

INSTITUTE
OF THE
BROTHERS of the CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
INSTRUCTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
CIRCULARS

Nº. 379

18th December 1963

New Year Wishes

Preparation for General Chapter of 1966



Casa Generalizia - 476, Via Aurelia - Roma

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to die. Religious education is value-centered education and so concerned with all that relates to life, love, trust, fidelity, freedom, justice, brotherhood and sisterhood in community. Religious education raises doubts about limited perspectives and unexamined presuppositions; it raises questions that can lead from agnosticism to faith. A religious educator knows how to lead students who no longer respond to traditional doctrine and creeds, legal codes or sacramental cult, to seek new words to express what they doubt and what they believe, to externalize their awe at a transcendent mystery in sign and ritual that they can relate to, to identify their failure and to repent of sin, to live out their commitment in justice and love. This in no way excludes the opportunity that the Lasallian school has to challenge students, when it is appropriate, with the demands of their membership in the Catholic Church along with formal instruction in the Christian faith and, even better, an introduction to the more profound implications of the religious truth they already know and accept.

A third characteristic of the Brothers' school is commitment, in association, to teaching as a vocation. It was at once the most difficult task and at the same time the most noble achievement of John Baptist de La Salle to bring his followers to see that a teacher does not merely work at a job; teaching involves a vocation and a mission; the work that one does in the classroom has a significance that is worthy of the commitment and dedication of a lifetime. To speak of teaching as a vocation implies that there is a divine involvement in a personal choice. To enter upon a teaching career in a Lasallian context is viewed as a response to a call from God as much as a response to an advertised vacancy. In excluding the option for the priesthood from the Brothers, De La Salle was in fact inviting them to see teaching as a genuine vocation in itself and not attached to some other form of ministry, much less as a stepping stone to a more exalted ecclesiastical function.

In today's world there is need to reaffirm the vocation of the teacher. Teaching is seen today less as a vocation than as a profession, with professional standards to be met on the one hand and professional privileges to be jealously

guarded on the other, And teaching is not generally regarded as one of the more lucrative professions. As the administrative structure of the schools becomes more complex, it is distressing to observe that more and more teachers seem ready to abandon classroom teaching for careers as administrators and guidance counsellors and in auxiliary services. Indispensable as these functions may be, the Lasallian school will lose an important part of its identity if the teaching staff does not appreciate the unique effectiveness of what happens between a competent committed teacher interacting with the students in the classroom.

This commitment takes place in an educational community where teachers are associated together to live out their vocation to teach. Association in the educational enterprise was such an important element for John Baptist de La Salle that he made it a religious vow. To this day, the vow of association for the service of the poor through education is one of the vows the Brothers take. In Lasallian schools today participation by association for an educational enterprise has to be, and indeed has been, expanded to include the lay and clerical colleagues of the Brothers. The traditional sense of association becomes concretized in a genuine educational community where, in the pursuit of knowledge, persons meet persons, mind speaks to mind, and heart to heart. Despite differences in states of life and lifestyle, Brothers and lay colleagues are called upon to live out this association for a shared educational mission in a common vocation to teach.

The fourth characteristic of the Lasallian school is the quality of the education that takes place there. That is what the word "Christian" in the designation of the schools originally stood for. The Founder favored the term Christian Schools to distinguish the Brothers' schools from the other charity schools of the day where chaos rather than quality prevailed. In contrast to noisy and filthy ruffians in the charity schools presided over by underpaid and undertrained masters, De La Salle insisted on cleanliness, politeness, discipline and -- what was most unusual for the time-- regular attendance. His teachers were dedicated and trained. This made scholastic progress possible. In a short time, the bourgeoisie, who would never allow their sons to mingle with the smelly

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We frequently receive pessimistic letters that speak of the writers' impatience to see some kind of improvement in the conditions that surround us. Make no mistake about it, we too long to feel that everywhere our Brothers are just what they should be: regular, charitable, zealous, humble, calm and ever attentive to make community life as agreeable as possible. We have, however, to make up our minds to the fact that it is not always so, that human nature is changeable and unpredictable. Some Brothers are subject to bouts of bad temper, easily explained perhaps by over-work, but which nevertheless make them difficult to live with; another may seem to think he is infallible, rejecting all advice and refusing to consider any opinion save his own; yet another, by his assiduity in cultivating outside contacts, may give scandal to his Brothers and create a feeling of uneasiness in the community. Such cases as these occur all too frequently and have a profound effect on certain sensitive natures. And it is, of course, said that people to-day are generally more inclined than they used to be to see the darker side.

What should our attitude be? Should we give way to a mood of blackness, retire into solitude, wash our hands of the common good? That is the usual temptation in such cases, but it is far from being the solution, only serving to make matters worse, rather than remedying them.

It has been pointed out, with a good deal of common-sense, that "discouragement is a luxury, since it serves no useful purpose; it can even be said to be a costly luxury, since it robs us of the spirit, the go, the self-confidence that would enable us to make the best of any situation. Bitterness, resentment, discontent and anxiety are very poor investments". They are, nevertheless, investments that tempt us, that awaken in us the misplaced hope of finding in them the answer to our problems. The real solution lies in our joyfulness, our courage, our virile and realistic outlook, our trust in God. We have to be ready to face up to what is less than perfect, but without becoming

impatient, without surprise, since we know we are living in an imperfect world. There is no telling how much we shall be able to do so long as we keep our eyes open to reality and remain firmly determined to do what we can to improve our surroundings.

