

53. RETREAT

Summary:

1. Some preliminary ideas. – **2.** Retreat understood as “spiritual exercises”. 2.1. In the experience of the Founder. 2.2. Retreats with teachers and “ecclesiastics”. 2.3. The objective of a retreat. – **3.** Retreat as “withdrawal from the world”. 3.1. Retreat and separation from the world. 3.2. Recollection and the experience of God. 3.3. Exterior and interior recollection. 3.4. Recollection and Ministry. 3.5. Dialectic – yes: dichotomy – no. 3.6. Recollection, prayer and mortification. – **4.** Recollection in the context of community. 4.1. Recollection and community. 4.2. Recollection and community recreation. – **5.** Recollection: an element in the spirituality of the whole Lasallian Family.

1. SOME PRELIMINARY IDEAS

In the life and writings of St John Baptist de La Salle we find two complementary ways of understanding and experiencing “retreat” which were consistent with the religious context of his time.¹ *In the first place* it was understood in a limited time context of a few days which broke the routine of daily life. In the history of spirituality this first meaning was given the classical name of the “spiritual exercises”. *Its second meaning* was in the context of the permanent withdrawal from the world and was used almost always with reference to Religious and consecrated life. It is necessary to keep in mind *a third meaning* that we find in De La Salle’s writings which, in reality, is an aspect of the second referring, as it does, to the context in which this withdrawal occurs and which makes it possible – i.e. the Community. Perhaps it is this third meaning which gives “retreat” its distinctive shade of meaning in Lasallian spirituality.*

2. “RETREAT” UNDERSTOOD AS THE “SPIRITUAL EXERCISES”

2.1. In The experience of the Founder

The making of a retreat, in the sense of the “spiritual exercises”,² was a constant practice in the life of John Baptist de La Salle and was, perhaps, inherited from his stay in the seminary of St Suplice.³ The first retreat to which the biographers refer⁴ occurred at the end of his time in that seminary, from the 10th to the 19th of April, 1672, following the death of his father and in the context of his doubts surrounding his priestly vocation. The retreat of 1682 had special importance as, “in a certain way”, being “the choice of a state” (CL 480; cf. 1B 182), after which he decided to live with, and be like, the teachers. The retreat which took place in Rheims, from the 23rd of May to the 9th of June, 1686, with the “principal Brothers”, culminated in the first profession of vows in the

Institute in the form of the vow of obedience which was made for three years.⁵ In August of the same year De La Salle went on retreat to the Carmelite monastery of La Garde-Châtel which served to further clarify the identity of the fledgling community and, in all probability, provided the opportunity for him to draw up his life project in the form of the *Rules which I have imposed on myself* which Blain has passed down to us in their entirety.⁶ In this project De La Salle refers three times to the habitual practice of retreat as a means of regulating and directing his life (n° 10), as a preparation for any important event such as, for example, when he had to travel (n° 11) or with regard to interior renewal (n° 13).

The year 1691 was to be crucial for the Institute and once again a retreat was to be the ideal setting for the making of decisions De La Salle went alone on retreat, probably around Holy Week and Easter, and finalized important specific options with regard to the Brothers. These included the absolute lay-character of their vocation, the development of the interior life of the Brother with the establishment of a Novitiate and the annual retreat during holiday time as means of providing for this, as well as making use of the monthly letter as a means of rendering an account of conduct.⁷ In September of the same year he gathered all the Brothers in Vaugirard when it is probable that the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* (cf. GALLEGO, S., vol. II, p. 633) had their origin and it was also to mark the institution of the annual retreat for the Brothers. In the following months, until Christmas, those Brothers who had joined within the previous three or four years continued on retreat in what was, in effect, the first attempt to create a Lasallian Novitiate.⁸ In the meantime De La Salle took the decision to commit himself totally to the work that God had confided to him and did so by means of the perpetual profession (or the "Heroic Vow") which he made with Brothers Gabriel Drolin and Nicolas Vuyart on the 21st of Nov., 1691.

