18th century.

The trials the Brothers underwent, at least in Rome, resulted in a situation similar to the one experienced by the Brothers in France. As in France, a division was created between those whose vocation was strengthened by the trials they experienced, and those who were unable to resist. This was the case of Brother Philadelphe, the Director of the Trinità dei Monti house, who returned to France and married. The trials which the Brothers in Italy had been spared for some years, and which had now afflicted them, enabled them to understand better the trials endured by the Brothers in France at a particularly difficult period in their history.

Concordance between the Republican and the Gregorian calendar

Constituent Assembly	Legislative Assembly	Convention	Directory	Consulate

1789 . 1790 . 1791 . 1792 . 1793 . 1794 . 1795 . 1796 . 1797 . 1798 . 1799 . 1800 . 1801 . 1802 . 1803 . 1804

Yr I . Yr II . Yr III . Yr IV . Yr V . Yr VI . Yr VII	Yr VIII . Yr IX . Yr X . Yr XI . Yr XII .
Revolutionary Calendar	

— Supplement Thirteen — Two Superiors Concurrently at the Head of the Institute

The preceding chapter dealt first with the situation of the Brothers in France, and then with that of the Institute in Italy, in the period beginning halfway through 1794 and ending with the fall of what was known in France as the "Directory". A comparison between what happened in these two countries, reveals that, during this period, for more than three years, the Institute had two Superiors at the same time, one in France and the other in Rome.

We need to give some consideration to this fact, less because of the consequences it had at the time, but rather because of the problems it caused later on. This supplement will try to show the extent to which political changes in France during the period which concerns us had an influence on the situation we are considering.

Appointment of Brother Frumence as Vicar General

Pius VI, elected Pope in 1775, had known the Brothers in Rome when he was "Treasurer of the Apostolic Chamber". He continued to appreciate their dedicated work with poor children (cf. Rigault III, 64). As we said in the preceding chapter, he contributed to the expansion of the Brothers' work.

There were close ties of friendship between Brother Agathon and Pius VI. They exchanged greetings at the beginning of each year, and the events which followed 1789 served to strengthen their relationship. Rigault writes: "The Superior's wishes for 1790 moved Pius VI by their sad tone" (III, 64). For the Sovereign Pontiff, the letter sent in 1791 was "a proof of the Brothers' constancy" (*idem.*). No letters have been found for 1792 and 1793.

From July 1793 to September 1794, Brother Agathon was in prison, but his silence continued for some time afterwards. Despite the relative calm that existed, it would not have been prudent to correspond with Italy (cf. Meoli, 1995, 81). It is not surprising that, under the circumstances, Pius VI was worried about Brother Agathon's fate, and concerned regarding the isolation of the Brothers in Italy resulting from the continuing situation in France.

Tradition has it that the Pope consulted Brother Raymond, a refugee from France, regarding the whereabouts of Brother Agathon (cf. Lucard II, 1883, 685). Whatever the truth of the matter, the Pope judged it necessary to call a halt to a situation which was prejudicial to the Institute. By the **Brief*** *Inter Graves*, published in Rome on August 7th 1795, he appointed Brother Frumence,

Director of the house at Trinità dei Monti at the time, Vicar General of the Institute. The document explained the reasons which had led the Sovereign Pontiff to take this decision, and indicated the extent of the powers conferred on Brother Frumence.

> "We charge and order the said Vicar General, by our apostolic authority, to take responsibility for the administration, government and direction of the said Institute, in the same way as every temporary Superior General elected in accordance with the same statutes and constitutions, until such time as, with the removal of existing obstacles, Brother Agathon can take over again the aforesaid government and administration, or his death is attested by trustworthy documents, and a new Superior General can be elected by a plenary assembly called for this purpose" (quoted in Rigault III, 342).

The Pope declared that he had made this decision "on his own initiative" (*motu proprio*). There is no proof that he did so because of pressure from the Brothers (cf. Rigault III, 343).

Brother Agathon asserts his authority as Superior General

When Brother Agathon was released from prison, he does not seem to have restored contact with the Brothers in Italy. He did, however, correspond with a number of Brothers in France. This is shown by a letter dated June 6th 1796 which he received from "Citizen Gaudenne, military employee at the military camp at Montreuil, near Laon. The writer was the former Brother Vivien who had been entrusted by Brother Agathon with a trunk full of documents and objects of inestimable value for the Institute.

This letter was probably sent to Brother Agathon's former address and so its delivery was delayed. In his reply, dated August 22nd 1796, Brother Agathon informed his correspondent that for the last six months he had been in Tours, and spoke of his incarceration in four prisons. In the same letter, he mentioned various members of the Institute his correspondent had spoken of, referring to them only by their religious name: Leufroy, Aubert, Julien and Aquilas. He added that he himself was in constant contact with three other Brothers.

It is clear that Brother Agathon tried to re-establish contact with former members of the Institute who, as he supposed his correspondent to be, were still faithful to their "former commitments", and to build up a network of Brothers around himself.

Another reply from Brother Agathon, dated November 5th 1796, to a letter sent by François René Gaudenne on September 13th, shows that the latter had left his employment and had moved to Rheims, no doubt intending to open a school. In guarded language, Brother Agathon informed him that they had similar plans in Tours: "Borgia and Lisimaque are going to open a shop here. A lot of people support the idea" (quoted in Rigault III, 356). The letter referred also to "Damascène who is at Rethel". The person in question was Jean Louis Martinet, who had saved the school opened by De La Salle in that town.

By signing his letter with his religious name, and affixing the seal of the Institute, Brother

Agathon made it clear that, even if circumstances did not permit him to exercise his responsibilities, he still considered himself to be Superior General of the Institute. His intention was to group together under his aegis former members of the Institute who were prepared to contribute to its rebirth. Circumstances seemed to favour this plan.

From the middle of 1796 onwards, there were various signs that tension was easing.

♦ On July 5th, the Pope published the Brief *Pastoralis Sollicitudo*, in which he recommended French Catholics to obey the civil authorities. Although the text was not published officially in France, its contents were known.

♦ In August, the two Assemblies rejected a resolution "which would have revived the persecution of non-jurors" (Rigault III, 358).

♦ In March–April 1797, the partial renewal of the membership of the two Assemblies modified their composition and made them more moderate.

♦ On August 24th 1797, a law was passed which allowed *émigré* priests to return to France.

These measures did not mean that all problems had been solved and that peace had returned. In fact, three of the five "Directors" who had executive power were anti-Christian fanatics, and there was a real danger they would stage a *coup d'état*.

All available evidence seems to indicate that Brother Agathon became aware of the Sovereign Pontiff's decision of August 7th 1795 only some time later, and then only indirectly (cf. Rigault III, 360). On August 27th 1797, one of the few remaining days when he could do so safely, he wrote a long letter to Brother Frumence.

The first part of this letter, at least, is worth quoting in full.

> "The Grace and the Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with you.
>
> "If your affection for me, my very dear Brother, makes you wish to hear from me, I shall satisfy you. The arrival of your last letters at my address was followed by my imprisonment, which ended only with the death of a tyrant. Having escaped execution, I hid in the country, and left it only when I felt sure I could live safely in a town. It is from the town where I am now living, and where I have found lodgings with a good family, that I am writing to you.
>
> "Up till now, my good friend, I have not been able to take up my responsibilities again: innumerable obstacles still prevent me from doing so. I shall lose no time in assuming them as soon as these obstacles disappear. If only I could be with a group of our Brothers! The sorrow and concern I feel because of the delay imposed on me by circumstances would be even greater if I did not know, my very dear Brother, that the Sovereign Pontiff, watchful as ever, has provided for the administration of the Society by appointing you Vicar General of the Institute, until such time as the Superior General is no longer impeded and can personally take up the reins of government, to which the body of the Institute duly elected him, and for which all the members who are here wish him to remain available" (quoted in the *Institute Bulletin*, 1938, 272).

