

*Brother Timothy Jerome, Visitor
San Francisco District*

**INSTITUTE
OF THE
BROTHERS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

INSTRUCTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
CIRCULARS

N° 354

July 16, 1956

Results of the General Chapter



MAISON SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DE LA SALLE
476, VIA AURELIA
ROMA

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Feast of Our Lady of Mount
Carmel



VERY DEAR BROTHERS

MAY THE GRACE AND PEACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE
ALWAYS WITH US.

The results of the last five General Chapters were given to the Institute each time by a newly elected Superior General. All five Superiors, on each such occasion expressed themselves as being greatly moved on having to address the entire Institute for the first time. All claimed that they lacked the competency for assuming the responsibility of Superior. Since we know the human excellence and religious ascendancy that marked the careers of our venerable predecessors, you can well understand our indescribable surprise at having to see our name added to a line of men whom we all remember as wise leaders and exemplary religious. Your representatives at the General Chapter felt it was quite in order for them to ignore our incapacity. May God spare them and our entire Congregation any grievous disappointments.

Thank God, the Regime is there to support and counsel the Superior General. In the measure that we have reason for being little confident in ourself, in the same measure are we

encouraged by the fact that we have such eminent religious to second us in the government of the Institute. We were decidedly relieved of much anxiety the moment our group of twelve Assistants was formed and began at once to share our burdens. It was immediately obvious that these eminent Brothers are profoundly enlightened and deeply solicitous regarding all that concerns the welfare of our Institute. The election of our dear Brother Philip Antoon to the post of Vicar General was especially pleasing to us. We know that we can always turn to our "alter ego" for sound advice deriving from a wide experience of men and affairs. His counsel is always marked by a truly supernatural spirit. The Regime constitutes something more than a group of eminent Brothers. It is a model community, a true family that our Father, St. John Baptist de La Salle, takes pleasure in blessing.

The kind and courteous encouragement extended us by the members of the General Chapter gave us confidence. A great number of letters coming from the Brothers and their Superiors everywhere expressed the same kindness, respect, obedience and religious affection towards a representative of God in their regard. This testimony of faith is very consoling. The ways of God are not those of men. We shall be all the more happy if it pleases God to make use of a poor instrument for the manifestation of His glory. Brothers, we count on you. We have complete confidence in you. We know that you have a profound desire for everything that can promote our religious life and apostolate. You are attentive and open to the action of God's grace. There is a great ambition in you and it is for things that matter.

These are crucial years we are passing through. To meet them successfully, even heroically, you await in all docility orders that are precise and directives that challenge generosity. May God as well as our holy patrons and protectors give us the grace not to fail you.

Circumstances attending our election incline us to look for help to St. John Baptist De La Salle and the Most Blessed Virgin. The Feast of May 15 was a prelude for the morning of the 19th. Having been elected under the protection of our Holy Founder, as we trust, we beg him with all earnestness to see to it that our government of the Institute be always in the line of his desires. The election took place on a Saturday of the month of May. We hasten to declare that we are taking

the Virgin Mary as special patron for our generalate. We desire, if it be possible, to establish her still more completely Queen of our Congregation. To her maternal care we confide all the interests of our religious family, all the matters we shall have to deal with, all the decisions it will be necessary to take.

These are times when devotion to Our Lady is happily going forward. Herein the Church and the Holy Father are lending every encouragement. We therefore promise to promote the worship of the Most Blessed Virgin in all our communities, in all our schools. For this purpose we will use every means in our power. The Most Blessed Virgin herself will assist us all in bringing about a furthering of her reign everywhere.

Saturday May 19 was the Vigil of Pentecost. May the Holy Ghost, Who was so often and so fervently invoked by all the Brothers of the General Chapter and indeed by all our Brothers everywhere, take command of our mind and of our heart—so that throughout the duration of our term as Superior we may retain “a love for what is right and the joy of His consolations.”

Brothers, because of the protection from Heaven, because of your regularity, prayers and sacrifices, we shall look ahead with confidence. We are certain that God in His mercy will bless His work.

* * *

Here, very dear Brothers, are the results of the work of the General Chapter of 1956. We are setting them before you as objectively as we can. As true sons of our great Lasallian Family you have been eagerly looking forward to learn what took place. We hope to satisfy you completely.

FIRST PART

HISTORY OF THE CHAPTER

Preparatory retreat

The letter convoking the General Chapter of 1956 was issued November 13, 1953. It pointed out how, according to Rule, the members of the Assembly should be determined, whether through election or by right of office. These duly appointed Brothers gathered at the Mother House May 9, 1956. The same evening they began their annual retreat, which was preached by Father Lievin, C.S.S.R., whose kindly, interesting talks were marked by depth of doctrine and experience. The retreat was genuinely appreciated. Running through it all was a fine, sympathetic note. Through the action of God's grace it stirred up faith and charity. The conferences of the Most Honored Brother Denis proved very helpful. They were clear and to the point, dealing largely with matters that preoccupy us all at the present moment. In order to have greater facility for reflection and private prayer the retreatants were in complete silence until May 15.

The Feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle was celebrated with exceptional solemnity; due largely to the special circumstances the Mother House alone is able to provide. The day terminated with an official reception extended to His Eminence Cardinal Micara, Protector of our Institute.

Notwithstanding his many engagements and the consequent fatigue, our eminent Cardinal Protector generously chose to honor us with his presence. He began with the chapel, where he gave Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He was then accompanied to the Chapter room, where the Most Honored Brother Denis presented to him the members of the Capitular Assembly. The Most Honored Brother saw fit to make some remarks that were very timely and, among other things, stressed the excellent religious understanding reigning among the Brothers present and the effort they would make to carry on their work in the spirit of their Holy Found-

er. He concluded by begging His Eminence to impart a paternal blessing to the group. The Cardinal very cordially did indeed give His blessing, pointing out that he meant it not only for the present assembly but likewise for all the Brothers throughout the world. From his heart he wished our Society increase and prosperity everywhere. His final kind gesture was to pose for a photo, the members of the Chapter grouping themselves about him.

Preparatory steps

The following morning began the triduum immediately preparatory to the General Chapter. In accordance with the Rule of Government these three days served as a continuation of the spiritual retreat as well as an official beginning of the work of the Chapter.

The first of the preparatory meetings was held Wednesday May 16, in the Chapter room. Certain practical improvements had been attended to some weeks beforehand. A carefully planned public address system had been made ready. Efficient arrangements had likewise been made to enable Brothers of the English tongue to receive, through ear phones, an immediate translation of all remarks and discourses. The Brother who made these translations so ably took the same oath of secrecy that the Rule of Government imposes on all the members of the General Chapter. This first meeting began with the customary prayers. All capitulars were present—save Brother Pedro Luis, retired Assistant, prevented because of health; and Brother Maurice-Emile, Visitor General, who was ill at the moment and had to keep to his room.

The Most Honored Brother Denis thanked the three Brothers all present who had served so expertly as secretaries for the Chapter of 1946: Brothers Francois de Sales, Secretary General, Maurice-Emile, Visitor General, and Fredien-Charles, Visitor of Paris. He thereupon proposed that three new secretaries be at once elected in order to assist Brother Secretary General. The following were elected: Brothers Marc-Marie, Visitor of Quebec; Martial-Robert, Auxiliary Visitor of South Belgium; and Clodoald, Director of the school of Likes, District of Quimper.

In the afternoon session of May 16 the Assembly proceed-

ed to form a commission for examining and verifying the mandates of its members. Five ex-officio members were designated for this commission: Brothers Leone di Maria, Postulator General; Cornelius Luke, Visitor General; Bautista Fernando, Visitor General; Anacleto, Visitor of Turin; Aloysius Lawrence, Visitor of Ireland. In addition, five elected members were chosen by lot: Brothers Quintin Jaime, Visitor of Argentina; Anthony John, Visitor of New York; Ramon Calixto, Visitor of Madrid; Damase-Jean, Visitor of Nantes; Agostinho Simao, Visitor of Brazil. Hereupon all the capitulars turned over their writs of deputation to the commission for verification.

Thursday May 17 at ten o'clock there was a meeting of the full assembly. The commission for verification reported that all writs were perfectly in order. It was now possible to proceed to the drawing up of the *Act of Constitution and Inauguration of the General Chapter*. At first sight this Act might seem obsolete and unnecessarily formal. It is indeed solemn, and not without significance. It goes back to the earliest General Chapters of the Society. It confers on the Assembly of the Brothers Capitulars the indisputable right to carry out all the elections and to make such decisions as come within its purview. Moreover, the Superiors in publishing the results of General Chapters in their respective Circulars have always felt it a duty to set down this Act in its entirety. Here is the Act for the Chapter of 1956.

Act of constitution and inauguration of the General Chapter

In the year of our Lord 1956, the eighteenth of the glorious pontificate of our Holy Father Pope Pius XII, on the eighteenth day of May, at ten forty-five o'clock, in the Chapter room of our house of St. John Baptist de La Salle, 476 Via Aurelia, Rome:

We the undersigned, Vicar General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Assistants in office, retired Assistant, Procurator General, Bursar General, Secretary General, Postulator General, Visitors General, deputies ex-officio and deputies elected by the Brothers professed with perpetual vows,

All of us, professed Brothers of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools founded by St. John Baptist de La Salle and placed by him under the protection of the Most Holy Child Jesus and the patronage of St. Joseph,

We, gathered together in the name of the adorable and indivisible Trinity, under the protection of St. Joseph, for the purpose of constituting the General Chapter which was duly convoked by the circular letter of November 13, 1955, which letter ordained that in our communities prayers be said, Communions be received, Masses be heard, and other pious works be performed in view of begging of God the light and the grace needed for the present Assembly and the work it must accomplish,

After having implored the help of the Holy Ghost by the recitation of the *Veni Creator*, after having addressed petitions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to Mary Immaculate under the title of our Lady of Good Counsel, to St. Joseph our glorious protector, after having instantly implored our Holy Founder to impart to us his spirit and invoked the help of Blessed Brother Salomon and Blessed Brother Benildus,

After having duly received the report of the commission for the verification of writs,

Considering the perfect regularity of the instruments that establish the right of the members appointed to share in the work of the General Chapter of 1956,

Considering the absence of any accusation or proof in regular form that any of the said members canvassed for his appointment or has been deprived of active or passive voice,

Considering that the Assembly accepts the reasons justifying the absence of Brother Pedro-Luis, retired Assistant,

We declare that the 74 Brothers (15 ex-officio and 59 elected) whose writs have been verified in the preparatory session and who are thus duly designated to represent the Districts, are legitimately members of the General Chapter of 1956,

And that in consequence the General Chapter is composed as follows:

- (1) The Most Honored Brother Denis, Vicar General;
- (2) Brother Adolphe-Marie, Pro-Vicar General;
- (3) Brothers Zacharias, Eliphus Victor, Guillemo-Felix,

Gioachino, Nivard-Anselme, Damien-Louis, Lawrence O'Toole, Antonio-Maria, Dominikus-Norbert, Philip-Antoon, Charles-Edmond — Assistants in office;

(4) Brother Philo'hée-Jean, ex-Assistant;

(5) Brother Alcime-Marie, Procurator General; Brother François de Sales, Secretary General; Armel-Félix, Bursar General; Leone di Maria, Postulator General;

(6) Brothers Damien-Georges, Cornelius Luke, Nicet-Joseph, Bautista-Fernando, Crispin de Jésus, Fabriciano-Luis, Olympius-Georges, Maurice-Emile, Visitors General; Brothers (1) to (6) inclusively being ex-officio members of the Chapter;

(7) Brothers Frédien-Charles, Anacleto, Marc-Marie, Donatien-Jules, Majorian-Pius, Mémoire-Ernest, Veron-Jozef, Aloysius-Lawrence, Edelwald James, Ramon-Calixto, Arthème-Pierre, Antonio-Nicasio, Ireneus Philip, Placido-Fermin, Antony John, ex-officio deputies of Districts;

(8) Brothers Augustijn-Robert, Wenceslao-Juan, Dieu-donné-Simon, Malon-Raphael, Veron-Ignace, Fridolin-Maria, Eusebio-Felix, Ulrik-Stanislaus, Fintan-Patrick, Agaton-Juan, Merry-Alphonse, Clodoald, Marie-Alphonse, Ismael-Gabriel, Flavien-Albert, Alphonse-Louis, Maltin-Grégoire, Genasio-Maria, Quintin-Jaime, Valerio, Navalis, Octave-Louis, Neon-Adrien, Cyprien-Gam, Gerino-Florian, Damase-Jean-Augustin de Jesus, Cyprien-Henri, Gebhard-Hanno, Aubert-Joseph, Virgile-Marie, Juan de la Cruz, August-Conrad, Beniamino della Consolata, Tarcisio de Jesus, Omer-Régis, Bernard-Alphonse, Mauger-Clement, Sevetian-Romuald, Damien-Joseph, Oliver Paul, Jerom Ephrem, Gilbert Ailbe, Alban-Joseph, Marinien-Sylvain, Libanos-Etienne, Martial-Robert, Olivier-Etienne, Erminus Joseph, Bernard Peter, Ulbertus Alfred, Rodulfo-Eloy, Vincentius van Jezus, Andres-Bernardo, Agostinho-Simao, Pablo-Manuel, Arbon-Honoré, Charles Hemy, Joel Damian — elected deputies of Districts.

Everything above being conformable to our Rules and Constitutions as well as to the Pontifical Rescripts dated November 12, 1875 and March 5, 1902.

We, the undersigned to the number of one hundred acknowledge and declare by the present act that we are assembled together in General Chapter according to the manner stipulated by our Rules and Constitutions, and that the pre

sent Assembly representing the Body of the Institute is empowered to hold regular elections as well as to propose, examine, discuss, and determine whatever it judges opportune and proper for the good of the said Institute — and for the greater glory of God, which each of us promises to procure as far as he can.

Done at Rome in the Chapter room of our house of St. John Baptist de La Salle — on the day, month and year mentioned above.

Here follow the signatures of all of the Capitulars.

* * *

Election of the Most Honored Brother Superior General

We cannot personally describe this ceremony. We were too taken aback and overwhelmed by the weight of the responsibility that came upon us. We think it best to give you simply the official report just as it has been written down in the capitulary register. This account conveys objectively all the main details.

“On Saturday May 19, 1956, Vigil of Pentecost, at six-fifty o'clock, following Holy Mass, Holy Communion and Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the main chapel, the Brothers of the Chapter assembled in the Chapter room. The Most Honored Brother Denis, Vicar General, presided. The *Veni Sancte* and the *Ave Maria* were recited and then the secretaries proceeded to distribute the prescribed ballots. The Most Honored Brother gave an address that was short but full of substance. He spoke of the qualities required in a Superior General, those, namely, mentioned in the Rule of Government. He stressed the extreme importance of the election. It was, he said, the gravest and most far-reaching step the Chapter would be called on to make. He likened our Assembly to the Apostolic College. He exhorted us to imitate the Apostles, to entertain only views of faith and to give ourselves up to the care and guidance of Our Lady. Then came the recitation of the *Veni Creator* followed by a quarter of an hour of mental prayer. This was a final plea to God that we might do according to His holy will.

“Then followed the impressive ceremony of the taking

of the oath--each in his turn kneeling before the crucifix and then going to a booth to write down on his ballot the name of the Brother he felt he should in conscience vote for. The Most Honored Brother, the Brothers Assistants and all the capitulars followed one another gravely, recollectedly. Meanwhile Brother Armel-Felix, first of the three tellers, accompanied by Brothers Dieudonné-Simon and Eusebio-Felix, proceeded to the infirmary to receive the vote to be cast by Brother Maurice-Emile, Visitor General. This Brother's health although greatly improved did not as yet admit of his attending any of the plenary sessions. Brothers Cyprien Gam and Beniamino, second and third tellers respectively were the last of the long line of Brothers to cast their votes. It was eight o'clock. The president of the Assembly together with the three tellers took the oath special to their office. When the ballot boxes were emptied and the ballots counted the required number was found to be exact, that is, one hundred. For several long minutes there was anxious waiting, the tellers working silently and rapidly. Finally, the first teller announced the result: 'There has been no election'.

"There began at once a second balloting, which proceeded in the same manner as did the first. During the second counting there was the same eagerness for a result that would be positive. But again no Brother had been given the required number of votes, and so there was no election.

"A third balloting began without delay, with no change in detail from the other two. During this counting likewise there was an ardent desire that it might be the last. Indeed the result this time was definitive. The first teller rose from his place to give us the desired formula, 'An election has been made'. It was in favor of Brother Nicet-Joseph. The time was nine-fifteen o'clock. The Most Honored Brother Denis, President, asked the prescribed but fearful question: 'Brother Nicet-Joseph, do you accept the office of Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools?' There followed a moment of silence. Brother Nicet-Joseph recollected himself, evidently making interiorly an act of submission to the will of God calling him to assume a very heavy and responsible burden. With some emotion, but not without firmness, Brother Nicet-Joseph answered, 'I adore the will of God... I promise to do my best... I ask for your fraternal collaboration and the help of your prayers'.

“The president then proclaimed Brother Nicet-Joseph legitimately elected Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, conducting him to a chair that was onetime used by St. John Baptist de La Salle, and as a sign of his new authority, presenting him with the seal of the Institute and a copy of the Rules and Constitutions.

“There followed the ceremony of presenting respect and obeisance. This served to ease the understandable nervous tension. All the capitulars were happy to express to the new Superior their religious affection and submission; and to receive from him the accolade together with a word of paternal kindness. This ceremony concluded, the Capitulars formed a double file proceeding slowly in the direction of the chapel and singing the *Benedictus*. Emotion still prevailed. The subdued voices of many testified to this until the group reached the chapel. Then resounded a vibrant *Te Deum*.

“In the procession from Chapter room to chapel the new Superior came last. Arriving at the sanctuary he was conducted to a specially prepared prie-Dieu near the main altar and facing it. The ringing of bells notified the personnel of the Mother House. The Brothers, together with some friends of the Institute, joined us in thanking God and praising Him. With all possible speed the good news was transmitted to the Houses of the Institute throughout the world.

“After Benediction and the singing of the *Ecce Quam Bonum* the Most Honored Brother Denis, Vicar General, and Brother Adolphe-Marie, Pro Vicar General, conducted the Most Honored Brother Nicet-Joseph to the Superior’s usual place in the Sanctuary. The ceremony closed with invocations to our holy protectors: the first of the prayers shared in by the Head of the Institute and his sons.”

And now, Brothers, what shall I say to you? Our election by your representatives constitutes for us an act of God’s Providence, which because of our faith we must adore. Better than anyone else we know that this office is beyond us. Humanly we were tempted to beg for mercy and refuse. But we remembered the words of the declaration that had already bound us on that distant, blessed day, we made our first vows: “... to do anything in the said Society at which I shall be employed, whether by the Body of the Society or...” We never imagined that this promise could bind to such lengths. We are at the service of the Congregation. May God be pleased

to accept our humble submission to His holy will. May He mercifully supply what we lack. The weaker the instrument the more can God in using it manifest His power.

• • •

When we were receiving the insignia of our authority from the hand of the Most Honored Brother Denis we thought of the last four years. During all that period Brother Vicar General bore the full responsibility of our religious family. A long and varied experience together with a spirit of complete devotedness to the interests of the Institute enabled him to take up and continue wisely and efficiently the forceful administration of his lamented predecessor, the Most Honored Brother Athanase-Emile. Let us mention here in the name of all the Brothers that the Most Honored Brother Denis merits supremely well of the Institute for the eminent services he rendered it during the fruitful years he acted as its head. We know that to the limit of his strength he will continue to promote whatever concerns the welfare of our religious family.

It is likewise right and proper for us to remember with affection and gratitude the eminent, universally admired leader that the Chapter of 1946 chose in the person of the Most Honored Brother Athanase-Emile. His biography, excellently written by Mr. Georges Rigault gives a sufficiently eloquent presentation of the exceptionnally fine qualities that characterized his energetic but fatherly government of our Society. We personally owe him very much. He frequently went out of his way to be of help to the Second Novitiate. We count him among those upon whose heavenly intercession we may depend for confirming and promoting everywhere the prosperity of our Congregation. Than this matter none was closer to his heart.

• • •

The first to receive news of our election was our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII. Here follows the letter addressed to His Holiness.

MOST HOLY FATHER

The members of the General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools assembled together in plenary session in the Generalate House of S. J.-B. de La Salle,

Via Aurelia, humbly prostrate themselves at the feet of your Holiness. To the Common Father and Supreme Superior of all Religious they joyfully announce the election of a new Superior General, Brother Nicet-Joseph, formerly Visitor General and Director of the Second Novitiate. To Your Holiness we renew our promise of fidelity to the Chair of St. Peter. We beg Your Holiness to impart his generous, paternal, Apostolic Benediction to the newly elected Brother and to the entire Lasallian Family, as well as upon the work that the General Chapter is about to undertake in accordance always with the directives of Holy Church.

Brother Alcime-Marie, F. S. C.
Procurator General

The same day we received from Vatican City the following telegram:

His Holiness learns of the election of a new Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Holy Father prays that abundant graces accompany the newly elected in the discharge of his office. His Holiness, from his heart, grants the Apostolic Blessing to the great Lasallian Family and to its worthy new Superior General.

DELL'ACQUA
Substitute.

Moreover, *Vatican Radio* was good enough to transmit to the entire world the news so impatiently awaited by our Brothers and our friends. During the following days, with as little delay as possible, an official announcement was sent by special letter to all our communities and to such dignitaries as are known to be interested in our Institute. We were profoundly moved by the great number of telegrams and letters of congratulation that arrived on the occasion of the election. This is a proof of the respect and affection that are extended our apostolate everywhere. We are privileged in having so many solid friendships on which to count.

• • •

In the afternoon of this same day we had an official reception for His Eminence, Cardinal Valerio Valeri, Prefect

of the Sacred Congregation of Religious. He presided at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. On leaving the Chapel we all repaired to the Chapter room, where His Eminence was good enough to receive the sincere, religious respect that we and all the members of the Capitulary Assembly were eager to render him. He in his turn had some important directives to communicate to us, calling our attention to matters of moment and actuality.

His Eminence began by remarking that the day was one of joy: joy for the Institute in giving itself a new leader; joy for the Capitulars over their opportunity for giving themselves up to the recollection of a serious retreat and leaving their souls open for the inspirations of the Holy Ghost; joy for the Sacred Congregation of Religious in that it is deeply appreciative of the religious family of St. John Baptist de La Salle, which is so nobly devoted to the cause of the Christian education of youth.

Then the Cardinal pointed to the wide range of effects that would attach to the discussions of the General Chapter. "Nothing," he said, "is to be changed in such Rules and Constitutions as are substantial. It is simply question of effecting such adaptations as are needed at the present hour and that are in harmony with the spirit that animated your Holy Founder. Every religious family that departs from the spirit of its Father will sooner or later disappear; for it thus loses the life which is proper to it.

"Such adaptations as concern your professional work can be discussed freely; for it is necessary that the mind of the Church triumph and that the mission of rearing youth that has been given you be more and more efficiently fulfilled—that you even accomplish it more thoroughly than others to whom it has likewise been confided. What trouble and difficulty has to be undergone in the work of educating the young! If this work was arduous in the past it is exceedingly more so today. At the present time the art of educating young people is meeting with obstacles that are various and very numerous. But then, before God, the merit is all the greater. This is the thought of the Church. It is especially the mind of our present great Pontiff, as he expressed himself in the letter concerning the Vocation of School Brothers, which he addressed (through me as his intermediary) to all those religious fami-

lies which, like your own, carry on the apostolate of Christian education.

