

44. MORTIFICATION

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1. PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

As my starting point on mortification I have taken the practice and the teaching of De La Salle as expressed in his evangelical journey. From this perspective I will study some of the key moments in the first Lasallian community faithful to the Founder's intuitions. This will be followed by an explanation of various aspects of Christian asceticism which, in essence, continues to be necessary to day although in forms different from those of the 17th century. The evolution of a modern mentality and the advances in technology are facts in the development of humanity and, as Brother Exupérien indicated in 1900, in the spiritual realm it is also essential that we progress in such a way that we live our Christianity in a more mature manner than was possible in previous eras.¹ I will limit myself to indicating this third aspect leaving it to the reader's initiative to pursue it through the material indicated.

2. COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL DIMENSION

These are two types of mortification which

mutually complement and support each other. A similar complementarity appears with regard to interior and exterior mortification of which I will treat in the section which follows.

2.1. Within the group

Making reference to the instruments of penance used at the time, the Rule states that "...There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute..." (RC 5,1).² Nevertheless, the 7th commandment of the Institute clearly states that "You should frequently mortify your mind and your senses" (RC 16,8). In other words, while there was nothing officially legislated, the principle that mortification formed part of the spirituality of the Brother remained valid. In any case, the Rule concerned itself with a minimum which could serve as a foundation for everybody and from there it was up to the individual to add what was appropriate according to the way in which he was inspired.

With regard to practices of mortification in community there were those which referred to particular liturgical times of the year such as Advent, Lent or other vigils, and normally these practices did not go beyond what was prescribed by the

Church. Other practices indicated could be weekly, daily or have a more permanent application as, for example, in the position of one's hands, or feet, or the use of one's eyes.³ The new Rule of 1987 was to be much less detailed in limiting itself to indicating some important demands which will lead the Brothers to self-control and to renunciation in the steps of Christ (Rule 74a).

2.2. As individuals

Practices of mortification over and above the minimum come into play once there is the opportunity for creativity and when the right to be different is admitted. In such a situation the distinctive opportunities which arise from personal situations and from the changing circumstances in which each one finds oneself with regard to common values will be better assimilated. There will be those who view the lack of a particular thing during the day as an expression of their mortification having already, in their morning meditation, put themselves in the disposition of blessing God and of being happy in themselves should such an eventuality occur (EM 83). The decisive moment presents itself as an interior call to allow oneself to be led like the saints whose "hearts were empty of things of the world" so that they could be filled with the Spirit of God (MF 167,2; MF 171,1). In the same way, the Brother will be disposed to "sacrifice his heart and his will to God" (MF 188,3), «to sacrifice "honour, health and life to the glory of God" (R 155,16). In fact, he will be led in such a way that for him, united to Jesus Christ, "mortification will be a permanent sacrifice" (MD 66,3).

3. EXTERIOR OR BODILY MORTIFICATION

The three earliest biographers of De La Salle place great emphasis on his spirit of mortification and give great importance to this aspect of his sanctity. On occasions they appear to indicate a certain contempt for the body as if matter, as opposed to spirit, were bad. However, on these occasions, it may be that they attribute to the Founder what may be more an interpretation of the writer himself.⁴ It is clear that the former canon of

Rheims did not totally escape from the mentality of his time but, nevertheless, he offers a very positive vision each time that he considers the body as the temple of the Spirit (EM 17,40; MD 62; MF 188). Thus, it would be better to say that De La Salle did not seek personal fulfilment in a flight from the body or by ignoring it. His concern was that the body function in conformity with the plan which the Creator had for it so that it would be a more effective temple and instrument of that divine presence and action.

In any event we know that the Founder was not given to selfishness nor softness. Thus in 1689, when his brother-in-law, John Maillefer, saw him ill he said to the Brothers that the Founder would have to ask pardon of his body at the moment of his death (Bl 2, 454). In his meditation for the feast of St Francis of Assisi, De La Salle says that mortification should "be so vividly present in you that, so to speak, it marks you with the wounds of Jesus Christ» (MF 173,3). Some of the key elements of this mortification are as follows.