By beginning his letter as he did his circulars, Brother Agathon made a clear statement that he was still Superior General. After saying what had happened to him since the arrival of the last letters from Italy (in 1793), he declared that he had been unable to take up his responsibilities again, but that he would do so as soon as circumstances allowed. He admitted that the decision of the Sovereign Pontiff had been good for the Institute, but he attested that the Brothers "who are here", that is, in France, regarded him as the person who would re-establish the Institute.

In the second part of his letter, Brother Agathon assured Brother Frumence and the Brothers who were in his charge "of the tender and sincere friendship of a heart still united with you". He urged these Brothers to take advantage of their situation to work "with zeal for the Christian and civic instruction of youth". Having asked them to "be aware of the difference between their situation and that of their unfortunate fellow Brothers who are in France", he went on to exhort them to "preserve the purity, simplicity and fervour of their state". He warned them also "against the revolutionary spirit and the philosophy of the impious".

The superior wished also "the Brothers of Rome to know that there was a ray of hope on the horizon". "The Brothers are missed everywhere in France. . . . People wish them to be reinstated where they were before. In several places they have been called back, and in various places they have taken up their work again. To the great satisfaction of good people, a great number of them are continuing to teach and remain attached to me".

The text of the letter gives no indication of any tension between the two Superiors. It indicates clearly, however, that Brother Agathon still considers himself to be invested with the authority of the Superior General of the Institute, and that he will take up his responsibilities as soon as circumstances allow, and in accordance with the terms of the Brief. The exhortation that follows shows that the re-establishment of the Institute could be envisaged only in terms of the continued fidelity of the Brothers under the authority of Brother Frumence to tradition, which they must preserve in order to pass it on to their successors. If in France there was growing hope of re-establishing the Institute, it was with him as the duly elected Superior that the Brothers who "remain attached" to him would bring it about. The letter gave the impression that these Brothers were already relatively numerous.

In conclusion, Brother Agathon urged his correspondent to be prudent when writing to him so that his reply does not attract the attention of the French police. He himself signed his letter as Brother Agathon. In this way, he indicated that this letter should be considered as one of the official documents of the Superior who had been elected in 1777. (This analysis of the letter is based wholly on that of Rigault III, 359-364.)

Brother Agathon disappears from the scene

There is no doubt that Brother Agathon never received a reply to the letter he had sent to Brother Frumence. On Fructidor 8th (September 4th), a *coup d'état* took place with the support of one of Bonaparte's generals. The two more moderate "Directors" were dismissed, some members of the assemblies were sent into exile, elections were annulled in a number of Departments, anti-religious laws were re-activated and a new oath — "hatred for the royalty and for anarchy" — was imposed.

Three weeks later, on September 13th 1797, in answer to a letter dated August 12th, Brother Agathon wrote to "Citizen Gaudenne, 8 rue de la Tirelire, Rheims". He exhorted his correspondent to be "faithful to the two-fold spirit of the Institute, to an unshakable attachment to the Church and to the laws of his conscience. He urged him to not to stray from the methods used in the Institute, and to show great generosity in remaining faithful to his sacred commitments, in particular, regarding chastity, the saveguarding of community life and separation from the world" (*Institute Bulletin*, 1938, 276).

After this letter, all trace is lost of Brother Agathon, until the "first supplementary day of Year 6" (September 17th 1798), when the death of Joseph Gonlieu is noted in the town register of Tours (cf. Rigault III, 368). We are probably justified in thinking that his two or three usual companions were with him when he died.

In Italy, in February 1798, the Brothers of Rome, in their turn, felt the effects of the political changes which had occurred in France the previous year (See page 248). Brother Frumence, who had fled with his secretary to Vallerano, returned to Rome in 1799, and set about re-organising the schools. He appointed Brother Raymond Director of San Salvatore in Lauro, and Brother Guillaume de Jésus, Director of Trinità dei Monti. The Brothers were authorised to accept gifts from their pupils in order to supplement their meagre resources (cf. Meoli, 1995, 83-84).

In August 1800, a conclave met in Venice and elected a new Pope, who took the name of Pius VII. He confirmed Brother Frumence's powers orally. Brother Frumence remained in Rome till the end of 1804, when he returned to France (see the next chapter).

Conclusion

The existence of two Superiors concurrently from August 7th 1795 to September 17th 1798 had no immediate consequences. Brother Agathon's letter to Brother Frumence, of itself, was not such as to give rise to a conflict between the two men who were bound by ties of mutual esteem and friendship.

The situation, however, did contain the seeds of future difficulties. For the Brothers in Italy, and for a certain number in France, it was on Brother Frumence and the Brothers who depended

directly on him, that the continued existence of the Institute depended. In their view, it was the Vicar General who should set in motion the re-establishment of the Institute when this became possible. In France, the Brothers who had kept in contact with Brother Agathon had hoped that the Institute would be re-established with him as Superior. This was the view, in particular, of Brother Vivien (René François Gaudenne). These Brothers would find it all the more difficult to be part of the process of re-establishing the Institute, for having adopted independent habits which fitted in badly with the reinstatement of ancient practices, under the direction of a Brother who had not experienced the situations they themselves had had to face.

Brother Frumence, Jean Baptist Herbet, 1747–1810. Born at Mesnil Martinsart in Picardy. Entered the novitiate of St Yon in 1763, perpetual profession in 1772. Director of the school in Ferrara (1773–1777 and 1781–1785) and of Trinità dei Monti, in Rome (1777–1781 and 1785–1795). Pius VI appoints him Vicar General of the Institute by the Decree *Inter Graves*, dated August 7th 1795. His residence is at the San Salvatore in Lauro school in Rome.

Forced to leave Rome in 1798, on the arrival of French troops in the city, he returns in 1799. In August 1800, Pius VII confirms his appointment as Vicar General orally. In 1804, he takes up residence in the Petit Collège in Lyons. In 1805, Pius VII blesses the Brothers' chapel. Soon after, the wearing of the religious habit becomes possible, and a circular from Cardinal Fesch (July 19th 1806) urges the Brothers to return to the Institute.

Brother Frumence sets about "gathering them" together with great patience. He also looks for new vocations, and appoints Brother Jonas to train them. He fights to maintain gratuity of teaching. His health begins to fail him although he remains mentally alert. He dies on January 27th 1810.

Chapter Fourteen

Preparing the Ground for the Re-establishment of the Institute (1800–1804)

Introduction

The assumption of power by Bonaparte brought about great changes in France. These changes affected the former members of the Institute and offered them new opportunities. Various attempts were made to set in motion the process of re-establishing the Institute in France.

A new situation for the Brothers in France

On the 18th–19th Brumaire, Year 8 (November 9th–10th 1799), Napoleon Bonaparte, fresh from his successful campaign in Italy, dismissed the "Directory". By doing so, he became the key-figure in the new form of government called the "Consulate". Napoleon was the first of the three Consuls created by the constitution of Frimaire 24th, Year 8 (December 15th 1799), and was invested with a great deal of power: he led the government, drew up laws and controlled the administration of the whole country by appointing "Prefects" in each of the major administrative units of the country called "Departments".

After ten tumultuous years, the country longed for order and peace. Bonaparte seemed to be the ideal candidate to ensure the first and obtain the second. There were also many people in the country who wished to preserve the benefits of the Revolution, and a strong form of government had the power to consolidate these benefits.

Bonaparte was in a position also to try to reconcile the divisions created in the country by the Revolution. The greatest of these had been created by the anti-religious policies pursued by successive Assemblies. The law adopted on Nivôse 21st, Year 8 (February 11th 1800) was a measure likely to ease consciences: "The various oaths which were repugnant to the Christian faith or made it hesitate, are replaced by a short declaration to

be made by public employees, ministers of religion, teachers and others: «I promise to be loyal to the Constitution»" (Rigault III, 442).