The first Assembly, or General Chapter, in 1694 also had its setting in the context of a retreat. The Founder asked each of the Brothers whom he had designated as capitulants to prepare themselves for the event by a personal retreat during the preceding four months.⁹ On Pentecost Sunday, 30th of May, they began together what was a re-

treating, and, at the same time, the first General Chapter in which the central theme for study was the official approbation of the Rule.¹⁰ The retreat finished with the first perpetual profession of association, stability and obedience which De La Salle and 12 Brothers made on June 6th 1694.

The critical period between 1712-1714 is sprinkled with long and demanding retreats in his search for light. In April, 1713, De La Salle went on retreat to La Sainte Baume, near Marseille, where he spent Holy Week. From there he went immediately to St Maximin for 40 days of Easter retreat.¹¹ Still in the same year, during this experience of the "dark night", he spent three days on retreat in the month of September in the Carthusian Monastery near Grenoble.¹² At Easter 1714 De La Salle went to the hill of Parmenie¹³ which has become a symbol of the spiritual retreat experience for the Lasallian Institute. At Parmenie De La Salle shared his doubts and experiences with Sister Louise who encouraged him to remain firm in the path which had united him to the Brothers. The biographers highlight the importance of this meeting and the impact it had on De La Salle. Perhaps it was here, or on his return to Grenoble, that he received the letter from the Brothers of Paris requesting him to return and take charge of the Institute.

De La Salle's final long retreat took place after he had been freed from the direction of the Institute when, from October, 1717, he spent five months on retreat in the Parisian seminary of St Nicolas du Chardonnet. What he did on this occasion, rather than the "classical spiritual exercises", was to give free reign to the contemplative life which had always been manifest in him.¹⁴ It was only on the insistence of Brother Barthelemy, Superior General, that he returned to St Yon (2B 155-161; MAR 285-286 – Translation p. 67).

2.2. Retreats with teachers and "ecclesiastics"

The importance of this type of retreat — in the context of a specific spiritual activity — would not be properly appreciated in the Lasallian experience if reference was not made to two other aspects which receive little attention:

(a) The first is mentioned in the *Memoir on the Habit* (1690) and it is De La Salle himself who

tells us that the teachers who had been formed in the “Training College for rural teachers”, “... once they had been placed, no longer had any relation with the community other than that demanded by courtesy. However they were received in the community **whenever they came to make a retreat**” (MH n° 6).

(b) The second aspect complements the above and highlights the quality of De La Salle as a retreat director for others besides the Brothers. It was there in Vaugirard, in the same setting of the Novitiate and the annual retreat of the Brothers, that “various ecclesiastics of exemplary life came to make retreats under the direction of De La Salle. He received everybody who came without distinction” (MAC 70 – translation p. 67).

2.3. The objective of a retreat

From this brief historical review we have been able to discover, through De La Salle’s own experience, what was the meaning or objective of this type of retreat. He summarized this in an appreciation made in a letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin: “... It is good to know that you have been on retreat with the aim of rediscovering and increasing the spirit of your vocation and of prayer. I will pray to God that he will grant this to you” (L 27,8). There is, therefore, a double objective:

(a) interior renewal which occurs only in an intense experience of God through prayer;

(b) to discern the will of God in order to carry out the mission which he has entrusted to us; or, along similar lines, to deepen the sense of this mission, “to grow in the spirit of your state”.

To facilitate both of these objectives, De La Salle provided the Brothers, in addition to the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* previously quoted, with a series of “Reflections which the Brothers must occasionally make especially during their Retreat” (R 183-231) which takes up the last part of the “Collection of short treatises” and where every aspect of the Brother’s life — religious, ministerial, community — is reviewed.