3.1. With regard to sleep

Nowadays we are aware that a hard mattress is better for ensuring a good night's rest once the body has become accustomed to it. However, for De La Salle and the Brothers it was a necessary demand by the poverty of Vaugirard which led them to mortify themselves without complaining with regard to sleep (Bl 1, 303). When it came to the moment of getting out of bed there was no concession to natural inclinations as the bell gave the signal for the generous offering of the first moment of the day. A verse from Scripture indicated the attitude which they would deliberately adopt: "...Arise, you who sleep, and Christ will enlighten you" (R 126,9). It should be noted that Roland already had this recommendation in his "Avis".⁵

Reducing the hours of sleep had the effect of ensuring that when the time for sleep actually did come these was no difficulty in getting to sleep while the ensuing sleep itself was also more profound (Bl 1, 328). Despite the exaggerations of Blain (Bl 1, 225), we also know that De La Salle was also led to curtail his sleeping-time both out of fervour and from the necessity of bringing an important issue before his intimate Friend who

would advise him.⁶

It is also important to note that at the beginning of the 18th century the nervous system did not suffer the same wear and tear as occurs today. Classroom activity was more tranquil and the life of the Brother, in general, less hectic. In such an environment the balance of the nervous cells could be restored with less hours of sleep while the absence of noise along with regularity in both rising and in going to bed also contributed to this essential rest. One could say that the Brothers went to bed each evening physically tired from the exertions of their ministry. On the other hand, the psychological and mental exertions were certainly less exhausting than modern demands and, in consequence, it was not considered necessary to adapt the hours of sleep to individual needs even if it is possible that the actual provision favoured those who, through disposition or age, could manage with less rather than more time.⁷ By the same token one would have to indicate that if De La Salle and his Brothers were to limit their hours of sleep to-day it would be in order to dedicate part of the time to such things as, for example, their permanent formation, or to devising time-consuming community or academic programs, or to attending to those people who have different rhythms of working and resting.⁸

3.2. With regard to meals

Coming as he did from a "good family", it took great effort on De La Salle's part to accustom himself to community meals. His success in overcoming his tastes was such that he alone could take the wormwood soup which the cook prepared by accident and he did so as if it were nothing unusual (BL 1, 227). Since he was in the habit of mortifying himself at each meal and of considering himself as "a beggar to whom food had been given as alms", he did not feel led to complain about anything (R 147). When he was exposed to prolonged hunger on more than one occasion (Bl 2, 256) he was to show that what he wrote for his Brothers did not remain as empty words in his own life. Furthermore, when it was necessary one had to act in such a way that in "leaving the dining-room one would be disposed for spiritual exercises" (R 182,9). All this assumes that the fact

of mortifying oneself, whether with regard to the quality or to the quantity of food, is not an external imposition. A good touch-stone was the question of travel. In this connection he wrote to Brother Mathias that he should not attempt to change community at a time when the traveller would be dispensed from fasting (L 44,5) while in both the Common Rule and in the Rule of the Brother Director he was explicit that, while travelling, meals "should be frugal" (RC 24,4; RD 118,14).

3.3. With regard to the eyes

The principal "fasting" which De La Salle expected of his Brothers from the beginning of Lent was with regard "to the eyes" (MF 16,2). There was also the duty of their state by which the vigilant attention of their pupils demanded that they be aware of all that happened in class and during recreation. Hence, the "Conduct of Schools" demanded that the teacher exercise "continuous vigilance over the pupils" (CE 91). But if the Brother wished to live an interior life, and not to be carried away by everything to which his curiosity was attracted during the day, it would be necessary to take appropriate measures. This is the meaning of mortification of the eyes as can be seen in his letter to Brother Clement (L 9,4).

3.4. With regard to the senses in general

Among the effects of daily meditation on the presence of God is that the Spirit comes to be totally "lord of the senses" (EM 16). This assumes that, at the same time, "one is lord of one's own senses" (MF 95,2) collaborating in the work of God which begins here and leads, in so far as it is possible, to the "spiritualizing" of our body (MF 156,3). It is from this perspective that the detailed norms with regard to educating exterior conduct make sense since it was through these that De La Salle's teachers educated themselves so that they could then teach those who wanted to learn from them not only through their lessons on "Christian Politeness" but especially through their example.⁹ However, the primary purpose was to facilitate one's spiritual advancement rather than the edification of others as can be seen in the case of the

Novices who did not always go either to the Parish of St Lambert, in Vaugirard, or to that of St Severus, in Rouen, at a later date (Bl 1, 3500-352).