In the first place, no matter what conditions around be like, we can do our duty, carry out the task that has been set us, try to awaken confidence, joy, fraternal charity in those who live with us. There is no point at all in wasting our time in criticising, complaining or fault-finding. God has put us where we are and it is up to us to make our plans in union with our Brothers, and to do as well as we can whatever God expects of us.

There are some among us who allow themselves to be carried away by what might be called *apostolic frenzy*; they dream of nothing but action, of new methods and new publications, and come to look upon time spent in prayer and reflection as time lost. How sadly they are deceiving themselves! The apostolate is very much more than well-organised propaganda, even though some would-be apostles are content to rest at that preparatory stage; the utility of that stage cannot, of course, be denied, but we do have to remember that it is, as it were, only the entrance hall to the real apostolate. It is God Who, by means of His grace, touches and wins souls, and we are no more than the instruments He is pleased to make use of. *Without Me you can do nothing* is as true to-day as it was when Jesus said those words. But are we convinced of that fact? Fr de Montcheuil made this point admirably when he said:

Apostolic yearning is not something which has its source and roots in us; it does not consist in our directing towards a higher end our natural need of activity or our natural tendency to have others share our ideas. It is the merciful activity of God that has settled in our hearts. It is eternal love for sinful humankind that has taken hold of us. But it is a treasure we bear in fragile vessels. It is the apparition

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in our narrow, petty, selfish and impure hearts of all that is highest and holiest... There is no such thing as a heart that is naturally ready to welcome God, to share fully in divine concern ...

To arrive at such a result as that, there has to be prayer and union with God. The spiritual life of a soul — whether it be the soul of a child or the soul of an adult — its religious spirit, its piety, the resistance it offers to evil, its propension towards what is pure, all those depths where the day-by-day drama is played and the battle for eternity waged, are quite beyond our grasp; there God alone has right of entrance.

What we have to do is to apply ourselves calmly to the task that can be carried through to-day, and put out of our mind those imaginary and always inefficacious labours, the mirage of which only serves to diminish our efforts in the face of the realities that are, nonetheless, the clear expression of God's will. The past is no longer with us, the future is yet to come, so we have to make do with the present. What wonderful use we could make of it in doing as well as we can, wherever we are placed, just what is expected of us. Those who seek to escape from the present with its duties and its difficulties are usually those who arrogate to themselves the strange and unhappy privilege of criticising those who are engaged in *doing*. Instead of observing their efforts with sympathetic interest, these self-appointed censors stand idly by, ready to rend as soon as those efforts fail. This is nothing more nor less than cowardice. Nothing has ever been achieved by criticism. God will judge us on what we have done and nothing else. In fact, the beautiful ideas we have had, and not heeded, will render God all the more exigent when He calls us to His judgment seat.

Every time we hear a religious condemn his Institute, his District or his community, we should ask him, "And what have you done to improve it?" The man who himself does nothing to remedy the evils he denounces loses all

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right to complain. Overcome evil by good is a divine injunction, a commandment of God; the contrary attitude comes from the devil.

We offer you these reflections, very dear Brothers, as a New Year reminder. May they help us all to become more realistic in our service of God. *It is not those who say Lord, Lord, who will enter into heaven, but those who do the will of My Father ...*

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Realistic! Here now is the preparation for the General Chapter offering us an excellent opportunity to show ourselves realists in this movement towards an *aggiornamento*, along the lines of the programme that the Ecumenical Council has set itself. For, if God so wills, the thirty-ninth General Chapter of our Institute will be held in two years time, that is to say during 1966. We feel it is time to extend to you an *official invitation* to take part in its preparation.

It was, in fact, decided at the 1956 assembly that a period of two years should be allowed before the next Chapter for the sending in of notes and reports by perpetually professed Brothers, and for a preliminary examination of those documents at District level. During that last assembly there had been a more or less general complaint about over-hasty and unco-ordinated preparation. Here are a few significant lines from the Circular issued on the occasion:

A considerable number of Brothers claimed, with reason, that the notes and reports sent to General Chapters should be accorded more lengthy and thorough study. Some well-devised projects were even handed in, with a view to ascertaining the best way of dealing with this problem. The world-wide nature of our Institute, the democratic spirit of the day and a more general concern about administrative matters have, in these last decades, led to a great increase in the number

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of notes received, not all of which, obviously, are of equal value or importance. "The essential work of the Chapter," said a Brother of wide experience, "should be the close study of outstanding questions chosen from among the mass of notes received, seen against the background of new circumstances and presented in accordance with a prepared programme which has already been the object of serious research and preliminary study" (Circular 354).

It was in the light of this that the Brothers Capitulants arrived at the following decisions. In reproducing them here, we are also putting before you the plan of campaign for the work that lies ahead:

In order to ease the task of the General Chapter, particularly with regard to the examination of the mounting number of notes, the dispositions of the Rule of Government (Chapter VII, section IV) are to be interpreted as follows:

1. - *Two years before the opening of the General Chapter. Brother Superior will write to the perpetually professed Brothers, suggesting that they prepare their notes in view of that assembly, in accordance with Chapter VII, section IV, of the Rule of Government.*

These notes should be sent to the central house of the District within a period of four months.

2. - *Brother Visitor will take careful charge of the notes; the four months having elapsed, he will call together the District Council. The members of that Council will proceed to the opening and classification of the notes, which will then be further studied by various Commissions composed of District Councillors and other competent Brothers. The same Commissions will, in due course, prepare summaries of their findings, to which should be added their own observations and, where this is called for, proposed solutions.*

The Brothers Visitors, Councillors and others who have part in this classification and analysis of notes must first take the oath prescribed in Chapter VII, article 36, of the Rule of Government.

