

CIRCULAR N° 403

40th
GENERAL CHAPTER

OCTOBER 1976

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
MOTHER HOUSE
476, VIA AURELIA - ROME

INSTRUCTIVE AND
ADMINISTRATIVE
CIRCULARS.
No. 403

Rome. 8th September 1976
Feast of the Nativity
of Our Lady.

Dear Brothers,

The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with us.

Two months have gone by since the General Chapter finished its last session. A few days later, on June the 29th, we sent you a message from the capitulants, promising to give you, later on, more complete and official information on its work and its decisions.

We have great pleasure in sending it to you to-day, we, the Superior and his Council, the community entrusted by the Chapter with « putting its aims and legislation into practice » (1) and it is addressed to you, to each and every one of the communities of the Institute. The purpose of this document is to summarize the reports approved by the Chapter, and also to share our desire that these reflections and directives be assimilated by the Institute.

Our frame of mind at the beginning of our correspondence with you is very much that of St. Paul: « Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ (and Silvanus and Timothy)... to the Church... (of such a city)..., grace and peace in God the Father and the Lord. We feel we must be continually thanking

(1) Document on « Government ».

God for you, Brothers ». Our desire is, indeed, that each one of our letters may really be a message of grace, love and peace, in Christ and La Salle. And we certainly have abundant reason to thank God, for in spite of our limitations and losses, the good work and the will for renewal are clearly evident everywhere among us.

We propose to send frequent communications, though not all in the same style. Some will be messages from the Superior and his Council to each community of the Institute. Others will be letters from the Superior directed to each of the Brothers. We hope that all will be read with interest so that they will provide ample material for thought and discussion. We are grateful for your opinions on our first letter, although it was short, and hope that, in the future, there will be an increase in the number and frequency of your replies.

According to custom set by previous Chapters, we are including in this circular a summary of the history of the last General Chapter, a concise extract from the committee reports and the decisions taken on them. There were six Chapter Committees formed by the Chapter to deal with the particular subjects recognized as being of prime importance in the work of the Chapter. At present we can only give a short summary of their analyses. Later on we shall send some of their reports together with our explanatory comments. We hope that this material will inspire your reflection while being at the same time a basis of our spiritual communion. This study, undertaken by all and for the good of all, will forge that true brotherhood which the Chapter, and ourselves with it, wish to see more perfectly established in the Institute.

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It is of great importance that the Chapter be not an isolated incident in the life of the Institute or the work of a group of Brothers completed in a very short time. If such were the

case it would be the negation of all that the 40th General Chapter stood for. Rather than a legislative assembly, the Chapter must be looked upon as a privileged expression of life and communion in the Spirit which brings to the religious Congregation new light and inspiration for the better understanding and fulfilment of the mission to which it is called by history. But it is only in so far that such experience is disseminated throughout the whole Institute that the General Chapter merits the name and fulfils its purpose.

From the very time of convocation and preparation, our 40th General Chapter was especially characterized by widespread participation. One has only to scan the last circulars of my predecessor Brother Charles Henry, to read the reports of district and regional chapters and meetings, of the international committees working on the preparatory stages, to find confirmation of this. It is likewise easy to see that the response and collaboration of the whole Institute reached an extraordinarily high level.

Now, to be logical, we must feel the compulsion to work together to follow up and complete what the Chapter judged, exacted and recommended. An attitude of merely exterior and remote appreciation of the work of the Chapter would be all too convenient and inexcusable in any Brother. Of itself, a chapter will scarcely convert anyone, still less the whole Institute. But it is now, as always, a pressing and privileged invitation to conversion. A conversion which is more difficult for one who, for personal or other reasons, is very much attached to his own way of seeing and doing and who is reluctant to following the new paths the Spirit is constantly opening up before us. (Cf. II Cor. 5,17).

We must bring about this conversion progressively and in a spirit of solidarity. Of ourselves we cannot find adequate answers to the serious problems of evangelizing the present world. The complexity of present day conditions forces on

us a plurality of expression which has been accepted by the Chapter as an inspired norm for our life and activities. We have to be truly « catholic », universal, in our sincere and intelligent respect for the different cultures and local circumstances. In order to adopt this plurality without compromising our unity and specific character, we must reach absolute agreement on what is the essential constituent of our vocation and charism. Real diversity and profound unity, two apparently contradictory yet complementary ideas, were very much in evidence during the Chapter. By means of our communication with you in the years ahead, we hope to maintain and promote this concept of unity in diversity.

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The Chapter made considerable changes in our government organization. This was foreshadowed by the studies undertaken previous to the Chapter. It is clear that any form of government must be able to adapt itself to the changing circumstances of time and place. The latest alterations have endeavoured to give a better interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity, stressing the idea of co-responsibility and community participation in decision making at all levels. Each district is given a greater and more exacting degree of self rule, without prejudice to unity and communion with the other regions of the Institute.

At the centre of this network of fraternal communications the Chapter has placed the General Council, sharing in the responsibilities and cares of the Brother Superior and « promoting unity, communion and leadership at all levels in the Institute » (Document of the Committee of Government). It was a bold act of confidence in the Brothers to reduce the number of Councillors and change the image of the Assistant while granting a greater degree of autonomy to the regions and districts. We, the Brother Superior and the Councillors,

for our part, recognise what « being constituted as a community at the centre of the Institute » means and what it requires of us; what it means to be a symbol of and to assure the fidelity of the whole body of the Society; what requires of us: to symbolize and assure the fidelity of the whole Body of the Society, to pursue and investigate, with you and for you, the thought and directives of the Chapter, especially those needing more clarification and development. We will spare neither effort nor sacrifice but we well know that we shall achieve nothing without your prayer and support, and unless there is sincere and confident communication between each region, district, and Brother and the General Council.

The General Council feels that it is well backed up and advised in its complex task by those in charge of the General Services. Brother Umberto Marcato, from the district of Turin, has already started on his functions as Secretary General in place of the well-deserving Brother Aloysius Carmody. Brother Francis Beck of the district of New Orleans, is preparing to take over the duties of Bursar General in place of Brother René Hamel whose administration was highly praised by the Chapter. Due to the complexity and delicacy of the functions of the Procurator General and the special skill with which Brother Maurice Hermans accomplished them, the normal replacement will take place only after a prudent interval of time. At the same time we have renewed Brother Maurice's obedience as co-ordinator and director of the « Monumenta Lasalliana », whose studies and publications will continue to examine the person and doctrine of our Father and Founder and communicate their findings to the Brothers. Brother Michel Sauvage, Clément Martinais, Léon Aroz, Yves Poutet, Henry Bédél, Miguel Campos and others whose names are less well-known will continue to devote their talents to this important task. Brother Leone Morelli will remain as Postulator General. It is likely that both Brother Mutien-Marie and

Brother Miguel will be beatified in the near future. Brother Leone is working very actively on these causes.

Moreover, we have invited especially qualified Brothers to study our problems in the fields of Education, Missions (SECOLI), Catechesis, Formation, etc. The promptness with which they accepted our invitations is a guarantee of the good work to come. I must express my gratitude to the Committee appointed by the Chapter itself to prepare a revised edition of our Constitutions and Book of Government. Brothers Maurice Hermans, Guillermo Felix, Arthur Bonenfant, Michael Jacques, Félix del Hoyo and John Hazell have been engaged in preparing the draft of our new Rules and Constitutions and of the Book of Government which will be sent to the capitulants this month for their approval and possible amendments before being published. We hope to be able to publish the new texts at the beginning of 1977.

One aspect of the government organization which deserves particular attention is the birth of the new regions with an existential and juridical structure more in keeping with the human and cultural life of the places in which the Institute is at work. It is of great importance that they be properly constituted and operate well if they are really to be « a practical instrument for maintaining unity between the districts and the centre of the Institute » as the document of the competent Chapter Committee puts it. The avoidance of isolation is essential as much at regional and district level as between local communities and people themselves. Some regions, of course, were already grown up when born, but others will have to work under great difficulties to acquire sufficient integration between districts which are much less homogeneous and less endowed with personnel and material goods. For our part we shall do our utmost to help those regions being formed to become, in the shortest possible time, efficient organizations of support, encouragement and inspi-

ration for the member districts, with the deepest respect, however, for their proper autonomy and creativity.

For similar reasons we have a special interest in those districts which might be termed « young districts ». Some have only recently been incorporated into the Institute. Others are going through crucial periods as their people take their destiny and responsibilities into their own hands. Some exercise their pastoral activity in local churches which are in a process of rejuvenation. Representatives of the « young districts » reflected their position and aspirations in the title which they adopted for their Committee: « The Institute in the Young Churches ». The special interest with which the Chapter followed their discussions and proposals found a significant echo in the enthusiastic welcome which the Pope addressed to them in his speech to the Chapter.

We should add, however, that it would be a misunderstanding of its attitude and work to see the change in the name of the Committee as an abdication of the missionary vocation of the Institute. Where we used to speak of the « Committee for the Missions », we now say the « Committee for the Institute in the Young Churches ». We refer rather to the general missionary call to all sectors of the Institute, of the culmination and crowning of the evangelizing process whose fruits are now coming to maturity. To understand it well, you might read the first proposition of the Committee. It is a clear invitation to all, without distinction of culture or degree of development, to cross all barriers in their devotedness to go and help there where the most needy are to be found. Thanks be to God, volunteers to follow the call still come forward in the Institute as a precious sign of hope and vitality.

Because of its singular importance, special mention must be made of the investigations and decisions on Mission and

Consecration. They are facts affecting the very foundations of our identity and thus guide and determine our life and activity. It is normal that there should be problems and crises, as in life itself, and that it is not always easy to find an immediate formula of final solution. Such difficulties have this time arisen on all that concerns our Congregation and religious commitments. God willing, because of the actual urgency and importance of these problems and because the Chapter gave us a special recommendation, we will direct our attention, and yours, to this study on many occasions during the course of our communications with you.

It is obvious that our life itself and our apostolic and social influence will gain in sincerity and coherence in the same measure as we understand and manifest these realities in our own lives. And the same holds true for our fraternal union in La Salle. We shall thus be able to overcome certain dichotomies and partial points of view which challenge concepts and ways of life which in themselves tend to be united in the same love. We have just had a striking occasion to see this evidence at first hand. A few days ago, at the end of August, during the 6th World Congress of the Lasallian Associations, I was able to invite and accompany Mother Teresa of Calcutta and speak with her when she agreed to attend the Congress. Her testimony in front of this audience with the force of her admirable love of God and the poor made a much bigger impression on the participants than any speech or treatise. And in this living confirmation of Christian love, it was impossible to say how much was the living of unconditional consecration to God and how much the mission of total self sacrifice to the service of mankind. Mother Teresa took both elements and offered them to her daughters combined in that truly heroic vow, perhaps the most difficult (as the theologian P. Alfaro says), of « consecrating oneself entirely and with one's whole heart to the gratuitous service of the poor ».

The Committee for Formation did excellent work, reported here only in summary but with all the propositions approved by the Chapter. The principles and directives collected during this investigation are ready to be put into practice to assure our Brothers that there is real possibility of understanding and living our vocation and mission. In due course we will send the complete text of the report: for the moment I am taking the opportunity of repeating that the C.I.L. as an international organization for further training will continue its important work with a group meeting in Rome at the beginning of 1977. Brother Genaro Saenz de Ugarte who is taking the place of Brother Michel Sauvage as director of C.I.L., has already sent his first circular to all districts announcing the plan of work and time for enrolling. The first 39 have enrolled punctually, and we have no doubt they will be followed by those we expect from other districts.

We stress strongly the Chapter's urgent insistence that all of us be involved in recruiting new members to our Institute. It is the condition for survival without which it is futile, even ridiculous, to draw up plans of action and renewal. In the Chapter two emotions were felt deeply and simultaneously: a deep preoccupation over certain antipathies and defeatism which leads to recruiting being abandoned and even looked down upon, and hope arising from the attempts made and the results obtained by certain Brothers and communities.

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To finish this panoramic view of the Chapter documents and as an encouragement to read them with greater attention. I must say that it was not my intention to provide you with what the following pages say more fully. I have only tried to think aloud and stress the points which merit special consideration.

Mentioning these signposts gives the feeling that life is worth living, that it is worth striving to follow the road opening before us, helping our Brothers along with us. May God help us make a significant contribution in the search for meaningful answers to the questions and confusion of the present world.

Steinbeck, a non-believer, reflecting the future in terms of the great ecological problems of the day, asks himself if the christian churches could not offer man to-day a system of up to date and practical values. The world certainly hopes and asks that we be what we ought to be and that by realizing and expressing the Gospel values as we should, make them known to those around us. This we shall do if we get down seriously to understanding and carrying out the programme given us by the Chapter.

In the texts as well as in the situations around us, we shall meet challenges exacting enough to make us realize that we cannot go far in meeting them without God's help. The sad experiences of the past have no doubt taught us to be realistic and humble. And, therefore, to end these my first words to you, I must share a strong desire with you: that we succeed in renewing and revitalizing ourselves by approaching that perennial fountain of youth and life which is God, in prayer and simplicity.

In prayer... Now is not the time to speak of its urgent necessity. The Chapter stated quite sincerely that « according to information and the notes received and from observations made, the life of prayer has often not had the force and the continuity wished for and experienced by St. John Baptist de La Salle ». (Document on Community). As a living answer, the Chapter developed in an atmosphere of prayer, particularly of exemplary community prayer, which reached extraordinary heights at times. And this is what we wish and

hope the response of the whole Institute will be. Let each community be conscious of its right and duty to « favour and organize its life of prayer » (Rules 3,10). We recognize that the times in which we live are difficult and that the task we have to perform is sometimes arduous. « In nomine Domini », with the faith and simplicity of a David, we feel ourselves capable of defying any Goliath who may challenge us with his boasting or sarcasm.