3. “RETREAT” AS “WITHDRAWAL FROM THE WORLD”

De La Salle’s concept of “retreat”, in the sense of a “permanent form or style of life”, is similar to that which existed in ecclesiastical circles of the time and is revealed in the religious literature of the French golden age. There is a general — and, for us today, a striking — insistence on withdrawal from the world which is seen as an essential means of remaining faithful to the Gospel. However, it is not the physical or bodily separation which is indicated as evangelical but rather spiritual detachment. The necessity for this separation is motivated by the fact that the world deprives one of the times which could be better employed in prayer. Further, it dissipates the spirit and prevents one from applying oneself to the duties proper to one’s state as well as impeding silence without which it is impossible to listen to God. One finds a biblical image underlying this concept of “retreat” — i.e. the desert. Blain makes use of this term on various occasions to indicate the places of retreat undertaken by De La Salle while the Founder himself uses it repeatedly in his writings. He does not use it in an antisocial sense — i.e. in the sense of a flight from people — but rather in the sense of a religious desert which both leads one to God and then directs one towards people with the aim of converting them. “In the 17th century people saw the three fruits of this form of “retreat” as getting in touch once again with nature, with oneself and with God. It was similarly understood by the spiritual masters but they reversed the order: thus, for them, it was to lose oneself in God so as to know oneself better and to admire how nature conforms itself to Him who is the only Creator”.¹⁵

“The teaching of the Founder with regard to “withdrawal” or “recollection”, in this sense, is utterly “polarized”, if the expression be permitted, by an apostolic concern and could be summarized as follows: to work effectively for the salvation of souls one must remain united to God during apos-

toloc work. In order to do this it is essential to devote certain times exclusively to putting oneself in the presence of God. Recollection has, as its objective, the provision of these appropriate opportunities so that God can really impregnate the solitude. But when the Lord calls to action — in the sense of one “being sent” or “missioned” — one has to leave this retirement out of fidelity to the divine call” (CAL p. 735).

What follows is an outline of the main components of the Lasallian conception of this type of “Recollection”:

3.1. “Retreat” and separation from the world

“The withdrawal from the world, even to the extent of contempt for it, which is necessary to apply oneself to God, or to the results of this application, are constant themes in Lasallian teaching” (AEP 166 – French edition). According to the Founder, this is the first condition for giving oneself to God: “... the first step of one who wishes to consecrate himself to God has to be to leave the world with the aim of disposing oneself to battle with it and with all the other enemies of our salvation” (MD 17,1). It is also the condition by which one can know oneself and in that way be able to improve oneself: “... In order to give oneself to God it is also necessary to work to perfect oneself interiorly and to root out passions and evil inclinations. It is through recollection that this good is achieved. In truth, it is not possible to overcome oneself without self-knowledge and it is extremely difficult to come to know oneself in the midst of the world” (MF 97,2). Further, it is also the condition by which one acquires the spirit of our state: “... Given that you have necessity for both of these (ie. the spirit of God and of zeal) you, too, should seek withdrawal from the world...” (MF 198.2).

In the “Collection” he gives three reasons why it “is necessary to maintain exterior recollection” and shades them with this opposition to the world:

1. Because it removes worldly ideas and ideas about worldly things.
2. Because it removes our liking of creatures, detaches us from them and, in this way, gives us the facility to love God alone.
3. Because he who practices this recollection reaches such a state that he grows weary of the world and of created things...” (R 123).

He is categorical in warning of the dangerous consequences of the deterioration of recollection: “... What ordinarily weakens religious is frequent contact with the world which keeps them apart from the contact that they must have with God. God and the world, the spirit of God and the spirit of the world, are incompatible...” (MF 174,3). He is so sure of this that he does not hesitate to reprimand Brother Gabriel Drolin thus: “... it grieves me that you have found it necessary to mix so much with the world and it doesn’t take much for me to see that, because of this, you have become tepid in your piety. Give yourself resolutely once again, I beseech you, to prayer” (L 28,18). Also, in the topics of conversation during recreation, he presents the “world-recollection” in opposition: “maxims... which may inspire an aversion of the world and a love for recollection, for prayer and for the renunciation of all things” (R. 65, VIII). (A fuller explanation of this theme can be found in “The World and relations with the World”).