3. - *A period of eight months will be allowed for these preliminaries. All reports will then be sent to the Secretariat at the Mother House. To their reports each Brother Visitor and his Council should add:*

a) *a summary of all notes received, grouped according to subject matter;*

b) *the notes themselves.*

During the General Chapter, these reports and notes will be made available to the Capitulants for final study, according to traditional methods (Rule of Government VII 36, and section VII). But even before the opening of the General Chapter the members of the Regime will be free to examine reports and accompanying notes, with a view to the more effective preparation of the Chapter.

4. - *Perpetually professed Brithers may also, should they so wish, send notes direct to the General Chapter; these should be addressed to the Secretariat in accordance with traditional methods and procedure. Nobody will be at liberty to examine such notes before the opening of the Chapter (Circular 354).*

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When His Holiness Paul VI received a delegation of Roman clergy a few days after his election, he spoke to them of the formidable problem of the apostolate in the Eternal City, and added, "You and I must prepare to face it together". We would do well to ponder over that remark for a while. The Pope was asking his listeners to work with him, not just to wait for orders from above and

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obediently execute them. What he was asserting was that superiors and subjects should work hand in hand more than ever before, for the religious and professional problems facing us to-day are so much more complex than in the past.

That is the appeal we are addressing to you, with all our hearts, as we begin to prepare for the Chapter. When all is said and done, we have to realise that "the Institute is each one of us". It will be what we make it, wherever we happen to be. Spending one's time criticising, complaining, grumbling will change nothing, will lead to no improvements.

We are presenting you with an opportunity to co-operate fruitfully for the good of the Institute, and we rely on you to give us your fraternal support with reflection and affection, even though this might, for a time, occasion a certain amount of extra work.

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* *

With this same aim of preparing for the Chapter — of becoming *Chapter conscious* — we have just sent your Brothers Visitors a relatively detailed questionnaire. We are now making it available to you in this Circular, not because you for your part will want to answer it in its entirety, but rather as food for thought and to encourage you in the co-operation being asked of you. It is hardly necessary to add that you are quite free to deal also with matters not mentioned in the questionnaire, and to deal with them in the way you feel most suited to the general good. We might add that in many cases your intervention could well take a community form, should Brother Director consider it worth while organising discussion sessions to deal with certain questions. A secretary could be chosen to summarise the findings, and the joint report would then be sent to Brother Visitor as the expression of the community's viewpoint. In such cases, naturally, we have not the slightest intention of excluding Brothers with temporary vows from the discussion. This, we feel, would be an excellent way

of making ourselves *Chapter conscious* and of preparing to benefit actively from the grace of renewal that will be, within the Institute, one of the results of our Chapter.

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The whole Church looks to the Council with unbounded hope. John XXIII himself felt it no exaggeration to speak of it as a Second Spring within the Church, as another Pentecost, and Paul VI has made these expressions his own. Both of them have, nevertheless, put us on our guard, urging us not to misunderstand the object of those hopes nor indulge in utopian dreams in which the exigencies of God's Kingdom are relinquished in favour of earthly comfort and convenience. This could only lead to the terrible disillusion which always comes to those who deliberately turn their back on the Cross!

We can say with confidence that all this will be equally true for our Institute on the occasion of the forthcoming General Chapter. It is quite certain that the *Conciliar spirit* now prevailing will have wide repercussions on that Chapter, which will be characterised by a sincere desire for a new Pentecost within our own ranks, for an authentic reappraisal of our position; and imbuing all will be the whole-hearted determination to labour for — as the Church is labouring for — a generous renewal in fervour and fidelity! But we, too, must be on our guard to see that the preparation for the Chapter is not transformed into a ferment of vain hopes and dangerous illusions.

In this, we are faced by two principal dangers. First these is that of dreaming of an *automatic* revival, as though the very drawing-up of fine-sounding projects or the introduction of new *external* methods was enough, and carried no implication of personal interior conversion. As Fr De Lubac wrote in his *Meditations on the Church*, "It is considered sufficient to change the ways of doing things,

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as might a human enterprise, in order to obtain results that first and foremost presuppose a change of heart" (p. 353).

The second danger to be avoided is the temptation of questioning the validity of everything, of wanting to throw all our traditions overboard in order to rebuild the Institute from the ground up, but on a more *human* — not to say *natural* — framework, much less demanding in its ideal of holiness.

Young Brothers sometimes tell us in their letters how impatient they are to know the findings of the Council or to see the General Chapter reform the Institute, but very often they give the impression that they are hoping for spectacular changes that will make our conditions of life much more *human*. That, of course, is an illusion. Certain practices and details will doubtless be changed, but we shall still have to labour for the salvation of our soul, still have to practise Christian and religious virtues, still struggle on in defence of our life of prayer, still strive to overcome our laziness, our pride, our inconstancy. Rules will be as necessary as ever they were; let us just hope that they will be so framed as to make a greater appeal to our love for God!

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If the Council and the General Chapter are inviting us to make a collective examination of conscience, it is evidently in view of a certain adaptation or *aggiornamento*; but here again we need to be on our guard against a false understanding of the terms used. It is not the way we interpret them that counts, but the exact meaning given them by the Church; and, we might add, it is not any and every critical attack that is going to prove a fruitful source of renewal and readjustment!