In the spirit of the Book of Samuel (I Sam. 17), I recommend it to you to-day, as I recommended it to the Institute in the first hours of my taking office. We must all return to the original simplicity of our family, that simplicity so evident in the life and writing of our Founder, so much part of the life of our first Brothers. Simplicity is one of the important elements of our prophetic mission, giving a sane response to a consumer society proud in its superstructure and exhausted by its uncertainty.

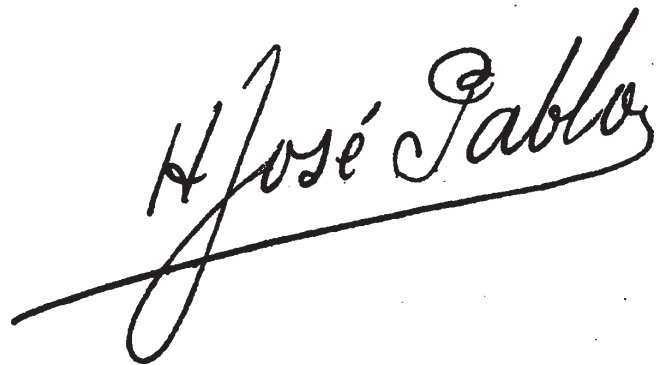
It would be wrong, however, to take this to be a childish or superficial simplicity. That which we seek is the deep biblical simplicity, the distinctive character of our witness and the image of the style and teaching of the Master. A realistic and convinced attitude which loyally recognizes its deficiencies and limitations, rejecting those false appearances which hide them. The intimate life of the poor in spirit, enemy of all presumption, who puts his hope in God, his strength. Disinterested surrender to the service of others with no thought of reward. An absence of artificial demeanour and affected behaviour as well as standards of living which would make us less approachable for humble people for whom we were founded (see the third point of La Salle's Meditation for the Nativity). Enemy of pomp with obvious preference for what is functional and operational. Humble and complete acceptance of truth in our lives, actions agreeing with our

words, and excluding subtlety which tries to maintain deceit. Serene consciousness of our own littleness and the behaviour resulting therefrom, which enables us to understand the things of the Kingdom (Matt 11,25-26).

May our Father, St. John Baptist de La Salle, guide us, animate and inspire us by his example and charism. That was another great hopeful sign in the Chapter: the filial and loving reference to the magisterium of the Founder brought us closer together and gave us the key for solving our differences. The study of his message will continue to be, as we have said, the object of our special care and attention. We realize that such a study would have neither aim nor meaning if it were not accompanied by our vital commitment to recreate to-day his intuition and spiritual journey for the salvation of the world.

In him, in the invocation of his name and confiding in his protection, we end these preliminary reflections, saying once again,

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Pablo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the signature.

Brother JOSÉ PABLO BASTERRECHEA, Superior General.

Brother JOHN JOHNSTON, Vicar.

**Brothers BENILDO FELICIANO, JOSÉ CERVANTES,
PATRICE MAREY, PEDRO RUEDELL,
VINCENT RABEMAHAFALY, Councillors.**

FIRST SECTION

HISTORY OF THE CHAPTER

On Wednesday in Holy Week, 14th April 1976, mass was celebrated in the chapel at which all the capitulants assisted. Brother Charles Henry, Superior General in office, had been asked to give the homily and this he turned into an opening address.

Taking as his text the words of the Founder: « Remember that you are working for the Church and the Body of Christ », Brother Superior insisted on the absolute necessity for religious orders to remain heedful of this continual transmission. They do not exist only to provide their members with the means and the opportunity for personal development, but for the service and good of our neighbour, for the edification of the Body of Christ which is the Church ».

This transmission must not, however, make us forgetful of personal values. It must be expressed in the whole life of the Institute and especially in the conduct of those in authority. They must strike a just balance and strive to harmonise the different charisms among themselves, respecting each one's talents as also their correct use in the service of the common apostolate.

And the speaker concluded with the following words: « This is what St. John Baptist de La Salle is asking the

Chapter to study, proclaim and guarantee our Brothers in the next ten years.

The First Days

After this first liturgical ceremony, all the Brothers present in the Mother House had their first meal together. The Chapter then became a community of prayer and fraternal discussion, a community which continued to solidify and strengthen itself as the days went by, beginning during the solemn triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

The afternoons of these three days were left free for the celebration of the liturgical ceremonies, the mornings being devoted to two plenary sessions. It was during these that all the necessary steps were taken for the organization indispensable for the smooth functioning of the Chapter. Then, as quite often happened also in the days that followed, Brother Superior read the messages of support sent to the Brothers by numerous other religious orders, old boys and friends of the Institute.

The Holy Father's Blessing

One of the first telegrams received came from Vatican City addressed to « Brother Charles Henry, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools » in the following words;

« Holy Father pleased to hear of the opening of General Chapter of your Institute prepared with supernatural and

apostolic spirit. Exhort capitulants to deep fidelity to charism of Founder and specific apostolate of the Congregation in Catholic education of youth. Holy Father implores light of Holy Spirit on their work and sends all participants whole-hearted paternal apostolic benediction.

(signed) Cardinal Villot »

Official Opening of the Chapter

A few delegates were still absent. Those from Rangoon, Saigon and Turkey were definitively prevented from coming and resigned or would soon resign in favour of substitutes regularly elected. Those from France-Atlantique and Lebanon could still be expected. The first had later to resign in favour of his substitute, the second was able, in spite of the extremely grave events we all know about, to arrive at the Mother House for the last weeks of the Chapter's work.

The report of the Preparatory Committee having been read and approved, the regulations also received provisional approbation on condition that some of the articles be subjected to further scrutiny. When all had been judged to be sufficiently well known to the capitulants the assembly constituted itself officially as a General Chapter at 11.00 a.m. on Friday the 16th April.

After the customary procedure and the counting of all the members of the assembly, the Brothers capitulants expressed themselves as follows:

« ...we acknowledge and declare by the present deed, that we are met together in General Chapter in the form required by law and that the present assembly, representing the body of the Institute, is, as of now, competent to undertake all the

procedures it is qualified to do whether by the common law of the Church or by our own private law, a General Chapter of our Institute legitimately constituted, our most ardent desire being to do all things only in view of the greater glory of God and for the greater good of our Institute whose spiritual and apostolic renewal we wish to promote in fidelity to our special vocation in the Church, in the light of the teachings of our Holy Founder, and being anxious to act according to the directives given us by the Vatican II Council and the Holy See ».

Homage to the Holy Father

This act having been read by the Brother Secretary General and immediately signed by all the capitulants, the Chapter proceeded to elect the officers: secretaries, chairmen, chronicler and scrutineers. These matters were finished on Holy Saturday morning, the 17th April, and on the same day the Chapter sent the following telegram to the Holy Father.

His Holiness Paul VI. Vatican City.

"The members of the 40th General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, gathered round the relics of St. John Baptist de La Salle for the last few hours, send your Holiness the homage of their profound veneration.

At the moment of starting their work, they received with emotion and gratitude and heard with respectful devotion the message of wishes, encouragement and exhortation which Your Holiness was pleased to address them.

They will be attentive, during the whole session of prayer, study and reflection, to the teachings of Your Holiness, desiring greatly with You that the present Chapter be for all

our Brothers an important step of spiritual and apostolic renewal”.

(signed) Brother Charles Henry,
Superior General.

Easter Liturgy

As they had been able to do on the preceding days, the Brothers went to the Basilica of St. Peter's for the Pascal ceremonies celebrated by the Pope. More, however, preferred the more modest surroundings of the Mother House chapel. As on the previous two days, the office of the Pascal Vigil was celebrated and sung in the three principal languages, but always well unified, the texts and hymns having been judiciously chosen to allow for easy and excellent participation.

The most modest ceremony was probably that of the Pascal solemnity as most Brothers wished to go to St. Peter's Square to take part in the papal mass and receive the benediction « Urbi et Orbi ».

Program and Prevision

Plenary sessions began again at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 19th April. The capitulants, consulted months before by the Preparatory Committee, had agreed to the Chapter's proceeding as follows: a first stage for information and exchange of views; a second of prolonged reflection on the teaching of the Founder; a third to discover and fix the objectives of the Chapter; a fourth to examine in committees the different questions thus chosen and formulated and, in general assembly, the conclusions reached and the corresponding re-

solutions; and finally a fifth to prepare to put the work of the Chapter into operation and to determine the programme of publication and application of the orientations and directives.

Information and exchange of views

When initial agreement had been reached, one was able to pass immediately to the presentation of the reports of the Brothers Assistants. These were already known to the capitulants, most of them having been sent to them before they left for Rome and the few remaining ones given them on arrival.

Each Assistant then spent a few minutes giving a brief summary to the full assembly, drawing attention to the points he considered more worth of notice. The members in the audience then spent a short while asking for further enlightenment.

According to the Book of Government, sixteen reports were due to be presented, eleven by the Brothers Assistants in charge of districts, four by those in charge of the General Services and one by the Brother Superior General. A seventeenth was later added, that of the Brother Vicar General.

Some of the Brothers in the audience had agreed to take notes of those points which seemed to be common to all the reports. Without sacrificing interest in the special circumstances, it was thus hoped to detect the general direction in which circumstances and evolution were leading us, pick out the common denominator in the diversity of aspects, discover the most serious problems which could risk passing unnoticed or at least which were less easily perceptible because of the very abundance of information.

Alternating with the plenary sessions, group meetings were arranged in order to increase the possibility of exchanging ideas, each capitulant being in turn interrogator and observer, being questioned and trying to explain or understand. Starting from the reports themselves, from the first reactions in assembly and more particularly from their own personal knowledge of one or other of the situations which had been mentioned, the capitulants were able to help one another for more than a week to get as clear an idea as possible of the actual conditions in which the twelve thousand Brothers of the Institute live and work.

These periods for discussion were quite often found to be too short owing to the slowness in getting started. And the necessity for so many indispensable translations did not make things any easier. Other often quite informal meetings also played a very important part. It can no doubt be said that at the end of the ten days everyone had managed to get beyond the frontiers of his own local preoccupations to concentrate his solicitude on the Lasallian world which he had discovered perhaps for the first time.

A First Appreciation

Grouped under four headings, Formation, Community Life, Apostolate, Government, the general situation is as follows:

Formation

— The crisis on vocations is general, many districts are seriously affected,

— a hesitant effort is being made to take up pastoral work for vocations again and improve it.

— The aims, programmes and organization of basic training are the object of study and trial.

— Continued training is seen as a vital process to be assured and developed during a Brother's whole lifetime, a great variety of experiments and achievements being reported on this point.

Community Life

— Greater attention is being paid to interpersonal relationships and to the relationships between subsidiarity and co-responsibility.

— There is preference for smaller communities and for a separation of the Brothers' community from the educational establishment it looks after.

— Communities are regulating their own lives more and more and relying less on established organization.

Apostolate

— There is more creativity and greater preoccupation with seeing that the « works » are carried out with a view to the better educational service of the poor.

— The common apostolate takes precedence over the individual apostolate, be it the Brothers, community, the local educational community or that of the district.

— A little everywhere, but more especially in the so called missionary countries integration with the local Church is the order of the day.

Government

— The Brothers Directors feel that they do not get enough support from less numerous and less rigid structures.

— At district level, a certain degree of collegiality is being initiated and this easily leads to a practical difficulty in defining and respecting legitimate authority and the interdependence of structures.

— District chapters are diversely appreciated. In many places they are very difficult of even impossible to hold.

— It is recognized that there must of necessity be a link between the regions and the Centre of the Institute, but the presence of the regional Assistant is less well accepted.

— A smaller and more homogeneous general Council is desired, one acting with more collegiality.

After this general appreciation, the 28th April was given up to discussion on « the needs of young people to-day ». Such preoccupations had undoubtedly existed quite often during the preceding days in many an analysis or evaluation. But it was especially on this last day that more significant situations and initiative were called to mind: challenges made to district chapters or made by them when faced with needs which had become particularly urgent; works suppressed, new ones created, others transformed, to allow the Brothers to give a better response to certain new needs which have been experienced in such and such a sector.

In the steps of the Founder

Better knowledge of the present situation in the Institute is not a sufficient foundation on which to base the directives

and orientations of the Chapter. To make a correct judgment of the problems, it must be possible to find out the views of the Founder himself. Everything must be studied and decisions taken with reference to his life and teaching. Not that the Chapter can expect to find ready made answers from the Founder as if it were possible simply to transpose what was done three centuries ago to the world of to-day. To deal with the present world as a Brother of the Christian Schools, we must place ourselves unceasingly in the current of the Founder's evangelical intuition.

The organizers of this week of reflection had taken care to provide for numerous interventions in the form of reports and more especially of round table discussions and testimonies. About thirty capitulants were called upon either to propose some main theme of reflection or to express their approval, or to say how they brought the Founder into the present in the very framework of their own existence and activities.

In this way we heard the testimony of Brothers from all the continents and all cultures. St. John Baptist de La Salle had become embodied in each of their lives in a particular way, having been discovered step by step in the novitiate and since then become for them the man of Providence whose example and message has transformed their lives. Such confidences were an invaluable aid to creating an atmosphere of mutual respect among the capitulants as well as a greater sense of brotherhood and a more religious attention to the teachings of the Founder. This last was dealt with in particular by three speakers, Brothers Maurice Hermans, Michel Sauvage and John Johnston.