De La Salle was not much given to making comparisons in his writings but he did make use of a common one in speaking of mortifying oneself with regard to silence when he said that too much talking makes "contact with God similar to a liquor which has lost its taste" (R 151,15).

The long and hard winter of 1683 led De La Salle, at the initiative of the mayor of Rheims, to give the Brothers a cloak while in 1709 the possibility of warming oneself around a fire was offered to them (Bl 2, 57). However, in his own life, De La Salle accustomed his body to cope with inclement weather overcoming both cold and heat as circumstances demanded without compromising his ministry. In fact, the contrary was the case when, in the face of adverse weather, he would leave the community to attend to those who needed to meet him (Bl 2, 455). Similarly, one should also note his own rheumatic sufferings and the remedies which he had to undergo whether in Paris (Bl 1, 331), Grenoble (Bl 2,102) or St Yon (Bl 2, 170).

4. INTERIOR OR SPIRITUAL MORTIFICATION

If he was a Christian ascetic in all that refers to overcoming that "enemy" which was traditionally given the ambivalent term "flesh", De La Salle was all the more so with respect to the means of mortifying the spirit. Whether it was from the testimonies which he had before him or from what he himself had witnessed, Blain tells us that De La Salle would often say: "I prefer an ounce of mortification of the spirit to a pound of exterior penance" (Bl 2, 464). The human-evangelical values which may have been present in this interior work which he accomplished in himself and in others can be outlined as follows:

4.1. To be open to insights from others

This openness to other ways of seeing reality is a trait which characterizes the simplicity with which one views oneself. De La Salle opened himself to the insights which were given to him by his

spiritual directors and it was these who had the last word in all his decisions regarding mortification, be it with regard to his actual or future status in the renunciation of his canonry or with regard to human security in detaching himself from his patrimony. The only "light" which was to guide him was the spirit of faith (MD 44,1) which, fundamentally, was the Holy Spirit under whose inspiration he had chosen to live and to make his decisions (MF 79,1). It was for this inspiration for which he was so frequently to intercede so that he would be aware of the moderation necessary with regard to acts of mortification and also be able to make this moderation known to his spiritual directors (R 219,1).

4.2. To be open to the wisdom of God

In the Rule of 1718 we see the repeated insistence on the need for the Brother's conduct to reflect "the wisdom appropriate to his profession". Moreover, this "exterior wisdom would be a sign of what was interior" (RC 21,5). This assumes an asceticism in the acquisition of every habit that the Brothers acquires so that his habits are distinct from those of the world. The biographers tell us that, in the promulgation of the rules, De La Salle did not wish to introduce anything on his own authority in order that the inspiration of God could be expressed through each of the Brothers. This approach applied as much to rules with regard to the community (Bl 2, 411) as to the pedagogical methods and individual accompaniment of pupils.¹⁰ This wisdom of God which he sought in all his conduct was nothing other than crucifying the "old man" in himself so as to "live now as risen in Jesus Christ" (MD 29,3). Consequently, this was to love mortification not for itself but because it helped one to "become like Him" (MF 176,3).

4.3. To cultivate true liberty

With regard to mortification it is not so much the fulfilment of a law as the call of the Spirit who invites one to self-renunciation with a view to greater availability for his work. With the passing of time the essential practices of mortification would be codified by De La Salle, in a personal form as "The Rules which I have imposed on my-

self” and in the community form as “The Common Rules”. They were norms of conduct which would be observed almost scrupulously, one might say, but they were born out of the depths of the desire for self-transcendence. Thus, for example, to facilitate this liberty, all types of visits were limited with regard to frequency and duration and the reason for this was to ensure that, by not dissipating energies in various directions, the mission could be better accomplished. Similarly, one was not to receive visits in class unless the intention was to meet the poor (RC 9,20). In this connection De La Salle congratulated Drolin on having sufficient time to rest since he had reduced his visiting (L 18,12) while he warned the Brother Director that he should not be so bound by visits that he neglected time for prayer (FD 5). Two other means of interior liberation which De La Salle embraced were his refusal of the general permission which Brother Barthélemy wanted to grant him (Bl 2,152) and the acceptance of being criticized.¹¹