There is such a thing as constructive criticism, but there is unfortunately, and far too often, the other kind as well:

evil criticism, criticising for criticism's sake which is, unhappily, a modern sickness. We are living in days of discontent, with "reform!" the battle-cry. Many of our contemporaries seem to be suffering from a kind of psychosis or collective neurasthenia: nothing matters, nothing is worth while! As a Catholic philosopher wrote recently:

One might well ask if certain Christians (or religious) are not a prey to that pathological deviation that psychiatrists call masochism. The least one can say is that the mania for self-criticism, self-accusation, once so widespread under communist regimes, has begun to take a grip on Christians, with this difference, which is by no means to their advantage, that whereas the deviationist accuses himself of his failures to toe the party line, the Christian blames the party line itself (De Corte).

Is it not true that many religious seem determined to see — and exaggerate! — nothing but the weaknesses and deficiencies about them? We know, of course, that we are living in a far from perfect world, and we should thank God for the uneasiness this causes us. To go through life with the comfortable feeling that *all's well with the world* would be a most regrettable, and culpable, failure.

This uneasiness can, however, take on various forms, and have varied effects. There is the kind felt by the fanatic or the theorist out of touch with reality; that, too, of the false idealist who, with untroubled conscience, spends his time urging the reform of others; then, again, that of the disillusioned, of the embittered, of the man who has been let down, and which is really nothing more than wounded egoism that merely hardens opposition. And above all there is that feeling of uneasiness that leads us to back away hastily before any kind of personal effort that reform calls for; this is an attitude of refusal, of cowardice, of revolt and defeatism, which takes its revenge in replacing curative action by denigration, by systematic — or

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should one say *obsessional*? — criticism! But we have already said enough about that.

Criticism of that kind is of no use to anybody, and it will certainly not be at the root of our *aggiornamento*. Happily, though, there is also a beneficent uneasiness, constructive uneasiness; this too, it is true, is a feeling of dissatisfaction, but one that stimulates to greater efforts, that by a mixture of patience, audacity, generous optimism and determination seeks to bring about improvements. That is the spirit that should be in us. It is the spirit that John XXIII had in mind when he defined the Council as a collective and public examination of conscience for the Bishops and the whole Church. It is in that spirit that we have to prepare for the General Chapter!

That is the mentality, too, that will enable us to come to a right understanding of the adaptation about which we hear so much. The term is, in any case, somewhat ambiguous and too often conjures up ideas of concessions and mitigations. The synonyms you have already met with: adjustment, bringing up-to-date, *aggiornamento*, *accomodata renovatio*. The essential thing is to realise that there is no question whatever of adapting principles to fit in with present situations, but of seeking how best to adapt our behaviour and our apostolic activity to immutable principles, whilst bearing in mind present-day conditions with their greater dangers but, also, with their wider possibilities. "Adaptation to modern trends will never have any value of its own. Its influence will be salutary only in so far as it facilitates the return to the authentic ideal of order and efficacy in the accomplishment of a specific mission" (V. Walgrave, O.P.).

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To sum up. Just as the Sovereign Pontiffs look to the *aggiornamento* of the Church by the Council, so do your Superiors want to see the Institute brought up-to-date through the General Chapter. But just as the Church, even

while adapting herself to new needs and new demands, will remain as true as ever to the Gospel, so too must we plan an *aggiornamento* that is not unmindful of tradition. Your reflections and notes, though dealing with concrete facts, actual needs, everyday experiences, must never lose sight of the Founder's great designs in establishing his work. Empty speculation will lead us nowhere, except perhaps away from the providential paths traced out for the Institute.

Our adaptation should, then, be in harmony with our specific end within the Church. We have a special vocation, our own form of apostolate, and it is with them in view that we should seek to develop our work if we mean to remain true to the divine plan. It is a proved historical fact that Congregations retain their vigour so long as they remain true to their Founder, but that once they desert their Founder they wither and die.

These are the norms that inspire the present questionnaire. We are not going to claim that it covers every possible aspect of our life, but we leave it to each one of you to choose the questions that touch him most closely or that he feels most competent to deal with. And each one, as we have already said, is quite free to bring up other matters that he feels call for attention. The aim of this Circular is to arouse your interest and direct your reflections towards points that appear to us to be of prime importance to the continued progress of our Institute. We would like to thank you now in anticipation of your fraternal co-operation, and are happy to remain, very dear Brothers,

Your devoted servant in J.M.J.,

Brother NICET-JOSEPH
Superior General

GENERAL VIEW OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO THE BROTHERS VISITORS

I. Basic Information

(questions 1 - 5)

Various Statistics on 31st December 1964.

II. End and aim of Institute and Schools within the District

(questions 6 - 34)

Our schools in the world

1. Scholastic needs of the region
2. Work of religious personnel
3. Is the use made of the Brothers satisfactory from the school point of view?
4. Suggestions for a better distribution of the District's schools and personnel.
5. Brothers' extra-curricular (secular) commitments.

Our schools in the Church.

1. Situation of our pupils with respect to the faith.
2. Christian education of pupils during school-life.
3. Apostolic influence of our schools.
4. Our schools in the Church.
5. Service of the poor.

III. Religious life of the Brothers

(questions 35 - 57)

Life of prayer and theological living:

1. Concrete conditions of Brothers' life of prayer.
2. Fostering of Brothers' theological life.
3. Question of overwork.

Separation from the world; Asceticism; Evangelical
Counsels:

1. Separation from world; asceticism.
2. Evangelical counsels.

Common life and spiritual support of Brothers:

1. Common life.
2. Spiritual support.

IV. Institute's Vitality at District Level

(questions 58 - 76)

Influence and growth of the District:

1. Influence of Brothers' life.
2. Growth of Institute.

Brothers' training:

1. The foundations.
2. Subsequent formation.

Perseverance of the Brothers:

1. District statistics of lost vocations since 1955.
2. Finding the causes.

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— elementary school level...