The first confined himself to what might be called the « act of founding the Institute ».

The « *Memorandum on the Habit* » is probably the most enlightening authentic text regarding this. Coming soon after

the event, illustrated with precise recollections, this *Memorandum* justifies the Brothers' adoption of a habit which is neither ecclesiastical, nor secular nor regular, a habit which has proved to be convenient in use and, above all, in the eyes of the Brothers and others, distinguishes them as a new community related to no other. By wearing this habit, the Brothers of 1685, and all those who have since joined them, show beyond doubt that they were resolved to continue the evangelical and apostolic type of community which had existed in fact since 24th June 1682, the day they rented a house to live as a community. From that moment, wearing the habit signified a real profession; by it the Brother affirmed that he was a Brother of the Christian Schools with his own individuality, and his community acquired legal status even if « it was at present established and founded on Providence ».

Brother Michel Sauvage's subject was one aspect of St. John Baptist de La Salle's spirituality.

From a book he is just finishing, he summarized a chapter with a particularly significant title, « Honour and serve Jesus Christ in the poor within the world of the poor ». « The Founder does not ask us to 'go to the poor'. His is not a deductive nor a moralising teaching. It is based on experience, of the Institute having its origin in God and in the needs of the poor, the experience of John Baptist himself, visibly possessed by God, committed to a fraternity in meeting the poor and working for their salvation ».

« The poor are, for the Brother, the sacrament of Christ... he educates them spiritually by inviting them to a more interior conformity with Christ. But the Brothers are also called to work to transform these poor children into Christ! The Brothers are chosen by God our Saviour to have, through the Holy Spirit, 'the property of saviours of the poor'. They must honour their ministry by working with zeal to make this salvation an actual fact.

Brother John Johnston had agreed for his part to propose as subject: "St. John Baptist de La Salle's challenge to the Brothers to-day".

Believing above all in the Declaration and the Meditations for the Time of Retreat, constantly confronted with the actual life of the Institute and of the Brothers over the last ten years, his address became more often a challenge. "Brothers, are we religious men? Have we an idea of mystery? of wonder? of what is holy? Have we an awareness of God? Does his presence influence our thoughts, our judgments, our decisions and our way of life?... Are we really christians? Do we believe we are justified by God », by faith in Jesus Christ rather than by fulfilling the law? (Gal. 2,16)... Are the fruits of the Spirit manifest in our lives? Are we men of joy, of love, of peace, of kindly patience, of goodness, faithfulness, humility, of self control? (Gal. 5,22). I do not claim to answer these questions for the Brothers of the Institute. I must admit, however, that as an international community of men I do not believe we are as authentically religious and christian as we should be... Whether I am right or wrong, there is no doubt that St. John Baptist de La Salle is to-day calling us to a more intense interior life, to become more conscious of the presence of the Lord in our lives, to grow in the spirit of faith ». « Be religious » was the title of that paragraph, and the leitmotiv is the same when the author treats of other « challenges »: Understand our vocation. Be signs of the presence of God for the poor. Be Brothers. Be faithful. ...

The Vigil of Prayer

Such was everyone's desire to place himself at the foot of the Founder that a whole night was spent in prayer and meditation in front of his relics. This was on the night of April 30th, the anniversary of the birth of St. John Baptist

de La Salle in Rheims. For an hour and a half in the Chapter room each one freely expressed his confidence, his pride and also his anxieties, calling to mind the problems of the moment, stressing the difficulties under which the Brothers are to-day fulfilling their educational mission and calling on the Founder to help the efforts being made everywhere towards a more fundamental renewal.

The assembly then wound its way in procession to the chapel where, before the Saint's statue and mortal remains and after reading his testament and last counsels, intercession continued throughout the night, the capitulants replacing each other in groups till it was time for the first capitular assembly next morning.

Discernment

This word was used to describe the delicate task which would enable the Chapter to select the matter it was to study, the aims it would pursue. From the mass of problems, necessarily all too comprehensive, raised during the first weeks of work, the Brothers capitulants had to choose those to which they thought they could and should give priority in their investigations.

This selection proved more difficult than had been foreseen, taking up a whole week. In small groups to begin with, then in larger groups, many discussions were held, each, it must be said, showing but little progress over the preceding one ... Agreement was quickly reached on some important points. The basic texts of the 1966-67 Chapter — The Declaration, the Rules and Constitutions — seem to be entirely valid, but insufficiently assimilated and put into operation. They do not need revising as a whole. One must try

rather to find the means of extracting all their potential in order to promote the work of renewal in the Institute.

Burning questions were brought up on « Consecration and Vows », « Government » and « Service of the Poor ». Was there any possibility of dealing usefully with certain matters, of getting far enough at least to find satisfactory answers? Would not the Institute gain more by continuing to think around some of them?

When it came to putting together the projects of the different committees there was a certain amount of irresolution. The final decision was postponed in favour of further discussion by groups composed in a different way. Finally, in the assemblies of the 4th and 5th of May, there was a somewhat weary feeling and just a hint of precipitation in the choice of subjects and especially of the committees. No doubt some of the difficulties arose from the large number of participants. They probably resulted also from the practical difficulties in which the Chapter found itself of taking over from the Preparatory Committee the elaboration and realisation of its program.

In any case, at the end of this difficult week, the capitulants divided into six committees which for reasons of brevity were designated by one or two words: Mission, Consecration, Formation, Community, Young Churches and Government. More than one of these committees later divided up into sub-committee to treat one special aspect or another. Thus there were the sub-committee on finance within the committee on Government and that on the priesthood within the committee for Mission.

Committee work

This constitution of the committees gave the Chapter its traditional aspect. Yet how many times did one not recall

the benefits of those first weeks of different contacts and less polarized meetings? The possible danger of the committees becoming watertight compartments had in this way been avoided. To minimize the danger still more, contacts between the different committees had been foreseen and certain matters were studied by two or more of them conjointly.

Thereafter, the committees under their presidents and with the often remarkable and always impartial help of their secretaries, undertook yet again and on their own account, the examination of all the information received on their subject, reports, personal and group notes, notes drawn up by the Preparatory Committee, results of the questionnaire, acts of district and provincial chapters, texts drawn up by international of other special committees, etc. ...

At different speeds, too slowly for the officers of the Chapter but too fast for the secretaries, reporters and other workers directly concerned, the committees carried on with their work of study, reflection and composition for more than a month, that is, till the end of May.

Plenary meetings followed hard on the heels of one another so that the reports could be laid before the assembly. Working meetings were interspersed, becoming more and more frequent till most of the capitulants were deprived of the few hours free time which had been provided for in the time table. The first hour or two after lunch and the late evening hours were devoted to meetings of committee, sub-committee or secretaries and reporters.

Special committees had to be appointed, two of which had the important task of up-dating the Rules and Constitutions and the almost complete recasting of the Book of Government. It soon became obvious that the Chapter itself could not do this twofold work without making a hurried job of it or falling into error and imperfection. It chose, therefore, to hand over this task to a post-capitular committee

whose work would, however, be prepared by the two special committees. Their duty was to collect from the reports approved and voted in Chapter, all the elements which could be used for this twofold revision.

The Committee on « Rules and Constitutions » and that on the « Book of Government » in their turn put two propositions before the Chapter which it is important to reproduce in full.

1. The 40th General Chapter confirms the Rules and Constitutions promulgated by the special General Chapter of 1966-67. However, account will be taken of a few modifications necessitated by resolutions adopted in the present Chapter of 1976.

The 40th General Chapter requests that a new edition of the Book of Government be compiled taking account of the decisions made by the present Chapter of 1976.

2. A post-capitular committee will be constituted, responsible for drawing up a homogeneous and definitive text of the Rules and Constitutions and the Book of Government. It will work in close association with the General Council. It must communicate the results of its work to all the capitulants within three months if possible, or at most six months. The committee will take note of the observations they receive and will send the revised text back to the capitulants of the 40th General Chapter for a vote of approbation, 'yes' or 'no'.

Presentation of Committee Reports

The first three weeks of June proved to be a decisive time for the Chapter. If agreement was easily reached in earlier reports — Formation, Young Churches, Priesthood, Finance — there were sometimes differing points of view on

other matters — Mission, Consecration. As to the report on Government, it took rather a special stand, limiting itself in most cases to suggestions for a new Book of Government. This did not for all that shorten the discussions on fairly novel ways of seeing the role of the General Councillors, the image of the regional grouping or the importance to be given to certain regional or local bodies.

In spite of these divergences of opinion, which no one would dream of denying or excusing, the atmosphere of the Chapter remained calm. For capitulants who had assisted at other General Chapters this was a pleasant surprise and a real relief. This did not eliminate all tension, but at least it served to give them a relative importance. It did not lead to complete harmony, but it gave confidence that we could end up by accepting our differences and finding in these very differences a reason to maintain and strengthen our unity.

The elections

The 1966 Chapter elected Brother Charles Henry and the Assistants for a period extending to the next ordinary General Chapter. The mandates, therefore, of the seventeen members of the General Council expired during the present 1976 Chapter. But as certain provisional measures adopted by the special Chapter of renewal seemed to have been modified during the course of the last ten years of experiment, it seemed wise not to proceed with the election of the Brother Superior and the members of his Council till the status which the Chapter was prepared to give them had been sufficiently defined. The elections, therefore, were postponed till the committee on Government made its first report. This provided, among other things, that the interval between ordinary general chapters would not be modified. It proposed that the Superior and the members of his Council be nominated for

the same period. It became more innovating in limiting to six the number of the general councillors, a new title in preference to Assistant, who would no longer have a mandate by right of election for any geographical or other sector.

Election of Brother Superior

Once these provisions were known, though as yet not definitely adopted, it became possible to take opinion polls judged to be indispensable as a preparation for the elections. Preceded themselves by less formal consultations, five such polls took place on the 28th and 29th of May and the election of the Brother Superior was fixed for 9.00 a.m. on Thursday, 3rd of June. This meeting was rather short. After Brother Charles Henry had led the prayer to the Holy Spirit, the President addressed a few words to the electors and the chairman for the session gave the necessary instructions. The interpreters and the other technicians then retired, leaving the hall solely to the capitulants. Before writing the name of their candidate they pronounced the oath written in three languages on their ballot paper. Once completed these were then placed in the box on the scrutineers table. Three electors were absent, far away, unable to come and duly excused. The total ballot papers received was 155 corresponding to the number of people in the hall.

One of the scrutineers read each one aloud. When the name of Brother José Pablo Basterrechea came up for the 78th time there was a spontaneous outburst of applause indicating that an absolute majority had already been achieved, and the counting came rapidly to an end. Brother Charles Henry then addressed himself to the one elected asking if he would accept. Having accepted, Brother José Pablo received the Rules and the seals of the Institute followed by the Obedience from all the capitulants. All then went to the chapel

where they were joined by the other Brothers in the house and the session closed with the singing of the Te Deum. It was then 10.00 a.m. The Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation of Religious were immediately informed.

Taking his place for the first time in his new role of Superior at the 5.00 p.m. session on the same day, Brother José Pablo expressed his gratitude and that of the whole Institute to Brother Charles Henry who had just relinquished his charge leaving behind him the memory of a man entirely devoted to his numerous duties, of a Superior showing fraternal consideration for all his Brothers, understanding, loving and helping them.

Brother José Pablo, as he prefers to be known, would like to be close to each of his Brothers. As he mentioned in his remarks, he will find it a joy to give them, in all simplicity, all the help in his power. He wishes that, together and united, the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle will continue their devoted work for God and the poor, with the prudence recommended by the Gospel, but also with the boldness and courage of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Election of General Councillors

Three meetings were necessary for the election of the six Councillors. They took place respectively on Monday, the 7th of June, at 11.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. and on Tuesday, 8th of June, at 4.00 p.m. During the polls of the preceding week preparatory to the election of the Brother Superior, several names had appeared as possible candidates. In groups — most suggestions. While maintaining full freedom the electors thus had sufficient information. On a number of occasions they had been asked to consider not only the personal competence of each one, but also their complementarity to each other.

The following were elected by secret ballot on the 7th June at 11.00 a.m.: Brothers John Johnston, Maurice (Patrice) Marey, Vincent Rabemahafaly, José Cervantes; on the 7th of June at 5.00 p.m. Brother Lamberto (Benildo) Feliciano; two other ballots were invalid; on the 8th June at 4.00 p.m., Brother Pedro Ruedell.

There but remained to elect from among these same Councillors he who would be called upon to assist the Brother Superior more closely as Vicar General of the Institute. During the same session of the 8th June at 4.00 p.m., Brother John Johnston received an absolute majority on the first ballot. He said a few words of acceptance in answer to the Brother Superior's ritual question and the new General Council was complete. The instrument of election was then drawn up and signed by all the capitulants.

Papal audience

Late in the morning of Wednesday, the 16th of June, the members of the Chapter and the other Brothers called upon as assistants were admitted to the presence of the Holy Father in the large audience hall of Vatican City.

In the first row, Brother Nicet Joseph and Charles Henry, former Superior General, sat next to Brother José Pablo. Thousands of pilgrims shared our happiness at this meeting but the Holy Father had a special word as encouraging as it was appropriate, to say to the members of our Chapter.

« We have among us this morning the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are just finishing their 40th general chapter. The pilgrims here will appreciate with us the importance of this congregation which is so numerous and spread throughout so many countries where they are fulfilling an apostolate of the utmost importance. We would, the-

refore, like to address a few words of special encouragement to them.