“ You must keep yourselves abreast of the progress being made in pedagogy as well as in catechetical and religious science. Let me repeat what I have already said in the letter I recently addressed to you: It is desirable that your Congregation study the possibility of establishing in Rome a Center of Higher Religious Studies not only for your yourselves but for all other Congregations of men that are, like yours, dedicated to teaching. This would mean an admirable contribution to the progress of preparing religious teachers for the entire world. For this help we are turning to the family of St. John Baptist de La Salle. ”

His Eminence ended by extending to our apostolate everywhere his paternal blessing. He said he would be praying for the General Chapter throughout the course of its deliberations.

Elections of the Brothers Assistants

The isolation in which a new Superior can suddenly find himself, we found painful. We needed the support of our council. So we arranged to have the elections of the Brothers Assistants take place as soon as possible. As early as May 21 we notified the Brothers Capitulars of the wishes of the Brothers Assistants who were retiring. Brother Adolphe-Marie, Pro-Vicar, and Brothers Zacharias, Gioachino, Nivard-Anselme and Damien-Louis asked not to be re-elected. We accepted as sufficient the reasons they gave. In the name of the Institute, and particularly of their respective Districts we thank them most sincerely for the devotedness and application to duty they daily displayed over many years. At times the circumstances attending their work were particularly trying, requiring all their wise, supernatural insight as well as patient, kindly fortitude.

At this same session we mentioned the changes that had to be made for certain Assistancies. Present conditions make it necessary to reduce to three the number of Assistants for France; and to name an additional Assistant for our houses of South America.

The elections of the Assistants took place during the sessions of Tuesday May 22 and Wednesday May 23. In everything they conformed to the prescriptions laid down in the Rule of Government: the prayer *Veni Creator* for invoking the light of the Holy Ghost; the taking of the oath; individual elections by way of secret ballot; announcement of results by the first teller; reception of the newly elected Brother by the Most Honored Brother Superior General. In this manner the following Brothers were elected Assistants to the Brother Superior General: Eliphus Victor, Guillermo-Felix, Lawrence O'Toole, Antonio-Maria, Dominikus-Norbert, Philip-Antoon, Charles-Edmond, Damase-Jean, Aubert-Joseph, Leone di Maria, Majorian-Pius, Fabriciano Luis.

We welcomed with great joy these immediate co-workers. As members of the Regime seven of these Brothers Assistants are already experienced. We are in a position to profit by their practical knowledge of matters that commonly come before the Council. The others likewise are filled with the generous desire to work with us in all that concerns the greater good of our Society. With the Regime thus completed we had reason, all of us, for singing in our hearts a joyous *Te Deum*.

Election of Brother Vicar General

In order to complete the General Council of the Institute the Chapter had now to proceed to the election of a Vicar General. This was the purpose of the plenary session held Friday, May 25. The importance of this office is clear to everybody. When occasion arises the Vicar General replaces the Superior General. In the course of events it is possible that he be called to take into his hands the full government of the Society. The Rule conveys the seriousness of this election by requiring that the balloting be not only secret but also carried out with the help of the voting booth.

The ballot resulted in the election of Brother Philip-Antoon. The first teller's declaration to this effect elicited sustained applause.

The session ended with a brief address from Brother Vicar General. He promised the Most Honored Brother complete devotedness and earnest collaboration. In seconding the Superior he would be very attentive and always faithful. He

would follow the magnificent example set by his predecessor, the Most Honored Brother Denis, save in this, he added wittily: he would make no attempt to "take over" during the last four years of the coming decennial period. He would pray that God in His goodness keep the present Superior General in excellent health and preserve him for long to the Institute. We thanked Brother Vicar General for this generosity, which we were absolutely sure of, even had he not chosen in this kindness to express it. We also hope to work in as close a union as possible with all the Brothers of the Institute. The future is bright, due largely to this union of heart and action, which, please God, will more and more embrace all the Brothers of the Congregation with the Brothers Assistants, Brothers Visitors, Brothers Directors, as intermediaries.

Audience with the Holy Father

Brother Procurator General had requested a private audience. This was not possible inasmuch as the concourse of people coming to Rome to see His Holiness these spring days, was considerable. We were admitted to the public audience of May 23. For all who were present the memory will live for ever. The Brother Superior General and a number of the Brothers Assistants were accorded a place of honor near the Pontifical throne. These were given likewise the privilege of kissing the Pontifical ring.

The Brothers Capitulars were grouped together on a platform that commanded an excellent view of His Holiness and of his magnificent, inspiring entourage. It is a joy to witness the splendor and the honor that accompany the presence of the Vicar of Christ on earth.

We were glad to see how the Holy Father's health has been restored--notwithstanding the anxious moments this matter gave us all last year. It was likewise a joy to listen to the Holy Father addressing us in the tongue of the Holy Founder. His words were eulogistic and paternal. He deigned to give us Brothers directives of a very noble character, which we cherish with the greatest respect and by which we shall be duly guided. We are recording here integrally the obser-

vations the Holy Father chose to make us—just as they appeared in the *Osservatore Romano* for May 27, 1956. The text is wondrously rich in supernatural inspiration. It is an encouragement for us as well as for all who aspire to our religious vocation.

“We are happy to receive and greet affectionately the Brothers of the Christian Schools grouped about their new Superior General. It was a great joy for us to learn of the choice the General Chapter made. We shall not fail to recommend to God both the newly elected Brother and the important work being carried on by the General Chapter for the good of the Institute and for the service of the Church.

“You are aware, dear sons, how greatly We esteem your religious family, not only because of the incomparable success it has obtained throughout the world in the field of instruction and education as well as in the training of future wage earners; but also because of the fruits of sanctity it has produced for the past three centuries, and will continue to produce if you remain faithful to the spirit of your Holy Founder.

“The total gift of yourself in an abnegation that is full of love, in a profound fidelity to the Rule, in a conscientious and intelligent application to the duties of your state—all this must continue to be the essential matter of your religious life. For the spiritual fruit deriving from your labors depends on your interior life. Do not imagine that you are lacking in charity when you reserve for God and for your soul all the time the Rule consecrates to common and to private prayer. Such a mark of humility and confidence will obtain from the interior Master graces of light and strength for yourselves and for your students. Today more than ever before these graces are necessary for anyone desiring to carry out the work of Christian education.

“Thus will you continue to fulfill in the Church the noble task she has confided to you: continually forming new Christian generations that are proud of their faith and ready to accomplish within the State all their family duties and social obligations. Such is the grace that we ask of God through the very powerful intercession of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the heavenly patron of all educators. From the depth of Our heart and as a token of affection We grant you Our

paternal, Apostolic Blessing; to all the Brothers here present together with all the other members of your Institute--and in particular to its new Superior General .”

A few moments after the Holy Father's discourse we were kneeling at his feet. He encouraged us to have confidence in God. Then pressing our hands between his he spoke, in substance, the following words, which remain profoundly fixed in memory:

“I thank your Institute for the great good it has done in Holy Church. More and more make it your business to take care of the children of the working class; and not only when they are in school but also during their first years of work .”

Then the Holy Father asked for news concerning our recruitment. He made inquiries about our Second Novitiates. We had the pleasure of presenting to him the Most Honored Brother Denis as well as several of the Brothers Assistants. His words for each were exceedingly cordial and notably apropos.

* * *

Pontifical directives

Two documents came to us on May 8 and 15, respectively. Both may be called Pontifical inasmuch as the first is from the Secretariate of State of His Holiness, and the second from the Sacred Congregation of Religious. It is very obvious that these documents are of the highest importance. They served to instruct the Capitulars as to how, here and now, they might procure God's glory and the good of souls in accordance with the mind of the Church. They influenced and guided the Chapter throughout its entire course; for it is happily in our traditions to be completely submissive to the Church. Brothers, we are giving you herewith both documents *in extenso*.

Segreteria di Stato
di Sua Santità
N° 375202

Dal Vaticano, li 8 Mai 1956

*The Most Honored Brother
Denis, Vicar General of the
Institute of the Brothers of
the Christian Schools.*

My Most Honored Brother,

On the eve of the General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (which will have for one of its principal objects the election of a successor to the lamented Brother Athanase Emile) you beg the Sovereign Pontiff through your Procurator General to bestow his special blessing upon the transaction of the Capitulary Assembly.

Very willingly the Holy Father grants this filial request. He bids me be his interpreter conveying to you his best wishes. He is recommending your intentions to God; for, as he pointed out in his letter of March 31, 1954 to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, the mission of the teaching Brother needs to be esteemed and encouraged more than ever—from the twofold point of view of its being a religious vocation and an apostolate of education.

For the spiritual formation of its members your Institute now enjoys the privilege of being able to profit by a three hundred years experience that has won the approval of the Magisterium of the Church. Cherish faithfully this treasure of wisdom and piety bequeathed by your Holy Founder. During the course of the capitulary transactions let your inspiration be the spirit that animated him when he drew about him and trained his first Brothers. Thus will your Chapter be able to effect prudently the adjustments that it deems needed by reason of its growth and other circumstances marking the present moment. To the youth of today the vocation of a School Brother should as a matter of fact offer an authentic ideal of a life at once truly consecrated to God and wisely attentive both to the needs of the present hour and the legitimate aspirations of coming generations.

It is no longer necessary to speak of the importance of the magnificent work of education that the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle are accomplishing throughout so many nations, notably in mission countries. Let the environments that are the poorest and most disinherited always command your preference; for these were the object of the predilection of your Founder! In our day new forms of technical and professional teaching are being developed, which sometimes are not without danger for the Christian education of youth: it is a problem which will, no doubt, draw the attention of your Chapter. From the depth of His heart His Holiness expresses gratitude to the Brothers laboring in schools and colleges. Continue confidently your work of education. Prepare your pupils for the responsibilities they will have to assume in the Church and in the State: co-operating with families; with the clergy, whose valued co-laborers you are; and with chaplains charged with the direction of Catholic Action. Your reward will be to witness growing up about you young men that are strong in their faith, conscious of their duties, ardent for the work of the apostolate; from whose ranks God will not fail to draw vocations for the work of the priest as well those other vocations that are so beautiful in their order—vocations for the work of the lay religious devoted to teaching.

While conveying this paternal wish of His, the Sovereign Pontiff accords both to yourself and to the members of the Chapter the Apostolic Benediction—as the pledge of an abundant pouring out of graces upon your Institute.

Kindly accept, my Most Honored Brother, the assurance that I am

Very devotedly yours in Our Lord.

*Dell'Acqua
Substitute*

What follows, Brothers, is the second of the two Pontifical documents. It is from the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

SACRA CONGREGAZIONE
DEI RELIGIOSI

Rome, May 15, 1956

The Most Honored Brother Superior General
Brothers of the Christian schools

Most Honored Brother.

In some few days from now the religious family of St. John Baptist de La Salle will be gathered together in General Chapter, the thirty-eighth since the founding of the Society. This event will enable you to rejoice with one another over the good work achieved throughout the past decade. There will be likewise an opportunity to foresee and arrange for the labors that must mark the period about to begin.

On this occasion the Sacred Congregation of Religious asks you to be good enough to convey to the capitulary members, representing as they do the entire Institute, its lively satisfaction over the progress that has been effected not only in regard to the number of Brothers, houses and pupils, but above all in regard to regular observance as well as to the formation of the Brothers and their preparation for the apostolate of Christian teaching. For all this we bless the Lord. We sincerely congratulate you likewise.

In planning the future be mindful not to forget the past. Be determined to continue to draw from the rich patrimony bequeathed you by your Holy Founder and promoted by centuries of fervor and virtue, devotedness and fidelity. The multiple treasures that are presently at your command have to be carried forward into a still more magnificent future that you are called on to prepare.

You know how poignantly the Church is interested in the masses of the poor and of the little ones, for whom St. John Baptist de La Salle organized his Institute and opened schools. Never lose sight of the special end appointed you by your Holy Founder; which is proposed likewise by the Church in the approbation she deigned to give your Institute.

You also know that in the matter of adaptations bearing on the life and apostolate of religious there can be no question of altering the essential, characteristic form of an Institute. The Holy Father has reminded us of this on several occasions. In regard to your own Institute the Church wishes that the express will of your Holy Founder be duly respected.

The interior life is the soul of every apostolate. So continue to give this life the place it merits. Let every means at your disposal serve to strengthen it—the religious exercises you perform, even your very apostolic activities themselves.

We feel that there is really no need of our having to encourage you to be zealous in the matter of the missions. Your Institute is pursuing its missionary role throughout the world, even in those regions that are abandoned and that give little or no promise of religious vocations.

Wherever it is possible to do so, do not hesitate to continue to go forward with the perfecting and deepening of your catechetical teaching. This is indeed essential to your mission.

Following the example of your Holy Founder make such adaptations as are necessary for meeting the progress that has characterized technical and professional teaching; and this with a view to giving the workers' world the leaders it needs—leaders that are themselves workers.

You are aware of the importance the Sacred Congregation of Religious attaches to the general training that should be given religious. This importance needs all the more stressing when it is question of men who, in their respective Congregations, are required for special assignments either as Superiors or Masters of Novices, of Scholastics, of the newly professed. This Congregation is aware of your praiseworthy arrangement of second novitiates for perfecting your religious ascetically. But maybe something more could be done. Your Institute is numerous and widely spread and rich in talents. It would therefore give a fine example in opening a Higher Institute of Religious Culture for specializing in such matters as are helpful for the apostolate of our lay teaching religious.

Insist on a strict observance of the prescriptions of the Canon Law and of the Constitutions. Keep especially in mind such prescriptions as concern the obligatory residence of the various Superiors of the Institute, the judicious selecting of vocations, and the wise severity that must characterize the admission of candidates. Attention to these things is required now more than ever.

There are other items of detail that can be freely discussed in the Chapter; for example, questions pertaining to community schedules, the religious habit, family spirit, the

regulated use of the various cultural instruments brought to light through technical progress. Needless to say that herein we must take into account differences of circumstance arising from: country, climate, language.

May the Spirit of Pentecost assist you and be the true inspirer of the decisions you make and the resolutions you draw up. May Mary, the Mother of Jesus, preside over your Cenacle. May She come to your assistance and enable you all to persevere in prayer through a union of heart and mind in charity.

From my heart I bless your labors for the good of your Institute and the Church. I ask you, Most Honored Brother, please to accept the assurance of my religious devotedness in Our Lord.

VALERIO CARD. VALERI
Prefect.

A re-reading of these documents moves us again to express our profound, filial respect for Holy Church. We are determined to be guided by them throughout the course of our generalate. They will be for us and for our Congregation a powerful lighthouse indicating a safe, sure passage amid the multiple obstacles that today threaten us everywhere.

Affiliation of His Excellency Mgr. Dell'Acqua

The afternoon of June 4 the General Chapter interrupted its work in order to hold a ceremony marking the reception of Mgr. Angelo Dell'Acqua, Substitute in the Secretariate of State of His Holiness, as an affiliated member of our Institute.

It took place in the Chapter room. All the Brothers of the Mother House were invited to be present. As the Prelate entered, escorted by the Most Honored Brother, he was welcomed by long applause.

His Excellency seated, the Most Honored Brother addressed him as follows:

"Your Excellency, it is the entire family of St. John Baptist de La Salle, represented by deputies from its fifty-seven Districts, that has the honor of receiving you this day at its Mother House. Our welcome to you is not simply a

testimony of respect. We mean it to be an addition to the long succession of events that over the years has drawn us very close to you. Today we are asking you to be so good as to agree to become like each of us, a spiritual son of St. John Baptist de La Salle. Our associations with you go back to the founding of our house in Milan. It is a matter of record that the Istituto Gonzaga opened its doors October 1, 1906. That same year, and in the same Province, the bells of the Basilica of Saint Donato de Sesto Calende announced that a baby boy named Angelo was entering Holy Church. Many of the circumstances attending upon the growth and development of that boy have proved occasions for our acquiring a fast affection for him.

“Inasmuch as the auditorium at St. Joseph’s in Rome has for long been a place of gathering for young ecclesiastics, it was probably during your sojourn at the neighboring Lombard College that you made the acquaintance of the “Carissimi.” You had occasion to meet them almost daily when later on in the course of your diplomatic career you were assigned to the Papal Legation in Istanbul.

“This was in 1935. The young republic of Mustafa Kemal had just made its entrance into the League of Nations. Due both to the rashness that is so often characteristic of youth and to a spreading spirit of laicism the new State forbade the wearing of the ecclesiastical habit. Over the horizon hovered a real religious persecution. But a merciful Providence intervened. Mgr. Roncalli, an able diplomat as well as a wise counsellor to the clergy and a loyal friend to the religious and faithful, was able to stave off the worst. He manoeuvred skillfully. By yielding gracefully where he knew resistance would have been fatal he managed to rescue things Catholic from complete annihilation. For Your Excellency, the year 1935 was tense with anxiety. The work you were called upon to do was continuous and trying. When now and then you were accorded spare moments you used them for untangling local problems and promoting the work of the Catholic apostolate. To this day the catechetical legislation for which you were so largely responsible, still bears fruit.

“Following your diplomatic work in Istanbul and the splendid assistance you there gave Their Excellencies Roncalli and Margotti you were assigned definitively to work

in Rome. First you became the Rector of the Roman Seminary. Later you were assigned to the Secretariate of State. Thereafter such time as you could spare from the Vatican was used for your apostolate at St. Joseph's. From 1936 to 1948, Brothers and boys as well as the persons employed at maintenance—all became beneficiaries of your kindly, apostolic zeal. Your Excellency, I should offend your modesty were I to tell you the remarks the Brothers of St. Joseph's made when they learned that you graciously consented to come to this gathering.

As chaplain at St. Joseph's you were able to understand what His Holiness, Pope Pius XI meant when he spoke of the "terrible quotidianum" that characterizes a Brother's life; and likewise what Maurice Barres intended to convey when he referred to the "sublime monotony" of our daily labors. You have been close to the Brother and have seen him at his work. Your opinion of him resembles that of Cardinal Villeneuve, one of our most distinguished alumni: 'What pen can adequately describe the heroic generosity of the Brother daily tied to his desk before his boys! He works over those boys as a goldsmith patiently labors upon his jewels. Both the one and the other strive to make the various facets of their subject reflect the light—the one, of the sun; the other, of God's truth.'

"Your Excellency, it is in the merits of such a calling that we today ask you to be good enough to share, quite as we ourselves do. This invitation is the testimony of our sincere gratitude to you. It is our Father, St. John Baptist de La Salle, who, with his disciples, welcomes you into this religious family. During the days when Jansenism raged it was the proud practice of this former Canon of the Cathedral of Rheims to sign himself, "Priest of Rome." It is with equal pride that today he approves our effort to honor and reverence one of the most distinguished members of the Roman Prelature. Your Excellency, you can be certain that his intercession will win for you the notable graces required in the exercise of your important functions.

"Be good enough, Your Excellency, to convey to His Holiness the profound love and respect we bear His person; we, that is, our Council, the members of our General Chapter as well as of the entire Lasallian family. We all greatly honor ourselves this day in presenting letters of affiliation to the eminent Substitute in His Holiness's Secretariate of State.

The long, enthusiastic applause that spontaneously arose

at the end of these remarks was ample proof that they echoed in the hearts of all the Brothers present. The Most Honored Brother then read aloud and duly presented to His Excellency the splendidly prepared document containing the articles of affiliation. The Prelate was deeply moved. Simply, but feelingly, he thanked the Most Honored Brother. Then turning to the Assembly and speaking in Italian he made an address that was uncommonly wise and eloquent. What follows is substantially what His Excellency said.

“There are moments when a man is so profoundly stirred that he cannot quite find words to express what is in his heart. This is my situation at the present moment. I am among you today as a man in his own family. Let me say simply that from my heart I am very grateful. My first contacts with your Congregation go back to a period earlier than the one that has been mentioned. As a young priest in Milan I was a witness of your work. There are many schools and colleges in Milan and then, as now, they would invite His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop to be present for the ceremonies that mark the end of a scholastic year. It was plainly impossible for the Cardinal to accept all these invitations. But I used to remark that invariably he was present for the exercises at Gonzaga, and always it was my privilege to accompany him. This dates back to 1926. Since then I have often been in touch with the “Carissimi”, especially in Istanbul and at St. Joseph’s in Rome.

“Dear Brothers, please let me mention that your role in the Church is of the highest importance. To continue to fulfill it with the same success it is essential that you remain what you always have been—lay religious. It would ill become you to desire to be otherwise than the Holy Founder chose to have you. Today especially your function in the Church as lay religious is clear and very well defined. Do not attempt to alter the way that has been selected for you. ‘Non siete dei superati; siete dei moderni’.

“As a matter of fact, from the point of view of Christian education there has not been enough thought given to the advantages the lay religious, in comparison with the priest, enjoys. Between the teaching priest and his students there is always the sacerdotal dignity that tends to keep the latter at a distance, which is not easily removed. This difficulty does not trouble you.

“For these and other reasons my affection for you is very great. The Holy Father loves your Congregation dearly, as He Himself has mentioned to me more than once. I am exceedingly happy over the privilege of entering the great Lasallian family. I will not fail to do all I can to promote the work of your apostolate. I will contribute my share to the best of my ability.

“Please let me insist on the importance of what I have said. Do not be tempted to turn from the path that has been traced for you by your Holy Founder. Remain what you are. The need the Church has for you as lay religious is very actual. Let me say, finally, that I am very happy over your naming Brother Nicet-Joseph as Superior General. Inasmuch as he is certain of your genuine co-operation his government of the Society will prove a triumph before God.”

* * *

We end this first part of our Circular by giving you herewith the arrangement that the Council of the Regime has drawn up for the Assistancies.

Assistancies

1st Assistancy Brother PHILIP-ANTOON, Vicar General: North Belgium, South Belgium, Congo, Holland.

2nd Assistancy Brother ELIPHUS VICTOR: Baltimore, New Orleans-Santa Fe, New York, St. Louis, San Francisco.

3rd Assistancy Brother GUILLERMO-FELIX: Madrid, Barcellona, Valladolid, Bilbao, Espana-Centro, Valencia.

4th Assistancy Brother LAWRENCE O'TOOLE: Australia, Colombo, England, Ireland, London, Penang, Saigon.

5th Assistancy Brother ANTONIO-MARIA: Mexico, Antilles, Central America, Bogota, Medellin, Equador.

6th Assistancy Brother DOMINIKUS-NORBERT: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Mother House, Czechoslovakia.

7th Assistancy Brother CHARLESEDMOND: Paris, Rouen, Quimper, Clermont, Le Puy, Algiers

8th Assistancy Brother DAMASE-JEAN: Nantes, Bordeaux, Rodez, Marseille, La Reunion-Madagascar.

9th Assistancy Brother AUBERT JOSEPH: Rheims, Lille, Besancon, Lyon, Chambéry, Orient, Alexandria

10th Assistancy Brother LEONE DI MARIA: Rome, Turin.

11th Assistancy Brother MAJORIAN PIUS: Montreal, Quebec, Toronto, Douala.

12th Assistancy Brother FABRICIANO LUIS: Caracas, Brazil, Argentine, Chili, Peru Bolivia.

SECOND PART

WORK OF THE COMMISSIONS

Notes Sent to the General Chapter

On May 16 the commission that was in charge of opening and classifying the notes sent to the Chapter presented the following report.