3.2. “Recollection” and the experience of God

The negative aspect of recollection — withdrawal, renunciation — should not lead one to forget its real objective which is eminently positive — ie. the experience of God: “... Renunciation, detachment, recollection from the world are the necessary responses to an awareness of the significance of his free love and of the exclusive bond which is demanded of the person who experiences his intimacy” (AEP 181 – French edition). “Everything that we do has to be directed to his glory. This has been the sole motive why you left the world since God must be both the inspiration and the end of your actions” (MF 90,3; cf. MD 42,2). For De La Salle this is a necessary step, along with prayer, to achieve this objective: “... Only through recollection and prayer does the soul come to a true transfiguration or, better, to a true transformation of itself and is enlightened by God” (MF 152,3).

It is a necessary step but also an effective step. De La Salle justifies it in the following way: “... Interior recollection in itself, while it is difficult, puts one in the disposition to think of God and of the things of God” (R 124). “... One learns to find God in recollection and to relish his presence by the

facility that one experiences in prayer and for depriving oneself of all contact with the world” (MF 189,2). In explaining the different types of “spiritual deafness” — with reference to Mk 7: 32-37 — he refers to those who “cannot hear God spoken of nor relish his word” and, once again, insists on the solution: “... It is necessary that they withdraw from worldly hustle and bustle since it is only in this type of retirement that they will be able to listen to the voice of God...” (MD 64,1). This experience of God in recollection tends to communicate itself and this is the fruit necessary for the ministry of the Brother: “...When a person has been filled with God in solitude he can then speak boldly and profitably of God...” (MF 100,2).

3.3. Interior and exterior recollection

It would be a great error if one confused the recollection of which De La Salle speaks with simple exterior separation: as he says, “... exterior recollection is of little use if it is not accompanied by interior recollection...” (R 123). The recollection of which he speaks has to be effective — thus, along with the “structure” which constitutes exterior recollection must go detachment, the affective separation from the world: “... Since you have withdrawn from the world you must live absolutely detached of all human inclinations...” (MD 40,1). “... Have you so renounced it (i.e. the world) that you absolutely refrain from thinking of it...” (MF 144,1).

3.4. Recollection and ministry

De La Salle traces an unquestionable link between recollection and ministry in such a way that the latter can only be adequately undertaken if accompanied by recollection as a necessary means. Following the example of the Apostles we make ourselves worthy of our ministry “by recollection and by application to prayer” (MF 102,1). Recollection provides the adequate means of “frequently reading and hearing the Sacred Scriptures” and “to learn the science of salvation from them as well as the holy maxims which, through your profession, you are obliged to practice and to teach to others...” (MF 100,1). “... It is in solitude and silence where one learns to speak well of God

— the greater the desire you have for them the easier it will be for you to fulfil your ministry with your neighbor” (MF 135,1).

Thanks to the fact that, through recollection, the Brother is led to personal conversion, becoming “a new man and a man of God”, he can then work for the conversion of others (cf. MF 161,1): “...When a person called to work for the salvation of souls has succeeded, like St. Remigius in solitude, in filling himself with God and his spirit, he brings to a happy conclusion all that he undertakes” (MF 171,3). In this way De La Salle insists, time and again, on this “recollection-ministerial” link focusing our attention on the example of the saints; hence, for example, “... (St Anthony) succeeded so completely in this holy ministry because he had prepared himself for it by prayer and recollection...” (MF 135,3).¹⁶

3.5. Dialectic – Yes: Dichotomy – No

The insistence of De La Salle on the recollected life and on what accompanies it — prayer, intimacy with God, personal formation — does not imply any dichotomy between “recollection” and “activity”, between “the interior life” and the “apostolate” or between “union with God” and “service of people”. On the contrary, “this insistence draws attention to two facts: firstly, that true intimacy with the God who saves the world and calls the Brother to be his collaborator directs the Brother back towards this world with renewed enthusiasm and, secondly, that as a *minister of God*, the Brother discovers at the hearts of his call, of his mission, and of his very existence, a personal love which establishes him *in God*, in a gratuitous relationship which transcends all his activities and, in itself, demands to be celebrated in thanksgiving” (AEP 188 – French edition).