« Dear Brothers, your special religious vocation serving youth is more necessary than ever to-day. Never have young people to be evangelized been so numerous and many of them, especially in the large cities, are living on the fringe of society and feel helpless. They really need educators with the spirit of the Gospel. Sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle, dedicated to the christian education of youth by your consecration, you are particularly well placed to answer this pressing appeal. Catechists by vocation, you share in the evangelizing mission of the Church. Have no doubts as to the apostolic importance of teaching within the framework of the catholic schools which can provide an overall christian education and an atmosphere favourable to the positive directing of the liberties of the young. And remember, that it was the specific wish of your founder that you be sent more especially to the poor.

« Fulfilling this mission requires of you an ever greater authenticity in your consecration to God and your Brothers. It requires a special kind of presence among men in the bosom of the fraternal and apostolic communities of the Institute. Let these communities assure the indispensable unity between contemplation and apostolic action, both of them rooted in divine love. Let them be places of mutual education for discovering the living God: The place you give there to prayer and fraternal charity will be the test. And that exacts a real discipline of life.

« The dynamic fidelity of the Brothers of the Christian Schools requires, therefore, a continuous, deep study of their faith, of their baptismal vocation and the religious consecration which determines it. You have answered the call of the Lord. Reconvincing that this personal invitation merited the gift of your whole life to God and youth, and that your apost-

olic task is itself religious from many points of view. By fulfilling it out accomplish the will of God, you find Christ in those to whom you are sent, and finally you are trying to prepare for God a people who will adore Him in spirit and in truth.

« The fulfillment of our mission is not without its difficulties and its trials. Like all religious institutes, you have suffered an appreciable diminution in recruiting, and even the desertion of a certain numbers of Brothers bewildered by the disorders in society and insufficiently equipped to face up to them. Far from discouraging you, this should lead you on the contrary to thank God for the precious gift of your vocation, to realize your responsibilities and to carry them out with more vigilance and generosity. It should also remind you of the importance and urgency of the initial training of the young Brothers so that they may progressively enter into the fundamental spiritual attitude of our religious life. We are pleased to hear that your chapter has been seeking the means of improving the search for vocations and the indispensable and specific training of the novices. This initiation is, moreover, never completed. You must convert yourself to the Lord each day, to adapt yourself in order to answer the spiritual needs of the young, to promote the further training of the Brothers, especially those in posts of responsibility, in intimate communion with the life and directives of the Church.

« These are a few of the conditions which will enable you to renew your spiritual life and give renewed vigour to your religious vocation. Our special greeting and wishes to your new superior general, the very dear Brother José Pablo Basterrechea, and to the capitulants representing the young Churches of Africa and Asia. To all, our encouragement and, as a sign of hope, our affectionate Apostolic Blessing ».

Brother Superior was allowed to approach the Holy Father as he was leaving the audience hall and profited by this

first occasion to offer him his sentiments of respectful devotion and docility and at the same time to testify to the constant heed paid by the Chapter and the whole Institute to the directions of the Holy See, and in particular to those of the Holy Father.

A few days later, on the anniversary of the election of His Holiness, the following telegram was sent to him:

His Holiness Paul VI. Vatican City.

« Most Holy Father, as they are finishing their work, the members of the 40th General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools once more address Your Holiness to offer Him the expression of their special gratitude and at the same time their fervent wishes for the coming anniversary of the election of Your Holiness to the Sovereign Pontificate. Three days ago, during the general audience, Your Holiness expressed towards their Institute, their chapter, and themselves, for their work and capitular decisions, such appropriate words, so rich in doctrine and so full of encouragement, that the members of the chapter wish to assure Your Holiness of the generous response and filial devotion of their eleven thousand Brothers, at the same time renewing the expression of their homage and profound veneration and obedience towards Your Holiness.

(signed) Brother Pablo Basterrechea, Superior General ».

Visits of Cardinals, fraternal meetings

In the afternoon of the 15th May, Cardinal Furstenberg was the guest of the Chapter for whom he had agreed to celebrate mass on the feast of the Founder. During the supper which followed, the Cardinal fondly recalled his numerous meetings with the Brothers in Belgium, Italy, Japan, Australia and the near East.

A few days later it was the turn of Cardinal Pironio, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, to celebrate the capitular mass. Three times during mass and again during supper, he expressed his joy at taking part in that event which a general chapter is, the gift of the Spirit to the Church, through the mediation of a religious congregation. Recalling the communion in which the Apostles lived while awaiting the Spirit in the first days of the Church, he invited the capitulants to enter still more fully into that grace of renovation and spiritual research which is always the grace of a general chapter.

Among other meetings occasioned by the Chapter must be mentioned those between the capitulants and the Mixed Committee of the Former Students with the representatives of the Secular Institute of the Holy Crucifix of Turin and with the newly professed Brothers of the district of Valencia-Palma. These meetings were continued, moreover, throughout the liturgical ceremony of Saturday, the Vigil of Pentecost, and by the profession of a group of young Brothers and that of a group of members of the « Signum Fidei » recently constituted by the Former Students and supporters. On Brother Charles Henry's initiative, a few Brothers and Former Students had for some months given careful consideration to a programme for meeting with the General Chapter. Part of it was, properly speaking, an audience but there was that close sharing in a liturgical ceremony together and the first attempt to translate into practice the will for ever closer collaboration between Former Students and ourselves.

Last days

The General Chapter of 1966-67 had preserved for the capitulants the memory of an event rich in content but producing little effect around them, perhaps because the means had

not been provided for transmitting the texts and, above all, of putting them into operation and converting them into an actual reality.

This fact gave rise to new anxieties in the Chapter, starting with the members of the Preparatory Committee. How could the potential of a General Chapter be better exploited? How could the Brothers capitulants, to begin with, be prepared to be, in their own districts, the heralds of this exceptional experience and this message of renewal?

The reflections of the Chapter on a rough plan drawn up by an ad hoc committee continued over several sessions on this more or less pedagogical question. Testimony and suggestions came to enrich this first attempt. The adoption of more precise resolutions followed, due regard being paid to the special circumstances of certain districts. The Brothers Visitors of the same Regions and the delegates of the same districts then determined what each ought to do. Suggestions were offered to the Superior and his Council and it is due to such suggestions that these communications of the General Council to the Institute are coming to you and will continue to come to you little by little over the following months.

Finally, on June 19th, Brother Superior addressed the capitulants at the end of the final general session. Having summed up the development of the chapter, he concluded with the following words:

« Brothers, the day Brother Superior was elected coincided with the anniversary of the death of Pope John XXIII. The Vatican Radio commented on this phrase of his that went right round the world: "The things that unite us are far more in number than those that keep us apart". This conviction is ours too; it is the result of our conversations and discussions during the chapter and our greatest joy.

To each one of you, to each district and region, today before we disperse, I would like to say what President Kennedy said to the young people of his country: "Do not ask what your country can do for you, but rather what you should do for your country". The whole Institute is now waiting for what we are going to do for its revitalisation and restoration. It is concerned about our missionary activity, our vocational apostolate; things which the chapter considers as urgent. We can see that our way of life offers young people the possibility of service that they often feel drawn to. May our Lady, Queen of Christian Schools, our Founder and all our holy brothers help us to bring this undertaking to a successful conclusion ».

SECOND SECTION

PRESENTATION OF THE WORK OF THE CHAPTER COMMITTEES

THE MISSION OF THE BROTHERS TODAY

Introduction

In its study of the Brothers' ministry today, the General Chapter takes as its starting point the pregnant statement of our Holy Founder that the end of the Institute is to give a Christian education to children. It affirms the continuing validity of this statement for our lives today. While individual Brothers and some communities have achieved wonderful results, the collective effort, in the opinion of the Chapter, has fallen short of the ideal. The Chapter takes as its purpose, therefore, to reaffirm this ideal as it is stated in the *Declaration* and the *Rule*, and to indicate ways by which these high purposes can be implemented in these last years of the 20th century.

Christian education

New Questions

During the last decade in the field of Christian education, there have been many changes, brought about by the ex-

tension of knowledge in all fields, by the influence of the media on all of our lives and the increased control over education by central governments. All these are important. But the most striking development is the emergence of a distinct youth culture, notable for its esteem of authenticity, its horror of hypocrisy and its love for good human relationships, but, at the same time, indifferent to institutional structures and sometimes to the faith.

This situation has caused great uncertainty among some of the Brothers who have found it increasingly difficult to relate to the young, especially in religious education. Here we must look to the Founder for inspiration. In his schools he had first a special regard for the poor, and he followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Association

Community and district planning must create adequate guidelines for assuring the fulfilment of our mission of imparting Christian education by association. Only in this way can the Brothers consider themselves, at one and the same time, personally called and communally sent.

The Educative Community

The Chapter reminds us also that the Brother is not the sole educator of youth; he really works in an « educative community » in close cooperation with parents and the neighborhood. He must also work in union with the large number of lay teachers who throng our schools.

Within the school itself Gospel values are communicated as much by human relationships and the administrative style of the establishment as by formal teaching. It is this school, therefore, which must enable youth to discover for themselves Gospel values. With this supernatural strength it will be able to resist unfavorable external pressures.

Other Educative Work

The apostolate outside the school must conform to the specific mission of the Institute, always oriented towards education and evangelization, with a preference for the poor. There must be the closest cooperation between the Brothers engaged in such an apostolate and the Brothers teaching in class. The special apostolate must be shared by the whole community and district, in order that it might be well understood, as well as to assure its continuity.

Ministry of the word

The Present Situation

The last ten years too have seen critical developments in the work of the Brothers as ministers of the Word, by their Christian teaching. The greater freedom experienced by youth, the changing moral climate, sometimes the exclusion of Brothers from the management of the schools and the increasing complexities of the school system — all this tends to affect our catechetical work.

Response

The Church itself has quite recently given important directives on evangelization, catechetics, and the ministry of the Word. Influenced by these directives, many Brothers have made progress in understanding our present day catechetical mission, and have advanced in theological and pastoral formation.

Much remains to be done with regard to evangelical witness, both as regards to evangelization and also to religious education, religious instruction and catechetics. Besides perfecting these, the Chapter asks for the creation of faith com-

munities among our pupils, parents, and past students, whose members will study in depth their own lives in the light of the Gospel. We have also asked all Districts to deepen the theological and related formation of the Brothers.

Especially the poor

The study of the life of our Founder, and of the *Declaration*, moves the Chapter to emphasize a return to the service of the poor. This would be a source of renewal and revitalization of the Institute.

What is also required is the need for action on behalf of justice. Here every Brother should help others to form a clear social conscience which condemns all forms of injustice even when these are sustained by present day structures in society.

In its use of the word « poor » the Chapter points to the children of people in society today who lack the basic necessities of life, of the unemployed or under-employed, of migrants, of the victims of all kinds of social injustice, of the handicapped, of delinquents. These are the ones requiring help. The poor in the State schools may also need a special form of education which the Brothers could provide, to enable them to rise above their difficult station of life.

Proposition M-13 is a clarion call for action on the part of each district, this action to be realized by 1978.

Our unique ministry

The Brother occupies a « distinct place within the people of God. » (*Decl.* 14, 1) By his vocation he is in the vanguard of a consecrated and committed laity.

In the Church today, there is in process an important reflection on the nature of ministries. There are Brothers personally involved with these questions, as a result of the new studies, their own personal history, or particular sociological circumstances.

The Chapter, in deciding to maintain the exclusively lay character of the Institute, urges the Brothers who feel particularly interested in these questions to participate actively in the research to determine, work out, and make exact the various forms of ministry within the Church.

It urges equally all Brothers to develop in their ministry all the possibilities of the Christian lay state, of baptismal priesthood, and the prophetic vocation.

THE INSTITUTE IN THE YOUNG CHURCHES

A new name

The General Chapter has studied under a new name the presence of the Institute in what was once known as the « missions. » Over the last ten or twenty years, these so-called missionary countries have in fact become independent dioceses with a local hierarchy and laity anxious to undertake their own evangelization.

The term « Young Churches » is borrowed from the Conciliar Decree « Ad Gentes. » In using it the Chapter in no way wished to confine itself to those local Churches which have recently been given their independence under their own local clergy. It includes all local Churches which are in a constant state of renewal and are continually readjusting their relations with the world, taking an active part in the liberation of mankind in Jesus Christ.

Complementary to our document on the Missions

The Chapter of 1966-67 took stock of the work of the missionary Brothers in its document No. 5, « The Missions, » and examined what could be done to make their efforts more efficacious.

The missionary directives of this document still remain valid as regards fundamental principles, principles intended

to revive the missionary spirit in each Brother, together with an openness to and availability for service in the « Missions. »

The Chapter commission, « The Institute in the Young Churches », basing itself on the experience of the last ten years, has tried to produce a document complementary to the preceding one. This new statement deals with the rooting and development of the Institute in those regions commonly known as missionary countries.

Incarnation of the local Institute

The Institute is not merely in the embryonic state in the Young Churches. There are about 2,500 Brothers in various regions, each region being what one might call the « local Institute » by analogy with the « local Church. » Each one is in communion with the whole Institute in its common reference to the charism of De La Salle.

To be truly missionary the Institute must try and integrate itself completely with the people it serves, implanting the Lasallian charism in the local Church according to the essential characteristics of culture, language, life-style, national aspirations and pastoral needs. In this way a local Institute is formed, according to the image of the local Church in which it is inserted.

The establishment of the local Institute depends on the work of both local and missionary Brothers. The local Brothers must rely on their own efforts for the incarnation and development of the local Institute. The missionary Brothers cooperate in a spirit of fraternal solidarity.

Both must consider as matters of high priority the fostering of vocations and the establishing of formation programs to assure the vitality and development of the local Institute.