Above all, Bonaparte understood that, for reasons of political pragmatism if not of religious conviction, he had to re-establish the Catholic Church. As a consequence, he entered into negotiations with the Pope with a view to securing an agreement which would recognise the end of the privileged position the Church had had before the Revolution, and would define its role in the new social and political order resulting from the Revolution.

Negotiations began in autumn 1800 and lasted nine months. They were brought to a close on July 15th 1801 with the signing of a "Convention" (the term "Concordat" was intentionally not used, but was subsequently adopted). To reassure opponents of this agreement, Napoleon added unilaterally some "organic articles" which defined the manner in which the "Convention" would be applied. In practice, these articles "tended to increase the power of bishops over their parish priests, and the power of the State over the bishops, and to keep in check the power of the Pope over the French clergy" (Dansette, 1948, 183). The complete document was promulgated on Easter Sunday 1802.

The extensive re-organisation undertaken during the time of the Consulate included evidently that of education. The Public Instruction Law of Floréal 11th, Year 10 (May 1st 1802), concerned itself in particular with the creation of "Lycées". Bonaparte was interested mostly in secondary education, which was intended to imbue the future administrators of the country with the spirit of the Revolution. Primary education remained the concern of local authorities and individuals.

This was the situation that the former members of the Institute in France had to take into account during the period of the Consulate.

The effect of religious legislation

The Brothers who had had to face renewed persecution during the final years of the Directory, were able to benefit from the policy of appeasement which marked the beginning of the Consulate. All the same, J. B. Mairez (Brother Jonas), arrested in November 1799, was released from prison only on March 15th 1800.

Generally speaking, as far as the Brothers were concerned, the law of Nivôse, Year 8, reassured those who had refused to take the constitutional or even the liberty and equality oath, as well as those who had felt justified in taking them. In addition, a decree of the First Consul dated Prairial 3rd, Year 10 (1802), ordered that "non-jurors" should be paid the

pension to which they had a right as ex-religious, on condition that their position with regard to their bishop was in order. This new measure enabled former members of the Institute who, up till then had been deprived of their pension, to obtain one. This explains, no doubt, the request sent by Claude Étienne Legendre (Brother Gordien Marie) to the Prefect of Calvados in September 1802, informing him of his 42 years in the Institute (RA CL 601-2/15).

It would be interesting to know whether all those who had belonged to the Institute before its suppression shared the same opinion regarding the signing of the Concordat. The Concordat did nothing to re-instate the regular orders nor the secular congregations that had been dissolved. In fact, Napoleon and his supporters were diametrically opposed to any attempt to re-establish "bodies" of any kind, and consequently there was absolutely no question, at the time, of an official re-establishment of the Institute.

Consequences of educational legislation

The Consulate made no innovations in primary school education. It made it the responsibility of local authorities, dividing the cost between them and the families of pupils. Regarding the recruitment of teachers, "the State remains opposed to free and autonomous societies. It believes that until it is decreed otherwise, it can solve its problem by using individuals" (Rigault III, 448).

As individuals, the Brothers could continue to be employed by local authorities in their capacity as "public teachers", or they could open "private schools". In either case, they no longer encountered the problems they had experienced previously. The problem that continued to exist, however, was how to saveguard gratuity, given that the law of Floréal, Year 10, (May 1802) stipulated that parents of pupils had to pay tuition fees, and only one fifth of these could be exempted.

What is typical of the period under consideration, is that side-by-side with groups of former members of the Institute, who had remained together or had come together again, other groups were formed which would play an important role.

Regarding the long-standing groups, we note, for example:

♦ On October 7th 1802, the town council of Laon decided to call back the teachers who had been persecuted during the Directory. Gratuity was maintained in the schools despite the law.

♦ At Chartres, on October 11th 1802, Brothers Acaire (André Fossey) and Montain (Claude François Langlet) returned to their former house.

As for the new groups that were formed, they were above all the result of the efforts of four Brothers.

Brother Vivien, who had left his school at the end of the Directory, returned to take up teaching again in the first months of 1800. When the town authorities of Rheims undertook the re-organisation of primary education in the town, Brother Vivien offered his help. The plan presented by a town council committee on December 29th 1802 reflected the ideas of Brother Vivien. It proposed that, since the isolation of teachers was harmful to the good running of schools, the schools should be entrusted to teachers who would live "in common", and who would share out the four boys' schools among themselves. In these schools, the proportion of non fee-paying pupils would be two thirds.

The town authorities approved the plan, and the group which had formed around Brother Vivien took possession of the four schools. At the beginning of 1803, nine "Brothers of the Christian Schools of Rheims" signed an address "to his Holiness Pope Pius VII, Sovereign Pontiff". Although forming an association, the Brothers did not constitute a religious community properly so called.

Brother Bernardin (Pierre Blanc) restarted the school at Castres in 1802. However, he was invited to go to Toulouse by a priest who had opened and supported the schools the Brothers had run in that town. On February 20th 1803, he and four other former members of the Institute drew up a "document of association". On July 3rd of the same year, the members of this association bound themselves by vows, renewable every year, of chastity, obedience and stability. Up till March 1803, when the schools re-opened, they ran a boarding school.

Brother François de Jésus (Antoine Cadoux) had taken refuge in Lyons some years previously. And then, towards the end of 1799, at the age of 76, he opened a small day school. One of the Vicar Generals advised him to set up a community of teachers. As a result, he contacted Jacques Juge (Brother Pigménion) who was at Condrieu at the time. Brother Pigménion went to Lyons and took up the work left by Brother François de Jésus who had died in the meantime. He was joined in Lyons by Brothers Paul de Jésus and Servule from Le Puy and by two other Brothers. Brother Paul de Jésus was unhappy with the situation and left, and one other Brother went home. At the end of 1802, the group was joined by a novice.

After leaving Rouen, **Brother Gerbaud** (Sébastien Thomas) went to St Germain en Laye, and ran a primary school there in the first years of the Consulate, together with Brothers Constantien, Aaron and Zénas. Leaving the direction of the school to Brother Constantien, Brother Gerbaud left for Paris to take over the Gros Caillou school. He was helped in his work by Claude Collin, known in the Institute as Brother Tiburce. Even before the school was opened, it had received the approval of the government, following a report presented to the First Consul by the Director of Religious Affairs, Portalis. In a letter which he sent to the Brother Vicar General on June 1st 1803, Brother Gerbaud pointed out that "the decree of approval named the members of the Congregation who were due to run the school". No other school benefited from a similar kind of approval (quoted in Rigault III, 476).

Steps taken to re-establish the Institute in France

The Institute had not disappeared completely as a religious congregation, since it still existed in Italy. In France, its re-establishment within the country presupposed, first of all, that those of its former members who were prepared to rejoin would rally under a single authority. Secondly, official re-establishment required that the legal existence of the Institute be once again approved by the public authorities. From 1803 onwards, various steps were taken regarding these two aspects, to bring about the rebirth of the Institute in France. The steps taken, however, tended to follow a parallel course without converging.

Gradual recognition of Brother Frumence's authority in France

The recognition of Brother Frumence's authority as Vicar General of the Institute posed no problem in Italy. At the request of the Sovereign Pontiff, a school had been opened in Bolsena which, added to the one in Ferrara and in Orvieto, and to the two in Rome, made a total of five (cf. *Essai sur la Maison Mère*, 114-115)).

Pope Pius VII had confirmed orally the decision of his predecessor. Brother Frumence returned to Rome in 1799. A dozen or so Brothers there had re-opened the schools of Trinità dei Monti and San Salvatore in Lauro.

Many of the Brothers scattered around France were no doubt unaware that Brother Frumence had been appointed Vicar General, even though his appointment had been made

several years previously. It is possible also that, of those who knew, some thought that the appointment applied only to Italy.

Because of the repressive measures in force in France, and the invasion of Italy during the last years of the Directory, contact between the Brothers of France and Italy was impossible, and was not re-established immediately under the Consulate.