In an attempt to analyze the Founder’s thought simply we could outline it as follows:

- The recollected life and the spirit of zeal are two inseparable components of the “state” to which we have been called: “... In your state it is your duty to combine zeal for the salvation of your neighbor with a recollected life and mortification...” (MF 150,2).
- There is no reason for opposition between these two components: “...The occupation to which you

dedicate yourself during the day does not prevent you from living a recollected life" (MF 126,3).

- Both form part of the same objective — or the same purpose — of our vocation: "...You who left the world to live a life beyond the natural and above human inclinations, and in order to work for the salvation of your neighbor, must apply yourself to God and to the ministry to which he has honored you..." (MD 58,3).
- Not only is there no opposition but the normal fruit of recollection is apostolic zeal: "...This is the normal result which comes from a recollected life: the more one has been filled with divine love through such a life the more one is obliged by God, for the good of the Church, to deal with the world in seeking ways to communicate this love to others" (MF 171,2).
- Both components are energized by the dialectic tension which is created between them: "...You must love recollection in order to work effectively for your perfection; but you must leave it when God calls you to dedicate yourselves to save the souls of those confided to your care; and as soon as God no longer demands this of you — when your work has been accomplished — return again to your solitude..." (MF 97,3).¹⁷

3.6. Recollection, prayer and mortification

This trilogy frequently appears in the writings of the Founder in the same way that we have seen it expressed many times in his life. They are three "absolutely sure ways of leading one to God" (MF 174,3)¹⁸ and he would usually add the reading of the Sacred Scriptures to these.¹⁹ However, it is necessary to note the interrelationship between recollection and prayer which the Founder repeatedly underlines in such a way that it is difficult to refer to the first without inviting or extolling the merits of the second, so convinced is he that "in recollection one finds God" (MF 189,2): "... Rest assured that you will only obtain it (the fullness of the spirit of God) in recollection and in prayer; consequently, you must love the first and apply yourself with much fervor to the second" (MF 171,1).²⁰

4. RECOLLECTION: COMMUNITY CONTEXT

4.1. Recollection and community

If we had to indicate a particular — not to say

an exclusive — characteristic of "Lasallian recollection", understood as a way or state of life, there would be little doubt in proposing its community dimension in the association which De La Salle makes between "recollection" and "community", between the "recollected life" and "community life".

In many contexts where the Founder speaks of "retreat" he had no qualms in substituting the expression "community life" for it, in keeping with his belief. In other contexts he refers simultaneously to both aspects or else expressly indicates a facet of community life such as regularity.²¹ In commenting on the cure of the paralytic, in Mt 9,1-8, he stressed this equivalence: "... Get up, pick up your bed and go off home —; in other words, live in retirement, recollection and silence and apply yourself assiduously to prayer and to the other exercises of piety in exact compliance with Rule of the community" (MD 71,3).

In the last meditations for the Sundays of the liturgical year which have, as their central theme, the community of the Brothers, we frequently find expressions referring to community life which are identical to those used in his meditations on the saints with reference to recollection, and on which we have commented in an earlier section: "One can also say of many who have left the world to live in community that they are not dead but rather sleeping... These, however, have only embraced community life to die to the world and to renounce all that those in the world practice" (MD 76, 1.3).

According to the Founder, the community is the "holy place" which one enters in order to sanctify oneself and dedicate oneself to prayer... (MD 77,1.). As we saw earlier, he said exactly the same with regard to recollection. One can see the equivalence he establishes in commenting on the Holy Family's stay in Egypt: "... God has brought you to a holy and recollected place, to his own house, in which he has gathered together those whom he has chosen for himself...". "The withdrawal in which you have to live with respect to all those who are strangers for you must inspire you to fear leaving this retreat and the company of the Brothers..." (MD 6,1).

Thus, the Community is the context in which the Brother has to find God and to fill himself with his Spirit. It is the "setting" for recollection;

“... In leaving the world you have consecrated yourselves to God with the aim of establishing your home by living in this community completely detached from what is proper to pleasing the senses in the world” (MF 191,1).