4.4. To find authentic peace

There is no better peace than that which Christ himself brings to us since it cannot be taken from us by either people or things. But one must begin by embracing that peace (MD 22,2) and to help in this it is important “to be less concerned with knowing what one has to do than about doing perfectly what one knows is to be done”,¹² to “abandon oneself into the hands of God with total indifference” in the face of everything (Bl 1, 3;07) while, at the same time, “silencing all interior reasoning” (Bl 2, 213). Once this peace has been established it is only possible to maintain it if appropriate measures are taken. One of the most important of these measures is to be disposed to mortify oneself daily and to allow oneself to be mortified by others (MD 31,3; R 165,16) above all on occasions of humiliation (R 102,15). De La Salle was so steeped in this interior peace that he never lost it throughout his mature life (Bl 2, 175) even in the difficult moments which he had to endure; for example, when he was unjustly accused of lying (Bl 2, 168), or when somebody hit him as he recited the Office in the garden (Bl 2, 419), or when he had to read “insulting letters” (Bl 2, 471).

4.5. To be men of prayer

De La Salle’s insistence on the life of prayer can be found in all the major works which he wrote for the Brothers. However, in order to have the slightest affect on the transforming work of the Brother (MF 95,2) this had to be accompanied by mortification if it was not to be reduced to mere “illusion” (MF 187,2). The constant struggle against fallen nature facilitates this work of “strengthening one in piety” (MF 95,2) and of “sustaining one in it” (MF 160,2). Without this it is impossible given the “dissipation of the mind” (R 161,15) and the lack of attention. This attention was related to “bodily posture” on which the efficacy of prayer so often depends (R 192,20).

5. ATTITUDES TO MORTIFICATION

More than the simple facts in themselves what interests us is the manner in which that new Lasallian community responded to the various forms of mortification with which they were faced. We will see this in considering both the opportunities for mortification which presented themselves as well as the agents involved in these opportunities.

5.1. With regard to the opportunities for mortification

The opportunity for mortification is a grace to be embraced — it is an opportunity to “season” all that one does for God (MF 190,2). To ensure that one is not deluding oneself it is better to take advantage of “the opportunities that occur” rather than to go in search of occasions (L 11,6). For example, the simple fact of wearing the habit will give rise to many occasions for mortification and some of the occasions indicated by the author of the “Memoir on the Habit” were the avoidance of “all occasions of following fashion” and the consequent more or less acknowledged desire to please (MH 35). These opportunities can be understood either in the context of an attitude of receptivity or, in a more active way, as a deliberate seeking of occasions for mortification. The two approaches can be followed by a interior act of oblation.

A. *A willingness to offer the circumstances of life*

There is no more realistic form of mortification than to accept self-crucifixion and to be crucified in a permanent and concrete way. De La Salle's own life was a life full of toils and reverses in which he died daily to his own comfort in favor of the development of that part of the Mystical Body for which he felt most responsible. He was burdened with concerns which were not designed to appease fallen nature; for example, the desertion of a Brother, or the death of another, or a journey in inclement conditions. This receptive-oblatory attitude involved all the designs of Providence which were expressed through circumstances.¹³ Thus, he could write that rather than "fleeing from mortification" (EM 111) one should know how to offer it to the Lord. Paraphrasing the teaching of St Paul (Rm 12,1), De La Salle indicated to the Brother that he should transform his body into a permanent offering pleasing to God (MD 62,2) to the extent of reaching the stage of not permitting any movement or action which was not marked by the inspiration of the Spirit (MD 67,1).