This commission for the notes sent to the Chapter opened its sessions at the Mother House May 3. It was made up of six ex-officio capitulars and six of the elected deputies. The six ex-officio members were: Adolphe-Marie, Pro-Vicar and President; Eliphus Victor, Assistant; Nivard-Anselme, Assistant; Leone di Maria, Postulator General; Fabriciano-Luis, Visitor General; Bautista-Fernando, Visitor General. The six deputies were: Valerio, Visitor; Gebhard-Hanno, Visitor; Eusebio-Felix, Visitor; Malon-Raphael, Visitor; Oliver Paul, Director; Beniamino della Consolata.

The Most Honored Brother Denis, Vicar General, presided at the first session. He reminded the members of the Commission what conditions the notes should fulfill to warrant their being taken in consideration. Then each of the members took an oath in accordance with the prescription mentioned in the Rule of Government. All the envelopes containing the notes that had been forwarded to the Secretariate of the Mother House were duly placed in the hands of the Commission.

When the classification was finally completed it was found that the notes for certain Commissions were exceedingly numerous. It was necessary to go over these and to put them into subdivisions. Thirty-seven notes were unanimously rejected for the reason that they were notably lacking in form or were without signature. The Circular that had given details as to how notes should be drawn up and presented was clear. Nevertheless this Commission found that some notes showed notable carelessness. The Commission is of opinion that in

the future the Circular announcing the opening of the Chapter and making mention of notes should be accompanied by the following items: (a) a printed model showing the format the notes should have and bearing these indications: name of District, object of the note, signature of writer, and (b) a model envelope carrying the words, *Note for the Chapter*. This envelope will of course not be opened except by the Commission for Opening and Classification; therefore care has to be taken to point out that when it is forwarded to the Secretariate at the Mother House it has first to be enclosed in a larger envelope. This commission is of opinion that it must be very definitely stressed that no note should deal with more than one subject; and that if several sheets of paper are needed for this one subject they should be pinned together.

In all there were 3,611 notes written by 1,386 different Brothers. These notes fell into the various categories as follows:

| | | | | |
|------|-------------|--|-------|-------|
| 1st | Commission: | Recruitment, Houses of Formation | 190 | notes |
| 2nd | " | Formation-Methods, Manner, Duration | 165 | " |
| 3rd | " | Perseverance, Second Novitiates, Vows, Holy Founder | 197 | " |
| 4th | " | Religious Studies, Profane Studies | 321 | " |
| 5th | " | Schools, Gratuity, Catholic Action, Technical Teaching | 247 | " |
| 6th | " | Regularity, Religious Exercises | 1,370 | " |
| 7th | " | Administration, General Chapters, Superiors | 343 | " |
| 8th | " | Religious Habit, Names of Brothers, Finances | 400 | " |
| 9th | " | Publications | 186 | " |
| 10th | " | Missions, Health of Brothers, Retired | 165 | " |

All the notes were given careful attention. Some were brief suggestions of two or three lines; others went on to fifty

and more pages, treating thoroughly questions of moment. No note had to be put aside because of its content. It is a pleasure for the members of this commission to go on record as recognizing that the notes were remarkable from the points of view both of number and excellence. They were written in all liberty, but not without dignity and seriousness and genuine affection for our religious family; even though on the same subject they were often enough in conflict with one another. We, in the name of the Chapter, thank the authors of these notes, even though we know that this matter has already been attended to by the secretaries of the Chapter.

The Commissions and Their Members

First Commission

Brother Bautista Fernando,
 Brother Anacleto
 Brother Ismael-Gabriel
 Brother Erminus Joseph
 Brother Cyprien-Gam
 Brother Damase-Jean
 Brother Memoire Ernest
 Brother Oliver Paul

Second Commission

Brother Damien-Georges
 Brother Fredien-Charles
 Brother Dieudonné-Simon
 Brother-Ulrick-Stanislas
 Brother Octave-Louis
 Brother Juan de la Cruz
 Brother Tarcisio de Jesus
 Brother Sevetian Romuald
 Brother Ramon-Calixto

Third Commission

Brother Olympius Georges
 Brother Wenceslao Juan
 Brother Marc-Marie
 Brother Donatien-Jules
 Brother Alphonse Louis
 Brother Gebhard-Hanno
 Brother August Conrad

Fourth Commission

Brother Leone di Maria
 Brother Merry Alphonse
 Brother Marie Alphonse
 Brother Flavien-Albert
 Brother Neon Adrien
 Brother-Cyprien-Henri
 Brother Beniamino della
 Consolata
 Brother Mauger-Clément
 Brother Charles Henry
 Brother Antonio Nicasio

Fifth Commission

Brother Cornelius Luke
 Brother Clodoald
 Brother Maltin-Grégoire
 Brother Quintin Jaime
 Brother Omer-Regis
 Brother Veron Jozef
 Brother Alban-Joseph
 Brother Arthème Pierre
 Brother Joel Damian
 Brother Arbon Honoré

Sixth Commission

Brother Fabriciano Luis
 Brother Malon-Raphael
 Brother Fridolin-Maria
 Brother Fintan Patrick
 Brother Valerio
 Brother Gerino-Floriano
 Brother Augustin de Jesus
 Brother Ireneus Philip
 Brother Bernard-Alphonse
 Brother Damien-Joseph
 Brother Marinien-Sylvain
 Brother Vincentius Van
 Jezus

Seventh Commission

Brother Crispin de Jesus
 Brother Jerome Ephrem
 Brother Eusebio-Felix
 Brother Agaton-Juan
 Brother Bernard Peter
 Brother Andres-Bernardo

Eighth Commission

Brother Arnel-Felix
 Brother Augustin-Robert
 Brother Gilbert Ailbe
 Brother Navalis
 Brother Edelwald James
 Brother Majorian-Pius
 Brother Antony John
 Brother Placido-Femin

Ninth Commission

Brother Aubert-Joseph
 Brother Virgile-Marie
 Brother Martial-Robert
 Brother Rudulfo-Eloy
 Brother Agostinho-Simao

Tenth Commission

Brother Veron Ignace
 Brother Aloysius Lawrence
 Brother Genasio-Maria
 Brother Ulbertus Alfred
 Brother Libanos-Etienne
 Brother Olivier-Etienne
 Brother Pablo-Manuel,

The Work of the Commission.

Each of the commissions held many meetings. It was first necessary to secure a good knowledge of notes—by

reading them or hearing them read. The notes were then studied, classified further and studied as to their substance and timeliness and practical consequences. Each commission selected its own secretary, whose duty it was to draw up a summary of the notes in accordance with the subjects dealt with. This summary or report was duly read aloud in commission and then, sentence by sentence confirmed or altered according to the discussions it elicited, thus it was made ready finally to be brought before the General Assembly.

These reports were thoroughly objective, reflecting in a lively truthful manner the opinions of the authors of the notes. Negative as well as positive aspects were faithfully presented. All complaints and regrets were duly noted; all hopes and plans for a better future were faithfully recorded. These reports made clear what many of the authors of the notes wanted to say—that a world-wide Institute working in a human context is bound to be imperfect. By and large this was a confirmation of the experience the Capitulars themselves have so far had in the religious life.

If some of the notes were somewhat excessively demanding, insistent, challenging, it should be understood that most of them were very remarkably thoughtful, enlightening, and constructive; even notably more so, it has been said, than were the notes of ten years ago. It was obvious most of the notes were from men whose gaze is on high ideals, whose souls are troubled over the growing secularization of the modern world, whose hearts go out to the millions of young men in distress from the lack of the knowledge and grace of God.

All these hopes and aspirations were truthfully reflected in the various Commission reports, whose excellence can only be suggested in these pages. To set them down here full length would require turning this Circular into a very large volume. Indeed we have been asking ourselves whether such a work would not be a very great help to all the Brothers spiritually. What makes us hesitate of course is the fact that many of these studies are of a too intimate, family nature to warrant the danger of their coming to the attention of outsiders. They have been carefully put aside in the archives of the Institute. We purpose to make use of them occasionally in connection with the composition of our Circulars. Again, from our heart, we sincerely say thank you to their authors.

FIRST COMMISSION

Recruitment and Houses of Formation

During the course of fifteen sessions the members of the Commission studied 211 notes, of which 102 concerned recruitment and 109 the houses of formation.

RECRUITMENT. — These notes were from men deeply solicitous for the glory of God, the true good of the Church, the sanctification of the Brothers and the apostolic efficiency of their Institute. Twenty-one of the notes dealt with difficulties obtaining in particular houses, which should therefore be attended to by the local superiors. With discernment a goodly number of the notes bring up the question as to why there is a falling off in the number of vocations in certain sectors of the Institute. They draw attention to the sources of the trouble: a loss of religious convictions on the part of some Brothers; an abandonment of the practices of religious discipline on the part of others. Other probable underlying causes are mentioned: a dangerous tendency to be so preoccupied with teaching secular branches as to forget what is essential for our boys—forming in them the mind of Christ; lack of a spirit of true Christian charity in certain communities; the absence of apostolic zeal in some to the point of showing little or no interest in recruitment, whereas they should be proving its principal supporters. “All our Communities and all our Brothers”, says the secretary for this Commission, “should be so religiously minded and apostolically zealous as to be able, under God, to *awaken* religious vocations.” If there be any magic formula for promoting recruitment it is surely this.

The reporter for this commission studies the means favorable for recruitment. He does not delay on the technical measures, which he finds quite excellent and already sufficiently in use. With good reason he stresses the means that are supernatural: real prayer, generous keeping of the Rules, family spirit in community—and the development of Catholic

Action movements, which prepare boys quite naturally for the generosity of the religious life. He concludes his remarks with: "God Himself will be our Recruiter when we lead a life that is authentically religious, when our zeal rises higher than a feverish desire to see our boys win grades and earn diplomas, when our apostolate implies more than satisfaction with a wonderful but noisy reputation for our schools". There can be no objections to the means we have been using for making our Institute better known to our pupils and their parents: pamphlets, reviews, talks, films, exhibits. These things have their utility; only, a wise discretion must accompany their use.

Concerning the selection of subjects for the novitiate and junior novitiate the Chapter feels it can do nothing better than to remind the Brothers of the recommendations that preceding Chapters have made and of the counsels that have been given again and again in Institute Circulars: to recruit principally in our own schools, to give importance to the quality of the recruits rather than to their number, to seek professional advice when necessary, to be severe in eliminating the inapt.

It is only just that we express a word of gratitude to all our recruiters, who have been laboring so devotedly and intelligently. Together with the Chapter we paternally encourage these Brothers to promote more and more in themselves the spirit of zeal and the interior, life, qualities which are so necessary for the success of their mission. We would have them likewise make use of all the helps that Providence sees fit to place at their disposal. We should add here that within the past ten years the number of our Brothers has increased eight per cent, that is, taking the Institute as a whole. In some sections the increase has been as high as sixteen and twenty-five—even thirty-one, per cent.

HOUSES OF FORMATION. — In general the notes make it clear that during the past ten years there has been a decided effort to give our groups in training all the plain, modern facilities called for, as well as a personnel better adapted to this special apostolate. The Chapter wishes to thank and congratulate these Brothers for their enlightened, indefatigable labors in the essential apostolate of the training of our young. The Chapter urges them to neglect nothing towards

becoming, as far as they can, more and more efficient in their important, delicate work.

Some Brothers, eager to see a more thorough training, would like to have admission to the Novitiate put off until the subjects are seventeen years of age. The Capitulars willingly agree to this. They judge, nevertheless, that anything later than this should not be required, at least for the generality of postulants.

Some Brothers would like to see the regulation for the junior novitiates and pre-junior novitiates revised—made more inspiring and meeting better the needs of the present time. The problem of spending part of the vacation period at home was likewise brought up. Because of the customs in various places this practice is tending to become more generalized in the Institute. The practice is not without danger for vocations. In those places where it is deemed well to conform to it care must be taken: the sojourn at home should not be prolonged. Those in charge should prepare their subjects for meeting this test—even for exercising some apostolic activity that naturally suggests itself.

Other notes go into detail. The ceremony of the Taking of the Holy Habit that has been tried out since 1946 appears to be meeting general approval. Since the suppression of the Octave of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception novices and scholastics have been without a feast day special to themselves. The solemnization of Dec. 8 was always dear to our Holy Founder. From now on novices and scholastics can make it their own special tribute to the Mother of God, because from now the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is to be their patronal feast day. Until now the pre-junior novices had the same feast day as the junior-novices, November 21. From now they shall have as their patronal day February 2, a day of presentation and of offering in union with our Our Lord and Our Lady.

In thanking the Commission for its excellent report the capitulars voted unanimously in favor of the resolutions it saw fit to draw up. Here follow these resolutions.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FIRST COMMISSION

1. That every Brother hold himself personally responsible in the matter of securing good vocations for the Institu-

te. That he be honestly religious, professionally conscientious and truly zealous and so be instrumental in kindling in young men a desire to enter our Congregation. That in addition to this personal good example the Brothers, as a community, show themselves united in charity and in joy.

2. That our houses of formation be staffed with a teaching personnel at once competent and sufficiently numerous, and with directors adequately prepared for their important assignment.

3. That there be no hesitation in returning to their homes such subjects as show themselves ineligible for leading the life of a religious educator.

4. That in so far as it can be arranged, subjects be at least seventeen years of age before admission to the novitiate.

5. That a committee appointed by the Regime be given the assignment of revising the *Regulation of the Junior Novitiate*.

Regula

6. That the special feast day for novitiates and scholasticates be the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8; and that the special feast day for pre-junior novitiates be the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, February 2.

SECOND COMMISSION

Duration and Methods of Formation

DURATION OF FORMATION. — A certain number of notes had suggestions to make in this matter. All stressed the fact that there is an actual necessity for deepening the training we are giving our young men, and consequently for lengthening it. Certain Brothers would like to see it made obligatory for junior novices to be eighteen years of age before entering the novitiate and thus have all the maturity needed. This idea was rejected. The Commission is of opinion that seventeen is the age most favorable for the complete giving of self and for making decisions that are definitive. Moreover, our junior novitiates are not in general equipped or prepared for maintaining together boys that are as old as seventeen or eighteen and others that are as young as thirteen or fourteen.

But the Commission feels convinced that the novitiate-scholasticate period should last not less than five years. This gave rise to the question as to how long the training in the novitiate should be—one year or two years. The Chapter of 1946 adopted the principle that the duration of the novitiate should be two years. But then it left to the Regime the care of taking circumstances into consideration. The Rule of Government (ch. I, art. 18) stipulates as follows: "The length of the novitiate shall be two years, postulancy included... In Districts where the scholasticate lasts at least three years effectively the duration of the novitiate may be limited to the one canonical year required." Since that decision was made twenty out of our forty-four novitiates have adopted the two-year plan. Certain notes have much to say in praise of two years. Others have certain reserves to make. But the reasons and considerations put forward by all are serious and merit respect and attention.

The question of the fifth year of training cannot be solved without taking into consideration certain local situations as well as the general needs of the Institute. The commission is of opinion that it would not be opportune at this time to

require in the matter complete uniformity throughout the Institute. But it suggests that one or the other of these two procedures be followed:

a) that there be two consecutive years of novitiate followed by three years of scholasticate,

b) that there be the canonical year of novitiate with three years of scholasticate—together with a final year devoted exclusively to a religious, catechetical and pedagogical training. "At the end of their scholasticate (three years)," the Commission remarks, "the young Brothers are more developed intellectually and more stable psychologically. Then if they are set free from the worry that is necessarily associated with examinations they can, confident of being able to profit greatly, give themselves up to a year's formation in matters that are religious, catechetical and pedagogical, solely. This year will be an immediate preparation for the apostolate awaiting them."

The Chapter is very much aware of the importance of this matter. It will therefore draw up a resolution maintaining the present prescriptions of the Rule of Government regarding the duration of the novitiate. It then counts on the wise prudence of Superiors, that they will do the best they can to organize the additional year of training.

METHODS OF FORMATION. — This second part of the report summarizes seventy notes forwarded chiefly by Brothers who are directly associated with the work of the houses of formation. Because of their seriousness and earnestness these notes are truly stirring. They are of a nature to inspire confidence in the goodness and stability of the coming generations of young Brothers, and consequently of a greater, wider harvest of souls in the classroom. Some of these notes are exceptionally worth while. To do justice to them requires more than a rapid reading.

The Commission, guided by the notes, took considerable time to look into what it is precisely the training of our young men calls for, regarded from viewpoints human, religious, professional, apostolic. This study gave rise to some very useful suggestions which, if they are followed, will help us more and more to secure the type of subject the Institute needs: well-balanced, instructed, competent, eager to undertake the apostolate of Christian education.

We shall mention, guided again by the notes, the qualities expected in those who are charged with the training of our subjects. These qualities are so numerous that they would discourage both Directors and their auxiliaries in our houses of formation, were it not for the fact that when good will is present God gives all necessary assistance and makes up for many a human deficiency. It is only proper that the Brothers Visitors use for staffing the houses of training only such Brothers as are well-qualified, even from a human point of view. These educators of prospective religious teachers should themselves be experienced, competent in the subjects they teach, and mature as religious. When they are Directors they should be especially competent pedagogically.

The fact that there are so many counsels and recommendations to make regarding the training given in our houses of formation brought about the suggestion that a directory be drawn up, where all the needed indications could be consigned and properly codified. The Chapter thought the project desirable. The care of seeing to its realization has been confided to the members of the Regime, who can secure for the work the Brothers necessary.

Directory

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECOND COMMISSION

1. That the period of training of young Brothers destined for teaching be, when possible, extended by one year, and that it be never less than four years.
2. That the prescriptions of the Rule of Government (ch. I, art. 18) as to how the years of formation are to be distributed, be maintained.
3. Due account being taken of their aptitudes, that our subjects receive a solid religious formation and at the same time a human and professional training adapted to the needs of the times; that the development of personality be emphasized. That this formation be orientated in the direction of the apostolate awaiting our subjects; and that it comply with the Pontifical directives, especially those mentioned in the encyclicals *Menti Nostrae* and *Sacra Virginitas*.
4. That the preparation of the personnel destined for responsible assignments in our communities and houses of for-

mation be realized by means of advanced studies at once religious, profane and pedagogical; and likewise of retreats and specialized seminars.

5. That a directory for the purpose of giving our young subjects a better formation be prepared by a committee of competent Brothers acting with, and under the authority of, the Regime. } *Directory*

THIRD COMMISSION

Perseverance of the Brothers, Second Novitiates, Vows of Religion, Devotion to the Holy Founder

The members of the third commission formed themselves into four subcommissions, each taking an equal share of the notes. The reason was that the notes were both numerous and important, and only in this way could a thorough study of them be made. There were consequently four reports. Each was carefully thought-out and well-documented, and when brought before the General Assembly provoked reflection and discussion that led to some practical conclusions.

PERSEVERANCE. — The Capitulars made a long and serious study of the Institute statistics presented clearly and graphically to them. They could see that although the Congregation is growing steadily its rate of increase is nevertheless painfully checked by the annual losses of vocations. No member of the Chapter could escape a sense of sadness when he reflected what an extraordinary expansion there would be today in our apostolate if all those confreres who have disappeared had continued on at the work with us.

Thirty-five of the notes analyze the causes of defections. The conclusions are quite those that have been so often enumerated in the past. Irregularity is especially underlined; so also are associations with the world, absence of family spirit in community, overwork. We cannot here go into a discussion of all these causes. But we would like to draw the attention of the Institute to the fact that the Holy Founder did indeed speak truly when he warned, "Irregularity is the chief cause of the destruction of communities and of the loss of their members." (Common Rules, Ch. XVI, art. 1). And wisely did he show his affection when on his deathbed he directed us not to frequent the world if we hope to live and die in our vocation. Were he living today he would be alarmed to see how the world is invading our communities through radio, cinema, television, the presence of secular professors and in particular of lady teachers; to see many young Brothers growing discouraged

in their vocation because they do not find in community the family spirit which provides for their natural need for wholesome affection; to see others less young, distressed by the pernicious effects of overwork, unable to reconcile their religious obligations with their professional activities, feeling that sooner or later they must slip downhill and end in discouragement.

The Commission tried to see what measures must be taken to remove these troubles. Certain remedies are obvious. For example, there must be a greater strengthening of the religious life through a more genuine love for mental prayer and the spirit of regularity; by keeping away from the world and organizing the activities of the apostolate better. But what is needed most is to give the Brothers opportunity and facility for entering into themselves at periodic retreats longer than the annual retreats and marking the chief periods or turning points of a man's religious life. It was this conviction that moved the Commission to draw up the resolution you find farther on. We mean the resolution concerning "specialized retreats," which are to be duly realized according as the possibilities admit.

In this connection the Commission drew up two other resolutions, which preceding Chapters studied likewise. The present General Assembly believes it ought to come back to these two matters, because of their importance. The first is the wise severity that should characterize the admission of subjects to vows. We must not bring into the religious life men who are either unwilling or unable to support its obligations. The second matter concerns the serious technical training that should be given the young Brothers not intended to be teachers. This instruction is necessary if they are to take an interest in their work and thus be more firmly attached to their vocation.

SECOND NOVITIATES. — There were forty-five notes treating of this subject. Their authors unanimously testify satisfaction with this work of renewal effected throughout the Institute by means of the second novitiates of nine or three months. The Brothers are only too eager to see these centers of spiritual reanimation multiplied and perfected, so as to be made accessible to all the Brothers.

Some notes suggest modifications or adaptations for the Second Novitiate at Rome. But the experience of now a good

many years, together with its excellent results, seems to indicate that the present arrangement has sufficiently proved itself, that it would perhaps be unwise to change it. The Chapter felt that the record of the Second Novitiate is such as to inspire confidence. Prudence dictates that if any changes are necessary they should be made slowly and discreetly, but likewise without timidity.

Through their notes many Brothers testify that they are grateful to the Institute for inaugurating the second novitiates of three months (the "hundred days," as they are referred to frequently). Many Brothers would like to see more of these groups established—so that the good they effect may be all the more generalized. Some Brothers would like to have the three months extended to four.

The same praise as above is meted out to those special sessions of sixty or fifty days which have been arranged for here and there. It is hoped that they can be multiplied and adapted in accordance with the various regional possibilities.

In terminating its report the Commission wishes to call attention to the fact that all these requests (aiming, as has been seen, to secure for all the Brothers periodic opportunities for spiritual rejuvenation) are a sign that there is taking place among us a most encouraging reaction to the dangers and attacks confronting the religious life in our day. Likewise, the Commission sees in these entreaties a phenomenon that is strikingly in line with one of the preoccupations of the Holy Founder, whose practice it was to make "prolonged retreats" available for his early disciples, that their love for mental prayer and recollection might be frequently renewed.

VOWS OF RELIGION. — There were seventy-three notes in this group, and out of them sixty-eight have to do with the virtue or the vow of poverty. The General Chapter of 1946 complained that there was at that time a serious relaxation in the practice of poverty due, so it was thought, to certain conditions arising out of the war. But according to the notes the situation, in some sections, has hardly improved.