The signing of the Concordat restored contact. Once again, the Brothers had the possibility of obtaining information regarding the exact nature of the role entrusted to Brother Frumence. Some Brothers contacted him personally.

Brother Gerbaud's letter, to which reference has already been made, and to which we shall return, mentioned two letters he had previously received from the Brother Vicar General. In autumn 1802, Brother Pigménion wrote to the latter and spoke of his disappointment regarding two of the Brothers who had joined him. On January 13th 1803, one of these two, Brother Paul de Jésus, wrote to Brother Frumence as to his Superior and, in particular, explained to him the reasons which had led him to leave Lyons. When, as a result of this letter, the Brother Vicar General asked his correspondent to leave Le Puy and join Brother Pigménion and start up a community with him, he demonstrated that his authority extended to the Brothers in France, at least to the extent that these Brothers were prepared to place themselves under his authority.

As far as we know, in 1803, these Brothers were not numerous and, under the circumstances, Brother Frumence probably thought that any plans he may have had to return to France were premature. In any case, the atmosphere in Rome at the time was sufficient to explain why the Vicar General hesitated to return: the impression left by Napoleon and his army in Italy, cast grave doubts on the sincerity of the agreement he had made with the Pope regarding the re-establishment of Catholicism in France.

Steps taken in Paris in view of re-establishing the Institute

In Paris, Brother Gerbaud had only one or two companions, but he was surrounded by persons who could advise him. These included especially the "Pères de la Foi", whose Superior Brother Frumence had recommended to the Brothers (cf. Rigault III, 474). It is probable that it was one of these priests who wrote a memorandum entitled "Observations on the plan to re-establish the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", which Brother Gerbaud mentioned when he wrote to Brother Frumence on June 1st 1803.

The basic reasoning of the document is as follows: the Brothers who wish to re-establish the Institute should elect a new Superior. This would be difficult. In fact, it was no longer possible since the Sovereign Pontiff had appointed a Vicar General for the Institute. The latter should return to France and bring with him a "short Brief", that is, a document signed by the Pope, confirming his appointment. Once in Paris, "he would see how things were. At the same time, he would negotiate with the government to obtain the necessary authorisation" (quoted in Rigault III, 513).

In his letter, Brother Gerbaud described the situation Brother Frumence would find when he arrived in France, and then he was moved to exhort his Superior as follows: "My very dear Brother, show us your goodness, your zeal and your affection for our order by undertaking this journey to France, and even by coming to live in Paris and making it the residence of the Superior" (quoted in Rigault III, 517). He explained the advantages of the solution that had been offered, and concluded with an urgent appeal: "Please come! We wait for you as children await their father. No one else but you can fulfil this mission, because, according to our former practices, there must be only one Superior, and his residence must be in France" (quoted in Rigault III, 518).

Steps taken in Lyons in view of re-establishing the Institute

In his letter to Brother Frumence, Brother Gerbaud also mentioned that he had "sent him two letters and a memorandum engraved by Abbé Gautier, secretary to the Cardinal of Lyons, the uncle of Bonaparte, who was going to Rome as ambassador" (quoted in Rigault III, 515). The ambassador of the French Republic to the Holy See just mentioned was Cardinal Fesch, who had been made Archbishop of Lyons on July 25th 1802. During his time in this town, he had shown interest in the work of the Brothers for the children of the lower classes, and had encouraged it.

On September 7th 1803, the Brothers in Lyons, who were now quite numerous, wrote to their Archbishop. Doubting that Brother Frumence could return to France, they asked authorisation to gather together a certain number of Brothers in order to elect a Superior General for France, who would have his residence in Lyons. They saw the designation of a Superior as a means of remedying an unfortunate situation which had arisen, because Brothers left to their own devices "do not know where to go or whom to obey"; because "all the houses function independently of one another"; and because "we are partially approved not as Brothers of the Christian Schools, but as individual teachers". They

believed also that it was urgent "to have our statutes approved by the government, even before appointing a Superior General for ourselves" (quoted in Rigault III, 527).

The Archbishop's Council, to whom the letter had been sent, supported the request sent to the Cardinal. The Cardinal himself was in favour. Having already made known his intentions to M. Jauffret, one of his Vicar Generals, in a letter dated October 5th 1803, he informed him that he had met Brother Frumence, who had told him he would be prepared to resign, and that he had sent a detailed report regarding the matter to M. Portalis.

Following an intervention by Cardinal Fesch, the Director for Religious Affairs presented a report regarding the matter to Bonaparte on Frimaire 10th, Year 12 (December 2nd 1803). In this report, which described the Brothers as being "simply associated for the gratuitous instruction of youth", he stressed the advantages of "re-instating them under the authority of the government", and he suggested the First Consul "should allow the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine to re-establish themselves in Lyons" (quoted in Rigault III, 533). The following day, Bonaparte wrote "approved" in the margin and added his signature.

This approval had much less importance than some attributed to it later on. Portalis had still to draw up a final report on this question as well as a draft decree which would accompany it. It would appear that it is this report, in the form of a document dated Germinal 15th, Year 12 (April 5th 1804), which is preserved in the National Archives in Paris. What is certain, is that the report in question was never presented to Napoleon.

In the meantime, the government was drawing up a document intended to prevent the clandestine reconstitution of "religious societies". This measure was not aimed at the Brothers. "Although resolved not to grant them any special privilege, the Emperor stood by his declaration of principle for the time being" (Rigault III, 544).

They were affected, on the other hand, by a decree which "established the forms under which a society or a religious association could be approved" (quoted in Rigault III, 546). In the future, such associations had to submit the statutes and rules according to which their members intended to live. These would be examined by the State Council (**Conseil d'État***).

M. Jauffret, the Vicar General who was helping the Brothers with their negotiations, wasted no time in gathering all the necessary information regarding the *Rule* of the Brothers, and presented it in a long document which, on Messidor 27th, Year 12, he asked the Brothers in Lyons to sign. Three Brothers chose not to sign it. M. Jauffret sent the document accompanied by a report to "M. Portalis, Minister for Religious Affairs". The dossier reached the latter at the end of July 1804, but, foreseeing the possible reactions of the

members of the Council of State to the text in its present form, he hesitated to pursue the matter.

There were other persons also who had plans for re-establishing the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Lyons. One of these was the Mayor of the West part of the town, who took the initiative of inviting to Lyons Brother Vivien from Rheims and Brother Bernardin from Tours, to ask for their advice, and to persuade, if possible, the two groups they headed, to join up and come to Lyons. Intentionally or not, Brother Gerbaud was not included in this invitation.

On Brumaire 19th, Year 13 (November 1st 1804), Portalis informed the Prefect of the Rhône that he was sending him a copy of the "decision by which the government authorises the establishment of the Institution of the Christian Doctrine in Lyons" (quoted in Rigault III, 565). The document in question was a copy of the report presented to Napoleon on Frimaire 10th, Year 12, and which the latter had approved the following day (see page 264).

The process begun by the Brothers of Lyons when they had recourse to Cardinal Fesch on September 7th 1803, seemed to have achieved at least one thing: the Brothers and the re-opened houses dispersed throughout France could now refer to a common rallying point which was in Lyons.

On November 19th 1804, and in a most unexpected fashion, Brother Frumence and three other Brothers arrived in Lyons.

What made the Brother Vicar General decide to return to France and make his residence in Lyons? We do not know for certain. However, he arrived in Lyons the day before Pope Pius VII, on his way to Paris to crown the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte on December 2nd, broke his journey in the metropolitan city of Cardinal Fesch. We can suppose that the two events were not unconnected. It seems as if the Cardinal had convinced Brother Frumence to go to Lyons, while he himself made his way there in the company of the Sovereign Pontiff (cf. Rigault III, 560). And so, one of the proposals made by Brother Gerbaud to his Superior in his letter of June 1st 1803 was acted upon.