— secondary school level...

How many Brothers hold University diplomas:

— Bachelor's degree or equivalent...

— Master's degree or equivalent...

— Doctorate.

(N.B. No Brother to be counted more than once; the most advanced diploma alone should be taken into consideration).

How many Brothers have a diploma for religious studies:

— Institute awards: Intermediary course...

Advanced course...

— Awards made by centres of higher catechetical or theological studies...

4 d) School situation:

Give the number of *schools* and the number of *students*:

— exclusively primary (6 to 12-14 years)

— secondary, non technical (vocational)

— vocational:

agricultural

commercial

industrial

— special foundations (indicate their special scope)

— liberal arts colleges (universities).

5 e) Comparative statistics: 31st December 1955 and 31st December 1964:

— number of Brothers, including Novices, in 1955...

— number of Brothers, including Novices, in 1964...

Number who received Habit between 1956 and 1964, inclusively...

Number who withdrew from Institute between 1956 and 1964, inclusively:

— Novices...

— Temporary vows...

— Final vows...

Number of deaths from 1956 to 1964 inclusively...

II. End and aim of Institute and Schools within the District

(questions 6 - 34)

The questionnaire takes as its starting point the following *definition*:

The Brothers of the Christian Schools are a lay religious Institute which, with the extension of God's kingdom in view, works within the Church and by means of Catholic schools at educating the living faith of children and adolescents — particularly the poor — while also preparing them to take their place with competence in the kingdom of this world.

This questionnaire deals with the following points:

- 1) the school in the world;
- 2) the Catholic school in the Church.

6 Our schools in the world:

1. Scholastic needs of the region:

- general school population in the region ...
 - Catholic school population in the region ..
- in both cases: primary schools
vocational schools
secondary schools other than vocational
more advanced schools
- What are the local needs:
with regard to schools of various types?
with regard to new types of educational establishments?
with regard to teachers?

7 2. Work of religious personnel:

- a) number of schools in the District and number of active Brothers

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- number of primary classes and of pupils in those classes
 - number of secondary classes and of pupils in them
 - number of vocational (technical) classes and of pupils in them
 - number of students receiving a higher education
 - b)* number of Brothers employed in these different sectors
 - c)* number of lay teachers in these different sectors
 - d)* juridical position of our schools in the country's general scholastic organisation
- 8 3. Is the use made of the Brothers satisfactory from the school point of view?
- a)* How are the Brothers employed? Full-time teachers; supervisors; positions of responsibility (Directors, prefects, etc.); engaged in administrative work (bursars, cashiers, secretaries); detached within the District for special tasks (specify). In each of these categories, give the figures for the District.
 - b)* What are the aims or tendencies with regard to the employment of the Brothers? That is to say, is the trend rather towards actual teaching roles or towards the occupying of key-posts? How do laymen react to this?
- 9 *c)* Under what conditions do the Brothers fulfil their professional duties as teachers?
- Did they receive adequate intellectual preparation at the outset? Are they in possession of the diplomas that should normally be held by those teaching at their level? Is it possible for them to remain up-to-date culturally, and how can they do this?

QUESTIONNAIRE

- What is done to ensure initial pedagogical formation, and how is it followed up? (Inspectors, pedagogical counsellors, educational conferences and workshops, etc.) What steps are taken to keep abreast of pedagogical progress? What more could be done in this direction?
- 10** — Brothers' class periods as compared with those normally allowed for by national or regional educational bodies in similar types of classes.
- 11** — The preparation of lay assistants: how are they recruited? trained? followed up? What can the Brothers do to help them during their training? at the outset of their career? during that career?
- Brothers' relations with other teachers in the area or the country: what contacts are to be desired? How best can we integrate our action into the country's educational set-up?
4. Suggestions for a better distribution of the District's schools and personnel.
- 12** a) What are we preparing our boys for, and what are they likely to become? Are our schools adapted to local needs, whether economic, professional or cultural? New needs, demands made upon us and interesting moves that have been made to meet them — or that could be made.
- 13** b) Does there appear to be an evolution taking place among the clientèle of your schools? Among the youngest, or the adolescents? the secondary, or the vocational sections? Are you faced with the question of mixed schools, and how do you propose to deal with it?
- 14** c) The matter of normal schools (training colleges). Does the Institute run any in your area? Is there a real need for establishments of this type? Do you think it would be a good thing if the District turned in that direction, and under what conditions?

15 5. The Brothers' extra-curricular (secular) commitments.

a) What do they consist in? Is there a demand to be supplied, needs to be met (adult classes, continuation classes, pedagogical or other types of research, educative activities of various kinds, either during the school year or during the holidays)?

b) What is to be thought of these orientations, and what should our attitude be? The problems posed by activities of this nature; attempts at solving them; interesting ventures, etc.

Our schools in the Church

1. Situation of our pupils with respect to the faith:

16 *a)* Our clientèle: Catholics, separated Christians, Jews, Mahometans, non-Christians, etc. (Give figures, with details of different schools).

b) Where our boys are Catholics, can we say that, in general, they belong to families that are effectively Christian:

- convinced Catholics engaged in the apostolate?
- practising?
- non-practising?
- non-believing?

c) Taken all in all, is the family status of our pupils normal or irregular?

17 *d)* What do you consider to be the special needs of our pupils in the matter of Christian education?

2. The Christian education of your pupils during their school-life:

18 *a)* Do they need to be prodded into awareness of their faith, or is the question of the faith a reality for them? If so, under what form?