The principal cause of the trouble is ignorance of obligations and responsibilities in matters of poverty; this, too, notwithstanding the clear concepts disseminated through the publication of the *Short Treatise on the Religious Life* and by Circulars Nos. 324 and 327 on the vow and the virtue of poverty respectively. We are wondering, not without some anx-

iety, whether these important documents have been given sufficient notice in our communities. A study of the notes gives rise to three considerations.

a) *Poverty in regard to persons.* Superiors are urged to give good example by showing themselves more faithful in the matter of poverty. They should likewise show themselves more exacting but in a manner that is positive and encouraging. They should do away with, and cause to be done away with, a standard of living that does not become us as religious. Superiors are obliged to see to it that their inferiors practise an exact and faithful dependence in the use of temporal goods. The Commission points out to inferiors a number of abuses that are, almost invariably, attacks on the vow of poverty. We mention, for example, the appropriations of gifts solicited or accepted from relatives, pupils, former students; out-of-place spending of money on trips conforming little to what is expected of men with a vow of poverty and resembling "tourism" more or less.

b) *Poverty regarding the community.* Some of the notes hoped that some of the suggestions of wealth might be suppressed in our communities: uncalled-for lavishness in constructing and furnishing our houses; abuses in the use of the auto, telephone and telegraph; violations of the common life due to the appropriation of presents. There are notes that call attention to the fact that sometimes in the same District there are differences in the way of living among the Brothers: Brothers in pay schools are better off than Brothers in free schools. These anomalies are disappearing, thanks be to God. Nevertheless there seems to be reason for believing that we need to tend more earnestly towards a greater evangelical simplicity of life and a greater equality among all the sons of the same Institute.

c) *Poverty serving as a testimony.* After all these lamentations it is encouraging to realize that the notes (especially those penned by young Brothers) express a longing to practise a poverty that is real, that can serve as a testimony throughout the milieu in which our apostolate is carried on. The notes demand that our poverty show itself effective and austere, even painful. They urge that we get back to teaching the truly poor to the extent that this is possible, for the reason that it is the poor that should be the object of our predilection; and when it is question of the boys in easy circumstances con-

fided to us by obedience, that we train them more earnestly to love the poor from their heart.

The extracts from the notes that this report has been able to place before you are all too few. But they are sufficient to make you realize that it is of paramount importance to see to it that the same doctrine on religious poverty be better known in our Institute and better practised. In order to encourage us in this undertaking the Chapter drew up an appropriate resolution, which you will read farther on. We mean to put this resolution into execution in the not too distant future.

DEVOTION TO OUR HOLY FOUNDER. — Elsewhere in this Circular mention is made of how this past decade proved particularly glorious for our Holy Founder. Throughout the Catholic world there has been a great increase in the honor and devotion rendered him. It is true to say that from now on he no longer belongs to us exclusively. This success should cause us, his sons, to make him still better known outside the Institute. Two remarkable studies together with forty-six notes urge the Capitulars to neglect nothing in causing our Saint to be more widely honored everywhere. Among other suggestions from the notes we should like to have you think upon these:

a) By means of critical studies the work of research connected with the life and writings of St. John Baptist de La Salle should be continued. These studies will constitute *Monumenta Lasalliana* and be the basis for a later critical biography of the Saint as well as of a critical analysis of his spirituality.

b) There should be established at the Mother House a central, Lasallian committee having for purpose to direct and co-ordinate all such work, publications and propaganda as have to do with our Saint; likewise to prepare missionary and pedagogical exhibits (stable or movable) displaying his work throughout the world.

c) We should continue to develop in ourselves and in others a true, filial piety towards St. John Baptist de La Salle. In this connection the following invocation seems desirable: *Sancte Pater Joannes Baptista, ora pro nobis.* Since it has necessarily a universal character it could be adopted by all our communities throughout the world.

d) The practice of making May 15 a Day of Intercession

should be propagated throughout the Catholic world. This can be effected little by little and without undue difficulty.

The Chapter was very pleased to learn that a certain number of Catholic lay teachers are eager to place themselves officially under the patronage of St. John Baptist de La Salle. In order to meet this need a Brother Assistant proposed that an *Association of Catholic Educators* be established. The object of the Association would be: to deepen in teachers a sense of the responsibility and dignity of their vocation through devotion to their Holy Patron and to the ideals he represents.

It was Friday June 8, Feast of the Sacred Heart, that the Chapter decided to create this *Association*. Although the *Association* begins very modestly it will, no doubt, in due time spread throughout the Lasallian world. We have been pleased to stress the matter. Very gladly do we bless it. We should like to see the *Association* spread everywhere, especially in those areas where the Institute is influential. You will find the constituting text for the *Association* at the end of the resolutions that have been drawn up by the Third Commission.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE THIRD COMMISSION

Means of Perseverance. -- Perseverance is nothing other than continuity in tending to perfection. To ensure this continuity the Chapter asks that the Institute manifest a more vigilant zeal:

1. In the choice of Directors: That they be above all, supernatural men capable of maintaining in their community the primacy of the spiritual life without neglecting the intellectual, professional, social, physical, even recreational, needs of their Brothers. That they attach the greatest importance to the upkeep of a family spirit among their Brothers, teaming up with them for the promotion of the work of the apostolate. That the Institute accord them opportunities for meetings, periods of recollection, retreats adapted to meet special needs and seminars for perfecting their formation and enabling them to meet the various obligations of their charge.

2. In the manner of conducting the chapters for vows: That in accordance with the directives of Holy Church they be characterized by a certain severity, not hesitating to reject def-

initively a subject failing to give guarantees of perseverance. That at the end of the year Brother Visitor together with his council study the causes of the defections, in order to take such measures as are pertinent.

3. In the preparation for perpetual profession: That the Thirty Days Retreat be specially adapted to leading each aspirant to give himself once for all and with great generosity.

4. In the organization of retreats: That the Twenty Days Retreat, which in some Districts is difficult to get in before perpetual profession, be postponed until the Brothers are twenty-eight to thirty years of age, according to circumstances. ~~That specialized retreats be established for groups that are homogenous from the point of view of duties and assignments,~~ so that these retreatants may be thus able to fathom adequately the spiritual, religious and apostolic aspects of the problems attaching to their responsibilities.

5. In the professional training of the young Brothers not intended for teaching: That this training be such as to enable them to fulfill their assignments easily and competently.

Second Novitiate. — Considering the Most Honored Brother's exceptional competence in a sphere that has been his for so long, the Chapter is confident that in his experience seconded by the wisdom of the Regime he will take opportune measures regarding the desires expressed in the notes having to do with the Nine Months Second Novitiate.

1. That nothing be spared in order to give the greatest possible number of Brothers the advantage of renewing themselves spiritually in second novitiates. That in view of this:

a) new, permanent centers be opened.

b) that in accordance with regional possibilities summer sessions of fifty to sixty days be organized and multiplied.

2. That, taking into account the possibilities in various regions, a study be made of the advisability of extending to four months the present sessions of three months.

Vows of Religion. — That there be organized all over the Institute a special year of effort towards bringing about a profound renewal of the spirit of poverty. That during the course of this year

a) the sound doctrine on the vow be recalled and

b) the generous practice of the virtue prove a testimony to the sincerity of both our spirit of detachment and our promises.

The Holy Founder. — 1. That the *Association of Catholic Teachers* under the patronage of St. John Baptist de La Salle (approved by the Chapter) be encouraged and propagated among our lay auxiliaries—and even extended to all Catholic teachers.

2. That the invocation to our Holy Founder said according to Rule at the end of community exercises be in either Latin or the vernacular, and under either of these forms: *Sancte Pater Joannes Baptista, ora pro nobis; St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us.* The invocation presently in use, *St. John Baptist de La Salle, our beloved Father and Founder, pray for us,* may be used on the occasion of novenas or in certain appropriate circumstances.

3. That May 15 be more and more universally a day of prayer for more vocations to the teaching Congregations and for an increase in the number of Catholic teachers generally.

4. That a permanent committee be established at the Mother House for promoting devotion to our Holy Founder; likewise for pursuing and co-ordinating research work and other enterprises having to do with his life, writings and spirituality.

FOURTH COMMISSION

Religious and Profane Studies

Among the reports that greatly impressed the Chapter must be mentioned this one on studies. Not without a certain anxiety it urges the Chapter to observe that there is a pressing need to reorganize our entire system of studies; especially our religious studies, which have to be given new life and rendered more formative.

The Fourth Commission began its work by analyzing a voluminous, serious, carefully thought-out dossier; this it did in a manner that was both painstaking and brilliantly penetrating. The finished report proved itself a splendid, solidly constructive synthesis. It was presented to the Chapter in two parts, as indeed the nature of the subject required.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES. — From the point of view of their origin the 230 notes referring to this subject are as universal as the Institute itself. The spirit animating them is excellent. Taken collectively these notes give proof of excellent good will and fine generosity. The views set forth are clear and deal with our religious studies from a twofold point of view: *a) they are needed in order to sustain the ascetical life; b) they are indispensable for fulfilling the apostolate that is peculiarly ours.* The notes convey their authors' vehement desire that our Institute put, and keep, itself in a position enabling it to meet the ever-increasing requirements being placed on us as catechists. The notes, for the most part are weighted with thought, ranging from formal, succinct presentations of facts to ardent, fully developed studies. Reading through them attentively one cannot escape the conviction that for us today the religious studies problem is one of the most acute; that it intimately affects our status as religious teachers; that on its solution will depend largely whether or no we shall see many of the vocations God sends us persevere and develop. "I believe," writes one Brother, "that before we begin to look for vocations it is only proper that we ask ourselves what we propose to do with them. I am persuaded

that if our religious formation were first-rate from every point of view; that if to become a Brother meant to become a witness to Christ, a well-informed specialist in education and particularly in the catechetical apostolate—then the problem of vocations would no longer be the crucial one it is, and the difficulties confronting a renewal of the religious spirit would easily be removed." Other declarations convey pretty much the same idea, but we cannot reproduce them here. We have to get down to details concerning our two courses: the Intermediate Course (*Cours Moyen*), those studies that are basic; and then the Advanced Course together with its indispensable complement, graduate studies.

Intermediate Course.

Both the Commission and the General Assembly began by discussing the remarks made regarding the content of this course. These can be reduced to three principal ones: *a)* the *text* in our manuals is too dry and jejune and insufficiently supplied with references to Liturgy and Holy Scripture; our *examinations* make demand on the memory almost exclusively and tend to promote pure self-education, which as a policy is nearly always regrettable; our *programs* are not sufficiently centered on the living Person of Christ. It is likewise pointed out that when a Brother is obliged to study a manual written in a tongue foreign to his country's he is almost always at a disadvantage.

But it is the teaching of religion in our houses of training that comes in for most of the criticism. The notes point out that presently this teaching is insufficient. This is the fundamental complaint. It is seemingly universal. It can be subdivided under three items.

a) Religion periods are too broken up. The rule that there should be two distinct half hours, one for explanation and one for memorization, is too rigorously applied. In some places it is even customary to use the entire time for memory work during the quarter that immediately precedes the December examinations.

b) On the timetable of certain scholasticates the religion periods are squeezed into very undesirable places. Notwithstanding their essential priority the teaching and study of religion are treated as poor relations—through a fearful con-

cern over the passing of examinations and the winning of grades in the profane subjects.

c) In the novitiates as well as in the junior novitiates and scholasticates those who teach religion are not always adequately qualified. Later on, where it is question of higher studies, this lack will again be noted.

Such are the energetic, numerous complaints made by some of the Brothers eager to see a solid training in religious matters the general rule throughout the Institute. Criticism is easy, and of this fact the Commission is not unaware; it does not therefore omit the complementary positive aspect of the matter. The Commission mentions certain desiderata, but inasmuch as these are common to both the Intermediate and Superior Courses we shall present them later on.

Advanced Course.

The present series of studies in this course goes back to 1934. It is less in need of a fundamental change. Nevertheless certain adjustments in it are desirable inasmuch as some of its salient features are no longer abreast of the time. This is true, for example, of the volume on Bible History, due to the progress in biblical studies that has been realized in recent years. Certain rearrangements are asked for in the scripture and ascetics series. The question arose as to whether some supplementary advanced series are not needed: one in the rich field of the Christian social sciences, another in Thomistic philosophy. It seemed wise to the Commission to confide these matters to a group of competent Brothers who in turn could be counseled and directed by men excelling in these respective studies. This prudent representation led the chapter to decide that it would be better to delay acting in this matter until later on.

What the report of the Fourth Commission makes clear is this. The main complaint against our present religious studies and their accompanying examinations is that they are too bookish; they tend to exercise memory too exclusively and thereby achieve results necessarily too superficial. Here is a list of suggestions regarding our religious studies in general.

a) *Examinations.* Many would like to see them less centralized. They could be organized according to Assistancies or regions. A committee of competent Brothers could, under the authority of the Major Superiors, attend to the drawing

up of programs, making out examination questions, correcting and rating of papers. Such an arrangement would guarantee the following advantages: the manuals in use would be more up-to-date and printed in a candidate's own language; there would be a closer relationship between the program followed religious studies would be better linked up with the apostolic and the requirements of a candidate's milieu; the candidate's viewpoints as well as with the various Catholic movements of his country.

b) *Religious studies in houses of formation.* It is a matter of experience that the pursuit of religious studies in community is often thwarted by certain unfavorable conditions. Prudence demands that the basis for proper catechetical qualification be laid in the novitiate and scholasticate. Serious, thoroughly organized courses should be established, accompanied by personal exercises and assignments and completed by appropriate, directed readings. Such a well-built ensemble should give our young Brothers a body of religious doctrine securely grasped by the mind and affectionately assimilated by the heart; honored at least as much as any of the other branches of learning. This surely would not be asking too much. It is not unreasonable to hope that our young Brothers be able to leave the scholasticate provided with a catechist's diploma as well as with the diploma that testifies that they are qualified to teach class.

c) *The duration of study.* It goes without saying that where the element of time is missing there can be no serious preparation in anything, be the matter religious or profane. What is done without time, time does not respect: it is superficial. This principle may not be ignored, especially now that the apostolate everywhere is fraught with so many difficulties.

d) *Study prescribed by Rule.* Twenty notes had reference to this matter. This topic was brought likewise to the attention of the Chapter of 1946. Patently neglected in many places the regular, daily study of religion must be properly restored—seen as a value to be prized and not as a burden to be endured. But because a serious, personal work, ill accommodates itself to time too limited we may (wherever the procedure seems necessary) bring together in longer periods the daily half hours of catechetical study prescribed by Rule throughout the week. A resolution of the Chapter authorizes this.

e) *The Church's authoritative sanction of our religious*

studies. We work dependently on the Bishops. Naturally we are better equipped when our religious studies receive ecclesiastical approbation and thus carry an official guarantee. On the other hand our Institute should willingly subscribe to courses organized by episcopal committees, or theological faculties, or Catholic university institutes for religious sciences. Brothers following such courses in regular sessions would not then be obliged to undergo a second series of examinations.

f) *Central Committee at Rome.* This will continue to exist. It will be linked up with the regional committees of which mention has been made above. It will approve the examination questions made out by the various examination centers. It will group and publish all results, which shall be duly forwarded for this purpose.

g) *Committee for catechetical studies.* Such a committee is to be established in each District. It will exercise the following functions: attending to the religious studies of the young Brothers, arranging meetings with them, encouraging them, giving them such information as they need, and finally organizing for them courses that can render their teaching more accurate and better adapted to circumstances.

h) *Qualifications of teachers.* But even thus organized our catechetical system would still present a lack in so far as the preparation of qualified teachers is concerned. In general the studies just enumerated are not enough to guarantee competent teachers for our houses of formation and for the higher classes of our secondary and professional schools. A teacher to handle such an assignment with enthusiasm, ease and efficiency must have had, in addition to his command of the doctrine involved, a serious preparation in catechetical pedagogy. Here, less than in any other field, may methodology be abandoned to the inspiration of the moment or to risky improvisations. Such procedures are hurtful to the Church and to souls. It will help to have read the following paragraph taken from a remarkably judicious note.

"We have to admit," writes the author, "that when it is question of a course of religion for our classes, little account is made of the doctrinal competency of the teacher. Generally, and in a way that is quite automatic, the assignment is confided to the "titular" of the class. But very often this man is a "titular" only in the sense that he has ability for imparting a knowledge of the profane subjects. So it happens often e-

nough that such Brothers, perfectly at home in their courses in philosophy or literature or mathematics, are decidedly ill at ease and inferior when it comes to exercising their mission as catechists. For such men the teaching of religion is often a nightmare. They want nothing to do with it." The same thought, sometimes with marked sadness, reappears in other notes.

There is today a catechetical movement. Its existence cannot be ignored, for it concerns itself with realities affecting souls. The progress of modern psychology has been profoundly influencing its methods, adapting them more and more for meeting the problems of the present time. This leads the authors of the notes to offer the following suggestions: let the duration of the scholastic training be sufficiently long so as to allow for a complete and thorough course in religion; as soon as possible have certain specially selected Brothers to follow courses of theology offered by Catholic institutions of higher learning, in view of providing our houses of formation with competent instructors; organize courses in catechetical pedagogy for Brothers holding the licentiate in Theology.

i) *An institute for higher religious studies.* The desire for such an institute came about as the result of certain suggestions already mentioned. The courses in this institute would deal with advanced religious studies, with Catholic ascetics and with the higher forms of catechetical science. The project formed the object of one of the resolutions of the preceding Chapter. On several occasions it was mentioned in this Chapter likewise. Up till now it has not been possible to say how, precisely, it is to be made a reality. But the matter will not brook delay much longer inasmuch as the Sacred Congregation of Religious, (in its recent, special letter to us) is pressing us to act. When finally it is given existence it will resemble somewhat the *Regina Mundi Institute*, which is already functioning here in Rome, serving exclusively the various Catholic Sisterhoods. It is only right and proper that the work of creating and maintaining the projected institute should be confided to our Congregation. We hope there will be nothing to delay us much longer in getting started.

By way of terminating these remarks we can do nothing better than to cite the words of the secretary of this Commission after he had conveyed to the General Assembly the number and nature of the remarkable notes pertaining to religious studies: "This wise, enlightened and zealous interest in rel-

igious studies is a sign that the grace of Pentecost is being given us anew." May God in His goodness bless and fructify this wholesome uneasiness manifesting itself among our Brothers in regard to both personal, religious perfection and genuine, apostolic efficiency.

PROFANE STUDIES. — Some 170 notes affirm that the Brothers generally would like to have a more advanced academic education enabling them to meet confidently the demands their assignments make upon them. They feel they need likewise a more complete pedagogical training. A number of notes recognize that there has been among us a notable advancement in profane culture; but they add that further progress is needed if many Brothers are to handle rightly the scholastic programs entrusted to them. Parents are more alive now than formerly to such inadequacies as may exist in schools or teachers. Mothers and fathers are in a better position for judging of the real value of the work done in school. This explains why certain representations by parents are now and then far from flattering; sometimes even in the case of religious teachers.

In order to meet the needs of the pupils' souls a teaching Institute must impart to its subjects a doctrine that is rich and substantial. But at the same time it must prepare its young religious to carry on in schools an activity at once supernaturally and humanly efficacious. Today in all our schools we need educators alert, capable of giving a response to values, possessing a certain measure of savoir-faire, especially when it is question of dealing with adolescents. The cultural basis for satisfying these conditions cannot afford to be flimsy. It has to be genuinely solid.

Some notes point out that there exist certain troubling situations where Brothers realize that their true cultural level is below what it is taken for granted to be. Worries arising from a sense of insufficiency often beget unwholesome feelings of inferiority. This sometimes accounts for the absence of enthusiasm to be seen here and there. At times it is the explanation for poor results in class. Experience shows it can engender an absence of appreciation and affection for the vocation of the School Brother and occasionally even lead to complete discouragement.

We Brothers are often reminded how necessary it is to

radiate joy. But Brothers dissatisfied or beset with notions of incompetency real or fancied cannot foster vocations about them. On the other hand a Brother at once competent and clearly happy in his vocation is, under God, likely to impart desires for it in the hearts of the young men with whom he comes in contact.

These considerations and others led the Commission to suggest for the consideration of the Chapter the following items, with a view always to a still richer profane culture and a yet more fruitful pedagogy. They were discussed in full assembly. Many of them were made the objects of the Commission's resolutions. 1. Junior novitiates must not be too rigidly sealed off from the realities of the world about them. Knowledge of such can be maintained through judiciously selected reading and by means of prudently controlled continuity of contact between the junior novices and their families. Initiative and the sense of responsibility should be cultivated through assignments requiring the exercise of these qualities, and training in piety should allow for a personal element. 2. Our novitiates should receive only such subjects as are sufficiently mature to grasp and understand the seriousness of the obligations they assume; to appreciate and make part and parcel of themselves what they are taught. Methods used in the novitiate should be active, involving applications that are personal. There should be no situation where instruction is followed distractedly, where conferences are followed passively. 3. Our scholasticates everywhere should impart a serious cultural and pedagogical formation. "For there is question," said Pope Pius XII on the occasion of the First International Congress of Sisters, "of a basic honesty to be practised towards the pupils and their families." Scholasticates should give the young Brothers an understanding of certain items it is essential for every Catholic educator to be mindful of these days: facts pertaining to contemporary social conditions; the promotion of the welfare of the wage earning classes in accordance with Catholic principles; the Church's desire to have young men who know, and know how to apply, the principles of Catholic Action; ways and means for meeting the moral and educational problems necessarily associated with radio, cinema and television; methods for co-operating with the Church in solving her problems—the expansion of her missions, making her liturgy intelligible to all her children.

4. Among the Brothers engaged in elementary teaching there should be a certain number with credentials to show that they have successfully passed courses in the higher pedagogical studies. The elementary schools need Brothers who are authorities in matters pedagogical—who can be as it were a framework around which to build our elementary teaching.

5. We should do our best to see to it that our young Brothers in community keep up interest in their intellectual and professional formation. We should make it clear to them that we have confidence in their initiative, doing all we can to sustain and guide them. 6. Our libraries everywhere should be kept up and improved. There should be annually a fixed, adequate sum of money set aside for this purpose. 7. There should be arrangements for facilitating exchanges of Brothers between countries, with a view to promoting a knowledge of foreign tongues. The knowledge of languages is becoming increasingly important. For the same reason it would be desirable to have some of our young Brothers trained in international scholasticates.

The Commission ends this series of considerations and suggestions regarding the professional formation of the Brothers, with a statement which it means to be comprehensive: *The Institute must now more than ever keep itself mindful of the Brothers' needs regarding cultural and pedagogical thoroughness.* By these words the Commission together with the General Assembly means to fix the position it takes. This general principle finds its application in the following resolutions, which are to be carried out in accordance with the possibilities of time and place.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FOURTH COMMISSION

Section A: *Religious Studies*

1. *Concerning Houses of Formation:*

a) That a complete course of religious studies be given our subjects during the period of their formation, before they enter Community.

b) That sufficient time be given to these studies so that they may prove adequate for forming good catechists.

That, where there is need, an entire scholasticate year be given to them.

c) That these studies be carried on, in so far as it is possible, under the direction of teachers who themselves have been formed in theological schools or in Catholic universities offering advanced courses in religion.

d) That the spiritual formation in our novitiates be given a basis at once doctrinal, scriptural and liturgical. It is with such a foundation that subjects in training should proceed to study the providential role of the Holy Founder, his spirituality, and the exigencies of their own individual vocation.

e) That the religious studies of the junior novitiates and pre-junior novitiates be co-ordinated, and that they be better, that is, higher and more thorough than those followed elsewhere by boys of the same age.