B. *Anticipating occasions of mortification*

From the time that they were in the Rue Neuve and in Vaugirard, De La Salle and the Brothers vied with each other in seeking opportunities for mortifying themselves. In fact, later on, some ecclesiastics would attempt to moderate the practices of the young community.¹⁴ In the following three texts which indicate aspects of Lasallian spirituality we can note the progressive realism with which the disciples of de La Salle committed themselves with regard to mortification; they were to sensitize themselves to "love" mortification since this makes them like Jesus Christ (MF 176,3); in consequence, they were "...not to allow a single day to pass without doing some act" of mortification (MF 160,2); moreover, to the extent that it was possible, occasions should be foreseen in which these acts would be practised and this foresight was not to be restricted to examen time but should be exercised at other moments during the day (R 171,11).

5.2. **With regard to the agents of mortification**

The initiative for a mortified life will come

from God, or from other people, or from oneself and in what follows we can see the attitude taken in response to each of these agents.

A. *Attitude towards God*

With regard to mortification there are two principal attitudes with respect to the Creator. In the first place, one should recognize that the senses, like the capacities of the mind, are his gifts and that they are best used in accordance with his will (R 90,20). However, the crosses which we have to bear are also gifts which we have to "receive with love and respect" as coming from his hand (MF 121,3). In the second place, one should "not be surprised if God frequently gives us opportunities to suffer" (MF 124,3). On the contrary, one should feel honored by this as it is an indication of his love since this is what he did with Jesus and with the saints (MF 177,2).

B. *Attitude towards one's neighbour*

In his meditation for the feast of St Monica (MF 122,2) De La Salle indicates the attitude which it is necessary to cultivate with respect to our neighbour who can be a motive for our mortification. One begins by "arming oneself with patience" and then one "beseeches God for them". This is what De La Salle himself had occasion to do not only with regard to his family but also with ecclesiastics, with members of his community and with many other people who crossed his path in life. Moreover, he did not wish that those who mortified themselves did so "to appear as such before others" (Da 278). There were those who, when with their Brothers, appeared to be mortified and perhaps believed themselves to be so, but in reality their senses were "sleeping" rather than mortified given the community circumstances in which they found themselves (MD 76,1).

C. *Attitude towards oneself*

Gratuitous love brings with it self-forgetfulness to such an extent that one lives mortified. It becomes almost natural to lead a life in which one does not compare oneself with others nor seek an easy life since the only concern is to carry out the work of God and dedicate all one's efforts to that. The interior gaze goes beyond oneself. Having become accustomed to it, the Brother lives a difficult life

in contentment without this becoming a motive for self-glorification. The glory which he receives will be rather more indirect in that it will consist in the glory of having accomplished the mission entrusted to him by God himself (MR 207; 208). When the Brother mortifies himself he will act with as much virtue as when "he is no longer mortifying himself" (R. 218,11). This indicates that it is neither mortification in itself, nor that vanity which comes from a more or less inflated feeling of spiritual self-satisfaction, which is sought in mortification.

6. WHY MORTIFY ONESELF?

De La Salle views man as divided in himself and distant from God since he is separated from his "likeness". It is from this perspective that total mortification is sought so that the cross of Christ will triumph and fallen man will be restored to resurrected new life. Another driving force is love of Christ and of others. The specific manner in which the biographers describe this love may be outdated to-day and say little to our modern psychological outlook but the inspirational love behind such practices is what needs to be highlighted and it is this love which is capable of inspiring the Brother to-day to different expressions of mortification more attuned to 20th century sensitivity.

6.1. To channel energies

From a negative point of view the work begins by "mortifying the inclinations of corrupt nature" (MD 45,2) so as not to allow these advancing "flood" waters to cause damage. This is followed by the desire to put some sort of order into these energies. There is a hierarchy of values which needs to be respected rather than leaving things to drift aimlessly. Thus, according to De La Salle, "... it is right that the body be submitted to the spirit; but if one hopes to do this it is necessary to adopt appropriate measures; make use of mortification..." (MF 179,2). Once attained this asceticism is continued by orientating one's intellect in conformity with one's state; hence "...Take care not to apply the mind to anything through mere curiosity... Occupy it with things which are proper

to your profession" (R 162,22). In this way the aim of mortification is to place one's physical, psychological and spiritual potential at the service of God and of others so that all the resources that one possesses are thus positively and consciously channelled.