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- 19** *b)* Religious instruction:
- time devoted to it each week; programmes in use; difficulties met with; efforts made; initiatives and their results.
 - Who, apart from the Brothers, gives this instruction? Is there anybody who is concerned exclusively with religion teaching? Do you consider this a good practice? Are there some teaching Brothers who never give religion lessons?
- 20** — are the Brothers adequately prepared for the religious teaching they are called upon to assure, either with the very young or the older students? What improvements could be hoped for in this matter?
- 21** — what is the role of lay assistants in this matter of religious instruction?
- is there a catechetical movement in the District? Is there one (non-Institute) in the region? If so, what part do the Brothers take in it?
- 22** *c)* Prayer, the sacraments and the liturgy.
- prayer in the school; frequency of mass; joining in the mass; reception of the sacraments; confessions: facilities accorded or difficulties raised by the clergy. What effect is the liturgical revival having on the Catholic life of our schools?
- 23** *d)* Our pupils' moral training: general difficulties; efforts made; special problems.
- 24** *e)* Apostolic training in the school: apostolic movements; missionary and social education given to pupils; Brothers' role.
- 25** *f)* What contribution to this Christian formation is made by the whole ambience of the school: discipline, contacts between teachers and students, secular instruction, etc.

3. Apostolic influence of our schools:

- 26** a) What is being done. Indicate objectively such undertakings as:
- apostolate movements; the part taken by our boys in Catholic Action; the training of our lay assistants; the Christian value of our former student associations; the organisation of retreats and recollection days, etc.
- b) Local needs and deficiencies.
- c) Most successful steps taken with a view to prolonging the apostolic action of the school and the Brothers.
- 27** d) Part played by the Brother in this apostolate, during and after the pupils' school-life. Their role and influence. Their preparation for work of this nature. Are there any specialists (i.e. Brothers specially assigned to this work) among them?
- 28** e) Suggestions of the Brothers with regard to this important modern problem.

4. Our schools in the Church:

- 29** a) The formation given in our schools, the Brothers' post-school influence and the part they play in the general pastoral set-up (where this exists). In what way do our efforts form part of the Church's effort: aims, difficulties, hopes. Co-operation with families, the clergy, apostolic movements, etc.
- 30** b) What kind of standing has the Catholic school in your area? If there are complaints, on what are they based? Is the Church's teaching in this matter sufficiently known, and are parents reminded of it in objective and up-to-date fashion?

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5. Service of the poor:

- 31** a) From what social classes do your pupils come? What is the social standing of their families in comparison with that of the people of the region or of the country? (Where necessary, indicate differences from school to school within the District).
- 32** b) What is the position in general with regard to gratuitous teaching? And in our schools?
- 33** c) Are there in your area any special educational establishments for to-day's category of poor children: orphans, refugees, delinquents, the handicapped or mentally retarded, etc? Are the Brothers in your District in charge of any such undertaking? If they are, have they received the special preparation this kind of work calls for? Are we being asked to establish houses of this kind? Are the Brothers in favour of them?
- 34** d) How does your District give proof of its interest in the missions?

III. Religious Life of the Brothers

(questions 35 - 57)

The questionnaire draws its inspiration from the following *description*:

The Brother is a man withdrawn from the world and dedicated to God by his religious profession.

His total dedication to the Lord gets its life-giving nourishment from his apostolic labours;

but also from his life and spirit of prayer;

from the practice of the theological virtues;
from the effective acceptance of the evangelical counsels;

from religious asceticism;

from the common life.

Hence the following divisions:

- 1) Life of prayer and theological living
- 2) Separation from the world, asceticism and the evangelical counsels
- 3) Common life.

Life of prayer and theological living

35 1. Concrete conditions of the Brothers' life of prayer:

- a) Does the practical life in community really allow the Brothers to pray? Have they time enough to make the exercises of Rule? Can they, in particular, be sure of having the stipulated time for mental prayer? Are conditions favourable to active and attentive participation in prayer: health, quiet, freedom from outside pressure, recollection?

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- 36** *b)* Are you of opinion that there is real or only imaginary incompatibility between the demands of the Brothers' prayer life and the concrete conditions he lives in, in an ordinary community:
- in so far as the general time-table is concerned?
 - with regard to the duration of the exercises?
 - with regard to the way the exercises are made?

(Base your answers on clear facts, not on ready-made opinions. Try to bring out the causes for any incompatibility that exists, and suggest solutions, etc.).

2. The fostering of the Brothers' theological life:

- 37** *a)* Are the Brothers' apostolic labours and exercises of piety sufficiently enlightened and nourished by the spirit of faith?
- 38** *b)* Do those spiritual exercises specially planned for the nourishing of the life of faith prove effective and stimulating: conferences, spiritual reading, study of religion? To what extent have the Brothers been able to benefit by the renewed biblical and doctrinal movements of recent years? What steps have been taken to make it possible to benefit by them? What could be hoped for, and done, in this respect?
- 39** *c)* To what extent has advantage been taken of the liturgical revival? What has been done to make the liturgical life possible, easy, as profitable as it should be in the life of our ordinary communities and, in particular, in the houses of formation and boarding schools?
- 40** *d)* Do the community exercises of piety (mental and vocal prayer) contribute as they should do to the nourishment of the life of faith? What could be done to make them more effective? How could the Brothers get more out of them?