2. *Concerning Communities and Districts.*

a) That those in charge of the religious teaching in our Districts or in advanced classes in school be themselves prepared (locally or in the theological universities of Rome) by advanced studies in religion and by courses in catechetical pedagogy.

b) That in accordance with the directives of the Rule the religious training of the Brothers be, in the measure possible, as advanced as is their learning in any of their profane studies.

c) That in each District, Assistancy or region, there be a Committee for Religious Studies to look after especially the young Brothers in Community: aiding them, giving them needed information, arranging for summer courses that can perfect them or for seminars that are doctrinal, pedagogical or apostolic, all with a view to enabling these beginners to be the more enlightened and better equipped for confronting the difficulties inherent in their apostolate.

d) That it be permitted to take the total time prescribed for the study of religion in communities and distribute it otherwise than is now the practice.

3. *Concerning the Institute as a whole.*

a) That the Assistancies or countries that solicit authorization to do so, be permitted to draw up themselves the

programs and examinations of the *basic religious studies*, under the control and approval of the major Superiors. The final diploma is to be granted by the Institute.

b) That in the near future a competent committee be formed to bring up-to-date both the organization and programs of the *Superior Series* (Higher Diplomas). That this organization be progressively decentralized according as circumstances permit.

c) That on both these levels the religious studies of the Brothers be recognized and approved by the Hierarchy or Catholic universities; and that the diplomas of such bodies be recognized by the Institute.

d) That a bureau for religious studies continue functioning at the center of the Institute for the purpose of linking the various regional units, of acting in their place should need arise, and finally for gathering and publishing results. (During 1956 and throughout the Institute the examinations in religion are to take place according to present practice).

Section B: *Profane and pedagogical studies*

That now, more than ever before, the Institute show itself aware of, and attentive to, the need the Brothers have of being trained culturally and formed pedagogically both in the general domain of education and in the particular branches they teach. Because this principle governs its attitude the Chapter makes its own the following resolutions:

1. That the length of time prescribed for the formation of our Brothers be duly respected and that it be used for imparting a true culture together with a pedagogical training, theoretical as well as practical.

2. That there be an efficient committee on studies functioning in the various Districts or Assistancies; and that there be a qualified Brother to organize and animate a program of studies for our young Brothers.

3. That scholasticates for advanced studies functioning in connection with Catholic universities be established in those Districts and Assistancies where they do not already exist.

4. That during the time of vacation or during the course of the school year exchanges of Brothers between different countries or between university scholasticates be fraternally encouraged.

5. The General Chapter approves the plan to establish in Rome an Institute of Higher Religious culture imparting knowledge in those branches useful for the promotion of the apostolate of the lay religious, teaching Congregations. The Chapter of 1946 gave thought to this matter. It has recently been recalled to our attention in a letter (dated May 15, 1956) from His Eminence Cardinal Valerio Valeri. The Chapter leaves it to the Most Honored Brother to see to it that the project is adequately studied and carried out.

FIFTH COMMISSION

Boarding Schools, Technical Teaching, Catholic Action

The Commission studied 250 notes. Some of them were of exceptional importance. Most of the members were specialists in the matters under discussion, and so their work could be expected to be of a constructive character. Their report began by laying down the general ideas and fundamental principles that had naturally to serve as a basis; then followed the necessary conclusions.

GRATUITY AND THE TEACHING OF THE POOR. — Sixty-four notes deal with this subject. They come from Brothers in various countries and they testify to the fact that throughout the Institute there is a deep desire to remain faithful to the directives of the Holy Founder. The report stresses these words from the Common Rules: "The end of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children... that the Brothers may teach the children to lead good lives." (Ch. IV, art. 4). The Holy Founder began by realizing that there was a grave social disorder that clamored for attention: the salvation of the children of the poor was being compromised. "All disorders," he says, "especially among the working class and the poor usually arise from their having been in childhood left to themselves and badly brought up."

Through the years the Institute has understood the import of these solemn words. Like its Holy Founder it has realized that the vocation of a Brother is to attack those disorders that are placing in jeopardy the salvation of so many boys. This introduction calls for the mention of two marks that must characterize the Institute if it is to continue its course properly orientated:

a) We should, preferably, establish our schools amid those conditions where the salvation of poor children is threatened.

b) Our apostolic labors should have for object prefer-

ably the poor. "The Brother Superior, with the advice of his Brothers Assistants, may open pay schools and boarding schools when he judges it proper to do so, but never to the detriment of schools for the children of the working class and the poor." (Common Rules ch. I, art. 1).

"The principal end of this Institute and its first glory must be always the Christian education of poor children and the teaching of religion." (Common Rules ch. XXVIII, art. 1). So the specific object of our apostolate is in the fullest sense of the term the *evangelization* of children and young men that are poor, or that are closest to being poor because of their social situation.

Many seriously thought-out notes speak of the poor, or the *wage-earning* class. It is not easy to render a precise definition of these terms that will be everywhere perfectly acceptable. The reason is that social conditions vary throughout the world. But the notes show that from more than one point of view we have been founded for this relatively disinherited section of mankind. From our hearts we must prefer schools established for the wage-earning class (*écoles populaires*), and the preference should be personal as well as administrative. Therefore we should open wide the doors of our schools. Our classes should be accessible to all. To receive a boy dispossessed of this world's goods means a sacrifice, but before it we must not recoil. We do well to let our young Brothers begin their teaching careers in schools for the poor; in order to honor them and give them an irreplaceable experience.

BOARDING SCHOOLS. — We have been founded to take care of all pupils, preferably however the poor. But it was not the purpose of St. John Baptist de La Salle to exclude the rich. While a boarding school is necessarily a pay school it can nevertheless give our Brothers the opportunity for a very fruitful apostolate, provided they keep up their religious life notwithstanding heavy schedules and the supervision that has to be exercised day and night. The boarding school affords advantages for a well-grounded Catholic education: the frequentation of the sacraments is made easy and good influences on the part of teachers and fellow students abound. All these circumstances

are a great blessing provided they are, together with the students' free time, organized with a view to imparting true Christian character.

Various notes in speaking of the education we should give in our boarding schools bring up the question of daily Mass. Some Brothers would like to see it re-established in those places where it has been suppressed; others are equally desirous of leaving it optional. No doubt if we conformed to the prescription of the Common Rules (ch. VII, art. 5) and at the same time rendered the Mass really *intelligible* to the boys we should be rendering them a service that would endure for the rest of their days. The Mass is the essential prayer of the Christian. To teach a young man how to follow the Holy Mass and to love it is one of the greatest blessings we can bestow on him. In certain places difficulties of various kinds seem to have made it impossible for the Brothers to maintain the traditional practice. We earnestly ask the Brothers to be faithful to this point of Rule in the measure they find it possible to do so.

It was expected that some notes would make mention of the lay teachers in our schools. In the opinion of some Brothers these auxiliaries are a "necessary evil." Others see them as a necessary good that has been providentially arranged for. The Chapter is inclined to share the second opinion. They need not be considered mercenaries preoccupied with their own personal material interests provided we know how to make them our associates in the pursuit of the work of Catholic education. It is evident that we must with firmness as well as prudence maintain the religious cloister in regard to lay teachers. It is right for us to exercise Catholic Action in dealing with these auxiliaries. But it is sad to see a religious lowering himself to the level of certain mediocre seculars when he should be serving as an inspiration to them, leading them to embrace *his* ideals.

TECHNICAL OR VOCATIONAL TEACHING. — The fifty-three notes pertaining to this subject were the result of an inquiry made before the Chapter. The entire documentation reveals the exceptional importance of this teaching in preparing for the future of young Catholic workers or wage earners. The matter is of importance for Catholics

of the working classes. The study of these notes was confined to specialists. The final report proved constructive and objective.

Certain situations must be recognized. Workers and wage earners are tending more and more to form themselves into groups or associations, which too often turn out to be centers for the spread of materialism and communism. The Church has been aware of this matter for a long time now and hopes to remove the evil by giving a Christian training to the young who are destined to join the ranks of the workers. Today all ideologies, good and bad, are seeking to influence the young.

Herein our sphere of influence is the technical or vocational school. This means an opportunity. It is a duty too. According to the notes there is something lacking in the preparation of the Brothers for this kind of teaching. Some Brothers contend that our training at present cuts us off too easily from the wage earners' world; that it does not open the mind sufficiently to the needs of the apostolate among the working classes. Other Brothers hope that we may become more and more convinced of the great necessity for the technical or vocational school—that it may give the Person of Christ to the pupils, that they in their turn may bring Him into their milieu. In order that we be in a position to carry on this work effectively it is indispensable to see to the following items: The Brothers must have a serious training that is at once general and technical. They must be formed doctrinally, from both the religious and social points of view. Their special pedagogical preparation must include adequate contacts with the wage earning classes together with a direct knowledge of the needs of the young worker.

Neither technical teaching nor the necessary preparatory training is at variance with regular observance. Rather both tend to build a mentality that is characteristically a Brother's; that is, showing solicitude for the welfare of the working classes and the poor (*artisans et des pauvres*). However, changes in timetables and schedules become necessary. This is unavoidable in order to meet the requirements of the various practice and study periods; of the obligatory arrangements for meeting families of young workers or representatives of specialized Catholic Action groups. Superiors will herein determine what adaptations are in order.

CATHOLIC ACTION. — The notes in this group are important from a spiritual and apostolic point of view. They deal with our mission as religious educators against the background of the conditions of our time. They likewise concern ways and means for kindling apostolic ideals in the minds and hearts of our pupils. In general the notes have two main purposes: one has for long been traditional and is now turning more and more to action; the other, although more recent, is presently in full development throughout the Church.

The first of these purposes or tendencies is actualized in the great devotions and their accompanying association proper to our Institute:

ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE BOY JESUS. — A recent circular makes clear the theological meaning as well as the pedagogical importance of devotion to the childhood of Jesus, which from the beginning of the Congregation has been regarded as a devotion that should be peculiarly ours. Worship of the Boyhood of Jesus is especially flourishing in certain Districts of the Institute. The Archconfraternity, which was founded by Brother Evagre and approved by Saint Pius X, should be encouraged, for it fills a need that is always present. Our pupils together with their parents should be invited to become members of the Archconfraternity, and these in turn should be encouraged to invite others in like manner. This means a vast crusade for the purpose of promoting Catholic education throughout the world. The monthly novena from the 16th to the 24th is a continually recurring occasion for remembering the Archconfraternity and its object—devotion to the Boy Jesus.

UNION OF JESUS CRUCIFIED AND OF MARY IMMACULATE. — The remarks of several Capitulars drew attention to this splendid apostolic work. The Union is a group specializing in catechetical activity and in personal sanctification. This good undertaking gave birth to a Secular Institute which is affiliated to our Institute. We should like to see a greater number of our Brothers interested in the Union. It

should be explained to, and propagated among, the students in our schools as well as the members of our alumni associations.

DEVOTION TO MARY. — This devotion has been a characteristic of our houses since the beginning of the Institute. Over the years it has given rise to *Sodalities of Our Lady*, which should be maintained active and made to serve as instruments for the promotion of our apostolate and of that of the pupils. Many notes praise the *Legion of Mary*, which is excellently organized in some schools and giving good results. Other notes speak of *Marian Groups*, *Marian Unions*. These are forms of the traditional *Sodality of Our Lady*, adaptations meeting needs varying according to countries and training adolescents from fourteen years of age to maturity how to lead their Catholic lives under the protection and guidance of Mary. The Capitulars were pleased to learn of this expansion of Marian activities. They were additionally encouraged when they were told that Marian activities are held in honor in our houses of training.

The second of the tendencies or purposes mentioned above is Catholic Action properly speaking. The secretary of the Commission took particular pleasure in reading before the General Assembly that part of the report having to do with *Specialized Catholic Action*. Since 1946 there has been an evolution in our apostolic activities. Our experience regarding the social work of the Church has been greatly increased. It is now possible to speak to the Brothers of Catholic Action and find them ready and willing to adopt its methods. They can now assist the Church in one of her most pressing problems: to form as quickly as possible a militant Christian laity, a missionary laity adapting itself to every milieu that has lost, or is losing, or has never known the Catholic Faith. It is of the highest importance that our schools contribute to preparing the way for this specialized Catholic Action laity, co-operating with the persons in charge under the control and direction of the Hierarchy.

The report goes on to say precisely what is expected of us: (a) that we prepare boys for radiating their faith, opening their minds to the realities peculiar to their milieu, teaching them to be consciously responsible for the salvation of their neighbors, making them aware of the demands of Cath-

olic social justice; (b) that we be concerned about the promotion of the Catholic faith among the various groups of modern society, especially the one made up of the wage earners; (c) that we avoid betraying the interests of any group by encouraging any of its apostles to leave it for another; (d) that the school do all it can to increase the numbers in its elite and then get them as soon as possible to be interested in some apostolic work—in the same milieu in which God has intentionally placed them; (e) that we show our pupils how to live their Catholic faith, how to be witnesses to it, how to give themselves over to, and be responsible for, its interests; (f) that we get our boys to work apostolically within their own community but in close co-operation with those in charge, in accordance with the directives of the Hierarchy.

These suggestions prompted some important resolutions that the Chapter adopted enthusiastically. We religiously draw your attention to these decisions. It will not do to have them turn out to be just so many Platonic wishes. We must realize that we are really and truly responsible for souls; for those of our pupils first and then for those for whom our pupils must in their turn hold themselves answerable. A Christian education that is closed, isolated and cut off from its environment can suffice no longer. Baptized persons are held accountable for the Christianization of their brothers, indeed of all humanity. The Christianity of our pupils must bear a social character. They are to work out their own salvation in working for the salvation of others.

SUMMER CAMPS FOR BOYS. — The Commission received some ten notes regarding this matter, all of them reflecting an apostolic turn of mind. The notes show that in some places Brothers are preoccupied with the problem as to how to make sure that the vacation period is a help and not a hindrance for the formation of the Christian character of their pupils. At the Chapter of 1946 the question of camps was studied and directives were subsequently drawn up and voted on. These directives are as timely now as they were then. They can be found in Circular No. 318.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS. — Several notes asked that the Chapter declare itself favorable to the estab-

lishment of an International Federation of our alumni associations. The project is manifestly big. It has aspects calculated to stir enthusiasm. We cannot but encourage the initiative. However, it would appear more important to begin by organizing national federations. These are in a position to unite the forces of a given country so as to focus them on objectives commonly understood and appreciated. The essential in this discussion is that the local associations live an intensely apostolic life side by side with the school.

As far as possible every school should have its Alumni Association or the equivalent. The Association maintains close the bonds of friendship between the Brothers and their former pupils. Any gathering or meeting of these Associations can of course be recreative, but this in itself is no sufficient reason for their existence. They should serve as cells alive with the life of Christ, from which a truly Christian, charitable zeal radiates upon family and society. The true character of the activity of the members of the Association appears in their enthusiasm, or lack of enthusiasm, for the formative practices and devotions of their school days: Archconfraternity of the Boy Jesus, Marian Congregations, Legion of Mary, Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Action,

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FIFTH COMMISSION

Day schools, boarding schools, gratuity. — Because it realizes that among the Brothers views regarding gratuity differ, the General Chapter respectfully requests the Most Honored Brother Superior General to cause an objective and precise study to be made on the origin, nature and binding obligation of the vow to teach gratuitously.

1. That in accordance with a directive already given by the Chapter of 1946 there be emphasized and stressed the preference we should have for the development of our teaching among the poor, and that thus there be avoided or corrected any tendency to favor the better-off to the prejudice of the less favored.

2. That in each District, as a consequence, the proportion of Brothers assigned to the teaching of the wage-earning classes be duly respected; and that the same principle apply when

there is question of opening a new school, save an approbation to the contrary by the Regime.

3. That there be taken such measures as are necessary for favoring and safeguarding the religious life, apostolate and health of the Brothers—measures having to do mainly with better organization, reducing where necessary the number of schools, or regrouping them.

4. That we be faithful to our educational traditions; that in our classes primacy be given to the principal means for forming Christian character—and likewise to the Lasallian practices proper to our schools. That our primordial solicitude for imparting a Christian education be guided by what the Church proposes—according to Pontifical and Episcopal directives, this applying to all our activities whether they be in, or about, or after, the school; and that this apostolate be among the classes for whom we have been established.

5. That the lay teachers we take as our auxiliaries be truly Catholic, and that thus they be in a position to co-operate with us in the apostolate confided to us by the Church.

6. That the enclosure of our communities be duly respected by the lay teachers; and that where lady teachers are employed their number be reduced to a minimum, observing in their regard the rules of prudence.

Association of Jesus Crucified. — 1. That zeal for propagating as well as for making better known the apostolic work known as the Association of Jesus Crucified and Mary Immaculate be more and more encouraged. That wherever it can be done, pains be taken to establish the Association; that a Brother be appointed for the promotion and extension of this good work.

2. Devotion to Jesus Crucified, a characteristic of the Association, is a very supernatural means for causing Jesus Christ to be better loved. It forms a spiritual bond between the Brothers on the one hand and the pupils and past pupils on the other. Consequently, in conformity with the wishes of Circular 328 the General Chapter invites our Brothers everywhere to lend their good will to spreading this devotion and recommending its practice.

3. The Brothers of the Christian Schools recognizing the

part played by Fra Leopoldo, O.F.M. in the work of Brother Teodoro invite all to pray that the causes of beatification of these two servants of God may terminate happily. This would be a sign and pledge of God's blessing.

Archconfraternity and sodalities. — That devotion to the Divine boy Jesus as well as to Our Lady be encouraged and sustained through the Archconfraternity and the Sodalities, which constitute an excellent tradition in the Institute. Devotion to Our Lady may express itself through Sodalities or by means of the Legion of Mary.

Catholic Action. — 1. That in conformity with Pontifical and Episcopal directives one of the principal preoccupations of our houses be the furthering of ways and means towards the formation of an adult Catholic Action laity; and that this earnestness be reflected in our teaching and educational methods as well as in direct contacts with the duly established organs of Catholic Action.

2. That everywhere our Brothers be conscious of their responsibility regarding the formation of this laity. That they not only avoid placing any obstacle in the way but that they enter positively and to the fullest extent possible into this directed, co-operative movement.

3. That in our houses of training aspirants be made familiar with the spirit and methods of Catholic Action.

4. That the Brothers who are counselors for Catholic Action and specially appointed to serve as links between the approved organs of Catholic Action and the Institute may, dependently on superiors, (a) deal with confreres regarding such procedures as are necessary, (b) look into the success or failure of measures already taken, (c) organize sessions that are formative or informative, (d) supervise our various publications that have to do with Catholic Action.

Technical or vocational teaching. — That wherever it is possible and opportune an effort be made to establish and develop technical or vocational schools for the Catholic training of prospective young wage earners, and

this because we bear our share of the responsibility for rechristianizing working classes and inasmuch as the Holy Father and his representatives have repeatedly called attention thereto. That these schools be especially on the elementary and intermediate levels and that they be accompanied by such necessary and relevant apostolic activities as occur during or after the training period. That qualified teachers be prepared for this work and that they be thoroughly conversant with that body of doctrine governing Catholic Action among the working classes.

SIXTH COMMISSION

Regularity, Spiritual Exercises

This Commission received a total of 1,400 notes, nearly as many as all the other Commissions together. These notes, whether pleading for a more faithful observance or seeking a better adaptation to present-day conditions, prove that for their authors regularity is not a meaningless word. These Brothers desire an observance at once alive and real and efficacious. This is the impression that the notes in their entirety convey, and it is consoling. Individually they vary greatly as to intrinsic value; taken together they bespeak earnestness and loyalty. They can be grouped into these categories: vocal prayers, spiritual exercises, priesthood, use of tobacco, modern technical facilities and varia.

VOCAL PRAYERS. — There were more than 400 notes on the subject. Already in 1946 it was being asked how routine and formalism in the recitation of vocal prayers could best be fought against. This concern is still with us. There is no demand for a diminution of the time we are now giving to prayer as such. What is requested is rather: the suppression of items that are repeated or doubled; an arrangement that is more logical and free from certain anomalies; the introduction of certain items that would vary in accordance with the liturgical seasons; a return to the vocal prayers in use in the time of the Holy Founder—to the extent that this seems possible. ?

The Chapter could not but approve of these suggestions taken as a whole. But it was at once aware that such an adaptation could not possibly be made off-handedly; that certain experiments would have to be worked out beforehand. Moreover, what is of primary importance is not whether our formulas for vocal prayer are the right ones, whether they are arranged in their proper order, whether they are sufficiently liturgical, but rather whether they are really *prayed*, attentively, slowly, respectfully; in a word whether they are

truly an *act of worship* springing manifestly from a fervent spirit.

For the same reason, replacing our traditional prayers by the recitation of the office of the Church (complete or in part) would prove no remedy for routine or "automatization" that is so much deplored and denounced. It is even to be feared that the rhythm of the office instead of obviating the evil would favor it.

These and other considerations, which because of lack of space we cannot mention here, led to the drawing up of the resolution to be found farther on.

2. *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*. — Every Brother recognizes the necessity of spiritual exercises. But opinions differ as to how much time should be given to them. Some Brothers find that they cannot acquit themselves of their exercises (notably the evening ones) integrally and with the earnestness desirable; for the reason that time is lacking or they are oppressed by fatigue. Discussion brought to light the fact that these difficulties are far from existing everywhere (even everywhere in the same region) to the same extent; especially the difficulty arising from lack of time, which is ascribed to the absorbing assignments in and about the school. Often it is the kind of school that makes the difference. Inasmuch as on the one hand our religious exercises are important and indispensable, and on the other hand the hardship attaching to their performance, though very real, is confined to certain places and is far from being universal, the General Chapter did not see fit to modify their amount. However, the Chapter recognizes that derogations (especially in the matter of the evening exercises) are justified in certain places with regard to certain assignments or functions.

Here we must stress the importance of coutumiers regularly approved by the Brothers Visitors and Assistants. If there exist a duly justified derogation the coutumier shall show that it has been rightfully legalized. Coutumiers will prevent modifications from degenerating more and more into relaxation, ending in the virtual suppression of religious exercises. It is a matter of conscience for the community as for each Brother individually to make sure that the reason for the derogation be real and truly justifiable and not simply a veiled preference for the attractiveness of the temporals to

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the austerity of the spirituals, not just a camouflaging of a lack of piety or taste for divine things.

It is equally necessary to note that there must never be a complete suppression of evening exercises—neither on the part of the community nor on the part of any particular Brother, even in those circumstances that seem most justifiable. There must always be a minimum compensating in intensity for what is lacking in entirety. This minimum will remind all right consciences that the derogation is justified only because worthy reasons demand it, and for only as long as these reasons continue to exist. It is in this spirit and in accordance with this explanation that we must interpret the resolution drawn up by the Capitulary Assembly.

There are two other points that we wish to draw attention to especially:

a) In boarding schools where Brothers have little time to dispose of after Mass because of the late rising of the student personnel, there must nevertheless be some minutes reserved for a suitable thanksgiving.

b) With a view to achieving better results it is permissible to group the regular, daily religious study periods more economically; for example, one hour every two days replacing the half hour prescribed for each of them.