Now that he had returned to France, the Brother Vicar General was in a position to achieve the aim pursued by all those who worked for the re-establishment of the Institute in the country.

Conclusion

The signs of re-birth, which had appeared in the previous period, led, in the period we have just considered, to the formation of groups of Brothers who had remained faithful to their vocation, and who lived in what were more or less religious communities. Some of these groups made attempts to obtain legal recognition for the Institute once again. A number of Brothers who had lived alone joined these groups. Others refused the invitation to do so.

Other groups, which existed here and there, remained isolated. The same was true of a certain number of former members of the Institute who were still alive and who might rejoin if it were ever re-established.

A passage from Brother Gerbaud's letter to Brother Frumence, dated June 1st 1803, gives an idea of the situation in France following a dozen years of all sorts of trials:

> "This is how things are: Brother Macaire died at Saint Vourn. Brother Lothaire is at Besançon. Sixty-five years old, infirm and convinced that our re-establishment is impossible, he refuses to have anything to do with government, even though he is very well disposed towards us. Brother Aimé and Rupert are the same. Brother Aventin has married.
>
> "Brother Julien, my venerable and tender Director of novices, lives at St Hubert in the Ardennes. There he runs the nice little boarding school he set up with his brother Agapet. Brothers Téonas, Gondebert and Alexis also have a flourishing boarding school in Tournai. Brother Vivien, with eight other Brothers in his charge, is at Rheims. Brother Constantien is at Saint Germain with three Brothers. There are Brothers at Chartres, Lyons and in other places I do not know" (quoted in Rigault III, 515-516).

This brief sketch of the situation shows that when the first signs of hope of rebirth appeared, it was a hope that was nurtured only by "the faithful few".

To what extent is it possible to check the truth of this impression? We shall attempt to do so in the supplement which follows, by analysing the results of an enquiry made in 1804 by Fourcroy, who was Director of Public Instruction at the time, even though these results are included in the opening chapter of volume three of this *Introduction to the History of the Institute*.

— Supplement Fourteen —
The Survey Carried Out in Year 13

On November 10th 1804, Portalis wrote to the Prefect of the Rhône who informed him of "the decision by which the government authorises the establishment of the Institution of the Christian Doctrine in Lyons". As we read in the preceding chapter, this did not constitute an official recognition of the Institute. Neither Bonaparte, who would become Emperor Napoleon I on December 2nd 1804, nor his close collaborators, had lost any of their hostility to the re-establishment of religious congregations or orders. On the other hand, they were prepared to allow the former members of the Institute to contribute to the re-establishment of primary education. In the circumstances, the government was interested in knowing what had happened to the Brothers who had been in the Institute at the beginning of the Revolution, and to what extent those who were still alive were available. As a consequence, it ordered a survey to be carried out.

Fourcroy, the Director of Public Instruction, was in overall charge of the project. On Frimaire 21st, Year 13 (December 12th 1804), he sent a circular to the Prefects. Answers started coming in at the beginning of 1805 but, according to the Revolutionary calendar which remained in force, it was still Year 13 of the Republic, and hence the title of this supplement. What is interesting about this survey, is that, on the basis of it, it is possible to make some sort of assessment of the state of the Institute after the Revolution.

The survey

The text of the circular sent by Fourcroy explains the reasons for carrying out the survey, and indicates the information it is supposed to gather. The "Councillor of State, Director of Public Instruction" wrote as follows to the Prefects:

> "The Brothers of the Christian Schools have made too great a contribution to primary education, for their institution to be ignored at a time when everything that proved useful to it [primary education] must be harnessed in its service.
>
> "The intention of His Majesty the Emperor is to adopt a general measure regarding the former school Brothers, restricted solely to teaching in primary schools. This measure does not affect in any way the principles adopted by His Majesty regarding religious bodies.
>
> "I invite you, Sir, to inform me if there are any Brothers in your Department; if they are employed in public or private schools; who their employers are, and what are the conditions of

their employment; if it is according to their former statutes, or according to new rules; what these statutes or rules are; in a word, to send me any information you may have about them" (quoted in Rigault III, 589).

The action taken in response to this circular shows the efficiency of the administration set up by Napoleon at the beginning of the Consulate. The Prefects distributed the circular to their Sub-Prefects and to the mayors of certain towns, with instructions to carry out the survey. Information was sent to the Prefects who, in their turn, passed it on to Fourcroy. Some of the answers were very detailed, others were vague or incorrect. For example, it was said that there had been no Brothers in the Var and the Vosges regions before the Revolution, whereas there had been communities in Toulon and St Dié.

The complete results of the survey are preserved in the National Archives in Paris. However, the Generalate archives (DF 354/7) have an analysis of the answers sent in by 41 Departments where there had been Brothers before the Revolution, and by ten or so others. In the case of five Departments where there had been Brothers there are no answers. There is no information from the 30 or so other Departments (cf. Rigault III, 590, note 1). Despite the gaps in the information at our disposal, we did not think it necessary to consult the National Archives again. On the other hand, further research was carried out in a number of Departmental archives in an attempt to discover the answers sent in by certain Prefects. A number of other documents preserved in the Generalate archives were consulted also.

Assessment of the number of Brothers

If we accept the figures explicitly mentioned in the files in the Generalate archives, there was a total of some 160 former members of the Institute spread over 50 or so Departments. A revised count appended to the files gives a total of almost 250 Brothers. This revised figure, established apparently by Rigault, uses other sources of information and includes 60 or so Brothers about whom the files give no precise information. The justification for this revised figure is given in the final three chapters of Volume III of his *Histoire générale de l'Institut.*

In the case of about 35 Departments, the results of the survey are not available. In the Departments which replaced the former Provinces, where, not only there were no Brothers, but they had never been heard of, the survey must have produced meagre results. We can presume that this was not the case in Departments such as that of the Hautes Alpes (Queyras and Briançon valleys), or of the Doubs (a part of the Franche Comté), from which many Brothers came (see page 76). However, research carried out in the archives of these two Departments produced no results. On the other hand, documents in the Generalate archives referring to the second reveal that there were three Brothers there in 1804.

On the basis of the revised figures, which he seems to have established by his own research, Rigault drew the following conclusion: "There are no more than 250 former Brothers on French territory". This figure is probably correct for the 50 Departments mentioned originally. However, the fact that the presence of Brother Paschal in Picardy was mentioned in the report of the Prefect of Seine Maritime (cf. RA CL 601-2/20), but was not included in the report of the Prefect for the Somme, proves that even in the case of these Departments information may not be complete.

Information regarding the Doubs, reveals the presence of a certain number of Brothers in the Departments, but does not offer any details. Copies of documents preserved in the Generalate archives indicate that there were a few Brothers there, and give the names of five former members of the Institute who, at the time, were in what is now Belgium. It is unlikely that further research would bring the numbers up to 300.

And so, of the Brothers who were in the Institute at the beginning of 1791, only a third can be found 14 years later, and in a great variety of situations.

The situation of the Brothers

The purpose of the Fourcroy survey was not only to determine the whereabouts of the former members of the Institute, but also to check whether they had remained in teaching, and to what extent they would be prepared to take up again their former way of life.

If we restrict ourselves to the 160 or so Brothers about whom we have precise information thanks to the Fourcroy survey, we find that at least a hundred were still in **teaching**. Some ran public or private schools; others had opened boarding schools, or at least, were giving lessons to a few pupils. This last alternative was especially true of the older Brothers. As for the other 60, who are referred to in Volume III of Rigault, it appears that the majority were likewise still in teaching, most of them having either remained with a group for this purpose, or had subsequently joined one.

And so, by and large, the former members of the Institute who had been through the Revolution had remained faithful to their vocation as teachers. Even though, according to the survey, not all continued to follow the former practices of the Institute, many of them did so, especially in private schools.