- 41** e) What could be done to enrich the Brothers' life of faith, our fundamental spirituality? Means you would like to put forward: representation of our spiritual supports? re-evaluation of our life? community recollection days? Lasallian retreats?
3. The question of overwork:
- 42** a) Is this a problem in your District? (Examine the matter in all its aspects and according to schools and situations).
- b) What are the causes in your District of this overwork?
- shortage of Brothers?
 - uncontrolled expansion of undertakings?
 - insufficient human and professional preparation?
 - badly organised or badly apportioned work?
 - lack of administrative staff? unorganised or non-existent secretariat?
 - other causes.
- c) Are those in positions of responsibility (Visitors, Directors, heads of departments) overworked? Why?
- 43** d) Is there an awareness of the extreme gravity of overwork?
- effects on health and on the spiritual life.
 - chart of physiological or mental sickness in the District.
- e) Have efforts been made to remedy this situation? What were they? Consider in particular the matter of the Sundays, free-time and vacation periods.
- f) What would be your solution for the District or region?

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Separation from the world; Asceticism; Evangelical Counsels

1. Separation from the world; asceticism:

- 44 a) Is there any difficulty in harmonising the religious exigency with regard to withdrawal from the world and the apostolic or professional needs that take us into the world? What has been done in your area to solve the problem?

(Examples: Visiting by the Brothers and presence of lay teachers in the house. Is it always possible to reserve a section of the house to the Brothers alone, that is to say strictly inaccessible to the public?)

- 45 b) Feminine staff; where recourse has to be had to a female element, have efforts been made to limit its ingress, and what form did those efforts take?

- 46 c) Travelling, and periods spent out of the community, especially for reasons of apostolate or study: limits set. Are some Brothers frequently called upon to travel about in view of their teaching duties? Or are there any who, to all practical purposes, are completely cut off from community life for longer or shorter periods?

- 47 d) How are the essential ascetical exigencies of religious life interpreted at community level? To what extent do the traditional Institute practices in this domain satisfy the exigencies of the present day?

2. Evangelical counsels:

- 48 a) Are there in the District any special problems with regard to poverty? Are the communities in a position to supply the normal needs of their members? Or does it become necessary to have recourse to expedients, perhaps to disguised begging?

- b) Is the level of community living sufficiently uniform, on the one hand, among the members of a com-

munity, a District, and yet, on the other hand, sufficiently attentive to the real needs of each individual?

c) Is the individual and community testimony we bear to poverty perceptible?

49 d) Special problems with regard to chastity, to obedience.

50 e) Suggestions to be made on these different matters.

Common life and spiritual support of the Brothers

51 1. Common life.

The common life is a characteristic of all forms of religious life. The religious life and apostolate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as planned by the Founder and the early Brothers, is strongly marked by this community aspect. Hence the importance of this section of the questionnaire.

a) Establish a comparison between our life as it is in fact being lived to-day and the exigencies of community living as set forth in the Rule.

52 b) Consider the community spirit that reigns in our houses: what is its distinguishing note? What are the greatest failings? Is the charity found in our houses authentic, and do we bear to the world testimony of fraternal charity?

53 c) Are the Brothers upheld by the community?

— from the professional point of view, are they assisted in their early days by a living pedagogical tradition embodied in older members who show an interest in the new arrivals? Are our schools being run by homogeneous and well-knit groups?

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- 54 — from the apostolic point of view, does the community help the Brothers to maintain and intensify their apostolic ideals? Do they mull over the problems of the apostolate together, and try to work as a team in the service of the Church?
- 55 — from the religious and spiritual point of view: how is the spiritual and religious support the Brothers have every right to expect of their community (superiors and confreres) lived in practice?

2. Spiritual support:

What we have in mind here, above all, is the spiritual support the Brothers should get from their religious superiors, and that the Institute normally expects them to get.

- 56 a) Establish a comparison between what actually obtains and the forms of spiritual support foreseen by the Rules. Is it possible for the Brothers Directors (and other superiors) to play the "pastoral" part expected of them? Difficulties and initiatives in this matter.
- 57 b) Is the spiritual support received from the "pastors" of the Church real and sufficient? What can we do to obtain it or to increase its efficacy? How is the Hierarchy's attention to be drawn to this pastoral role that the clergy should assume in their relations with lay religious whose autonomy they respect? and what can be done to help the Brothers to make the most of this support wherever it exists?

IV. The Institute's vitality at District level

(questions 58 - 76)

Under this general title will be found questions concerning the bringing of the Institute up-to-date, recruiting, formation, subsequent formation, perseverance. It is, in effect, under all these forms that the vitality — whether as a positive or a negative force — is manifested both in the Institute as a whole or in any one of its Districts.

We shall, therefore, consider:

1. The influence of the Institute and its growth.
2. The Brothers' training.
3. Perseverance.

The influence and growth of the District

The questionnaire has as basic principle that it is the Brothers' religious life itself, by the way it is lived in fact and by the way it strikes the onlooker, that should attract and nurture vocations. Direct recruiting action, which is certainly not to be neglected nor its importance overlooked, should appear as one of the forms of this almost spontaneous influence of happy and fervent religious lives, the natural tendency of which is to propose ideals to others.

That is why this section of the questionnaire will be divided into two parts:

- 1) Influence of the Brothers' life (for presenting the Institute as a vital reality).
- 2) Growth (or recruitment).

1. Influence of the Brothers' life:

58

- a) Is there in your District (region, country) a current favourable to or unfavourable to the Brothers' vocation? Consider in this matter the opinion of the Brothers themselves, of the clergy, of the pupils

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(taking their age into account), of the families (according to their milieux), of the active laity. Base your findings on sure and sufficiently numerous facts.