PRIESTHOOD. — If we are giving a special heading to the notes concerning this subject it does not mean there were many such. There were actually very few. Those Brothers who did suggest that some Brothers should be made priests did so not because they are not satisfied with our vocation or fail to esteem it, but for reasons peculiar to their respective regions: they find it hard to secure an adequate priestly ministrations for their schools and houses, due to chaplains being few and hard to find or lacking preparation for this special function. In the countries where this problem exists the right solution does not call for a change in our state. Such a step would not be as easy as at first it might appear; nor would all its results prove fortunate! The difficulty can be met by inviting some clerical Congregation to consider whether they could not act as chaplains for us. The Congregation in question might be willing to consider the possibility of making the filling of our chaplaincies one of the special forms of its apostolate. Here and there such an arrangement is already

a reality. In recent times it seems that Providence has been inspiring apostolic men to found clerical Institute-adopting this type of work as peculiarly theirs. Declarations of the present Holy Father (e.g. Discourse to the Congress of Religious in 1950, letter to Cardinal Valerio Valeri, letter from Mgr. dell'Acqua) have made it sufficiently clear that lay Religious Institutes are necessary, that they have a specific role to fulfill in the Church and that their religious life is just as authentically a religious life as that of the clerical Institutes. Our Brothers are perfectly persuaded of the truth of all this. Such exceptions as exist are very few, and their motives (at least in some cases, it is to be feared) are not always purely supernatural.

The above can be taken as the solid conviction of the Superiors and of the other members of our Institute. But it happens likewise to be the opinion of a great majority of the ecclesiastical authorities throughout the Church. Shortly before the Chapter took place there happened an incident (wholly unconnected with our Institute) that made all the surer the truth of what we say.

A certain prominent ecclesiastic suggested to the Sacred Congregation of Religious that the priesthood be introduced into a religious teaching group that has always been, like our own, a lay Institute. At the time we were unofficially asked for our opinion on the subject. The Superiors made their position clear. They then proceeded to solicit the opinion of the Cardinals under whose jurisdiction we carry on our apostolate. A number of bishops and archbishops in whose dioceses we work were likewise so good as to give us their views on the subject. All of them saw fit to tell us that we should remain what we are, exclusively lay religious. These declarations came from Rome and Jerusalem, from Tarragona and San Francisco from Malines and Havana — from Europe and the Near East, from the Old World and the New. All these letters can be summarized in the words of one of them: "The priesthood is nowise necessary for the mission which is yours in accordance with the will of your Holy Founder. Introduced among you there is danger it would draw the Brothers slowly but surely away from their essential work. It might well bring about among you a division likely to ruin good spirit. It would promote recruitment neither for your own Congregation nor for the priesthood itself."

Number?

PROHIBITION REGARDING THE USE OF TOBACCO.

A number of notes asked that the prohibition be maintained. Others pleaded that a more comprehensive approach be taken—in view no doubt of human weaknesses but also because of (some would say chiefly because of) special local circumstances. It seemed to the Capitulars that these two aspects of the matter called for an attitude at once firm and merciful. The attitude is well reflected in the resolution they drew up.

The Institute cannot abandon the principle that there should be no smoking among us. There are of course spiritual reasons—reasons of austerity proper to the religious life. We have also the repeated recommendations of the Sacred Congregation of Religious. Then for us there are other fundamental motives: this prohibition goes back to the very origins of the Institute and has decidedly become more and more one of the characteristics proper to us; besides, our function as educators requires that we give an example of mortification and austerity so as to render our exhortations the more convincing and compelling, especially in these days of sensualism and lack of self-restraint.

Why not?

So?

Modern
manipulation

This is why we earnestly entreat all our Brothers to abstain completely from tobacco. We especially beg our young Brothers completing their scholastic training or making their perpetual profession to pledge themselves on their honor not to smoke; also we recommend that they do this for the intention that God in His goodness may, in return for their generosity, raise up in all our Districts the good and numerous vocations so urgently needed.

If, on the other hand, abuses occasioned by habits prevalent in certain countries have been introduced and become more or less common, we prefer, in accordance with the example of Our Savior and the Church, to try to heal rather than break: to appease consciences by means of regulations—but with a view to bringing about greater generosity in the Institute. We wish to be understood correctly; it is a therapeutic that is intended and not a relaxation.

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MODERN TECHNICAL FACILITIES. — The difficulty was foreseen: the seemingly inevitable introduction of these facilities into our communities was certain to bring about problems. In the beginning there was a kind of groping, a feeling of one's way. But from this beginning to continue on and end in downright abuses all that is needed is to follow

the down-drag of fallen human nature, which is never wanting for "good" reasons. In a number of allocutions and exhortations His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has traced out the course of conduct to be followed in these matters.

It is readily understood that Superiors are obliged to intervene and establish regulations if the requirements of the common life as well as the obligations of religious obedience and poverty are to be respected. It will depend on the uprightness and delicacy of our personal consciences whether we make a good or bad use of these facilities; whether or not we practice the caution that is needed if they are not to prove harmful to our religious life. Regulations are barriers meant for protection, but how easy it is to get around them if one chooses to do so! Unless each one's conscience speaks out clearly and firmly the best directives in the world become useless. This principle, which you stress when you are dealing with your students, we beg you with confidence to apply to yourselves in all honesty. We speak this way because there is question here of things that although good in themselves can easily become objects of grave abuse, leading to situations most disastrous for religious vocations. Bear these considerations in mind when reading the resolutions of the Chapter in regard to these modern facilities.

VARIA. --- Besides the matters mentioned above many others were submitted for the attention of the Capitulars. Among them were these: (a) lack of silence and recollection in the common room, (b) suppression of the recreation of Rule, (c) irregular use of the *Benedicamus* at table, (d) infractions of the Rule of silence in general; and of the great silence in particular, (e) abuses connected with the various modes of travel.

Here and there certain religious exercises or exterior supports of the Institute are neglected: the accusation and advertisement of defects, reddition of conduct, particular examen.

We submit these problems to your generous, painstaking attention. We request the Brothers Visitors and Brothers Directors to bring more care to them, and after that do all they can to second the good will of the Brothers. If there was one of these points the Chapter insisted on more than others it was the question of the obligation of the Directors to receive

their Brothers regularly in reddition. This point was likewise the object of many notes. That no Brother Director be able from now on to plead lack of time for meeting his obligations herein, the Capitulary Assembly decreed that the maximum interval between redditions shall be fifteen days. We urge the Brothers Directors to see to it that now all the more the manner for conducting the redditions be such as to render them truly efficacious.

REVISION OF THE TEXT OF OUR RULES. — Circular 318, in giving the results of the Chapter of 1946 discussed at length the principles that governed the revision that appeared in the 1947 edition of the Common Rules and the Rule of Government. The magnitude of the work was such that the final product could not but be imperfect. Obscurities remained, even some slight contradictions lingered. Here and there the modifications brought to the text of the Holy Founder were not altogether happy. Moreover, especially in so far as the Rule of Government is concerned, the work of adaptation and of keeping abreast of present necessities must continue to go on especially in this age of rapid evolution. The important directives given the Congress of Religious in 1950 explained how necessary this is and how incumbent.

These considerations induced the Regime to undertake the completion of the work of 1946. But to render the work valid it was indispensable to secure a mandate from the General Chapter. This present Chapter was good enough to ratify the undertaking under the following provisos: (a) The Regime shall submit its work for approval to the General Chapter of 1966. (b) But in order that the Regime make use of wider experience and of the best opinions, it shall forward mimeographed copies of the first draft, as soon as this is finished, to the Brothers Visitors. These Superiors together with their councils shall study it, ~~annotating their copy as they proceed.~~ (c) ~~The regime shall summarize all these remarks and make use of them for drawing up a second draft, which shall be duly submitted to canonists and to the consultors for the Sacred Congregation of Religious.~~

With a revision thus prepared and supervised it is expected that the new texts will be enthusiastically approved by the next General Chapter. Until then it is understood we shall continue to be governed by the edition of 1947. This applies equally to the Common Rules and the Rule of Government.

Not done as yet

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SIXTH COMMISSION

1. That the efforts made for the past ten years to be faithful to the Rules and Constitutions regarding the coutumier (ch. XVI, art. 5; ch. XXIX, art. 1) be intensified and generalized, in order to draw from it all the advantages it can yield for the good ordering of the community.

2. That retreat schedules be so arranged and lightened as to give the Brothers more time for personal prayer.

That the Brothers Visitors and Directors be more particularly solicitous regarding the monthly recollection, that it become an opportunity for a generous renewal of regularity and the interior life.

3. That reddition to Brother Director, appreciated as it should be for its human and spiritual values, be made at least every fifteen days; that every Brother make use of it freely and faithfully.

4. That the use of the modern means of culture or information (cinema, radio, television) as well as of transportation (auto) be justified by such motives only as are consonant with our state as religious educators. Their use must be regulated by Brother Visitor after he has consulted with the District Council and received approval from Brother Assistant.

5. The use of tobacco being contrary to the letter and spirit of our Constitutions the Chapter invites the Brothers Assistants, Visitors, Directors, and all the Brothers in general, to uphold within their sphere of influence the austerity of the Rule regarding this point; and where there is need, assist in re-establishing it. Only the Brothers Assistants may, according to circumstances, make decisions in particular cases.

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Prayers. — That in accordance with the exhortations of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, the Brothers strive to cultivate love for God, the support and sustenance of piety. That they be persuaded that formulas however rich lose savor and effectiveness through tepidity and routine. That the Brothers in charge of the formation of our aspirants, Brothers presiding at retreats as well as all our Superiors, do all they can to encourage the making of this effort, being guided in the matter by the doctrine of St. John Baptist de La Salle on the conditions for vocal and mental prayer explained in the *Collection*.

2. That the task of bringing a certain precision to our

vocal prayers be confided to a committee of qualified Brothers designated by the Chapter and working together with the Regime, the following directives guiding them:

- a) lessen the amount, avoid repetitions;
- b) draw approximately nearer to the prayers that were in use during the time of the Holy Founder, in so far as this be possible and desirable;
- c) adapt our prayers more to the liturgical seasons, for example in the matter of hymns, aspirations, even occasionally taking inspiration from the divine offices of the Church.

SEVENTH COMMISSION

Administration, Superiors

The 187 notes handled by the Commission were of very great importance. They concerned General Chapters, major Superiors, local Superiors and the question of administration.

GENERAL CHAPTERS. — Notes dealing with this subject discussed such topics as how often the General Chapter should be convoked, how it should be constituted, how it should be prepared. An interval of ten years between Chapters seemed too long for some Brothers. "If it were shorter," said one, "we should have the advantage of a greater security in these times when the rhythm of things and events is so greatly stepped up." There was one note that expressed the desire to see the interval increased to fifteen years. The present Chapter is of opinion that experience has justified the decennial period which was decreed by the Capitulars of 1946. However, it admits that there are some inconveniences, which can be obviated at least in part by bringing to Rome, after a lapse of five years following the closing of the Chapter, all the Brothers Visitors of the Institute, for the purpose of participating in the retreat for major Superiors. After the retreat a few days will be devoted to discussing such items as: whether there are not some new problems requiring study.

Some notes, in terms not a little energetic, complain of the manner in which the General Chapters are constituted. These are points found fault with: a distinction between Brothers Visitors based on the numerical importance of their respective Districts, the age of eligibility as a capitulary member, disproportion in numbers between ex-officio members and elected members, above all the nonrepresentation of certain Districts. The General Chapter judged that these observations were not sufficiently warranted—with the exception of the last, which was looked into at length. A subcommission studied this matter of representation and finally de-

clared by way of a resolution it drew up that no District shall be without a delegate at the Chapter.

A good number of the Capitulars desired to see some arrangement made whereby notes to the Chapter could receive a more lengthy and consequently more thorough study. Many suggestions were made with a view to finding a good solution. The fact that the Institute is world-wide, that everywhere there is a democratic spirit abroad, that mentalities are becoming more wide-awake to administrative problems—all these facts explain the very great increase in the number of notes these recent decades, and seem to indicate there will be more in the future. Not everything written to the Chapter is of equal interest, value and importance. It is only proper to take special notice of those notes that constitute serious and fruitful studies. "The essential work of a Chapter," said one Capitular of wide experience, "should be the thorough and profound study of certain questions of magnitude suggested by the mass of notes forwarded--important questions that bear reference to new situations in which we find ourselves. These questions should be presented to the General Chapter accompanied by documents whose preparation has been attended by serious inquiry and research. Such far-reaching matters should be foreseen and be the object of mature examination, discussion and investigation carried on beforehand." This declaration in stressing the necessity of pre-capitulary work prompted a considerable amount of useful debate. After a serious consideration of the several solutions presented, the Chapter came finally to make its decision by drawing up the resolution that is to be found farther on.

From now on notes for the Chapter are to be classified and studied on the District level. There will be District reports summarizing the work, everything being conducted under the authority of the Brothers Visitors. In making this arrangement the Capitulars believed they were adequately implementing the judicious proposal of the Seventh Commission: that from now on our decennial General Assemblies strive more and more to understand and carry out the constructive adaptations called for by the wishes of the Church and the directives of the Holy Father.

Superiors.

The authors of the notes sent to this Commission showed

a solicitous, respectful attitude towards Superiors. There were fourteen remarks having to do with the Superior General, all of them religiously filial, suggesting that the Regime see to it that he be assured of a periodic rest, that the amount of his administrative work be reduced and that his journeys in behalf of Institute interests be prudently organized. The Chapter very willingly ratified these suggestions.

Thirty-eight notes showing an excellent spirit pertained to the Brothers Assistants. The authors speak of the disinterestedness and spirit of sacrifice of these Superiors and then go on to mention the natural and supernatural virtues needed in the men to whom this office is given. It is pointed out that there can be an opposition between the two roles of a Brother Assistant: he is a counsellor to the Most Honored Brother and therefore should generally be near him; he is an administrator and so must have adequate contacts with the territories coming under his jurisdiction. The Chapter desires that in all prudence more account be taken of the first of these functions.

Certain notes claim that there would be an improvement in the general administration of the Congregation if a greater measure of decentralization could be effected. The Capitulars believe that a practical study of this matter would require a great number of sessions. They judge that if less centralization is desirable it can prudently be achieved only with time, and step by step.

Sixty-seven notes deal with the administration of the Districts and mention such matters as are already taken care of by the various articles of chapter XVII of the Rule of Government. Nevertheless the Commission insists that the assignments allotted the Auxiliary Visitors be duly carried out with a view to giving the Brothers Visitors the necessary time for attending to the religious and pedagogical organization of their Districts, and to enable them to give more help and encouragement to the young Brothers. Deeming that this directive needs to be remembered the Chapter has made it the object of one its resolutions.

The notes pertaining to the Brothers Directors bring up no problems or situations that are not already legislated for in the Rule of Government, principally in chapters XIX and XX. All the remarks that have been made to the Commission concerning the Directors can be summarized in the following

observation taken from its report: "Many Brothers deplore the fact that many a Director finds himself so burdened with a multiplicity of administrative matters that he cannot find time to attend adequately to the religious life of his community. Insistence is laid on the obligation of the Brothers Directors to respect the true hierarchy of values and duties, to insist on having every Brother co-operate in the pursuit of the common good, to make sure they get time for attending to the essential: showing themselves sollicitous for the religious and apostolic life of the community; ridding themselves of all anxiety over secondary matters and turning over the care of them to their auxiliaries: prodirector, subdirector, bursar, etc." The Chapter gave its approval to this wise insistence.

Some notes drew attention to the legislation requiring the Brothers Directors to be changed at the end of their second term. This request amounts to nothing more than what is of law. But then it is additionally asked that when the Director's obedience expires he take his place among the rank and file at least for a certain brief period. The arguments for sustaining this proposition are not a few. But as happens in such matters those who applaud this procedure do not always see it under all its aspects or from its urgent, human point of view. The Chapter felt that it could not delay long on this matter.

The function of the community council is closely associated with the administration of the Brother Director. Several notes complain that the community council is inoperative, or called only after long intervals, in many communities; in some even that are very important. Mention is made of the unhappy results: Brother Director's administration becomes arbitrary, his decisions are often too much his own personally, long-established traditions are inconsiderately set aside, etc. The substantial character of this remark induced the fifth Commission to make it the matter of a resolution.

This Commission's report presented several other questions prompted by the notes. But the Chapter showed itself unwilling to discuss any apart from those that seemed truly helpful for the Congregation, likely to render its government more efficient and stable and better adapted to the exigencies of its mission.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE SEVENTH COMMISSION

Superiors.

1. That adequate care be taken of the Superior General's health. That he be required to take the rest and relaxation he needs; and that such journeys as he has to make be prudently limited and organized.

2. That the prescription (Rule of Government ch. IX, art. 6) requiring the Brothers Assistants to be habitually present with the Most Honored Brother in order to constitute his council be observed within the limits of what is possible; that thus they may be able to reserve the best of their time for serving as counselors to the Superior General and for the study of matters both general and particular.

3. That each Brother Visitor make use of such assistance as is necessary to enable him to meet his obligations, and likewise to respect the order of their importance.

4. That everything possible be done to help our Brothers Directors to acquit themselves of their grave responsibilities: retreats, specialized seminars, conference plans.

5. That on all levels the holding of the various councils required by Rule be carried out faithfully.

General Chapter Notes and Memoranda.

With a view to increasing the efficiency of the work of the General Chapter, to facilitating especially the reading and examination of notes (which tend to be more and more numerous) chapter VII, section IV of the Rule of Government shall be modified as follows:

1. Two years before the opening of the General Chapter the Most Honored Brother Superior General shall notify, by circular letter, the Brothers professed with perpetual vows that they may prepare notes for the Chapter in accordance with chapter VII, Section IV of the Rule of Government. Within a period not exceeding four months dating from the issue of the Most Honored Brother's letter these notes shall be forwarded to the District administration.

2. According as the notes reach Brother Visitor he is to put them aside carefully, unopened. The four months period having expired, Brother Visitor shall call together the

members of the District Council and proceed to the opening and classification of the notes. Commissions, made up of the members of the District Council as well as of other competent Brothers, shall examine and study the classified notes, summarizing them and adding such observations as are needed. To each summarization should be added a statement of the solutions called for. The Brothers Visitors and members of the District Council as well as all the other Brothers who share in this work shall take the oath that is prescribed in chapter VII, article 36 of the Rule of Government.

3. A period of eight months shall be allotted for these preparatory labors. When it expires all reports shall be forwarded to the General Secretariate at the Mother House. The Brothers Visitors and their Councils shall add:

- a) a resume of all the notes received, and,
- b) the notes themselves, grouped according to their various objects.

When the General Chapter convenes, these notes and reports shall be submitted to the Capitulars for a final study, according to what has been traditional. (Rule of Government, chapter VII, section IV). Before the opening of the Chapter the members of the Regime are authorized to make a study of the District reports and accompanying notes, in order to be all the better orientated in preparing for the General Chapter.

4. Brothers professed with perpetual vows may individually send notes *directly* to the General Chapter. These notes should be addressed to the General Secretariate at the Mother House, not later than the date that has been traditionally specified. (Rule of Government, ch. VIII, art. 33). Nobody shall open these notes before the General Chapter convenes.

Composition of the Chapter.

1. Those who may elect deputies must be Brothers whose right to do so (according to the Rule) dates back to at least the date of issue of the Most Honored Brother's letter announcing the date of the General Chapter.

2. The General Chapters are composed as follows:

Ex-officio Members: (a) the Most Honored Brother Super-

rior General, Brother Vicar General, Brothers Assistants in office; (b) retired members of the Regime; (c) Brother Procurator General; (d) Brothers Secretary General, Bursar General, Postulator General; (e) Brothers Visitors General in office; (f) Brother Director of the Second Novitiate of nine months; (g) Brothers Visitors of Districts that have at least 251 Brothers professed with perpetual vows.

Elected Members: (Fundamental principle: Every regularly established District has the right to be represented at the Chapter). (a) Each District having less than 251 Brothers professed with perpetual vows elects one deputy and one alternate. (b) The rest of the legislation regarding members that are to be elected shall be what is actually in chapter VII, article 4 of the Rule of Government, except that the last paragraph of this article (begins with, "Districts with less than 100 Brothers...") is to be omitted.

Brothers who are eligible. (What follows is a modification of article 6 of chapter VII of the Rule of Government). The Brothers eligible as deputies and alternates shall be: (a) Brothers Visitors and Brothers Auxiliary Visitors; (b) Brothers Directors of novitiates, scholasticates, principal houses (A principal house is one that has at least seven Brothers); (c) Brothers who have been professed with perpetual vows for at least fifteen years on the date of the Circular convoking the General Chapter.

EIGHTH COMMISSION

Religious Names, Clothing

RELIGIOUS NAMES. — The Commission examined 144 notes and one report on the subject of the religious names. Certain notes call attention to the expression, *De La Salle Brothers*, which is used in addition to the official name to designate the Institute. We also find *Lasallian Brothers*, which has been popularized by the Institute Bulletin. Occasionally we meet simply, *The Lasallians*. In itself the matter did not seem to be sufficiently important to take up time of the General Chapter. It was pointed out that in the Pontifical Annual the initials F.S.C. are used to indicate our Institute and these should be used to the exclusion of all others.

A number of notes requested that our religious names be suppressed entirely. The reasons advanced can be summed up in these two: (a) Sometimes when there is question of being obliged to sign with one's secular name official documents (for example school records, school diplomas) of the State Education Department or some other branch of the government, pupils and their parents and others are astonished to discover that the same man can bear two names. The truth is that in most countries the general public takes it for granted that a man bearing a religious name has a secular one likewise. In certain countries, even in non-Catholic ones, it is permitted to have both names inscribed on passports and identification cards. (b) In certain large Districts some names are often repeated (almost infinitely it is said), and this because the initials are limited to a few letters of the alphabet. Again it is remarked that this system makes it necessary to give names that are outlandish and sometimes of a nature to elicit laughter. Finally the argument in favor of suppressing religious names goes so far as to contend that changing one's name is in a way equivalent to denying one's Baptism! The day on which this discussion took place was the Feast of St. Eugenius, Baptismal patron of His Holiness, Pope Pius XII. It was impossible not to remember how His

Holiness changed changed *his* name on the occasion of his elevation to the Papacy. Even today in certain countries, as in Biblical times, a change of name signifies a promotion—a step forward. It was not without reason that our Hcly Founder chose, following the example of other religious societies, to introduce the practice among us.

Out of respect for a tradition going back to the very beginnings of the Congregation, and inasmuch as reasons to the contrary were considered inadequate, the Chapter decided that herein there should be no change. It was, however, decreed that those Districts that find themselves too restricted because of alphabetical considerations should be allowed more liberty. It was likewise stipulated that there is no objection to incorporating the Baptismal name in the religious name.

CLOTHING. — Ever since the Holy Founder's *Memoire sur l'Habit* (cir. 1691) our religious habit (apart some slight modifications mentioned in the Bull of Approbation in 1725) has suffered hardly any change. Besides, this fidelity is demanded by the Church: no change may be made in any essential part of the religious habit without the permission of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.

But a considerable number of notes are begging the Chapter to be so good as to consider whether it is not time to take these two steps: (a) to put an end to certain whimsies in the matter of clothing that have been introduced in certain regions and (b) to take into account the trouble that a fairly large number of Brothers experience in wearing the traditional mantle and hat. As appears in the resolutions it ratified, the Chapter accorded a favorable answer to this twofold request.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE EIGHTH COMMISSION

Religious names. — While the principle of giving religious names at the taking of the Religious Habit is maintained it is nevertheless desirable that there be the possibility of a wider selection unrestricted by the actual system of alphabetical lists. The Secretary General in concert with the Regime shall determine ways and means for realizing this desideratum without there resulting any confusion from identical names.