This “community” perspective provides a clearer understanding for De La Salle’s preoccupation with recollection. It has to be situated in the context of his concern for making the community the guarantor of the mission — it is the community which educates the Brother, prepares him for his ministry and welcomes him on his return from it. Hence this dynamic tension of which we have previously spoken. Understood in this way, Lasallian recollection is not comparable to a solitude which is individualistic but rather is shared with others who are called and who are seeking God. De La Salle indicates this to us through the saints, especially Founders or Foundresses: thus, for example, “... St. Martin... Built a monastery close to that city where he retired with many religious. There, with them, he led a very austere life...” (MF 189,2).

4.2. Recollection and community recreation

In the same way, the silence to which De La Salle invites with regard to recollection is not the absence of words but rather is equivalent to “interiorization”, to a personal and shared reflection on God and on everything related to ministry; “... Things of his nature are what must ordinarily provide subjects for conversation among religious and among those who live in community. Since they have withdrawn from the world their conversation must also be totally different to that which those in the world are accustomed to...” (MD 30,2).

De La Salle wanted the Community to be a pole of attraction in opposition to the world in which one would feel at home and where one would find all that was necessary to dedicate oneself to God and to his service. He was convinced that one of the reasons why communities fail was through the contact of their members with the world, the breaking of community “recollection”, living dependent on events outside the community. Conversation with those outside the community is only sought, he affirms, “because one is not content with that which one has with one’s Broth-

ers” while concern for what is happening in the world only arises because “the heart is not sufficiently occupied with the things of God”. In the same way, one opts to speak of worldly “because one is not in the habit of speaking of God” (R 58).

In consequence of this, and as a means of strengthening the “recollected life” of the Brother, De La Salle created “the manner of spending recreation well” (R 6; RC XVI, 8) making it one of the “external supports of the Institute”, or one of the pillars, which supported community. In contrast to his contemporary Rancé (1626-1700), founder of the Trappists, who, in order to strengthen his reform, suppressed the recreation of the monks, De La Salle not only maintained it but, in fact, gave it great importance in the rule of the community,²² dedicating chapter 6 of the Rule to it, as well as drawing up a “collection of topics of conversation for the Brothers in their recreation” with the aim of helping them to “preserve the spirit of their Institute” (R 57-70). One can therefore say that, according to the Founder, “community recreation” of the Brothers is one of the key elements in the “recollection” which they have to maintain in their life with the aim of effectively carrying out their ministry.²³

5. RECOLLECTION: AN ELEMENT IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE WHOLE LASALLIAN FAMILY

At first sight all of the above reflection could lead us to the conclusion that “recollection”, as understood by De La Salle, is something specific to the spirituality of religious — to those who live “apart from the world” — for example, to Brothers and Sisters. The cultural influences which impinged on the spirituality of the Founder, a son of the French Golden age, accentuated the sombre shades²⁴ of his perspective with regard to the world and to human nature leading to an apparent radical separation of religious from lay people. However, in De La Salle’s work, there are sufficient indications to enable us to broaden this perspective thus recovering this important Lasallian experience for all who feel drawn by his charisma and spirituality. For example;

(a) In works dedicated to pupils we find clear

indications that De La Salle did not consider recollection — understood as a style or attitude of life — as something exclusive to religious, such as the Brothers, but rather as something which was applicable to all Christians. Thus, in the 3rd part of *Les Devoirs d'un Chrétien, Du Culte extérieur et public*, we find the following two observations:

- “We must ask God for a love of recollection, prayer and conversion of heart” (Dc 157).
- “We must... imitate his virtues (St John the Apostle), particularly his simplicity, his love of recollection and of prayer” (Dc 254). We notice here, again, that De La Salle links recollection and prayer.

(b) **In the meditations** written for the Brothers De La Salle distinguishes clearly between “exterior withdrawal” from the world and the interior attitude or “spirit of recollection” maintained through relations with people and in the midst of daily occupations proper to one’s employment. This spirit is the contrary to the “spirit of the world”, that world to which Christians do not belong even though they are in it, as Jesus affirms in the Gospel (Jn 17:16) and which De La Salle repeats (MD 41). We are thus presented with a message which is valid both for Brothers and for seculars. In his meditation on St Peter Celestin, Pope, De La Salle writes: “... He maintained the spirit of recollection after his coronation. This has to be the way of living in the midst of the world if one wants to obtain salvation and preserve piety” (MF 127,2).