- b) Where the Brothers' vocation does attract, what is at the basis of this attraction?
- c) If there are objections to this vocation, what line do those objections take? Are they aimed at the principle of the Brothers' vocation itself, or merely at certain concrete ways in which this religious and apostolic life is led?
- 59 d) Where there is an unfavourable current, what could be done to modify it? Can you give any examples of positive and effective measures taken in this respect?
- 60 e) In what way, would it be possible under any kind of circumstances to revalorise the vocation of the Brother of the Christian Schools:
— at the individual level?
— at local level (in the community, District, etc.)?
— at Institute level?
- f) Do you think there is anything "attractive" about the Brothers' life as far as the young are concerned? Give reasons. What could be done to make it more attractive?
2. Growth of the Institute:
- 61 a) Give the main lines of your District's recruiting statistics since 1946:
— number entering Juniorate each year: their age, where they come from, social class, etc.;
— percentage of those entering the Juniorate who took the habit during the ten years between 1946 and 1956;
— number entering the Novitiate annually since 1946: those entering directly and those entering from the Juniorate. For the former, indicate age, social class, etc.; intellectual level.

- b) Who is responsible for recruiting in the District:
 — officially?
 — as far as efficacy and results are concerned?
- 62 c) What signs are there in the District of interest in fostering vocations? What means are taken to encourage and develop vocations? Has the District a set plan for making the Brothers' vocation known and appreciated? Mention some original ideas that have been tried out, and indicate results.
- 63 d) What are the obstacles, the difficulties met with in recruiting? In what ways has your recruiting been particularly successful. Examine the causes that have played a part in either or both of these cases.
- e) Any other suggestions the District might like to make in this matter.

The Brothers' training

Our basic principle here is that the formation of a Brother of the Christian Schools should have a two-fold objective or a two-fold aim:

- wholeness and balance; every sector of the Brother's religious and apostolic life must be dealt with, nothing overlooked: formation of the man, of the religious, of the teacher, of the catechist, of the educator, etc.
- integration: it is not, however, sufficient to deal carefully with each sector, there must also be respect for the hierarchy of values, so that the different aspects of training are inserted into a unified but graduated formation. Professional training is, for example, very important, but it has to keep in view the apostolic finality of our life. And the keystone of any constructive formation (such as the Brother's life), the very soul of that formation, is it not the complete gift of self to Jesus Christ, to the service

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of God's Kingdom within the Church? This being so, can we not say it is *spiritual* education that should be given pride of place in any formation programme?

1. The foundations:

- 64** a) Objective elements: duration of formation - various stages - intellectual programme - religious programme.
— age of trainees and the problems this sometimes raises (age for admission to Juniorate, for entry into Scholasticate).
— organisation of houses of formation at District level and at regional level.
— number and quality of those in charge: Directors and staff. How are they chosen? prepared? What is expected of them?
- 65** b) What difficulties have been met with, schemes followed up and efforts made with a view to improving formation at its various stages: Juniorate, Novitiate, Scholasticate? Do the methods employed in these houses of formation, the nature of the training given and the general follow-through give satisfaction?
- 66** c) What is the quality of the formation given? Consider it under its various aspects:
— physical - intellectual (secular branches) - affective - human (distinction, social training) - doctrinal (religious studies) - pedagogical - catechetical - apostolic.
— what is being done to assure an authentic and progressive spiritual education?
- d) Is anything being done to form the personality of the trainees, side by side with their formation for community life? Special efforts made in view of this two-fold formation, and results.
- e) What *practical* steps have been taken to foster in aspirants and young Brothers an awareness of the

graded scale of values in a Brother's life? And is the formation that is being given them sufficiently *practical* in its way of stressing:

- the primacy of spiritual values?
- the apostolic significance of the Brothers' scholastic activity?
- the primordial role of doctrinal alimentation in the life of faith (the very soul of the Brother's existence)?
- the place of honour reserved to religious instruction in his apostolate?

67 f) Does formation in the idea of giving oneself wholly to the living Person of Christ constitute the nub of all the training given by the succession of formators? What are the difficulties met with in working to this end? What means are used at particularly favourable moments, etc.?

68 g) Does the formation given add up to a harmonious education of the religious-apostle, or a more or less heteroclitic jumble of practices and preferences?

69 b) What is, in this formation, the role of the Brother Visitor of the District? And that of Brother Visitor General?

70 i) What are the practical wishes of the Brothers of the District with regard to formation?

2. Subsequent formation:

71 a) Do the young Brothers have any difficulty in adapting themselves to active community life? If they do, what are those difficulties and what gives rise to them? What could be done to facilitate their first community and professional contacts?

72 b) How does the District organise the pursuit of secular and religious studies after the Scholasticate? Give results since 1955.

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- c) Is any special scheme in existence with a view to the subsequent formation of young Brothers? What is it? How does it work? Up to what age?
- 73** d) Has the District a group of well-prepared Brothers Directors at its disposal? Age of the Brothers Directors. How many have followed the three-month or the nine-month Second Novitiate?
- 74** e) Have you any suggestions to make for the improvement and development of the formation of Brothers in positions of responsibility?

Perseverance of the Brothers (see Circulars 363 and 370)

- 75** 1. District statistics of lost vocations since 1955:
- number of withdrawals: temporary vows and final vows;
 - percentage of total withdrawals in relation to total number of Brothers in District;
 - is the number, and percentage, of withdrawals increasing, diminishing or steady over the ten years 1946 to 1956? (Deal with this in the two categories, temporary and final vows).
2. Finding the causes:
- 76** Has there been, for example, at District Council level, a study made of the causes of these lost vocations?
To what can these losses be attributed? Are there any special causes in your area?
Suggest remedies for the improvement of the standard of perseverance, quantitatively and qualitatively.