An integrated community

In this manner the local Institute, in a spirit of openness towards and collaboration with other members of the People of God, will become a vital force in the local Church. By working heart and soul to create a living community, the image of a united family, the Brothers will make their community appealing to young people and will be able to enter into dialogue with them.

Religious community life has always sought to incarnate itself in human life, taking into account the historical context as well as the socio-cultural characteristics of the area. For this reason the Lasallian community can fulfill its prophetic function only if it is really integrated in the milieu, integrated in the spirit of the Gospel, which cannot be reduced to any one culture or civilization.

The Chapter, in view of this integration and respecting the differences in situations, imposes no uniformity of view or structure for all Brothers or for all places. Thus, for example, as long as the essential content of the vows is safeguarded, and as long as there is a commitment to live our Rules and Constitutions, various ways of expressing our religious consecration are acceptable.

Diversified apostolate

The Chapter reaffirms the value and necessity of the presence and activity of the Brother, the Christian educator, in every milieu, Christian or not. This presence will always be personal in approach, showing respect for other religions, actively encouraging Christian ecumenism, and agreeing to maintain a critical dialogue with the local ideologies.

The Brothers' apostolic life, therefore, is not manifested necessarily by a uniform missionary apostolate in the Young Churches. They are called to be witnesses to young people of all classes and all creeds, Their witness may well be gratuitous, with no hope at all of making any disciples.

In these places the school is a privileged means of apostolic action. However, in many places, the period of stability for Christian educational institutions seems to have come to an end. It is also about to come to an end in many other countries, nationalization taking place more and more in the young nations.

The local Institute must, therefore, diversify its educational apostolate. There must be less routine and more creativity, less ownership and more collaboration with the local efforts. Such diversification, however, must be recognized and supported by the community and the district, above all when it is a question of individual commitment.

Unifying structure

The establishment of a local Institute is the responsibility also of the whole Institute, since the incarnated Institute presents a particular and original picture of the Body of the Institute, and reveals it as a mystery of unity in diversity.

The Central Government, the sign and agent of the living unity of the Institute exercises its pastoral authority and prophetic inspiration by seeing that this union is maintained between all sections of the Institute, questioning the Brothers as to their fidelity to the spirit of the Founder, encouraging their efforts at integration and authenticating new and original initiatives.

The organization for assuring this Lasallian unity is SECOLI. It will work in close and continual liaison with the

Institute in the Young Churches in order to sustain their dynamism, and with other areas of the Institute to stimulate missionary thought and cooperation. It facilitates and coordinates the answer to appeals for personnel help, and for financial and technical assistance, not permitting, however, a dehumanizing dependency to develop.

The different Lassallian sectors will also be determined to reflect this union among themselves, grouping in regional units the better to share their resources and organize projects in common. Special relations will also be established between districts of the Young Churches and districts in established centers of Christianity.

In this manner, the Institute will grow in true unity, recognizing itself in the variety of « faces » it assumes, according to the location in which it is incarnated.

CONSECRATION AND VOWS

The reflections and decisions of the Chapter on Consecration and Vows were difficult, limited, but significant. Only one of the three reports of the competent committee was accepted by the general assembly: the subject matter is serious and in evolution.

Contribution of Rules and Constitutions

The Chapter confirmed the Rules and Constitutions of 1967.

In the matter which here concerns us they make a considerable contribution, a renewal in depth from which we have not yet exhausted all the possible benefits (1). Let us recall the main points which this Chapter has made its own.

The pre-eminence of Consecration

Consecration is not confined to the purely arithmetical sum of the juridical observances attached to the vows. It is perceiving and accepting God who consecrates us to Himself, an all-embracing and total response made progressively during one's whole life. The vows express this response

(1) *Rules and Constitutions*, Chapters 4 & 9.
Declaration, especially paragraphs 14, 17, 18, 25, 26.
Consecration and Vows, volume 4.

without exhausting it (2). Most Holy Trinity, I consecrate myself entirely to... and for this purpose, I promise to unite myself... I therefore promise and vow... »

Characteristics of our Vows

While preserving its own specific nature, each element in the Brothers' life (consecration, mission, community) is nuanced and oriented by its integration into the two others: chastity fosters loving relationship with those we serve (R & C 5d), poverty calls our attention to the poor (R & C 4f and 6a), obedience leads us to live in unity (7b).

Specific Vows

The 1967 Rule, confirmed in 1976, initiates renewal of the specific vows, calling on us to proceed from material considerations (gratuity, stability) to a responsible, personal or communal commitment: service of the poor through education, fidelity to God. Thus the historical basis of our consecration and its integration into apostolic and community life is affirmed.

Development over the Last ten years

Guided by the Consecration Commission, the Chapter considered the history of consecration over the last ten years.

This history reveals first of all the *large number of Brothers who have left the religious life*, having had either temporary or perpetual vows, as well as the *decreasing number of new recruits*. There are numerous reasons for this

(2) *Lumen Gentium*, paragraphs 43 to 47. *Perfectae Caritatis*, Para. 1 & 12-15.

which are well enough known since they affect the whole Church.

Some are due to lacunae in initial training, leading to a crisis in adulthood. Others are due to the general trend towards secularisation. Moreover, the greater heed being paid to the laity seems to have diminished esteem for the religious life and the priesthood. Finally the tension arising from the integration of the apostolic and community life into consecrated life has sometimes been sufficiently great to lead to the disassociation.

Instruction of Renovacionis Causam

Realizing the difficulties being felt in all religious families, the Holy See published the instruction *Renovacionis Causam* on January 6, 1969. Our circular 392 gives the full text and the rules of its application to our Institute. It introduces considerable adaptations to the substance and form of the novitiate, as well as to the form and duration of temporary commitment; e.g. the possibility of replacing temporary vows by other forms of commitment. These directives are an unequivocal indication of the will to evolve on the part of the supreme authority in the Church.

Meeting of Brothers Visitors in 1971

All the above factors were operating in 1971 when the Visitors had their meeting midway between the two chapters. They requested that a commission be established to study and evaluate this evolution. This was done and the Commission report was one of the important sources for the work of the Chapter. It dealt with the possibility of making the temporary commitment more personal, of diversifying the form of the definitive commitment, and with the nature and number of the vows, while safeguarding, obviously, the primacy of Consecration and its original character.

The Lasallian Family

During the same meeting in 1971, a proposal was adopted calling for more attention to be paid to former students and friends of the Brothers who wished to have a greater share in their spirit, prayers and mission. From then on, therefore, we hear the « Lasallian Family » spoken of, and even of « different degrees of belonging to the Institute. » Quite recently the World Confederation of Former Students Associations confirmed this evolution by calling itself « The World Confederation of Lasallian Associations, » for its ranks are open to all those who have been mentioned above.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire furnishes valuable information on the evolution in people's mentalities. Two important facts emerge:

A perceptible unease: a large minority of Brothers show visible concern about the following questions: « Does consecration necessarily imply vows? » (Q 3028) — The ultimate meaning of the vows (Q 3029) — The maintenance or not of the permanent commitment (Q 3032). For certain age groups the proportion reaches a majority. (Q 3029, art. 1 and 2 added together, age group 30-36 yrs. »

Change of emphasis

In answer to questions 3030 and 3031: « If there were only one vow, I should choose..., » the younger members showed a preference for chastity and educational service of the poor, the older Brothers for obedience and fidelity. It is to be noted that no question dealt with a possible vow of Association which had been asked for by many regional and district chapters (Cf. following).

Regional and District Chapters

Personal notes were too few to give an overall picture. On the other hand many district and regional chapters stated foreseeable changes and dwelt at even greater length on the wishes of the Brothers, especially of those with temporary commitment. For example, on giving the formula of expression a more personal note, on the length of temporary commitment, on the choice between perpetual vows and other forms of commitment to express the definitive gift of self to God, of the opportuneness of introducing a specific vow of Association at a time when our unity is threatened by our numerical diminution and increasing diversification of apostolates.

Conclusions

The Chapter found abundant evidence to show that we are in a situation of change. In stating its position, it showed the same uncertainty as the rest of the Institute. The doctrine put before us by the Council and by the 1966-67 Chapter has not been sufficiently assimilated. In too many cases it has been unable to contain the force of the evolution of the last 10 years. Hence the Chapter shows good judgment in not taking premature measures, in giving honest information, and in manifesting an openness to the future by adopting measures which, as mentioned earlier, are limited but significant.

Limited: the fundamental principles concerning the vows are maintained and any adaptations are accompanied by safeguards.

Significant: they fulfil the wishes of the youngest among us, including the future professed, in assuring the human and religious truth of their commitment. Both in refraining from

certain decisions and in making others, the Chapter tried to face the reality of the current situation squarely and respond prudently. The most significant decision is that which entrusts the General Council with the continuation of the research and with giving the Institute guidance in the matter. The problems are there and the Chapter has no intention of covering them up. But, if instead of troubling us they are to give us new impetus, propositions have not merely to be voted, they must find acceptance and an echo in the heart of each one of us. That will be the task of *Continued Formation* and the 40th General Chapter has fully committed the Institute in that direction.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Following the direction of the commission charged with the study of community life, the Chapter refused to theorize any more on the subject. It preferred to examine and reflect upon community life as it is lived in the Institute today. The reflection is organized around three themes:

1. The community constantly creates and re-creates itself.
2. The community lives profoundly.
3. The community implements the principle of subsidiarity.

The Community constantly creates and re-creates itself: the Community plan

The last ten years have seen significant changes in the relationship between community and mission. On the one hand there has been a continuation of communities with the traditional relationship to the institutions they animate. On the other hand new forms of community life have surfaced, forms not existing in the Institute, at least on a significant scale, before this time. These communities have developed out of a desire on the part of the Brothers to respond in an effective manner to new apostolic needs.

In both cases questions have been raised in all sections of the Institute: What are the criteria for founding a new community or renewing an existing community? The Chapter did not think in terms of formulae which produce automatic results, but rather of questions to stimulate the community's growth, and to examine its fundamental *raison d'être*: What are the real intentions of the community? What is its apostolic thrust? Is there a living fidelity to the Founder?

These questions provide a point of departure for formulating the Community Plan. This plan expresses the objectives of the community, and specifies the means to attain them. It indicates also a precise program for evaluating progress. In formulating the plan the Brothers try to become sensitive to the presence of the Spirit in their life and to His call upon them to serve others.

The Community lives profoundly

The internal life of the community must permit each Brother to develop normally and integrally. This principle affirmed by the Chapter calls for a truthful and realistic examination. For example, until now the affective life has all too often been spoken of as if it were an accidental dimension of the Brothers' life. The truth is, however, that a deep, personal life, solitude, and friendship are essential parts of our existence. Moreover, the Chapter proposes means for deepening interpersonal relationships. Certainly, there has been notable progress in this area. Relationships among the Brothers seem more significant in general, but often enough they remain rather superficial. How many Brothers, for example, have the nerve to speak to one another about their personal prayer? Community relationships are too often shallow; they need to be enriched, to become more demanding, not, of

course, to the extent of giving up moments of more relaxed conversation on day to day topics.

A life of prayer is at the heart of our community life. It is a fact that community prayer has suffered in a number of areas of the Institute. On the other hand communities are searching for new approaches to community prayer and are being enriched by contacts with groups engaged in renewed forms of prayer. It is important to make a sustained and continuous effort in this important dimension of the Brothers' life. More than anything else, the Brothers must grasp more clearly their own personal responsibility for community prayer, as well as the concept of co-responsibility as members of the community. Only in this way can they prevent their common prayer life from being governed by the feelings and moods of the moment. The District Chapter on its part must establish complementary orientations, adapted to local needs. In this effort at renewal the General Chapter recommends particularly that the Brothers pay great attention to the Founder: for example, by examining present developments in the light of the spirit of faith, as it appears in the *Meditations for Time of Retreat*.

Spirit of subsidiarity

Almost everywhere in the Institute the spirit of subsidiarity is gradually taking hold. There are indications of mutual confidence and of freedom with responsibility. Nevertheless, in the face of certain difficulties, clarification is needed. The principle of subsidiarity presupposes a double movement: the first, personal initiative on the part of each individual, to the extent of his responsibilities; second, concern to assure a relationship of unity with other levels of authority and to give them necessary support.

Subsidiarity rejects individualism and arbitrariness. It is a means of assuring a communion of persons, foundation of our brotherhood. This communion is manifested first of all at the center of each group, but it is established also among all the various levels which make up the Institute, and all the more, the Church. Authority is exercised within the context of co-responsibility. This understanding of subsidiarity will bring about a renewal of spirit in our communities and in our districts.

Conclusion

The Chapter urges the Brothers to create fraternal and apostolic communities, communities which will always witness to the following:

1. A spirit rooted in the Gospel, lived in the Lasallian tradition.
2. A relationship with God in the midst of daily life, sign, according to the Founder, of the spirit of faith.
3. Prophetic action, rendering Christ's love for young people and the poor present and active everywhere the Brothers serve.
4. A community commitment to the educational service of the young, especially the most deprived among them.
5. A Community Plan which specifies how the essential elements of the Brothers' common life will be lived (apostolate, life of prayer, interpersonal relationships) and effectively constitutes an instrument of continuing formation.

This quest for more meaningful and significant brotherhood can be realized. The numerous « tentative successes »

noted by the Chapter indicate this possibility. Guided by faith and hope, this effort opens to us a completely new opportunity: that of rendering our communities attractive to the many young people still challenged by the ideal of St. John Baptist De La Salle, young people who have a right to find that ideal lived in the communities of the Brothers.