It is interesting to read in the results of the survey that the decimal system was taught at the school at Noyon. The survey notes that, in general, it seemed that among the teachers "there were those who were capable of teaching the decimal system and all the new weights and measures, but that the majority could not and would not undertake to teach these things which, through prejudice, were rejected by the parents of the pupils".

As for the question which asked whether former members would be willing to return to their **former way of life**, the answers received were less numerous and decidedly less favourable.

Out of the 160 for whom we have sufficiently detailed information, 40 or so are listed as married or widowed, and it is possible there were others in the same situation.

Among those who were available, very few of those who lived alone seemed prepared to return to community life. On the other hand, the Brothers, who already lived together for the purpose of running one or several schools, as at Bourges, are listed as following their "former practices". Others, as in Chartres, are said to be faithful to the "former statutes". Even though, in the case of the six Brothers at St Omer and the three at St Germain en Laye, it is noted only that they "lived together", it is probable that they too were faithful to "their former way of life".

It seems also that among the 60 or so former Brothers described by Rigault, the majority found themselves more or less in a similar situation. For example, Brother Vivien lived with his eight companions in Rheims, Brother Bernardin had his "associates" in Toulouse, and Brother Gerbaud had taken over the Gros Caillou school in Paris with one or two Brothers. The group which clearly lived in greatest conformity with the Rule of the Institute was the one in Lyons which numbered 28 Brothers, novices and postulants.

The situation of the dozen or so Brothers we know about from other sources also varied from individual to individual. In the Doubs, two of the three Brothers agreed to put themselves under the authority of Brother Frumence, but the third, Brother Lothaire, was not prepared to do so. Out of the five Brothers in Belgium, the two at St Hubert were prepared to rejoin the Institute. In Tournai, at least one of the Brothers was married (cf. RA CL 601-2/22).

If we take into account the variety of situations brought to light by the survey carried out at the end of 1804, how can we describe the state of the Institute as the Revolutionary period came to an end? We shall try to provide an answer.

The state of the Institute

The answers to the Fourcroy survey provide us with information regarding the numbers and situation of the former members of the Institute. Even if the information we have used is incomplete, it enables us to form an idea of what happened to the Brothers included in Brother Salomon's 1791 list between this date and the end of 1804/beginning of 1805.

Of those included on the 1791 list as belonging to the Institute, an unknown number had died. We know of the seven who bore witness to their Catholic faith by their deaths. We know that others died in prison. The trials suffered by others undoubtedly hastened their death. This appears to be true in the case of Brother Agathon. Others, despite all their trials, reached an advanced age. Brother Florence, for example, the former Superior General, died on January 15th 1800, at the

age of 75 (Rigault III, 502). Others disappeared without trace, and it is not known whether they were alive or dead at the time of the survey. These include Brother Philippe de Jésus, the former Procurator of the Institute, the former Brother Assistants Zachée and Anaclet, and many others.

The survey reveals that a certain number of former Brothers who took the constitutional oath had left the Institute in 1791. The Brothers of Dijon and Auxonne are mentioned only as a group, but we find the name of several of them listed as being resident in the Côte d'Or in the answers furnished to another survey carried out in 1808. In the answers furnished by the Prefect of Calvados to Fourcroy's survey, Mamel Dominique and Quillot Joseph are listed as living in Bayeux. Both of these and a third Brother had taken the oath.

A certain number of Brothers, who had continued running schools in the towns in which they lived, had abandoned their "state" completely. In the answer provided by the Prefect of Loiret, three former Brothers, living in Orléans, are listed as being married. Others, who no longer taught, were in the same case.

Some Brothers left the Institute but remained unmarried and lived as faithful Catholics. The most typical case is that of Brother Lothaire (J. B. Clerc), the former Assistant. Brother Salomon, who remained a friend of his, wrote to one of his sisters about him in 1791, saying that the latter had found employment outside the Institute. When the Institute had been suppressed, he had obtained a pension, and had gone to live at Besançon in his native province. We saw earlier what Brother Gerbaud wrote about him in his letter to Brother Frumence in 1803 (see page 266). He helped to set up a community of Brothers in Besançon, and joined it towards the end of his life, during the winter of 1808–1809. When he died at Besançon in 1809, one of the two witnesses mentioned by the death certificate was one of the Brothers who had re-opened a school at Dole (cf. RA CE 301).

There were other Brothers who had been able to continue their former kind of life for a long time, but when circumstances forced them to change, they did not re-establish contact with the Institute when it began to come back to life in France. Charles Turpin, for example, the former Brother Dominique, who had been the Director of the house at Dijon and the only one to refuse to take the constitutional oath, and who had been appointed by Pius VI to head the community at Estavayer, had returned to France in 1800. He had obtained a position as assistant bursar in the hospital at Dijon. In the answer to the 1808 survey already mentioned, he is listed as "unmarried, 73 years of age . . . at the hospital, teaches young people called "Red Caps" (Dijon town archives, 10 T 239 B2). He had returned to his previous profession at an advanced age, but he did not rejoin the Institute before his death in 1809.

Others, who had survived all the trials of the Revolution, did not join the Brothers who were coming together again in order to re-establish the Institute. A case in point was J. B. Delvainquier, the former Brother Lucain, who had been imprisoned and who continued to teach in Bourges. When he was contacted by the Prefect of Cher regarding the Fourcroy survey, he had answered that he and another Brother "follow the former rules of their institution and make their pupils use

the same traditional works . . . the *Duties of a Christian*, the *Rules of Christian Politeness* . . ." and that, since the "corporation" had been dissolved, each member followed the *Rule* as he wished, or restricted himself to fulfilling as well as he could his duties as a schoolmaster. According to him, if the Society of the Brothers" were restored, it would have to be on the same conditions as before. However, he was very attached to Bourges and never rejoined the Institute (cf. Rigault III, 593).

And then, there were those who wished to rejoin the Institute but whose requests went unheeded. There is the case of Brother Irenée (Claude Antoine Trimaillé) who wrote to Brother Frumence in 1807, reminding the latter that, when he had arrived in Lyons, he (Brother Irenée) had offered him his services and those of Brother Anatole Lacroix, but had received no answer to his letter. He offered his services a second time to the Brother Vicar General, proposing to open a school in the Doubs area with his brother, Claude François (Brother Donat Joseph), who was a survivor of the prison ships of Rochefort. Brother Irenée's letter mentioned also Jean Claude Delacroix, whose travels we have described elsewhere, and who died in the meantime "as a true Brother of the Christian Schools" (RA NC 734-2).

It was the Brothers who formed part of a group who were the most likely to put themselves under the authority of Brother Frumence. But this was not true for all of them, at least, not immediately. This was the case, for example, of the Brothers working with Brother Vivien in Rheims. While it is true that Brother Vivien himself went to Lyons as community bursar, he still continued to look after the schools in Rheims in a fairly independent manner. He may have declared that he was "under the jurisdiction of the Vicar General resident in Lyons" but, in practice, as Rigault writes, he remained "50% a layman, with apparently considerable sums of money at his disposal" (Rigault III, 583).

Brother Bernardin, who headed an "association" in Toulouse, showed a greater degree of dependence on Brother Frumence. However, his ties with the latter were not as close as those which had existed from 1802–1803 onwards between the Vicar General and Brothers Pigménion and Gerbaud (see page 260-261).

At the end of 1804/beginning of 1805, Brother Frumence headed a group of 28 in Lyons, composed of Brothers, novices (called "pupils") and postulants. The 20 or so Brothers in Italy likewise accepted his authority without question. This was the case also of a certain number of Brothers in France, living singly or in groups. How many were they in all? It is difficult to say, since relations between the Brothers and the Brother Vicar General could vary so much.

When Rigault concludes his analysis of the results of the survey carried out in Year 13, by saying that there were "altogether a hundred or so teachers, working or in training, under the authority of the Brother Vicar General, or intending to accept his authority in the near future" (III, 605), we should accept his assessment that this figure represents a maximum number, especially if we take into account only the former members of the Institute in France.