On the other hand, De La Salle presented as reference models not only those saints in whom he could find some similarity with the ministry or the life which he desired for the Brothers but also the faithful of the early Christian communities as presented to us in the Acts. The model is the same for religious as for lay people; “...There we also have the model for our perfection. Could we aspire to be less virtuous than the first Christians who lived in the world with much greater detachment and perfection than many religious who live in retirement?...” (MF 116,3).

One can assert, then, that the “abandonment” of the world undertaken by the Brothers in their “recollected life” is a sign of what the Brother, as much as the lay person, has to do — ie. to renounce

the spirit of the world, its values, its criteria, its style, its maxims, in accordance with the prayer of Jesus to the Father for all his disciples (Jn 17: 15,20). The practice of the presence of God and “interior recollection” contribute to this attitude or “spirit of recollection” while all of these are greatly strengthened by participation in a retreat — understood as “spiritual exercises”. This retreat may be periodic or extraordinary and has as its objectives, as previously indicated, renewal and the discernment of the will of God as well as leading to a deeper appreciation of one’s life project.

Without fear of exaggeration it can be asserted that the practice of retreat and the experience of recollection were catalysts which facilitated the forging of De La Salle’s itinerary as we know it. Perhaps it will be necessary to develop new forms of retreat and renew traditional models in order to accommodate the different contexts in which the members of the Lasallian Family find themselves today. However, it is unquestionable that it has an important role in Lasallian spirituality as a means of renewal, of developing the interior person, of confronting “the spirit of the world”, of being filled with the spirit of God, “the spirit of faith and zeal which is the spirit of this Institute”.

* In the Spanish text the author normally uses the same word, “retiro”, to denote each of these three meanings of “retreat”. In this English translation, the English word “retreat” has been used almost exclusively with regard to the first meaning indicated — ie. the making of a retreat or, as used in the text, the “spiritual exercises”. In deference to common usage and to the apostolic nature of our ministry “recollection” rather than “retirement” has usually been used with regard to the two other meanings indicated here (Translator’s note).

¹ In the *Nouveau Dictionnaire François* by RICHELET, “to make a retreat” is defined as follows: «Se retirer du commerce du monde pour quelque temps, ou pour toujours. ... Les dévots font une retraite pour vaquer au jeûne et à la prière. Ceux qui entrent en Religion font une retraite”. It also indicates that the place in which this takes place also has the meaning of “retreat” (RICHELET, P., *op. cit.*, II Amsterdam, 1709, p. 80).

² “... Un exercice spirituel qui implique une rupture avec le régime de vie ordinaire, un cadre plus ou moins isolé, silencieux et paisible, en vue de faciliter une rencontre avec Dieu au sein d’une expérience spirituelle plus ou moins intense» (DS, XIII, Paris, 1988, 423). “La Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice, dont on sait l’influence sur la formation du clergé, met en bonne place les retraites dans son programme, de même que Saint Jean Eudes” (*Id.* 28).

³ Cfr. POUTET, Y., p. 745. and GALLEGU, S., I, p. 154: “It was his way of asking God to manifest his will and for fidelity in following it...”.

⁴ Cf. MAR 5 (MAILLEFER, *The life of John Baptist De La Salle*, translated by Brother Didymus John, 1963, p. 3); POUTET, Y., I, p. 369; GALLEGU, S., I, P. 84.

⁵ Cf. 2B, p. 360; POUTET, Y., I, p. 734; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 184-185.

⁶ 2B 318-319; cf. POUTET, Y., I, p. 745; GALLEGU, S., II, pp. 713-715.

⁷ Cf. 1B, p. 312; MAURICE-AUGUSTE, CL 11, 61, note 1; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 237-239; MAC 55 (MAILLEFER, trans. Bro Didymus John, pp. 53-54).

⁸ Cf. 1B, p. 315; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 243-244.

⁹ Cf. 1B pp. 342-343; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 272-273.