FORMATION

Why Continued Formation?

The euphoria which followed the Council gave place all too quickly to a period of disenchantment and crisis. The far reaching and unexpected results of the decrees of Vatican II came as a surprise even to their authors.

In our Institute similar results followed the 1966 Chapter. Optimism gave way to perplexity. As Brothers, we risk being overcome by fear or discouragement at the vast horizons which have opened up and by the questions which have been raised.

But we cannot stop the forces unleashed by the Council or the Chapter. The Spirit of God is at work in the history of men and institutions, as well as in the succession of events.

The crisis felt in the present civilization, the profound disillusionment of many who are not satisfied with material comforts and are waiting for « something » that always seems out of their reach, the sufferings of many others oppressed by injustice, poverty, and slavery, are so many calls for renewal in our religious life.

We are called to leave our security and to live in a state of « exodus » similar to that of our Founder's experience and spiritual teaching. He gave himself up to God's leadership which led him from one commitment to another on an entirely unexpected route.

If many Brothers have left the Institute, it is no doubt because they have not been able to make a suitable renewal in their religious life. If so few young men are attracted by our life, it is again because we do not do enough to show that we are making a success of the religious consecration we live in the Church, in response to the needs of the world and of youth.

Continued Formation

Nevertheless, there are many Brothers who aspire after a deeply religious life, who seek to revitalize their life of personal and community prayer, who wish to renew themselves in their catechetical mission and create the necessary conditions in order that the Word of God might challenge the youth of today.

Consequently, the General Chapter directs the Brothers to organize on an annual basis personal and community programs of continued formation. It instructs Visitors, District Councils, District Chapters, and the General Council to give high priority to developing and promoting continued formation. It reaffirms the value of the International Lasallian Center (CIL). In all of these decisions the Chapter manifests its desire that programs of continued formation produce practical results in the life of the Brothers, communities, districts, and Institute generally.

As a result of these programs, the Brothers, hopefully, will learn to live their personal and community commitments more profoundly. They will have sufficient light and strength to be living witnesses to the presence of God among men, to the liberating influence of his Spirit and the tenderness of his love. The whole Institute will be renewed in meeting the most urgent needs of young people.

Continued formation promotes the existence of apostolic communities which are open to the young and which live the words of the Gospel: « Come and see. » This kind of fraternal living is the best recommendation the Institute can give to young men, and is the most efficacious invitation we can extend to encourage them to follow the life of the Brother of the Christian Schools.

Fostering of Vocations and Recruitment

Renewal, the fruit of continued formation, revives the meaning of « Church » in each Brother. It provides him with an incentive to work for the vocations the Church needs to continue her mission.

In a real sense, therefore, the Chapter sees every Brother and every community as intimately involved in fostering vocations and in recruitment. Nevertheless, the Chapter also requires the Visitors to appoint one or more Brothers on a full-time basis to be in charge of vocations and recruitment in each district. The Visitor himself is to encourage a practical concern for vocations in his visits to each community. In addition the Chapter charges the General Council to give its full support to the work of fostering vocations and of recruitment.

Initial Formation

The atmosphere created by our apostolic communities will be the best stimulus for forming postulants and novices to religious life. They will be proud to contribute their talent to fulfilling the mission of the Institute, through which they realize their vocation and hear the call of the Spirit.

In this area of initial formation the Chapter calls for special sessions of CIL to continue the search for more effective programs and to help in the training of formation personnel. It provides some guidelines for the postulancy, as well as for the years preceding perpetual profession, and calls for commissions at every level of the Institute to animate and evaluate progress in formation work. Each district or region has the responsibility of creating an integral program, well-adapted to local needs.

Conclusion

In the present « journey, » Springtime is approaching in the religious life of the Brother, sign and educator of a new type of follower of Christ. This, however, can only be brought about by a return to the requirements of the inspiration of St. John Baptist De La Salle and in meeting once again the needs of the world in which God wishes us to live.

GOVERNMENT

Introduction

The General Chapter has worked on the reorganization of the government in the Institute very carefully, being sensitive to the suggestions and notes from the Brothers as well as the conclusions of District and Regional Chapters. The experience of individual members of the commission and the results from the Institute Questionnaire also served as sources of information in the discussions which were intended to create a form of government that would be best suited for our time.

Reasons for changes in government

These changes are intended to emphasize the pastoral role of central and local governments and to further implement the concept of subsidiarity already adopted by the 1966-67 General Chapter. The Chapter was aware of the need to stress the co-responsibility of the Brothers at all levels, community, district and Center.

Diversity in the Institute: Need for communication

This Chapter recognizes the diversity that exists between different regions and the need for greater communication

between the Center and Districts, and between Districts and other regions. Thus the Superior or his Councillors may visit the Brothers to be of service, or, if the need arises, to give orientations and directives. The General Council will also periodically send information through various means, on the subjects and conclusions of the General Council's own discussions.

Community: responsibility of all Brothers

Each community has responsibility for establishing its goals and designing the means to use to achieve them. The Brothers of the community determine the rhythm of the daily and weekly prayer life of the community, share in the responsibilities of its materials resources and share in the apostolic mission of the community. The members meet once a year with the Brother Visitor to evaluate how they have achieved the community's established religious and apostolic goals. The Brother Director promotes unity in the community and between the community and district. He exercises his responsibility by encouraging the Brothers to develop their prayer life and the apostolate in the community; by promoting the human, professional and religious development of the Brothers; by maintaining a personal dialogue with each member of the community; and, by maintaining communication with other communities, with the district, and with the local Church.

As a general rule, all the Brothers participate in the government and animation of the community. When the community judges it necessary or desirable, it may form a Community Council to assist the Brother Director in the routine management of community affairs, but the community retains the fundamental responsibility for decisions relating to the

spiritual and apostolic life of the community, as well as the disposition of material resources.

The Districts as basic unit in the Institute

The District is the expression of the living union that exists among the communities and Brothers. The principal function of district government is, therefore, to promote this unity, by which communities and Brothers carry out their mission and live their consecrated lives. The District serves as the link with the worldwide Institute and with other Districts that are in close association in a given region. Through the participation of all the Brothers, under the leadership of the Brother Visitor, the District Chapter and the District Council, the District takes the steps necessary to strengthen its recruitment, formation, community life, religious life, and apostolic work.

Participatory Government in the District Chapter

The District Chapter is the legislative and pastoral assembly of the Brothers. It is a means for all the Brothers to share in the government of the District. The Brother Visitor exercises executive power in the District, in accordance with the directives of the General Chapter and the District Chapter. In the exercise of his office he is aided by a Council to whom he presents his plans for the administration of the District. He visits the communities and takes this opportunity for a pastoral evaluation of the community life, and fosters cooperation among the communities. He supplies the Superior General and General Council with an annual summary report and communicates to the Brothers and com-

munities the advice and directives received from the General Council.

Regions

Districts may group themselves into regions in order to take common action and prevent isolation. This grouping also facilitates cooperation with local churches and provides a stronger sense of cohesion among Districts. Each region is free to devise its own government structure, and whenever necessary, should secure the necessary approval from the Superior General for its statutes, governing activities and relationships.

Central Government: Its role and style

Perhaps the greatest changes in government have been brought about at the level of the Central Government of the Institute. The Superior has a greatly reduced General Council with which he is urged to form a community. The Commission was aware that, in order to promote unity, communication and leadership at all levels in the Institute, the members of the General Council must first of all provide cohesiveness and complementarity, if their pastoral responsibility is to give an example of fidelity. They must also show competence and a representative quality, in view of the diverse cultures in the various regions of the Institute.

To promote unity, communication and leadership at all levels, the Superior or one or more Councillors will meet with the responsible Brothers in their Districts and will arrange to meet the Brothers Visitors or their representatives in Rome. The preservation of the unity and the cohesion of the Institute depends, in great part, on the interaction of the

General Council and the Districts. This interaction is particularly important now that there are no Regional Assistants.

The Superior General: Collegiality

The Superior General is the first representative of the Institute. He acts in the name of the Institute, both in relation to ecclesiastical hierarchy and in contact with other authorities.

In a collegial manner he is often in consultation with the General Council and exercises executive power in the Institute. He also makes decisions in accordance with Canon Law and the Law particular to the Institute. He names the directors of the general administrative services of the Central Government, appoints the Visitors and makes other appointments as empowered by the Chapter.

Conclusion

In summary, the 40th General Chapter has restructured the government at all levels of the Institute to ensure a living unity in the midst of diversity. There is greater autonomy, but a stronger authority now resides in the participation of all Brothers in government. Communication between and among levels in the Institute is called for, a communication characterised by personal concern, co-responsibility and a desire to live together in our common search for the spirit and living charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

THIRD SECTION
PROPOSITIONS VOTED BY THE 40th
GENERAL CHAPTER

In the preceding pages, we have read the History of the Chapter as well as a short presentation of the work of the different Chapter Commissions.

The following pages contain a list of all the propositions voted upon and accepted by the 40th General Chapter. These propositions are classified under six titles which have been placed in the following order:

- Mission
- The Institute in the Young Churches
- Consecration and vows
- Community
- Formation
- Government

Some sub-titles, generally of Chapter origin, have been placed to help in understanding the text. On the whole, these propositions affirm or reaffirm certain basic principles, and give some line of practical action in the spirit of the larger themes mentioned above.

Each of the 95 propositions voted by the General Chapter has been numbered for easy classification.

THE MISSION (Prop. 1-18)

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Christian education**
- 3. Ministry of the Word**
- 4. Orientations concerning the poor and justice**
- 5. Question of the priesthood In the Institute**

THE INSTITUTE IN THE YOUNG CHURCHES (Prop. 19-34)

- 1. Call of the young Churches**
- 2. Implantation of the « local Institute »**
- 3. Attitude with regard to the dangers of nationalisation**
- 4. Missionary commitment**
- 5. Relations with the Central Government**

CONSECRATION AND VOWS (Prop. 35-50)

- 1. Consecration**
- 2. Definitive commitment**
- 3. Temporary commitment**
- 4. Degrees of belonging to the Institute**
- 5. Admission to profession**
- 6. Frequency of Chapters**

COMMUNITY LIFE (Prop. 51-61)

- 1. The Community which is continually creating and re-creating itself - Criteria for the foundation and appreciation of Communities**
- 2. Living a more profound Community life**
- 3. A spirit of subsidiarity**

FORMATION (Prop. 62-74)

- 1. Fostering vocations and recruitment**
- 2. Initial formation**
- 3. Continued formation**

GOVERNMENT (Prop. 75-90)

- 1. Central Government**
- 2. Finances**

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHAPTER (Prop. 91-93)

- 1. Communicating the Chapter results to the Brothers**
- 2. Post-Capltular commission**

VARIA

- 1. The « Alès » situation**
- 2. The « Fllippin » question**

THE MISSION (Prop. 1-18)

I - Introduction

1. The General Chapter re-affirms the validity of the Declaration and the Rules in all that concerns the MISSION of the Brother.

Therefore, the Brothers must integrate personally, as well in their communities as in their institutions, the components of Christian education, the ministry of the word, the service of the poor, and action on behalf of justice in the world.

The districts must adopt an appropriate plan to help the Brothers apply the content of these texts to themselves personally and interiorly, and to dedicate themselves to the needs and appeals of the Church and of the world.

II - Christian education

2. Each Brother, each community, and each district will analyze and evaluate their activities regularly, to determine whether they do or do not respond to real local needs, to the mission of the Institute, whether they listen to the needs of the young, and whether they fit into the priorities of a total pastoral effort.

3. Fidelity to the Founder should be inventive. It urges us today to renew the school profoundly, and to devise new means toward the formation and evangelization of young persons, especially the poor. For the improvement and evaluation of our schools, as well as for that of the entire educative community, the coordinators of education of each district must apply the following norms:

— that the instruction be incarnated in the milieu of the student's life and built around his interests;

— that education, in all its aspects, put into action those dynamic methods which aid the young person to know himself and to be socially at ease;

— that the style of education favor creativity, a critical sense, and a sense of responsibility;

— that the ambience be genuinely communitarian, favorable to the proclamation of the Gospel;

— that the continuing education of adults be envisioned.

Whenever the Brothers are serving in other educational works, they will adopt the same criteria as a community, as elements they desire to realize « together and by association,» whatever the educational work they perform individually.

4. Inspiring themselves by Gospel principles, the Brothers will organize the school and their other works in such a way that they allow a relational style based on fraternity among the different groups which make up the work. These relationships will be based on mutual respect, and on a practical interest in favor of justice. The Brothers will make it a duty to help young persons form their judgment and become sensitive regarding injustices which are institutionalized and maintained by social, political and economic systems.

5. In many countries, freedom of education makes possible the organization and functioning of the Christian educational community. An active and vigilant attitude is necessary relative to ideologies and policies which threaten this freedom. The Brothers will take on their responsibilities in this matter, working with public and private associations which protect this freedom and make it effective for all social classes.

6. The Brothers will share their Lasallian spirituality and the leadership of their works with all the members of the educational community. They will be concerned with the continuing formation of those persons and will make them aware of the different degrees of belonging to what is called « the Lasallian family. » They will invite their alumni and co-workers to take part in movements that work for social justice and the promotion of the human person.

7. The Brother, whatever his apostolate, must interiorize his mission and consider himself personally chosen and sent by the Institute. Similarly, he will share his apostolic experience with his community and his district, from whom he will receive in return support and a listening attitude.

8. The community and the district council must use discernment regarding all new apostolic undertakings. This reflection should be carried on in an evangelical spirit, considering the apostolic goal of the Institute, and with a great respect for individual persons.