Conclusion

When the Revolutionary period came to an end, the future of the Institute depended on a very small group of Brothers.

These Brothers had survived the "great trial". Like many of their fellow Brothers, who had remained in France, most of them had continued to exercise their former profession, or had taken it up again as soon as they could. But unlike the others, they had tried to remain faithful to their former "state", especially by not marrying.

As soon as they had seen signs of the rebirth of the Institute, they had contributed to it actively, or had joined those who were doing so.

The trials suffered by the Brothers in Italy had been less severe, but they had suffered nonetheless. Their great merit had been also to hold firm despite their exile and their isolation.

There were also those who had been slow in making up their minds, but who eventually joined the pioneers of the rebirth of the Institute. There were even former Brothers who, on the death of their wife, rejoined the Institute.

When the Institute finally began to come back to life, there were only a few dozen Brothers involved in this rebirth, whose faith had been strengthened and who had never lost hope during those long years they had had to endure.

On the other hand, what happened is very much in accordance with the way God often works: the fidelity of a small group under trial bears within it the seed of new growth.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The history of the Institute in the 18th century is, as we said in the introduction, just one aspect of the history of the countries which made up Europe at the time. What distinguished these countries, in particular, was the persistence of characteristics inherited often from the Middle Ages, and the evolution in thinking, which had brought about changes which, especially in France, had overturned the ancient order. Both of these characteristics applied in particular to France.

In the case of France, in fact, one cannot help being struck by the differences between this relatively recent period of history and our own present-day one. The explanation for this is that, in many ways, the 18th century was more a continuation of the preceding centuries than a precursor of the two that followed.

The **ancient character** of the French society of the time can, perhaps, be summarised as follows: "Economically, slowness of communications, predominance of agriculture, almost non-existent metallurgy, a primitive banking system. Demographically, medieval for much of the period, high marriage, fertility and birth rate, persistence of epidemics and famine. Politically, a great juridical, linguistic and administrative diversity. Intellectually, a mixture of belief in the marvellous and Christian fervour, much illiteracy, a highly compartmentalised social life, notions such as the State, Nation and country either non-existent or only vaguely understood. . . ." (Pierre Goubert, quoted by Methivier, 1989, 5).

However, within this static framework, there took place a profound **change in thinking**. This change was already potentially present at the time of what was called the "European crisis of conscience". This change in thinking occurred gradually "not only among persons whose profession it was to think and write, but among all those who had positions of some importance in the world of politics" (Viguerie, 1995, 116). One of the consequences of this change was that everything was now submitted to the judgment of reason, the existing order was questioned, and the hold exercised by Catholicism on society was rejected.

The first effect of this transformation, which continued throughout the century, was to impart a revolutionary character to the revolt of the 13 British colonies in North America, which was the first act of a process culminating in the French Revolution.

At the beginning of the French Revolution, the progress made by new ideas gave rise to reforms intended not only to "change an ancient government, but also to abolish the ancient form of society" (De Tocqueville, quoted by Methivier, 1989, 4). In keeping with the aspirations and interests of the section of the bourgeoisie which supplied the leaders of the Revolution (master craftsmen, small workshop and shop owners, lawyers), these reforms, threatened at a certain period by the assumption of power by the masses (the abolition of the monarchy and the early stages of the Revolution), were maintained by the "Thermidorians" and then consolidated by Bonaparte.

While these reforms did not do away with all that remained of the past, they did change the face of France and, subsequently, in the course of the 19th century, of other countries.

The task facing the Brothers in the 18th century was to preserve continuity with the past, while at the same time adjusting to a new kind of future. We can assess how they fared on the basis of the facts at our disposal.

Continuity

The Brothers remained in contact with their past especially because of their **social background**, which connected them to certain sections of the society of the day. Their status, however, based as it was on the Bull of Approbation granted to the Institute, put them in the same category as the clergy.

In general, the family background of the Brothers placed them in the sections of society which undertook "manual activities and productive occupations" (Robert, 1970, 101). This meant they had a well-defined position in the hierarchical society of the times.

Very often their families belonged to a working class elite to which literacy had given them access (cf. Corvisier, 1992, 424). Despite this, the Brothers remained in touch, socially speaking, with the majority of the pupils who had working class backgrounds.

A certain number of Brothers came from minor bourgeoisie families connected with commerce and manufacture. More rarely, their father had a liberal profession to which access was gained by studying in a college.

Their connection with the social groups to which most of their families belonged, resulted in the Brothers being more interested in what was concrete rather than intellectual. This enabled them to understand better the expectations of the parents of their pupils, both in schools and in boarding establishments.

In the case of the Brothers, their continuity with the past was particularly clear where **religion** was concerned.

The religious renewal which took place in France in the 17th century did not reach the working class to which they mostly belonged till later on, although it continued to bear fruit throughout the 18th century (cf. Viguerie, 1988, 10).

Many families belonging to the minor bourgeoisie which dealt in commerce and manufacture remained attached to their faith and led profoundly Christian lives. Others, on the other hand, were affected by the new ideas, or at least, were less committed to their Christian faith. This was the case, for example, in Brother Salomon's family, where his parents' attitude differed from that of his uncle Dupont (cf. Guilhem, 1990, 14).

The Christianity practised by both the committed and the less committed has been described in the following terms: "It is a deeply religious Catholicism, possessing to a very high degree a sense of the transcendent and of God's sovereignty and grandeur. It is therefore a pure religion, very little contaminated, even among «simple people», by superstitious elements" (Viguerie, 1995, 102).

This may be seem to be an idealised picture of the situation and, in fact, it was not possible that all Catholics led Christian lives of such high quality. Contributing factors to this include the fact that, in the course of the century, the religious renewal movement gradually lost its impetus. In addition, dechristianisation began to affect the people who were drawn to the outskirts of towns by the first signs of industrial development, or in a certain number of areas where Christianity was less deeply rooted.

It is not surprising that this Christianity, lived and practised at home, led many Brothers to enter the Institute, and continued to attract and support them in it. In this instance also, we should not idealise the situation: there was also mediocrity and weakness. It is nonetheless true that the Institute proved capable of forming men who were profoundly impregnated with the Christian faith, a fact proved, as in the case of many others, by the Revolution.

It was this Christianity that the Brothers tried to communicate to their pupils. Throughout the course of the century, they remained faithful to the practice of teaching them catechism and bringing them up as Christians, even though Brother Agathon had found him-

self obliged to condemn negligence on the part of some. Some continued to teach catechism, even at the peril of their lives, during the time of the Revolution.

Such teaching, of course, produced varied results. There were former pupils of the Brothers among the Revolutionaries who persecuted the faithful, but they were present also among their victims. It is not possible to say in what proportion they were persecutors or victims.

Facing a new kind of future

What was especially new about the 18th century was the ferment of ideas which transformed the thinking of a part of society in France and in other countries.

The Brothers could not have been ignorant of the various schools of thought currently in vogue, if only because of the way in which they themselves were taken to task. It was clear, however, when we dealt with this question earlier, that they were little affected by them, and that if some were won over by the new ideas, this happened only at some subsequent time, and very few Brothers were involved.

We can deduce this from two things. First, in the writings of the Superiors, there is no indication that they feel it necessary to put the Brothers on their guard against the current "philosophy", except at the very beginning of the Revolution (see page 194, 1790 circular).

Secondly, we have suggested that the new ideas were slow in reaching the working-class sections of society, and consequently also the Brothers who, by and large, belonged to them. This view is based on that of Vigueric, an historian who has improved considerably our knowledge of the "Christian life" of the French in the 17th and 18th century.

We can add also that, because many of the Brothers came from sections of society, whose members, in those days, earned their living "by manual work and productive activities", they had nothing in common with those who considered themselves to have "enlightened minds", even if they were ecclesiastics or members of religious orders.