¹⁰ Cf. MAR 107 (MAILLEFER, English translation, p. 69); 1B p. 340; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 273-275.

¹¹ GALLEGU, S., I, p. 488-489: "Both Blain and Maillefer indicate that in this solitude De La Salle felt the temptation, or the strong desire, to abandon the work and to dedicate his life to priestly work in a parish or, alternatively, to hide himself away there for the rest of his life. But he promptly overcame this acute temptation" (cf. MAC pp. 132-134; 2B p. 97; MAR 232-235 – English translation, pp.132-133).

¹² Cf. GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 494-495.

¹³ MAR pp. 244-247 (English translation, pp. 138-139); 2B pp. 105, 223, 273-274; GALLEGU, S., I, pp. 507-508.

¹⁴ CAL 472 (See Note 1).

¹⁵ POUTET, Y., notes in *Siel*, Rome, 1988.

¹⁶ See also the "recollection-ministry" link in the following meditations: 89,1 (The Holy Innocents), 97,2 (St. Anthony, Abbot), 100,1 (St. John Chrysostom), 105,1 105,1 (St. Romuald), 111,1 (St. Benedict), 126,3 (St. Gregory Nazianzen), 135,1.3 (St. Anthony of Padua), 136,1.2 (St. Basil), 138,2 (St. John the Baptist), 161,1 (St. Augustine), 170,1.3 (St. Jerome), 171,1.2.3 (St. Remigius), 180,2 (S. Hilarion), 189,2 (St. Martin).

¹⁷ Cf. MF 128,3; MR 200,1.

¹⁸ Cf. MD 2,2; MF 89,1; 113,3; 127,1; 138,2; 190,2.

¹⁹ Cf. MF 100,1; 170,2; 192,3.

²⁰ Cfr. 102,1; 135,3; 152,3; 161,1; 170,3; 189,2; 192,2; MR 200,1.

²¹ Cf. MD 42,2; 71,3; MF 98,1; 111,1; 126,3.

²² The "Rule of the Brother Director" indicates that, in the case of necessity, the Brother Director should absent himself from prayer rather than absent himself from recreation (CL 25, p. 155).

²³ Cf. the study by TEMPRADO, A., in his doctoral thesis, *La Palabra según La Salle*, on the theme of recreation, pp.163-184, Col. Síntese 13, ed. San Pío X, Salamanca 1977.

²⁴ Cf. DEVILLE, R., *L'École française de Spiritualité*, Annexe 2: *Le pessimisme de l'École française*. VARELA, L., *Biblia y Espiritualidad en San Juan Bautista de La Salle*, pp. 190-191, Col. Síntese, 10, ed. San Pío X, Salamanca 1965.

Complementary themes:

Apostles; Community; Consecration; Conversations; Faith, Formation; God (Glory of); Gospel; The Holy Spirit; Inspiration (Movements of the Holy Spirit); Jesus Christ; Lay people; Ministry; Mission; Mortification; The World and relations with the world; Piety; Prayer; Presence of God; Recollection; Recreation; Renewal; Renunciation – detachment; Rule and Regularity; Salvation; Silence; Solitude; Supports of the Institute; Union with God; Vocation; The Will of God; Zeal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ALCALDE GOMEZ, A., *El maestro en la pedagogia de S.J.B. de La Salle*, Col. Síntese, nº 3, Salamanca 1961, 211-221.
2. CAMPOS, M. and SAUVAGE, M., *Announcing the Gospel to the poor*, (English translation, Romeville, 1891).
3. DEVILLE, R., *L'École française de Spiritualité*, Paris, Desclée, 1987.
4. GALLEGU, S., *San Juan Bautista de La Salle*, Vols I and II, Madrid, BAC, 1986.
5. POUTET, Y., *Le XVII^e Siècle et les origines lasalliennes*, I, Rennes 1970.
6. SAUVAGE, M., *Catéchèse et Laïcité*, Paris, 1962.
7. TEMPRADO, A., *La Palabra según La Salle*, Col. Síntese, nº 13, Salamanca 1977.

Bro. Antonio BOTANA