III - Ministry of the word

9. Personal experience in faith is essential for religious education to be fruitful. « The fundamental problem of the

mission of the Brother is that of his personal living faith in Christ Jesus, the Saviour. » (C.I.C. App. 23) The Brother will develop his life of faith through prayer and through the challenge of daily life.

10. The catechetical mission of the Brother may take different forms compatible with his vocation. It is incumbent on communities and districts to foster creativity in this field by stimulating new methods, new locales, and new techniques that make possible the evangelization of the young. Such planning calls for the continual collaboration of qualified lay colleagues.

11. Communities will initiate among pupils (young and adult), alumni, and others, faith communities and apostolic movements whose members will give themselves to a deep study of their own lives in the light of the Gospel, to communal worship, and to the service of mankind.

12. District will re-think their policies regarding formation and re-training of Brothers and their colleagues in the area of religious instruction, so that all educators, and not only some specialists, will receive adequate formation in theology, counselling, and human sciences.

IV - Orientations concerning the poor and justice

13. On the subject of the mission for the educational service of the poor and the effort on behalf of justice, the General Chapter adopts the following orientations:

A) It invites the Brothers:

— to develop, personally and in community, new ini-

tiatives with regard to the poor, with whom they must be concerned in virtue of their specific vocation;

— to work directly in the educational service of economically poor young persons (children of laborers, of under-employed persons, of migrants), of the victims of social injustice, of the handicapped, of delinquents;

— to consider this commitment an essential element in the spiritual renewal of each Brother;

— to volunteer for this educational service of the poor wherever the most urgent needs present themselves.

B) It invites the districts:

— to see to it that the orientation towards the direct service of the poor becomes the rule rather than the exception in district priorities;

— to assure that the formation of the Brothers takes note of these directions;

— to place no obstacle, even under the plea of maintaining existing works, to Brothers who volunteer for this educational service.

14. Each district will submit, before December 1978, a report to the General Council in which it will show how it has put into practice (and in the immediate future will do so) the principles of the Declaration and the orientations of the present Chapter concerning the educational service of the poor and action on behalf of justice. Annual review and updating by the district itself is also called for.

15. Districts in developed countries will evaluate their contribution to the service of the young churches in the Third World.

V - Question of the priesthood in the Institute

16. The 40th General Chapter maintains the exclusively lay character of the Institute. Therefore, it affirms that the priesthood — as it is now ordinarily known in the Church — is not to be introduced into the Institute.

17. The Brothers should develop in their ministry all the possibilities of the Christian lay state, of baptismal priesthood, and the prophetic vocation. In their educative action, they will always have in mind to favor the development of a laity called to assume growing responsibilities in the Church.

18. So that the Institute may continue to fulfil better its proper ministry, in fidelity to the dynamic charism of its foundation, the 40th General Chapter asks the Brothers to participate actively in the research to determine, work out, and make exact the various forms of ministry within the Church,

— by participating in current thinking and by supporting the specific mission of the Brother,

— by means of an educative and pastoral action, in solidarity with other evangelizing forces at work in their milieu.

THE INSTITUTE IN THE YOUNG CHURCHES (Prop. 19-34)

I - Call of the young Churches

19. Every Brother participates in the mission of Christ and of His Church by the evangelical witness of his life devoted to the Christian education of youth, more especially that of the underprivileged.

That an ever renewed consciousness of this mission pledge the Brothers to make themselves available to the call of underprivileged youth, and even to leave their country to carry the Christian Message of Salvation to the youth elsewhere.

II - Implantation of the « Local Institute »

20. Every Lasallian establishment incarnates itself with the Local Church in the culture, the language, the life-style, in the legitimate aspirations of the people and the needs of the pastoral effort. This incarnation is to be achieved in accordance with the charism of the Institute.

21. The Local Brothers who are primarily responsible in this movement must themselves give the lead for the incarnation and development of the Institute in the Local Church.

22. The Missionary Brothers are requested to collaborate (S. C. Evang. 1969) in fraternal solidarity with the Local Brothers for this implantation of the Institute.

23. In its orientations the General Chapter respects the diversity arising from different situations and mentalities. It leaves to the Regions or Districts, in dialogue with the General Council, to determine:

— what regards « poverty-sharing », and the exigencies of the concept of family: the matter of aid, signs of solidarity etc.

— what pertains to prayer so as to encourage the Brothers to discover rhythms and forms of prayer appropriate to the genius of the country.

24. Taking into account the various civilisations and cultures, and along the line of « the incarnation of the Local Institute », we accept pluralism in the expression of the vows, provided that this expression remains in agreement with the Rule and Constitutions.

25. In view of the urgent needs of the Young Churches and the rapidly changing conditions of the apostolate, the Brothers, urged by Faith towards their mission, will strive to find local vocations to the Institute.

26. Within the framework of the process of establishing the « Local Institute », the Missionary Brothers, in those sectors where they are in the majority, should energetically prepare the Local Brothers to assume responsibility for their area.

III - Attitude with regard to the dangers of nationalisation

As nationalisation of our works is already a reality in several countries and seems probable in others, it is important:

27. To form the Brothers humanly, professionally and religiously so that they can adapt themselves more easily to possible changes.

28. Prudently to set up in the Districts a certain diversity in their apostolic works, always in favour of the Christian education of the young, and more particularly of the poor.

These diverse forms of the apostolate, accepted and supported by the community and the District, are to be regarded as a genuine apostolate of the Brothers.

Besides, this diversification in no way excludes the school as the privileged means of the apostolate there where the school is possible and where, suitably adapted, it answers to the needs of the country.

29. Where it is possible and where circumstances require it, gradually to entrust to lay people the responsibilities for our works. These then become little by little the concern of those who commit themselves more fully in the evangelical service of the Church. In this way, the community will become more dissociated from, and less the owners of these works.

IV - Missionary commitment

30. In a spirit of continual and fraternal solidarity towards the Missionary Brothers;

faced with certain risks arising from the consequences of political or national evolution;

and to guarantee in all circumstances frank collaboration between the Missionary Brothers, their Districts of origin and the Local Brothers:

— The missionary service of the Missionary Brothers should henceforth be determined by a commitment of the kind known as « Fidei Donum » in the Districts and sectors of the Young Churches.

It will be for predetermined and renewable periods of service, and will lay down precise modalities whereby these Brothers may periodically or definitively be reintegrated into their District of origin.

V - Relations with the Central Government

31. Every establishment depends on the « Body of the Institute » and must therefore be authenticated by the different levels of structure of government and of animation which engage to assure its future.

32. Preferential attention should be given by the Central Administration to those sectors which are poor, isolated, far from the Centre, which is often the case of areas of the Institute in the Young Churches.

33. SECOLI, as the central organ of service of the Institute towards the Young Churches, will be charged with the task of coordinating and animating its missionary effort.

As such it will:

a. - gather, elaborate and diffuse throughout the Institute information regarding our works and projects in the mission areas as well as the principles which should animate our missionary activity;

b. - help the General Council in those decisions required by the Institute's collective responsibility in the Young Churches: analysing situations, studying our foundations and their development in the missionary effort, allocating spheres of responsibility as well as resources in personnel and money, encouraging exchanges on the international level etc.

c. - manifest a special concern without eliminating the proper responsibility of the Districts concerned:

— to respond to the needs of the Institute in the Young Churches with regard to formation (recruitment, basic formation, continued formation, the training of formators...) and the preparation of missionaries;

— to provide for the retirement of aged missionaries and local Brothers where this is necessary as well as for our Brothers in situations of distress.

34 SECOLI is a service of the General Council:

— it shall be endowed with adequate personnel;

— it will work in close collaboration with the other services of the General Council, and also;

— in close liaison with the Mission Secretariats of the Districts.

CONSECRATION AND VOWS (Prop. 35-50)

I - Consecration

General Proposition

35. The Chapter asks the General Council to follow up the discussion and research that is going on concerning Consecration, and also that it provide direction for the Institute in this area; that it make available to the Brothers instruments of research and discussion on the Founder's teaching on Consecration and the identity of the Brother.

II - Definitive commitment

36. The general rule is maintained that requires a definitive commitment.

37. The general rule is likewise maintained that the definitive commitment be expressed by Perpetual Vows.

38. By way of exception, in the judgment of the Brother Visitor and his Council and with the approbation of the Brother Superior, a Brother may be authorized:

- a) To choose the moment of his definitive commitment;

b) To express his commitment by vows or promises indefinitely renewed.

III - Temporary Commitment

39. During all the period preparatory to the definitive commitment, the Superiors of the Institute at every level shall be careful to foster the personalization of the progress of the young Brother within the framework of the constitutive elements in the vocation of a Brother.

40. The period preparatory to the definitive commitment ought to favour a process of spiritual maturity, a growth in faith and an appreciation of the values which motivate commitment.

41. The Brother may express his temporary commitment in the Institute by either vows, promises or another form of commitment approved by the Brother Superior and his Council.

42. While respecting the personalization that is necessary, even in the formulation of temporary commitment, its essential content will be determined in such a way that some points for consideration, related to the Rules and Constitutions, be furnished to those involved.

IV - Degrees of belonging to the Institute

43. The Novices and the Brothers who are bound to the Congregation by religious profession are members of the Institute.

44. In addition to the postulants, either young men or men of mature age can be associated with the apostolic activity and the community life of the Brothers without having to make religious profession (their status and contractual arrangements would have to be made precise by the community in agreement with the District).

45. Individual persons or groups of persons can be associated with the apostolic activity and to the life of prayer of the Brothers without sharing completely in their community life.

V - Admission to profession

46. Admission of a Brother to temporary profession is the responsibility of the District. In case of refusal the subject can make an appeal to the Brother Superior.

47. It is a matter of obligation that definitive admission and refusal of admission of a Brother to the Institute, once it is decided within the District, be submitted to the approval of the Brother Superior.

48. Admission of a Brother to temporary or to definitive commitment will be determined in the framework of the District. The request of the candidate will be examined in the course of one single Chapter of Vows whose composition will be determined by the District Chapter.

This Chapter should allow dialogue between the Brother who asks for admission and his Community. The Brother may be present himself at the Chapter of Vows or he could explain by letter the basic reasons for his request.

VI - Frequency of Chapters

49. A Chapter, sometimes called a « Chapter of Vows » always takes place before the first commitment and also before definitive commitment.

50. Other « Chapters of Vows » are left to the discretion of the District Chapters or District Councils, according to the situation and needs of each area.

COMMUNITY LIFE (Prop. 51-61)

I - The Community which is continually creating and re-creating itself - Criteria for the foundation and appreciation of Communities

51. *Basic Principles:*

— Community Life is an essential element in the Brother's life.

It must be kept in mind that the community is always:

a) a group of consecrated persons, co-responsible each for the spiritual life of the group.

b) seeking for the guidance of the Spirit in the individual and personal commitments of its members.

c) apostolic, that is, united in an educational mission.

d) warm and fraternal, where the Brothers love each other and are open to outsiders.

— However, it must be admitted that certain communities manifest one or other of these criteria to a higher degree. The Institute recognizes that there are different forms of community, provided that the competent authority can apply the following criteria to them in the same way as to the other communities.

52. Pastoral criteria:

That the following be the usual criteria for the evaluation of the communities by the Brothers Visitors and their Councils and even by the communities themselves:

Truth: What are the real reasons of those forming the community? (Assistance in formulating them).

Poverty: Is there an openness, an availability, a sense of poverty, of sharing, or on the contrary, a seeking for security, a refusing to be disturbed, a freedom from all constraint?

Reality: To whom is the community reaching out? What is the neighborhood? Who are the young people to whom the overall pastoral work is addressed? What are the actual and real goals and objectives of the community?

Gospel witness: What kind of witness, of fraternity, of prayer life, of response to injustice?

Lasallian: In what way does this community, this educational commitment challenge a disciple of D.L.S.? Does the community consider its goals and objectives and community happenings in the light of the spiritual itinerary of D.L.S.?

53. Community goals and objectives:

At the beginning of each year the Brothers will make out or revise their community goals and objectives concerning the life of prayer, the apostolate, leisure time, and internal organization.

These various activities are planned in a balanced manner as to promote spiritual life and human growth.

These goals and objectives are submitted to the Brother Visitor for his approval and form the object of regular evaluations throughout the year.

II - Living a more profound Community life

a) The internal life of the community: the affective life and interpersonal relationships

54. Those in charge of the life of the community as well as those in charge of the District should take all the necessary means to create and to maintain a climate in each community where each Brother can feel free to express his ideas, where he can enjoy his leisure, and where he can find some self-satisfying and worthwhile activity.

Each Brother should pay special attention to maintaining harmony in his affective life by a high degree of communication with his Brothers, by his personal integration into the life of the community, and by his personal enthusiasm for his daily work.

It is the duty of the Brother Director, the Brother Visitor, and the entire community to pay fraternal attention to a Brother who is worried, disturbed, or living on the fringes of the community.

55. That, in all charity,

the Brother... for whom community life seems impossible,
... whose habitual behavior gives a counter-witness,

... for whom consecrated celibacy is a burden too heavy
to bear and is the cause of emotional disturbance,

should be assisted... in recognizing his real situation,

... in finding the means to live his commitment more
normally and adjust his life accordingly,

... even, in reconsidering his belonging to the Institute, after all other means have been tried.

56. The personal interview of the Brother with the Brother Director is one of the best means to promote communication within the community.

It is the responsibility of the Brother as well as the Brother Director to see that the interview is held. The personal interview becomes one of the agenda items for the community discussion when it makes out its goals and objectives.