On the other hand, the Brothers were innovators, in the sense that they gave access to children belonging to the working classes to knowledge which enabled them to enter professions which were less precarious than those of their parents. In this, they differed from those who, professing the "philosophy of the Enlightenment", wished to restrict these children to a rudimentary form of education.

By opening special classes in their schools, or by setting up boarding schools, the Brothers responded also to the needs of parents who wanted their children to be given extra tuition in order to prepare them for the profession they themselves followed in commerce or in the manufacturing trade.

The desire to satisfy in the best possible way the expectations of the parents who entrusted their children to them, led some Brothers teaching in the special classes or boarding schools to upgrade their expertise considerably, as is shown by the textbooks they composed and the works that were on the shelves of boarding school libraries. For example, while it is true that the library of the boarding school in Marseilles did not have a copy of the *Encyclopédie française*, it did contain several works of a similar nature (cf. Prevot, 1964, 98).

When, at the beginning of the Revolutionary period a number of **reforms** were made — reforms largely influenced by the ideas diffused during the course of the 18th century, the reaction of the Brothers, it would seem, was to accept them to the extent that they met the demands made, for example, in the "Registers of Complaints". We have mentioned elsewhere how the Superiors accepted the new authorities, even as the latter were planning the suppression of the Institute.

It can be said also that, by teaching French in all the regions of France in which they found themselves, the Brothers contributed in a particular way to the unification of a country characterised until then "by provincial peculiarities and local privileges" (Soboul, 1982, 2, 440). This unification was undoubtedly one of the achievements of the French Revolution, whatever opinion one may hold regarding it.

Were the Brothers aware of the contribution they were making? If so, how did they judge the results, especially when the everyday use of French was imposed in certain provinces (Brittany, Alsace, the Basque country) as a means of uprooting Christianity? We cannot tell, but there is no sign that it affected the practice of the Brothers who taught, or returned to teaching, in public or private schools.

Finally, as was true in the case of many other Catholics, it was the policies adopted by the National Assembly regarding religion that led a large proportion of the members of the Institute to oppose the Revolutionary movement. It was not a question of taking up a particular position regarding the old order or the new, but of remaining faithful to the demands of one's conscience and to one's religious convictions.

The result was that the Brothers were numbered among the opponents of the Revolution, and were consequently treated as such, especially by those who gave the Revolution-

ary movement an anti-Christian character. Their attitude had consequences for the future, for once the Revolution was over, most of them would be among those who rejected the heritage of those difficult years.

If we have to make an overall assessment, it would seem that the Brothers were more part of the "modernising movement" than they thought. However, it remains true that, as a group, they continued to favour continuity.

From this we can conclude that, if we accept the idea that the "Age of Enlightenment" was the prelude to a period of decisive progress begun by the Revolution, we have to say that on the whole, the opposition of the Brothers to it was greater than their contribution.

If, on the contrary, we believe that the change in mentality which occurred in the course of the 18th century led to the destruction of the values on which France was founded, we can say that the Institute can be judged as having constituted an opposing force which resisted the efforts of those who wished to subvert the established order of things.

By refusing to take either of these positions as an *a priori* point of departure in this work, we have tried, as far as possible, to allow conclusions to be drawn from the facts themselves. We accept, of course, that the facts presented here are only those we have managed to trace, and that we may be guilty of error or omission. Nor do we maintain that ours is the only possible interpretation of these facts. There are many points that require further study and development, but then the purpose of the *Introduction to the History of the Institute* is precisely to encourage this.

The approach we have adopted has the disadvantage of concentrating on analysis and therefore of failing, to a certain extent, to provide a broader picture. On the other hand, in volume 4 of this Lasalian Studies series, entitled *Tres Siglos de identidad lasaliana: la relación mision-espiritualidad a lo largo de la historia FSC*, Brother Pedro Gil has provided this broader picture for two parts of the *History of the Institute in the 18th Century*. And so, even if each of these works is of a different nature, it can be said that they complement each other most usefully.

GLOSSARY

Bailliage: Administrative area and jurisdiction under the authority of a representative of the King called the "bailli". ** "Bailliages" were also courts of law. These "bailliages" were found mostly in the North of France: elsewhere, they were called "**sénéchaussées**" (seneschalsies); (cf. page 187).

Biens-fonds: property income from which was allocated for a particular purpose (cf. page 38).

Bref: A letter from the Pope, less important than a Bull (cf. pages 26, 251).

Bulle: In general terms, an official document carrying a metal seal. More particularly, a solemn declaration by the Pope, written on parchment, and carrying a lead seal (cf. page 14).

Capitation: (literally poll tax, tax per head): tax paid as a rule by all the King's subjects, including the "privileged" (clergy and nobility). First imposed in 1695 (cf. page 120).

Congrégation séculière: Official term used by the state Administration referring to institutes or societies of men or women religious who took simple vows, or even who took no vows at all. The members of these congregations normally devoted themselves to charitable works or teaching (cf. pages 189, 192).

Conseil d'État: In France, following the Revolution, a body of lawyers responsible for advising when laws were drawn up, or judging whether the measures adopted to implement them were appropriate (cf. page 264).

Corps: A group of persons "constituted with the permission of the King for the defence of the legitimate interests of their members. At the same time, they pursued aims consistent with the public interest" (Viguerie, 1995, 874; cf. page 37).

Déclaration royale: Legal document from the King interpreting or modifying a previous edict (cf. page 38).

Dîme: Share of the harvest due to the clergy to provide them with income (cf. pages 188, 190).

Édit: Legal document from the King regarding a single matter or a single category of persons (cf. page 37).

Enregistrer: Copy a document into a public register to give it legal status in a given electoral district (e.g., in that of a Parlement); (cf. page 29).

Fonder: In the strict sense, to set up a capital fund ("fond"), the income from which was allocated to cover the running costs of an institution such as a hospital or a school (cf. page 107).

Gens (or **Hommes) de loi**: Persons whose function was connected with the application of the law, such as judges, barristers, solicitors (cf. page 38).

Gallicanisme: The belief that the French Church and the King of France were independent to a certain degree of the Holy See. A "Gallican": someone who professes "gallicanism" (cf. pages 29, 83).

Indulgence: Pardon which completes the conversion of the sinner by making reparation for the disorder caused by sin, and reconciling the sinner with the Church (cf. page 15).

Intendant: A representative of the King in an electoral district called a "Généralité" (a province or part of a province); (cf. page 109).

Jansénistes: Catholics who had a rigoristic approach to doctrine and morals. In the 18th century, they constituted a body opposed at the same time to the Pope, who had condemned them in his Bull *Unigenitus*, and to the King who wished to force them to accept the Bull (see Bédel, 1996, boxed section on page 7; cf. page 19).

Lettres Patentes: A royal decision giving legal value to certain official documents (see Bédel, 1996, 217; cf. pages 14, 28).

Logement des gens de guerre: The obligation to give lodging to soldiers at one's own cost (cf. page 42).

Motu proprio: Letter written by the Pope on his own initiative (cf. page 247).

Octroi: Indirect tax on articles and foodstuffs paid on entry into a given area and, in particular, into a town (cf. page 190).

Parlement: A superior court of justice, endowed also with political powers (to counsel, admonish, permit the raising of taxes), and with administrative powers (registering, public assistance, ecclesiastical discipline); (cf. page 28).

Rescrit: Reply of the Pope to a petition (cf. page 127).

Ressort: Jurisdiction of a court, in the sense of district or area of competence (cf. pages 9, 29).

Seigneur féodal: A member of the nobility with a certain number of rights over the persons and property in the domain in which he exercises his "lordship" (cf. page 43).

Subdélégué: Assistant responsible for executing the orders of an "intendant" (cf. page 109).

Taille: Tax on the income of a person or from property. The clergy and the nobility were exempt from this tax (cf. pages 42, 117).

Taxe des pauvres: A contribution asked of more well-off members of a town community to help the poor (cf. page 151).

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