6.2. Self-fulfilment

In following this narrow road of renunciation in so many areas De La Salle was to pine for nothing. His colleagues in the Cathedral Chapter had a secure position and a bright future of appointments beckoning while his younger brothers were well-looked after.¹⁵ Yet he was happier than they were because his aspirations found their fulfilment in total self-giving through the school. If he envied anybody it was, perhaps, the person who lived more austere than himself; for example, Sister Louise, the Carthusians... those who could devote more time to prayer (Bl 2, 100; 105).

In any case, he found fulfilment by transforming his body in a desire to experience the Spirit more fully in his life. These same austerities were to fortify his health which according to Blain was delicate by nature as well as through education in the heart of a well-to-do family (Bl 2, 177). In the same way, his disciples, too, "...would overcome the repugnance and difficulty which they found in the practice of virtue" (EM 111). They would accomplish this through daily contact with God in meditating on Gospel maxims. In this way the designs of Providence for them and their own desires to live a meaningful life would be a tangible reality.¹⁶

6.3. To give one's life daily

De La Salle did not renounce life. He was aware of the 5th Commandment and knew that it was his duty to preserve his life. It belonged to him as much as to those who had been confided to his care. Consequently, in living a mortified life he was not seeking self-destruction since that would have been un-Christian. But he did realize that it was in conformity with the Gospel to give one's life freely — not simply for the sake of giving it but so that others would have life, be they Brothers or children of the artisans and the poor. This would be the best way of losing one's life and also to recognize the

Father as the continuous "Giver". It was also to practice true love in helping others to live while imitating Christ in his paschal mystery.

This is authentic living which is only understandable to those whose faith enables them to see everything from the perspective of the Beatitudes. Writing for the Brothers on the feast of the Holy Innocents, De La Salle says that in "...dying daily through continuous mortification you will give life..." so that Christ can continue to live in you (MF 89,3) while he had written a little earlier that, since "...you have neither the privilege nor the occasion to suffer martyrdom for the faith, make yourself martyrs for the love of God through the practice of mortification..." (MF 89,2). We know that the first companions of the Founder did not lack occasions for this daily dying which consisted simply in embracing it and encouraging each other to generously respond "yes" to every moment. This was to be the consequence of the graces received and it was the price to be paid if they were to be fruitful.¹⁷

6.4. To serve – accomplishing a mission

In conformity with his apostolic ministry, mortification in the life of the Brother will have an aspect quite distinct from that of other religious. It is the forms and the circumstances which change. Thus, for example, unlike the Dominican or, especially, the Carthusian, the Brother practically lives all the time in the company of his Brothers and spends the majority of his time in contact with his pupils. Consequently, the Brother's service to others will be through community and school life and it is within this context that decisions with regard to mortification are made.

De La Salle and his disciples did not seek a comfortable life. Within the Brothers' community De La Salle remained as superior in 1694 only as a service to that community and when he was replaced, in 1717, he continued to adopt this attitude of service, choosing "the most mortifying chores" for himself so as to ensure that others in the community would not have to do them (Bl 2, 412). It is clear that it was the community reality rather than that of the school of which Blain and the other biographers were more aware but it was this second reality which determined the majority of the

Brother's options. Suffice it to recall that the final motive for which the three associated themselves on 21st November 1691 was to be disposed to continue the work even if "they were obliged to beg and to live on bread alone" (Bl 1, 323). It was not poverty or a hard life in itself which they sought; they felt called to an educational service to these sons of God and they wanted to respond in spite of the difficulties which would arise.

¹ Cf. the manuscript notes of Brother Exupérien which are preserved in the Generalate, Sous-Série BO 752-1 (17-18).

² De La Salle made use of them and Blain speaks about them while there are various examples preserved in the Generalate in Rome (Bl. 1, 228; 2, 445; CL 40, 255-258).