Religious habit. — In order to obviate infractions of religious discipline in the matter of the religious garb the General Chapter asks that the following directives and prescriptions be strictly observed: (a) The rabat and robe are to be regarded as the essential, unalterable parts of the religious habit of the Brother of the Christian Schools. (b) The wearing of the traditional mantle is maintained as obligatory for such religious ceremonies as are held in community. (c) Any change in the matter of the traditional mantle and hat for those occasions when it is necessary to leave the community shall be under the control of the major Superiors, account being taken of the customs observed in the different countries. (d) The wearing of the calotte shall be optional.

NINTH COMMISSION

Institute Publications

The Commission examined 180 notes, which gave proof of a sincere love for the Institute and a genuine desire to see it provided with means still more appropriate for imparting to the Brothers a knowledge of the Holy Founder, of his doctrine and work; strengthening in consequence their personal piety and by the same token rendering their apostolate so much the more fruitful. This Commission wishes to remark first of all that if the honor of the Institute is to continue to be upheld the prescriptions of Canon Law as well as the directives of the Rule of Government in connection with the publication of books and articles must be fully obeyed.

BOOKS CONCERNING THE HOLY FOUNDER. —

We cannot but rejoice that in these recent years and in various languages there has been a considerable number of excellent publications treating of St. John Baptist de La Salle. The Chapter expressed its deep satisfaction over this fine work and ardently hoped it might continue to go on. What is urgently needed at the present moment is a critical study of all of the writings of the Holy Founder after the manner of what has already been done for *La Conduite des Ecoles*, *Les Lettres* and *La Civilité Chrétienne*. In order to hasten the realization of such a project some would like to see a "Lassallian Committee" permanently established at the Mother House. The Brothers of the group would be specially prepared for the pursuit of critical studies. They could be given access to the archives of the Institute.

Many complain that the present *Précis* is inadequately developed and too jejune. They would like to see a *History of the Institute* that is better developed and more thorough; something likely to appeal to our young men in training, even to attract the general reader. The problem would be solved

if only we could find the right man for making an interesting summary of the nine volumes of our noted historian, M. Georges Rigault. An attempt has already been made in Canada. Other countries would like to profit by it. Many insist that the way of writing the name of the Holy Founder be kept uniform. *De La Salle* is the way he himself wrote it. There is a branch of his family that writes it *de la Salle*. The Institute Bulletin as well as the Circulars from 1921 on have been making it *de La Salle*. This last form is the one recommended.

INSTITUTE MEDITATIONS. — These meditations that have served as the spiritual food of several generations of Brothers are beginning now, according to some, to sound a bit archaic. Some would like to see them completely recast and to have them based on Holy Scripture and Pontifical documents with a Lasallian as well as a liturgical trend running through them. This preoccupation reflects needs that are actual; it is typical of the spiritual movement throughout the Church.

NECROLOGICAL NOTICES. — This family possession was the occasion of a long exchange of views. Some claim that the notices are hardly ever read, either publicly or privately. So their publication would be an expense that comes near to being useless. That can be true, especially in Districts where the language of the Holy Founder is not well known or where it is the practice to thrust the notices into a cupboard to gather dust. This pessimistic outlook was strongly challenged by some of the Capitulars, even by some in whose Districts French is not commonly spoken, and who declared that these interesting, encouraging, well-written family records are doing immense good. During the course of the debate there were many suggestions as to how the notices might be made more accessible to everybody: continue present practice, but let each biography be written in the language that the deceased himself spoke; each Assistancy or each District to publish the biographies of its own Brothers exclusively; publish all the notices in all the principal languages of the Institute — and

have therefore as many editions as there are languages. There was finally a vote taken — maintaining the *status quo*.

VARIOUS SPIRITUAL BOOKS — Several notes ask for new, revised editions of the *Lives of the Saints*, the *Souvenir of the Novitiate* and the *Manual of Piety*, in order to render them more acceptable to the present generation. Among the many suggestions offered some were taken up and studied seriously and are to be realized according as circumstances permit. Some believe that our present Religious Calendar should be improved — it should be made more liturgical, say they. Unless it is to be turned into a kind of Ordo (a procedure which is hardly feasible because of variations from diocese to diocese) it is hard to see how it can be altered advantageously.

INSTITUTE BULLETIN. — The present make-up of this medium of information among the Districts of the Institute elicited marked differences of opinion. Some believe that in its present form the *Bulletin* is too expensive-looking and risks conveying a false impression of the Institute. On the other hand some Brothers claim that it stands out favorably among publications of a like nature and, that taking it all in all, it is a credit to us. Some dislike its multiplicity of photographic reproductions while others contend that this is one of its most interesting features. One capitular remarked that it is especially the Brothers without a command of the French tongue that appreciate the pictures; that would even like to see the letterpress accompanying each illustration printed additionally in their own tongue. The general feeling is that it would be better to have more studies and less news. Evidently it is not easy to please everybody.

Farther on you will find the resolution that mentions what decision the Chapter came to in regard to the *Bulletin*. The Capitulars were convinced that no single Brother however competent and devoted he happens to be, is properly in a measure to assume responsibility for a publication like the *Bulletin*. Such an undertaking should be confided to an editorial staff.

LASALLIAN PROPAGANDA. — In this matter requests, proposals and projects abound. It is not possible to give a summary of them here. Suffice it to say that many of them are unrealizable for the reason that financial resources are not illimitable. Pains have been taken to retain what is essential in all these plans: that as soon as possible means of propaganda that are theoretically and practically correct and sound and recommendable for their good taste should be improved and multiplied.

CATHOLIC EDUCATORS' DAY. — We should look upon it as a privilege to promote vocations to the Catholic teaching profession. The General Chapter makes this declaration its own. It therefore requests that we do all we can to cause a day to be set aside in honor of St. John Baptist de La Salle for the purpose of begging God to increase the number of good Catholic educators. This day of intercession is already an accomplished fact in many countries— due largely to the instrumentality of a Brother of the Mother House who wrote to the Bishops of the entire world begging them to bless and sanction the project.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE NINTH COMMISSION

1. That the critical study of all the writings of our Holy Founder be continued; and that the writing of books and articles investigating and making known his spirituality be further encouraged.

2. (a) That the Institute *Meditations* be completely recast and be based on Holy Scripture, Pontifical documents, liturgy—and rich in Lasallian spirituality, all with a view to the promotion of mental prayer rather than simply of meditation. (b) That our *Lives of the Saints* be re-edited, drawn up in a style somewhat more animated; that certain historical rectifications be effected; that the selection be wider. (c) That the Institute *Précis* be re-written, that it reflect M. Rigault's *Histoire de l'Institut*—that it avoid being too synoptical and jejune.

3. That the *Bulletin de L'Institut* be confided to a committee; that its articles be substantial; that it avoid the note of vanity in its accounts of the life and celebrations of our schools and houses; that occasionally it make use of articles appearing in other publications; that it open its pages to missionary accounts; that it review books published by members of the Institute.

4. In accordance with article 140 of chapter XIX of the Rule of Government and as a commentary on it:

a) That all studies of a nature to interest the entire Institute be submitted for examination beforehand to the General Secretariate,

b) That in each District there be a committee, selected by Brother Visitor and his Council and approved by Brother Assistant, for regulating the publication of books and manuals as well as doctrinal articles for reviews and newspapers. Exception is made for School and Alumni Bulletins; the regulation of which can be effected by each house through a Brother selected by Brother Director and approved by Brother Visitor.

5. That as soon as possible the General Secretariate draw up a precise regulation concerning the obligation to forward to the archives copies of books, brochures and articles having to do with the Institute.

TENTH COMMISSION

Missions, Health, Retired Brothers

MISSIONS. -- The notes for this Commissions were studied by Capitulars who are themselves authentic missionaries. These Brothers have had a long experience in the missions and fortunately the Chapter was able to benefit much by it.

The notes recognize the magnificent missionary effort we have accomplished in these recent years. Farther on you will find details making this clear. However, the Brothers now actually in the missions are sending out emergency signals to the entire Institute, to secure help for the territories they are evangelizing. They are pretty nearly powerless to place a check on what is going on before their eyes: powerful advances are being effected by the forces of Protestantism, Islamism, Communism and atheistic materialism. Missionary areas are evolving at a record speed. The future is in the hands of those who today can reach and form the youthful generations.

Our pioneers in the mission field are demanding that the number of truly missionary schools be increased; be made part and parcel of the people to be evangelized and thoroughly adapted to the customs and practices of the respective countries. These schools must be totally Catholic, free from nationalism, from racism, from a superiority complex and from any attempt to impose a foreign rule and civilization. Just the contrary must take place: the missionary must know how to adapt himself to the laws and ancestral customs of the country he is helping, in order to spiritualize and Christianize them.

The purpose of this implantation is to bring about a Christian, human and social development of the country's own elements. The missionary Districts have to aim at autonomy and achieve it little by little. We must hasten recruitment there where we carry on our missionary work. We can well afford

to place our confidence in the grace of God, which at times works far more powerfully than we fancy.

The Institute's missionary organization has to be continually modernized. Our present arrangements are not immutable; they have to be kept in alignment with the needs of the Church and the directives of the Holy See. What is above all important is that we ourselves acquire, and then impart to our pupils, a true notion of what missions mean and their rightful claim on our devotion and generosity. We sometimes hear: "We do not have to go far afield to find missionary work; we have all we can handle here at home." This is false. The Church's various functions and structures have been long established in our own countries. If so many souls are not making use of them the responsibility is largely their own. But in missionary countries these organisms are missing; and it is the work of missionaries to supply them, in the name of the Church and for the Church.

We hope that the missionary secretariate which has been functioning for the last two years is going to develop. It can help in bringing about needed adaptations. It can give Superiors as well as some of the world-wide missionary groups information that is of interest to the missions.

A permanent missionary exhibit is now installed in the Mother House. It is a beginning, and shows promise. The Capitulars assisted at two excellent Institute missionary films: *Kistito* and *Au Pays des Fétiches*. Both are interesting and praiseworthy. This too means another fine beginning.

This report was read to the General Assembly by a veteran missionary; a true missionary in every sense of the word, beard included. His words went straight to the heart of everybody. He added a personal appeal of his own, which stirred and moved the Assembly. The speaker was convinced that if his directives are followed there will be many more infidel peoples everlastingly grateful to the Institute.

HEALTH. — After reading the notes on this subject one might well believe that enemy number one is overwork. Indeed we have often heard it blamed for many things. However, the normal means prescribed for curing the disease are not miraculous. Remarks are made to the effect that our work should be

better organized, on the part of the District, on the part of the school and on our own. Some hope that vacation periods more rationally thought-out and better arranged are the answer. Some others speak of rest centers. It is wisely recommended that there be a complete avoidance of certain types of work inspired by indiscreet zeal with no previous approval of Superiors. It is normal that from time to time there be periods of overwork; but these are necessarily exceptional. Moreover, when a man begins to complain of work and difficulties he does not of course increase their number, but often enough he doubles their weight. Minds that have a sense of order, men who are masters of themselves, are seldom overwhelmed by what they have to do; they foresee what must be done and determine the time wherein to do it. The Commission points out that overwork is sometimes ascribable to lack of personnel. Overeagerness for success is still another cause.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE TENTH COMMISSION

Missions. — 1. That in houses of training that supply the missions there be given a course in missiology.

2. That our missionary apostolate be in accord with the needs of the Church and be guided by the Pontifical directives.

3. That we multiply schools in missionary countries, especially normal schools; and that the staff for these institutions be sufficiently numerous and competent.

4. That missionary Districts intensify their own recruitment, and thus ensure the continuance and expansion of the Institute in the mission field.

5. That through the judicious organization of Mission Day in accordance with the suggestions of Circular No. 329 our Districts promote still more effectively our missionary apostolate. That through an intelligent, sustained publicity our Districts elicit generous gifts in favor of the missions; but that at the same time missionary Districts intensify *their* efforts in order to be able, little by little, to provide for their own needs and get along by themselves.

6. That the Missionary Secretariate be a center more and more efficient in supplying missionary information and publicity.

Retired Brothers. Health. — That a special training be given to certain Brothers who show interest and aptitude in caring for the sick—in view of enabling them to become competent, experienced infirmarians.

2. That our houses for retired Brothers be modernized wherever improvements are deemed necessary or useful.

3. That all Brothers undergo an annual medical checkup.

THIRD PART

FINAL SESSIONS, DECISIONS

FINAL SESSIONS AND CLOSING OF THE CHAPTER

On Sunday June 10 it was possible to foresee that the closing of the Chapter would take place Thursday June 14. There remained for study two commission reports only, together with some supplementary questions to settle. We began the day of June 13 by making a pilgrimage to St. Mary Major and then immediately after, a visit to the cemetery, where we prayed for the deceased members of the Chapter of 1946, especially for the Most Honored Brothers Athanase-Emile and Arese-Casimir.

At the outset of the morning session a motion was proposed to the effect that we honor Our Lady under the title, *Our Lady of the Star*; and that this title be particular to the Institute. As a matter of fact it pleased Providence to place in our care a Marian place of pilgrimage (Montebourg) where the Mother of God as Our Lady of the Star is prayed to, especially by students. Last year the Most Honored Brother Denis set up a statue of the Virgin of Montebourg at the entrance of the Mother House chapel. One of the Brothers Assistants had pictures printed of Our Lady as Protectress of the Mother House and these have been circulating very widely. This year another step was taken towards recognizing Our Lady of the Star as an Institute inheritance. An artist of Barcelona made a very faithful replica of the Madonna, which the Brothers' alumni of that great city presented to the Most Honored Brother. From now on it will adorn the common room of the Second Novitiate at Rome. Here is the resolution the General Chapter drew up regarding this devotion: "The members of the General Chapter of 1958 recognizing that Divine Providence has seen fit to confide to us the Shrine of Our Lady of the Star desires that the Madonna honored at Montebourg be, under the same title, especially revered and invoked in all our houses; and that the abbey of Montebourg become a center of very special devotion to Our Lady."

* * *

The Rule of Government requires that during the course of the Chapter an account be rendered of the progress of the Institute during the preceding decade. Two of the retiring Brothers Assistants shared this assignment between them. One recounted the Institute's principal joys and sorrows. The other pointed out the important steps in our missionary development. Both reports are encouraging. But they speak of suffering too; especially the great hardship still experienced by Brothers behind the iron curtain. The first sets down the main lines of progress: historical events as well as measures taken to ensure the spiritual and temporal prosperity of the Institute.

During the past decade the Superiors General kept before them three ends:

a) *To strengthen unity in the Institute.* There were personal contacts. Journeys to various Districts as well as periodical Circulars contributed very effectively; eloquent proof is the excellent union reigning among the members of the present Chapter.

b) *To cause the Holy Founder to be known and glorified.* This end was attained by the Lasallian Year, which marked the tercentenary of the Saint's birth; by the proclamation of St. John Baptist de La Salle as the "Special Patron of all Teachers of Youth;" by the solemn consecration of the Mother House chapel, which shelters his precious relics; by the publication of numerous works treating of his writings and spirituality; and finally by the Beatification of Brother Benildus, one of the greatest of his sons.

c) *To develop further our missionary apostolate.* This point is treated of below.

* * *

In addition to these joys it is necessary to single out some of the sorrows that afflicted the Institute in certain regions during the past decade: countries where a more or less veiled persecution trammels recruitment and places the Brothers in conditions of life that are particularly painful; countries behind the iron curtain where silently and heroically our Brothers await the return of liberty and an opportunity to take up again the work of the apostolate; finally countries in southern Asia where our Brothers have been obliged to withdraw before the Communistic wave. In connection with this matter of persecu-

tion a letter was read from a Brother sixty-five years of age in Central Europe. Notwithstanding his age and previous training (he is a Doctor of Literature) he is obliged to work painfully at digging. But isolation is the suffering he finds hardest to endure.

In order to ascertain fully what was done in the last ten years by way of "sustaining and strengthening the life of the Institute" it would be necessary to enter into detail, to take up the resolutions of the Chapter of 1946 and see with what effort they were realized and what splendid results the realization has occasioned. By way of example we mention these projects that have been put into effect: the establishment of several, fruitful second novitiates of three months; the prolongation of training in the ordinary scholasticates and the spiritual and professional training of the young Brothers; finally the resurgence of interest in religious studies.

Everything of course is not perfect. The rapid evolution characterizing our times makes new adaptations constantly necessary. But the activity displayed in the past constitutes a solid preparation for future undertakings and a guarantee of their happy issue.

During this session one of the Capitulars gave an account of our missionary progress in the past decade. The Most Honored Brothers Athanase-Emile and Denis accorded vigorous encouragement to our missionary apostolate; and this explains largely why it never knew a brighter period. A few figures will give a résumé of the excellent record. At the beginning of the decade the number of missionary Brothers was 1,133. It is now 1,787—an increase of 57 per cent. At the outset of the same period the number of pupils in our missionary schools was 57,427. It is now 131,287—an increase of 128 per cent. In 1946 the Institute was going forward in its work in 60 countries. Today it is to be found in 70 countries; and within the next few months it will have crossed two more frontiers.

Here the Capitular delivering the report took his listeners on a geographical journey throughout our various mission territories. It was a joy to learn how we have already set up houses of formation and normal schools in many of these places, where the Catholic faith is beginning to flower. In terminating, the reporter paid a well-merited tribute to the Districts of Spain, which in order to favor Institute missions

during the past decade parted liberally with many of their generous young Brothers. He likewise complimented the Missions Secretariate, which has done much towards stimulating and sustaining missionary zeal among our Brothers and their pupils.

* * *

Again in obedience to a prescription of the Rule of Government the Chapter appointed a committee to look into the financial situation of the Institute. The group, constituted by selecting a competent Brother from each of the Assistancies, was presided over by the Brother Bursar General. The report, presented to the General Assembly June 10, studied first the notes that were forwarded, which were few and had to do with such financial questions only as were of secondary order. It next studied the matter of taxes needed for meeting the general needs of the central administration of the Institute. The Capitulars were given a list of the ordinary and extraordinary expenses that it is the duty of the Bursar General to take care of. The Capitulars admitted very readily that resources must be maintained proportionate to necessary expenses; and that from time to time, according to changes in the cost of living, some readjustments have to be made.

At the same session the Brother Bursar General set before the Assembly the economic situation in which the Congregation presently finds itself. The account, eloquent with intelligible figures and clear as a bank statement, was listened to with lively interest. The Capitulars were manifestly pleased to realize that the finances of the Institute are cared for competently and conscientiously and with a devotedness beyond praise.

The committee then, through its mouthpiece Brother Bursar General, asked the Assembly to ratify the resolutions below, with a view to *a*) enabling the Institute to meet its financial obligations, *b*) giving the Most Honored Brother the material assistance he needs for carrying out many of the resolutions passed by the Chapter. The Assembly answered favorably. These are the committee's resolutions, which were passed almost unanimously:

1. On the basis that was stipulated by the Chapter of 1946 the Institute tax is to be raised from one per cent to one and a half per cent. However, the Chapter leaves it to the Most Honored Brother and his Council to determine what ought to be done in certain particular cases.

2. The various procures shall turn into the office of the Bursar General a sum of money equal to one per cent of their gross income. Each year the figure upon which this tax is based shall be that shown by the financial situation as of December 31. In this matter the responsibility is Brother Visitor's.

3. This Chapter renews the decision of the Chapter of 1946 regarding the use of books of the Central Procure for purposes of translation, reproduction and adaptation. The decision is this: ten per cent of the selling price for editions that have been translated or reproduced; five per cent for editions that have been adapted.

4. It is necessary that certain Districts show greater promptitude in settling quarterly accounts. It is desirable that this settlement take place within three months of its falling due.

* * *

A session held June 13 had for special purpose the selection of the members of the Elective Commission, which in the event of the death of the Superior General must confirm the Vicar General in his powers or elect another for the time that remains until the convocation of the next General Chapter; or again, replace a Brother Assistant who dies or resigns between Chapters. Each Capitular was requested to draw up in secret a list of twenty electors from the members of the Chapter. These lists in triplicate were enclosed respectively in three different envelopes. The envelopes were then sealed, and are to be kept, one in Rome, another in Madrid and the third in New York.

On June 14, closing day of the Chapter, it was in order for the Capitulars to review rapidly the resolutions duly analyzed and ratified during the preceding weeks. A special committee had been selected by the Assembly to give the resolutions such alterations in phrasing as would bring out the meaning more clearly and felicitously. As these finished texts were read out and duly approved a second time many a Capitular could see how his own thought and reflection contributed to the total good work. The General Chapter had reason to be satisfied that its labors taken as a whole gave excellent results.

. . . .

The Chapter declares that it would like to see some Catholic publisher bring out an altar missal containing the Masses proper to the Institute. It ratifies the affiliation of our institute to the Missionary Union of the Clergy.

This General Assembly renews the following decision, which was originally made by the Chapter of 1946: That the monthly novena to the Most Holy Boy Jesus be maintained and faithfully announced in all our communities—and for this twofold intention: to obtain good vocations and to secure the perseverance of our Brothers.

. . . .

The attention of the Assembly is drawn to a final matter. The Most Honored Brother Denis explains that because of certain Providential circumstances the Institute succeeded in obtaining the Hotel de la Cloche in Rheims. This is the house in which the Holy Founder spent his early years. The Capitulars applauded and unanimously ratified the acquisition. They approved of the plan inviting the Districts to share in the purchase price and then to offer the house to the Most Honored Brother in token of respect and affection.

. . . .

During the course of the afternoon the Capitulars gathered together in the Chapter room for the last time, for the purpose of bringing to an end this ideal Community in existence since May 9 and of taking leave of one another. Briefly, the Dean of the Chapter praised the devotedness of the retiring Brother Vicar General and Brothers Assistants. There was a vote of gratitude to the Most Honored Brother Vicar General. He answered by promising to continue to serve the Institute to the best of his ability; and the Chapter learned that he is to take charge of the technical school at Gombe-Matadi— at the invitation of the Brother Visitor of the Congo. We could not but approve of this generosity. We wish this worthy Superior health and happiness in his missionary apostolate, another step in the life of a very noble Brother. We express our gratitude and good wishes to the retiring Brothers Assistants likewise. They too, instead of taking a well-merited rest, are planning to continue devoting themselves actively to the welfare of the Institute.

We ask the Brothers Capitulars, and through them all

the Brothers who are in charge throughout the Congregation, to see to the following:

1. To attach great importance to spiritual formation—through retreats, days of recollection, reminders to be fervent.

2. To be solicitous regarding the formation of young Brothers— and to have it conducted according to the mind of the Church and the end of the Institute.

3. To remember frequently that our apostolate has to be supernatural— in order to give the Church dynamic members for Catholic Action, and in order to be instrumental in fostering vocations for the religious life and the priesthood.

4. To be more mindful of the working, wage earning, classes. (The Holy Father as well as all those in close contact with him, ask for this. Moreover, it is the same directive as the Holy Founder's. It is the object of the deepest desire in the hearts of all our generous young Brothers).

5. To safeguard cohesion in the Institute— first of all through unity of government in each District; and then throughout the entire Institute. (In this connection we wish to call attention to the importance of the Circulars as a means for direction and administration. Through them Superiors cause their will to be known. Making little or nothing of them through inattention means the virtual suppression of one of our most important vehicles for governing).

6. Finally, we ask you to be mindful of the matter of recruitment. Although *ex professo* this Chapter has spoken little of recruitment, most of its resolutions have really no other end. This matter is capital. Now in terminating we wish to insist on it. While our recruitment of course depends at least to some little extent on the kind of propaganda we use, it hinges most on the manner in which we live. If the interior life and the supernatural apostolate are made to flourish among us then our Brothers will love their vocation more, they will understand their obligations better, they will do God's work— and God in His turn will assist them and co-operate with them and see that they secure the fellow workers they need.