Each Brother is to arrange with the Brother Director the form and frequency of this interview.

b) *Life of prayer*

57. There has been observed a general weakening of the prayer life in the communities of the Institute, and also there has been noticed in certain communities a searching after spiritual renewal. Therefore, the General Chapter makes an urgent appeal to each Brother and to those in charge at all levels to commit themselves to a serious and profound renewal of the prayer life of the community.

The General Chapter recommends to each Brother in a very special way, to participate in the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the source of his religious and apostolic life.

The General Chapter asks that the community schedule provides for daily prayer, and the community celebration of the Eucharist as often as possible.

58. *The Institute recognizes that:*

— Daily prayer and daily Mass are essential sources of the spiritual and apostolic life.

— The Brother is primarily responsible for his own

prayer life and is co-responsible for the prayer of the community.

— The community has the responsibility for organizing the order, time, and rhythm of the various exercises of prayer.

— The responsibility of the District is to promote and assist and approve the community plan of prayer according to its goals and objectives.

The criteria for the discernment and decisions regarding the community life of prayer are, among others:

— the spirituality of the Founder

— the guidelines of the Rule, Chapter X

— the decisions of the District Chapter, District Councils, and General Chapter in this matter.

This means, therefore, that the communities determine the daily and weekly pattern... and specify the community prayers, meditations, Mass, community meetings and other forms of prayer agreed upon by the Brothers. They will then submit their plan to the Brother Visitor and it will then only have the strength of « constitutions » on his approval.

59. *To nourish* their faith and renew their religious life, the Brothers will set aside a sufficient time for spiritual reading and the study of their faith. They will personally take the means to see that this is effectively done and the community will do likewise.

Attentive to the recommendations of the Church and faithful to the traditions of the Institute, the Brothers will frequently honor the Most Blessed Virgin Mary by the rosary or some other practice of devotion to her in accord with the

spirit of the liturgy, and Marian theology. This may be done in private or in community.

III - A spirit of subsidiarity

60. *The General Chapter reaffirms:*

a) The validity and propriety of the Principle of Subsidiarity understood as a principle of action which calls upon two drives that are inseparably united to each other:

the responsible initiative of each person, or each structure of government, in its own domain;

the mutual respect of and support for each other, whether it be for persons or structures on the same level or at different levels. This respect and support take into account the common good and the authority which belongs to each person and each structure.

b) The Brother Director's function as the responsible leader in the life of the community.

61. *It is urgent:*

Short term: to provide for the training and re-training of those in charge of communities.

Long term: to assure for all the Brothers, especially those still in basic training, a serious preparation in human, theological, and pastoral studies.

FORMATION (Prop. 62-74)

I - Vocation forming and recruiting

62. The Brothers who form the team engaged in the fostering of vocations and of recruiting, must work in close co-operation with the diocesan authorities engaged in the same work. As far as possible, Brothers Visitors should meet those who are in charge of these organizations.

63. The General Council will be expected to give its fullest support in fostering vocations and recruiting. It will regularly request information on any initiatives taken in this matter by the districts and will communicate this to the Institute. It will organize meetings of Brothers in charge of fostering vocations and recruiting in order to disseminate the information they may have and to assess the information and to encourage the creativity.

64. According to local conditions, Brothers Visitors should name one or more Brothers to be in charge of fostering vocations and of recruiting. They should be on a full time basis and their principal role will be to assist the commission on vocation to our Institute.

The Brothers Visitors, when they visit the communities, should assess with the Brothers their concern and what action they are taking to favor vocations and recruiting.

II - Initial formation

65. In the next ten years, at least two sessions of C.I.L. will be planned for the benefit of personnel in charge of initial formation. The principal objectives of these sessions will be to set out the guidelines for initial formation adapted to local needs and faithful to the inspiration of the Founder. The results of these reflections of these sessions will be communicated to the districts and to those in charge of formation.

66. The postulancy is one stage of initial formation which has its own distinct organization different from that of the juniorate and novitiate. It must last sufficiently long to allow the postulants to get to know the Institute from the inside by taking part in apostolic and community life.

67. Only those Brothers will be allowed to make a final commitment who have lived full time for three years in a community and doing apostolic work.

68. a) Commissions should be created on a level with the General Council and of Visitors Conferences and in the districts for animation of the formation programs and for an assessment of their progress.

b) In each district or region, the Formation commission must draw up a plan for all stages of initial formation which shall be coherent and adapted to local needs. This plan must be approved by the competent authority for initial formation and assessed regularly.

69. In order that the young Brothers be fully integrated into the life of the District and Institute, it is necessary for them to be able to take part like any other Brother at various meetings of the district held for the purpose of reflection and discussion or decisions (Chapters, Commissions, Councils).

III - Continued formation

70. The Brothers individually and in community are the first responsible for their continued formation. Each Community is to consecrate some time at the beginning of the school year to establish its program of continued formation, to plan regular meetings for exchange of views and to provide for evaluation of its program, especially at the time of the visit of the Brother Visitor.

71. a) Brother Visitor and his Council will set up a district program of continued formation according to the needs of the Brothers and the demands of the apostolate.

b) Brother Visitor and his Council will assess the programs of continued formation of each community and the effective participation of each member in renewal.

c) Brother Visitor and his Council shall pay particular attention to the Brothers of other countries who reside in their district for their formation or for other reasons, and shall make sure that the directives, agreed upon between the districts in such cases, are respected.

72. a) The General Council has the responsibility of promoting programs of continued formation in the Institute and of coordinating research programs on the inspiration of the Founder.

b) It is the responsibility of the Center to provide financial help for research work, for the translation of writings and for the dissemination of the Lasallian message as well as assisting those districts most in need so that their Brothers may participate in Lasallian renovation programs.

73. a) The 40th General Chapter endorses the continuation of an International Lasallian Center (C.I.L.).

b) The sessions of C.I.L. should be organized and coordinated by the animating team in view of the continued formation needs of the Institute, and in conjunction with the General Council.

74. The Center shall each year inquire of the districts regarding their programs of continued formation, as well as solicit their suggestions on how the Center can assist in the overall plan of continued formation for the Brothers of each district and each region.

GOVERNMENT (Prop. 75-90)

I - Central Government

75. The new Book of Government will insist on the union which must exist between the Brother Superior General and the members of his Council, and on the collegial manner in which they should assume their responsibilities.

76. The new Book of Government will specify the role proper to the Brother Superior General: he exercises executive power in the Institute and he makes decisions in accordance with Canon Law and the Law particular to the Institute.

77. The mandate of the Brother Superior General extends from one ordinary General Chapter to the next ordinary General Chapter. The Brother Superior General may be re-elected.

78. There will be six (6) General Councillors.

79. The General Councillors are elected by the General Chapter. Their mandate extends to the following ordinary General Chapter. They may be re-elected.

80. In the interval between two General Chapters, the Brother Superior General will fill any vacancy which occurs in the General Council. His naming of a replacement must be

approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the complete General Council.

81. The Brother Superior General may add one or two Councillors to the General Council, so that a maximum of eight Councillors might exist. The proposal to add a Councillor must be submitted to the General Council and be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the complete General Council.

After receiving authorization to increase the size of his Council, the Brother Superior General must submit the name(s) of the Brother(s) of his choice to a deliberative vote of the Council. This vote requires a two-thirds majority of the complete General Council.

82. The Brother Vicar General is chosen from among the General Councillors. He is elected by the General Chapter. He can be elected by the General Council if the office becomes vacant during the period between two General Chapters; a two-thirds majority vote of the complete General Council is necessary. He replaces the Brother Superior General if the latter is prevented from exercising his Office.

83. The new Book of Government will specify that the Brother Superior General and his Council must be in direct contact with the Districts and regions. Brother Superior General and his Council must meet with the Brothers Visitors and regional representatives on a regular basis between sessions of the General Chapter, both at Rome and in the Districts and regions.

84. The directors of the general services of the Institute are named by the Brother Superior General, who specifies the length of their mandate. As such, they do not form part of the General Council.

85. The Brother Superior General newly elected may indicate to the General Chapter the names of Brothers he considers suitable to be his Councillors. The General Chapter remains free in its choice.

N.B. The General Chapter accepts the Government Commission reports on the following, to be used as the basis for the corresponding texts in the revised Book of Government: the Regional Grouping, the District, the Sub-District, the Delegation, the District Chapter, the Brother Visitor, the District Council, the Community and the General Chapter.

II - Finances

86. Motion to approve the financial accounts of the Econome General:

We have examined the report of the Econome General.

We judge the financial situation of the Institute to be sound. The accounts have been rigorously maintained and the Econome General has given complete and satisfactory answers to all the questions which we have addressed to him.

With unanimity, the Commission on Government proposes that the General Chapter approve the administration of the Econome General over the past ten years.

87. Audit of Central Government Finances.

The Econome General shall engage a competent company to do an annual audit of all the financial records of the Central Government of the Institute.

Such an audit is advantageous because it:

1. is done by an outside agency;

2. is made according to generally accepted auditing procedures;

3. provides records for easier year-to-year evaluation of Institute finances;

4. provides records which are more acceptable to other financial agencies and to the Brothers who are accustomed to such audits;

5. serves as a protection and a validation of the work of the Econome General and his Council, and

6. provides suggestions by the auditing company for good financial management of Central Government finances.

88. *Economic Council*

An International Economic Council shall be organized by the General Council, consisting of four members named for three years and meeting semi-annually to function as follows:

1. to develop fiscal policy for the Central Government to be approved by the Brother Superior General and his Council;

2. to propose the annual budget for Central Government;

3. to monitor and report annually on the income, expenses and investments of Central Government;

4. to monitor and adjust according to developments an equitable schedule of District contributions for the support of Central Government;

5. to help Districts in their financial administration when such help is requested, and

6. to assist the Econome General in his implementation of policies.

Declaration on sharing

89. The different Districts of the Institute share their resources with their Brothers in the following ways:

1. By contributing, according to their resources and capacity, to the maintenance of the services of the Central Administration.

2. By participating in the relief of diverse special needs which are provided for in the general budget of the Center of the Institute.

3. By voluntarily committing themselves to meet certain specific needs. The central administration regularly informs the Districts of these needs and the occasions for contributing to them as they arise.

4. By encouraging close collaboration at the District and community level with Brothers living in other regions, so as to share personnel and financial resources with them in fraternal union with their apostolic work. This liason is sometimes called « twinning. »

The General Chapter endorses this Declaration on Sharing and thanks the Brothers throughout the world for their generous response to the special needs that have been brought to their attention during the past ten years.

90. *A proposal for fixing the tax of each District towards the expenses of Central Administration.*

« The General Chapter shall fix the rate of taxation of each District of the Institute for the general expenses of the Institute. These arrangements might be modified in the period between Chapters by the General Council, after consultation with the Economic Council of the Institute.» (B. G., Chapter 29, 6.)

It is proposed that there be established five levels of financial participation, graduated in steps of 20%; each District would be assigned by the General Chapter to one of these levels, depending upon:

- a) the relative standard of living in the country, and
- b) the relative ability of the District to contribute to the general expenses of the Institute.

In case of extreme hardship, a District might be exempt from all taxation.

The assignment of a District to a certain level of participation would be made after consultation among the Visitors of the region concerned, and taking into consideration as many economic factors as are known: the financial reports of the Districts; the standard of living in the area; the relative value of work translated into purchasing power in the area; the sources of revenue for the Brothers of the District, especially the salaries they receive, etc.

The annual tax per Brother would depend upon:

- a) the level of participation determined by the Chapter for his District;
- b) the annual budget of the Institute;
- c) the distribution of all the Districts of the Institute in the various levels of participation.

Method. Each District will suggest to the Finance Commission the level of participation it thinks it can support. The Finance Commission will study this listing of Districts, and after consultation with the Visitors involved, will make whatever adjustments seem necessary. The General Chapter will approve any final listing of Districts in levels of participation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHAPTER (Prop. 91-93)

I - Communicating the Chapter results to the Brothers

91. We, the Chapter Delegates, of the 40th General Chapter, in accord with the mandate we have received from the Brothers of our District, pledge ourselves to share with them the life happenings of this Chapter and to aid them to accept for themselves the guidelines of the Chapter and its approved Propositions.

For this purpose, we will take the means which we judge to be the most suitable, using the suggestions of this report.

II - Rules and Constitutions & Book of Government Post Capitular Commission

92. The 40th General Chapter confirms the Rules and Constitutions promulgated by the special chapter of 1966-67. However, account will be taken of some modifications made necessary by resolutions passed by the 1976 Chapter.

The 40th Chapter requests a new edition of the Book of Government to include the decisions made by the present 1976 Chapter.

93. A post capitular Commission will be set up and be responsible for a homogeneous and definitive edition of the

Rules and Constitutions and of the Book of Government. It will work in close liaison with the General Council. It must advise all the capitulants of its work within six months at the outside.

The Commission will take into account the remarks received, and will return the revised text to the capitulants of the 40th General Chapter for a vote of Yes or No».

VARIA

94. I - The « Alès » situation

In response to the note from the Brothers of Ales, dated March 2, 1976, the General Chapter declares that it does not accept the existence and initiatives of this group called Exact Observance.

95. II - The « Filippin » Question

1) The General Chapter refers the « Filippin Question » (Paderno del Grappa) to Brother Superior General and his Council for study and resolution.

2) The General Chapter sends to Brother Superior General and his Council, for use as the basis of their study and resolution, the report titled « The Filippin Question » (submitted by the Subcommittee on Finance of the Commission on Government) and the « Pro Memoria » concerning the financial situation of the District of Turin.

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