³ Cf. the whole of the chapter on Modesty (RC 21 +; CL 16, 41-50). MAURICE-AUGUSTE, "Pour une meilleure lecture des Règles Communes", a collection of articles published in numbers 36 to 44 of the periodical "Entre Nous", especially pp. 65-79 and CL 5, 323-403.

⁴ NEWMAN, H. "Saints d'autrefois", Bloud, Paris, 1908, p. 113: – when a biographer attributes motivations to a saint, two-thirds of the time he is expressing his own motivation rather than that of the saint about whom he is writing.

⁵ RIGAULT, G., "Histoire Générale de l'institut des FEC", Plon, Paris, 1937, Vol I, p. 120.

⁶ One can recall his nights in St Remy (Bl 1, 230), or the occasion when the Brothers had decided to send Brother Barthélemy away (Bl 2, 282), or when he became aware that one of the Brothers was tempted to abandon his vocation (Bl 2, 369).

⁷ De La Salle educated his Brothers through frequent exams asking them if they "still felt inclined to sleep" (R 91,20; 182,1) and he presents various examples to them of Saints who took the means to overcome sleep (MF 179,2; 79,1).

⁸ In his own life there are examples of De La Salle setting out at night to visit a Brother when his presence rather than a letter was urgently required.

⁹ Cf. RC 7,15; CE 81 on the manner of conducting oneself in front of the pupils during prayers in class.

¹⁰ Cf. the school "offices" and the "files" referring to qualities and defects of each one (CL 24, p. 204; 236).

¹¹ For example, when he sought to abandon his canonry (Bl 1, 197), or when Compagnon spoke against him (Bl 2, 267), or at the end of his life in St Yon (Bl 2, 417). Not only did he not want to judge others but he was also prepared to excuse them in so far as it was possible. He also asked his Brothers that they should speak well of others rather than criticizing them (Bl 2, 417; RC 13,5).

¹² Cf. Bl 2, 319,14; R 190,4. According to G. Beaudet's study, this Rule that De La Salle imposed on himself and which he later proposed in the Collection, was almost exactly the same as Consideration 18 of Hayneufve – cf. Lasalliana 20-4-A-79.

¹³ "Il y a un héroïsme chrétien, mais sa source est théologique. Ce qui l'anime ce n'est pas le souci de l'excellence personnelle, mais le sentiment de la majesté de Dieu. L'héroïsme de saint consiste non pas à se tenir fortement en mains, mais à s'abandonner entre les mains de Dieu", BRUCKBERGER, R., "La valeur humaine du saint", Braconnière, Neuchâtel, 1943, p. 27.

¹⁴ There were those who while not being in the community wanted to live a mortified life following the example of De La Salle (Bd 62) while others such as Baiyn admired this type of life (Bl 1, 330). However, there was also no lack of people who were prepared to attack him or who wanted him to temper his generosity; for example, in Paris with Baudrand (Bl 1, 299), in Chartres with Godet des Marais (Bl 1, 373), in Marseilles with the Jansenists and in Rouen with d'Aubigné (Bl 2, 167).

¹⁵ Peter was to be the lawyer that their father, Louis de La Salle, hoped at one time John Baptist, as the eldest son, would become while John Louis was to have an honoured position in the most famous Cathedral Chapter in France – cf. CL 26,

p. 260; CL 27, p. 133.

¹⁶ ROUSSEAU-DUJARDIN, J., “*Du holde kunst, ich danke dich*”, in “*La Vie Spirituelle*”, 693 (1991), 35: “...Tout plaisir est payé par une peine et certains plaisirs ne s’obtiennent pas sans peine”. Here pleasure appears to be understood as joy, the tasting of profound experiences. To accept the privation of certain experiences may facilitate the tasting of others which lead to a more profound joy than those which have been renounced.

¹⁷ BONHOEFFER, D., “*El precio de la gracia*”, Sígueme, Salamanca, 1968, pp. 7-17: “...Cheap grace is that which is not accompanied by the following of Christ, the grace of the Cross, grace without the living and incarnated Christ...”.

Complementary themes:

Artisans; Associated; Attention; Christian Teacher; Gospel; Faith; God's Work; Prayer; Patience; Peace; Penitence; Renunciation-Detachment.

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