Teaching Institutes are complaining that their recruitment is inadequate. Blame for the situation is placed on the pagan environment in which our pupils live, on the various kinds of amusement they find in their localities— and occa-

sionally even on the easier life available in certain kinds of social work or Catholic Action. Now vocations come from God. And can it possibly be that the good God has decided to cut down the number of vocations at a period when Catholic education is everywhere known to be more and more important? Instead of explaining our difficulty by pointing to exterior causes (which no doubt are real) would it not be more pleasing to God and more courageous and more useful to look within for the source of the trouble that creates a distaste for our life at the very moment when this way of life is so necessary for the welfare of the Church?

When our pupils begin to see us really living the life our Rules call for, then shall we see our novitiates filled again. It is hardly necessary to speak here of what we should have constantly present to our minds: that the religious life is a call— a call from God to souls that He wishes to lead to sanctity. It is only logical that He direct these souls to places favorable to the work of sanctification. An apostolic vocation is equally a call from God. Does it not make sense that He will place souls with such a vocation in an environment where they can be at once totally His and true apostles?

We must put faith in authentic means for recruiting. We must not count too much on human advertising. It will not do to trust too much in human means for making a religious vocation attractive. We shall be efficient recruiters if our souls are filled with God and radiant with the joy of being able to serve Him. The Holy Father said a while ago, "Be deaf to the temptation to sacrifice your religious life and sanctification to the apostolate. This would be like picking the tree's flowers and hoping later to find fruit on barren branches".

DECISIONS OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH GENERAL CHAPTER

1^o *FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI* (octave suppressed).

Inasmuch as the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi has been suppressed, the quarter of an hour of adoration and the Benediction mentioned in articles 25 and 26 of chapter XXXII of the Common Rules are no longer obligatory. But during this octave the reading of the Meditations of the Holy Founder is to be maintained.

2^o *FEAST DAYS OF THE NOVITIATES, SCHOLASTICATES, PRE-JUNIOR NOVITIATES.*

From now on, December 8, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, shall be the feast day for both novitiates and scholasticates.

The feast day for pre-junior novitiates is fixed for February 2, Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple.

3^o *GENERAL CHAPTER.*

Notes and Memoranda. — With a view to promoting the efficiency of the work of the General Chapter, to facilitating especially the reading and examination of notes (which tend to be more and more numerous) chapter VII, section IV of the Rule of Government shall be modified as follows:

1. Two years before the opening of the General Chapter the Most Honored Brother Superior General shall notify, by letter, the Brothers professed with perpetual vows that they may prepare notes for the General Chapter in accordance with Chapter VII, section IV of the Rule of Government. Within a period not exceeding four months dating from the issue of the Most Honored Brother's letter these notes shall be forwarded to the District administration.

2. According as the notes reach Brother Visitor he is to put them aside carefully, unopened. The four months period having expired, Brother Visitor shall call together the members of the District Council and proceed to the opening and classification of the notes. Commissions, made up of the members of the District Council as well as of other competent Brothers, shall examine and study the classified notes, summarizing them and adding such observations as are needed. To each sum-

marization should be added a statement of the solutions called for. The Brothers Visitors and members of the District Council as well as all the other Brothers who share in this work shall take the oath that is prescribed in chapter VII, article 36 of the Rule of Government.

3. A period of eight months shall be allotted for these preparatory labors. When it expires all reports shall be forwarded to the General Secretariate at the Mother House. The Brothers Visitors and their Councils shall add: (a) a resume of all the notes received, and, (b) the notes themselves, grouped according to their various objects. When the General Chapter convenes, these notes and reports shall be submitted to the Capitulars for a final study—according to what has been traditional. (Rule of Government, chapter VII, section IV). Before the opening of the Chapter the members of the Regime are authorized to make a study of the District reports and accompanying notes—in order to be all the better orientated in preparing for the General Chapter.

4. Brothers professed with perpetual vows may individually send notes *directly* to the General Chapter. These notes should be addressed to the General Secretariate at the Mother House, not later than the date that has been traditionally specified. (Rule of Government, ch. VII, art. 33). Nobody shall open these notes before the General Chapter convenes.

Composition of Chapters. — Those who may elect deputies must be Brothers whose right to do so (according to the Rule) dates back to at least the date of issue of the Most Honored Brother's letter announcing the date of the General Chapter.

The General Chapters are composed as follows. — *Ex-officio Members:* (a) the Most Honored Brother Superior General, Brother Vicar General, Brothers Assistants in office, (b) retired members of the Regime, (c) Brother Procurator General, (d) Brothers Secretary General, Bursar General, Postulator General, (e) Brothers Visitors General in office, (f) Brother Director of the Second Novitiae of nine months, (g) Brothers Visitors of Districts that have at least 251 Brothers professed with perpetual vows.

Elected Members: (Fundamental principle: Every regularly established District has the right to be represented at the Chapter). (a) Each District having less than 251 Brothers professed with perpetual vows elects one deputy and one alternate. (b) The rest of the legislation regarding members that are to be elected shall be what is actually in chapter VII, article 4 of the Rule of Government—except that the last paragraph of this article (begins with. “Districts with less than 100 Brothers...”) is to be omitted.

Brothers who are eligible. (what follows is a modification of article 6 of chapter VII of the Rule of Government). The Brothers eligible as deputies and alternates shall be: (a) Brothers Visitors and Brothers Auxiliary Visitors, (b) Brothers Directors of novitiates, scholasticates, principal houses. (A principal house is one that has at least seven Brothers). (c) Brothers who will have been professed with perpetual vows for at least fifteen years by the date of the Most Honored Brother’s letter convoking the General Chapter.

4° RELIGIOUS HABIT.

In order to obviate infractions of religious discipline in the matter of the religious garb the General Chapter asks that the following directives and prescriptions be strictly observed: (a) The rabat and robe are to be regarded as the essential, unalterable parts of the religious habit of the Brother of the Christian Schools. (b) The wearing of the traditional mantle is maintained as obligatory for such religious ceremonies as are held in community. (c) Any change in the matter of the traditional mantle and hat for those occasions when it is necessary to leave the community shall be under the control of the major Superiors—account being taken of the customs observed in the different countries. (d) The wearing of the calotte shall be optional.

5° PUBLICATIONS.

The following is an application and explanation of article 140 of chapter XIX of the Rule of Government.

1. All studies that are of interest to the entire Institute shall be submitted to the regulative authority of the General Secretariate.

2. In each District there shall be a commission with authority to control all books and manuals as well as doctrinal articles that are composed by the Brothers for newspapers and reviews. Brother Visitor and his council shall select the Brothers who are to be members of this commission. Brother Assistant shall approve as he judges fit.

3^o Exception is made for school and alumni bulletins. These are to be under the control of a Brother recommended by Brother Director and duly approved of by Brother Visitor.

6^o FINANCES.

1. On the basis that was stipulated by the Chapter of 1946 the Institute tax is to be raised from one per cent to one and a half per cent. However, the Chapter leaves it to the Most Honored Brother and his Council to determine what ought to be done in certain particular cases.

2. The various procures shall turn into the office of the Bursar General a sum of money equal to one per cent of their gross income. Each year the figure upon which this tax is based shall be that shown by the financial situation as of December 31. In this matter the responsibility is Brother Visitor's.

3. This Chapter renews the decision of the Chapter of 1946 regarding the use of books of the Central Procure for purposes of translation, reproduction and adaptation. The decision is this: ten per cent of the selling price for editions that have been translated or reproduced; five per cent for editions that have been adapted.

* * *

In ending this account we once again declare ourself very grateful to God. We have confidence in His merciful goodness. We reaffirm our complete dedication to the welfare of the Institute. To the best of our power we thank God for having accorded us a great encouragement during the course of this solemn gathering of our religious family: there was unanimity among the Capitulars in their earnestness for the promotion of the interior life among us, for the further development of the apostolate the Church has confided to us and finally for the strengthening of the affection we

Brothers bear our beloved Institute. There can be no greater reason for hope and confidence than to see Capitulars hailing from the four corners of the world and forming but one mind and one heart—full of faith in the vitality of our Institute and genuinely determined to reverence and be guided by the mind of its Holy Founder.

So far as we ourself are concerned we believe that we express what is deepest in us when we tell you that our thoughts and affection, indeed our very life, are henceforth dedicated to your service. We are thinking especially of those confreres who are suffering most from persecution. We have often wanted to tell our Brothers behind the iron curtain of our great desire of being able to speak to them and mention how we hold them in affection and are prepared to assist them in their terrible ordeal.

Brothers, our greatest comfort would be to help you in loving and serving better Our Lord and Our Lady. It is with these sentiments that we invite you, the day after this Circular reaches you, to hear Holy Mass and offer up Holy Communion for the following intention: that Our Lord enable us all to carry out perfectly the resolutions drawn up by the General Chapter.

With deepest religious affection for you in Our Lord Jesus Christ, we are, very dear Brothers,

Your humble and devoted servant,

BROTHER NICET-JOSEPH
Superior General

APPENDICIES

1. Association of Catholic Teachers under the Patronage of St. John Baptist de La Salle
2. Note Relative to Our Lady of the Star
3. Note Concerning Vocal Prayers

I - CATHOLIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

Under the patronage of St. John Baptist de La Salle, who on May 15, 1950, was proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Pius XII, *Patron of All Educators*.

OBJECT OF ASSOCIATION.

To deepen in Catholic educators a sense of the responsibility and dignity of their vocation—through devotion to their Holy Patron and to the ideals he represents.

CONDITIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP.

- 1° To be faithful to their duties as Catholics.
- 2° To have their names entered on the Association's register at Rome.
- 3° To pledge themselves to recite daily the *Teacher's Prayer before School* as well as the ejaculatory prayer, *St. John Baptist de La Salle, Patron of Teachers, pray for us*.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES.

- 1° To receive frequently the sacraments of Confession and Communion.
- 2° To spend daily a quarter of an hour in spiritual reading.
- 3° To make a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
- 4° To prepare for the Feast of St. John Baptist de La Salle, May 15, by a special novena of prayer.
- 5° To make a spiritual retreat annually.

N. B. — The Association has its center in Rome, at this address:

CENTRO LASALLIANO
C. P. 99 B ROME (Italy)

II - OUR LADY OF THE STAR

The origin of many a shrine dedicated to Our Lady goes back so far as to be matter of legend rather than of history. This is the case of the shrine of Our Lady of the Star, at Montebourg—near Cherbourg, in France.

During the Middle Ages, about the year 1050, there were two Benedictine monks of Monte Cassino who desired to spread abroad the good work their Order was accomplishing. So they traveled through France and arrived finally in Normandy. One of them accidentally falling asleep in a small boat was driven by a strong wind even as far as England.

The monk left alone on the shores of Normandy bore the name Roger. He wept of course over the misfortune that had befallen his companion. Later he begged God to be so good as to point out a place where the rest of his days could be spent in fasting and prayer.

God then spoke to the monk Roger in a dream. "You will see", it was said to him, "a star falling from the heavens, and where it comes to earth you are to build yourself a dwelling as well as a chapel in honor of the glorious Mother of God". The following night monk Roger did indeed see a star falling. It was all aflame, and coming down quite near him it burned away and reduced to ashes briars and thorns and bushes and whatever else might prove an obstacle to the work of construction. Roger understood it was the will of God for him to settle down in this place. He set to work at once and was piously aided by all the people of the countryside.

King William of England visited Roger and bestowed on the monk many and generous alms for the erection of a monastery and an abbey church. King William died in 1099. But his son Henry was an equally kind benefactor to the abbey, which because of its origin came to be known as the Abbey of Our Lady of the Star.

The Shrine was a place of pilgrimage for several centuries. Its monks were learned and won everywhere a reputation for the highest culture. The Shrine was pillaged during the Hundred Years War. It was restored under William Guerin, its twenty-third abbot, in 1451. During the Thirty Years' War it began to be abandoned as a place of pilgrimage. In 1773

there remained but one monk. The French Revolution completed its ruin. The abbey was confiscated as national property and then sold. Both church and monastic buildings were at length demolished. One could well be excused for believing that the worship of Our Lady of the Star had been completely forgotten—had disappeared forever.

But Our Lady of the Star bided her time. In 1842 Bishop Delmare, Bishop of Coutances, bought the site and the ruins of the ancient abey. This was the bishop who, at the pleading of St. Marie-Madeleine Postel, had just founded an order of Brothers known as the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Mercy and given them the Rules of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

The Brothers revived devotion to Our Lady of the Star. To the extent of their resources and of the alms they received they undertook the difficult task of restoring the monastic church and buildings. Then came the expulsions of 1903—the Brothers were bidden to leave their abbey and disappear.

In 1923 a certain number of the Brothers were able to return to their apostolate at the abbey. They worked earnestly and managed by 1936 to have the chancel of the abbey church completed. But the Brothers were few and had little hope of increasing their numbers. In 1935 the Most Honored Brother Valentin, their last Superior General, asked to have his little group admitted into our Congregation. The fact that their Rules resembled ours facilitated their admission, which took place March 25, 1938.

This is how our Congregation came into the possession of the Abbey of Our Lady of the Star—and of the venerated statue that it housed and that was so much cherished by the Brothers of Mercy. It would seem now that the principal mission of the Brothers of Mercy was to re-establish the abbey church as well as the worship of its time-honored Madonna—and then to turn both over to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It is our Brothers who have completed the work of restoration at the abbey.

III - NOTE CONCERNING VOCAL PRAYERS

As you have seen, the commission on regularity drew up a resolution to the effect that the vocal prayers be revised conformably to the following threefold principle:

- a) lessen the amount—avoid repetitions;
- b) draw approximately nearer to the prayers that were in use during the time of the Holy Founder—in so far as this be possible and desirable;
- c) adapt our prayers more to the liturgical seasons, for example in the matter of hymns, aspirations, etc.—even occasionally taking inspiration from the divine offices of the Church.

When the Chapter ratified this resolution it stipulated that the revision be confided to “a commission that would, jointly with the Regime, work in accordance with the directives above.” On June 9 we wrote to a dozen Brothers in various sections of the Lasallian world asking them to send us a plan that would conform to the directives just mentioned. The twelve we wrote to were among those whose notes on the subject of vocal prayers were considered uncommonly thorough. As soon as the plans came to hand a special commission, here in the Mother House, was appointed to study and then draw up such projects as seemed desirable. These projects were duly given the test of experience. When further adjusting was finally effected certain formulas were found to meet with approval. Below is a description of their outline. A booklet containing the texts that will be in use from now on is in preparation. In reading this circular you have likewise noticed that a revision of the Manual of Piety is also planned. But this matter cannot be carried out until later on.

Before we enter into detail concerning the modifications that have been made we should like to mention what spirit it was that suggested and governed them; and what spirit likewise should accompany their application. Herein we wish to avoid misconceptions. Neither the authors of the notes to the Chapter, nor the Capitulars that drew up the resolutions mentioned above, nor the commission that labored at drawing up a practical project, nor the Superiors who are now about to publish the changes—none of these had in mind any thought of diminishing the time that is regularly consecra-

ted to prayers. Were it otherwise we should have reason to be sad; there would exist a grave misunderstanding of the primacy of the interior life. Not only is our apostolate not at variance with union with Jesus Christ—it has need of this union as of something essential. How, before our pupils, could we be witnesses to Christ if He were not for us a living Person, loved intimately, in Whose presence we find our pleasure! And how could such a love prevent us from wanting to meet Him as often as possible in mental prayer! So the time we devote to prayer must remain unchanged—especially in what has to do with the morning religious exercises. In this matter local Superiors are under obligation to show themselves vigilant; they must see to it that the duly approved contumiers are observed with exactitude.

This revision of our vocal prayer has but one purpose: to promote and facilitate true prayer—be it vocal prayer or mental prayer.

* * *

In regard to vocal prayer it must be admitted that our formulas have been somewhat increased in number during the course of the years. They are more numerous now than in the beginning. This is readily seen if we compare our present morning vocal prayer with what it was at the outset of the Institute. In our communities the exigencies begotten of timetables have become inexorable. But while the formulas for vocal prayer have multiplied, the time allotted for their recitation has remained practically the same. Of necessity, then, we tend to recite vocal prayer hurriedly, mechanically. The prayer loses in dignity; likewise it lacks power to *sustain devotion*, which is the end proper to all vocal prayer. "I don't know", writes St. John Baptist de La Salle to Brother Hubert in 1708, "whether you recite the vocal prayers as slowly and deliberately as we do here. *This is of importance if the necessary attention is to be given*". The author of the critical edition of the *Letters* remarks: "At Paris as well as at Rouen prayers were said so slowly that the morning prayer took a quarter of an hour—just as the Rule prescribes. And still the morning prayer was only *half as long as it is today*". If morning vocal prayer has been doubled in length without its taking practically any more time the only conclusion is that all this has been effected only at the expense of dignity and proper pacing; to the prejudice likewise of spiritual efficiency.

The little remark, "Reciting vocal prayer slowly and deliberately is of importance if the necessary attention is to be given", is modest enough. But like all the simple utterances of the Holy Founder it is based on a realistic understanding of the facts of human psychology.

That the Chapter was made aware of this handicap explains why it prescribed a "lessening of the quantity of vocal prayer." In regard to morning vocal prayer we shall return, practically, to the quantity that obtained in the days of the Holy Founder. From now on therefore it should be possible to recite these prayers becomingly—and within the time prescribed by the Rule.

Dear Brothers, it is hardly necessary to tell you that the effort the General Chapter made in favor of prayer cannot of itself bring results. Really to make it efficacious (that is, profitable for our spiritual lives) there must be a renewal of earnestness personally and collectively as to the *manner* of praying vocally. In many places it is well known that this reform is urgent. Brothers, we urge you to inaugurate this renewal at once.

In this matter each Brother must assume his own responsibilities, just as the Brothers of the General Chapter duly weighed theirs. With insistence do we speak here. Largely because of the excessive quantity of vocal prayer, which we speak of elsewhere, the manner of saying vocal prayers hurriedly has been acquired. It would be unfortunate indeed if this practice were continued now that the amount of vocal prayer has been restricted. Wherever the practice has entrenched itself it must now, with courage, be driven out. With equal energy must we insist on excellence in the recitation of vocal prayer. Otherwise our vocal prayers will indeed be less lengthy, but because of their failure to sustain devotion, as was often the case in the past, they will soon become no less irksome. It is with urgency that we direct our Brothers Visitors and Brothers Director to be attentive to this matter, which "is important if the needed attention to vocal prayer is to be given."

Once again we meet a truth that has been frequently brought to mind during the course of this circular: the most perfect of prescriptions, the most desirable of reforms, the most reasonable of plans—all these things have about them absolutely no magic to enable them to realize themselves by themselves. It is incumbent on each Brother, on each com-

munity, to put them into execution—in the same spirit that inspired their enactment. Finally, the one big question that arises here as well as everywhere else is this: Are we genuinely striving to love and serve Our Lord better; or are we just trying to camouflage our spiritual mediocrity—always under pretexts that are more or less specious? It is up to each of us to answer the question straightforwardly.

Another consideration is the monotony that can creep into vocal prayers always identical, and that consequently proves an obstacle to a worthy, attentive, profitable recitation of them. Routine will more easily appear wherever there is no element making for change (thereby forcing attention) from time to time. In order to remove this difficulty as far as possible it was thought desirable to introduce into both morning and night prayer items that vary throughout the year. Here it was necessary to proceed carefully. Too great a variety of formulas could defeat its own end: attention could be too taken up with watchfulness not to make mistakes; it could be harmful for us whose lives are already sufficiently full of little upsets. So we confined ourselves to introducing into both morning and night prayer just one variable part. We mean a hymn of the Church (together with its versicle, response and prayer) that will change with the principal liturgical seasons of the year. With all due measure we are meeting herein the desire of many for a greater participation in the official prayer of the Church. Many notes gave expression to this desire. It was, moreover, ratified by the Chapter.

There are four days of the year when the complete office of the Church is prescribed for us: the last three days of Holy Week and May 15. On these days the offices of Prime (or of Lauds) and of Compline shall take the place respectively of morning prayer and night prayer.

But here again, dear Brothers, we must not fancy that these modifications can of themselves by a sort of magic bring about the desirable result. We have to remember that an effort making for interior renovation in prayer and for renewal of purpose in the spiritual life, is absolutely essential at each of the liturgical periods of the year. From now on our prayers will adequately draw attention to these changes. We are as a matter of fact all of one piece: the quality of our prayer is a function of the generosity of our lives; and in its

On page 133 the three paragraphs beginning respectively with the words Another, There and But were introduced by mistake. They are not in the official, French text.

turn the generosity of our lives requires the sustaining help of prayers.

The authors of many notes begged that genuine mental prayer be reestablished. The Chapter went on record as making this desire its own. Where morning vocal prayer was recited with all due reverence it lasted twenty minutes, to the prejudice of the mental prayer that followed. On the other hand the all too few minutes that can be spared after Mass and Holy Communion were used for the recitation of vocal prayers which, however good in themselves, cannot replace an intimate, personal audience with Our Lord. Moreover, our Rules prescribe a thanksgiving following Mass. But they prescribe no special prayer at this moment. Not long ago the encyclical *Mediator Dei* reminded us of the importance attaches to this private thanksgiving.

We trust therefore that the lessening of the amount of vocal prayer will guarantee that the duration of the mental prayer be duly according to Rule; and that likewise there be a personal thanksgiving after Mass, according to the desire we expressed above. You know, dear Brothers, the importance the Holy Founder gives to mental prayer. He speaks of it as the "foundation and support of all the other spiritual exercises." Everywhere and always the practice of mental prayer has been regarded as essential to the spiritual life. Today more than ever it is indispensable: because of the fact that life has become more feverish and distracting it is unquestionably necessary to give to the periods of silence, recollection, personal reflection and intimate contact with God the place they demand.

It is in this same spirit that we should renew, where there is need, our manner of acquitting ourselves of the weekly exercise of the way of the Cross, making sure not to transform the exercise into a period of reading or of vocal prayer merely. During this exercise we should apply ourselves to that meditation which is so fundamental for a Christian life: the mystery of the redeeming sufferings and death of Our Savior.



In the near future we will send the Brothers Visitors a booklet containing the revised text of our vocal prayers. We have stated above the meaning attaching to the changes being effected in our vocal prayers. We are persuaded that this alteration will mark a deepening of piety in our communities and in the heart of each of us.

A SECRET of SANCTITY

I am going to reveal to you a secret of sanctity and happiness. If every day during five minutes, you will keep your imagination quiet, shut your eyes to all the things of sense, and close your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, speaking there to that Holy Spirit saying:

*O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul,
I adore Thee. Enlighten, guide,
strengthen and console me. Tell me
what I ought to do and command
me to do it. I promise to be
submissive in everything that
Thou permittest to happen to me,
only show me what is Thy will.*

If you do this, your life will pass happily and serenely. Consolation will abound even in the midst of troubles. Grace will be given in proportion to the trial as well as strength to bear it, bringing you to the Gates of Paradise full of merit.

*This submission to the Holy Spirit
is the Secret of Sanctity.*

Cardinal Mercier

Abbey of Gethsemani, Trappist, Ky.

Holy card found between pgs. 130+131 in
archivist copy of Circular 354 (San Francisco
New Orleans Archives)
jke 11/5/2014