

# 67. CELEBRATING

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*Marking a friend's birthday by a small celebration offers an opportunity to show, once a year, deep-seated feelings that are in danger of being masked by the daily routine of life. People need visible signs to express what is invisible.*

*In the same way, the phenomenon of religion is first of all recognised because of its sacred language, ritualised gestures and group celebrations, and only afterwards by its personalised interior aspect. A relationship with the Sacred cannot be satisfied by ordinary language : it is expressed on a symbolic plane, which alone can speak of realities beyond the reach of human beings. The biblical Revelation of God adds an historical dimension : Easter is no longer simply an agricultural feast marking the first fruits of the year; it is a commemoration of the departure from Egypt, the pledge of a new Freedom.*

*In the writings of John Baptist de La Salle, the only celebrations mentioned are those included in the calendar of the Catholic Church. Consequently, this article will limit itself to these only. This should not suggest, however, that De La Salle was not aware of more secular forms of celebration.*

## 1. WORSHIP IN THE 17th CENTURY

From the 4th to the 7th century, there developed gradually in the Catholic Church a more or less unified form of rite established by a number of Councils. Later on, the Council of Trent contributed to the restoration of a vigorous unity in the Church, made necessary by the Protestant Reformation. Pius V was responsible for a revised form of the breviary (1567) and an amended missal (1568). In addition, there was launched an overall liturgical reform: in 1588, the *Congregation of Rites* was made responsible for ensuring respect in the Latin Church for liturgical rules.

In the days of De La Salle, there continued to survive in France its own so-called neo-gallican liturgy. Trained in the school of St Sulpice to have the greatest respect for all that came from Rome, De La Salle always opted for the Roman Tridentine liturgy, where the Mass, the breviary and the liturgical calendar were concerned. It was during this period, in fact, that the reform undertaken as a result of the Council of Trent finally became a reality in France.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1. Unity between doctrine and liturgy

Liturgy is not something separate from Christian doctrine. It is not as if, on the one hand, there was doctrine and morals, and on the other, liturgy. There is interpenetration, as can easily be seen in the sacraments and the Mass. Numerous catechism books of the 17th century see close links between doctrine and Christian life, on the one hand, and liturgy — and therefore worship<sup>2</sup> — on the other.

We should not be surprised, therefore, to find De La Salle occasionally speaking also of liturgy in his *Duties of a Christian*. For example, when, in the *Duties of a Christian*, vol. III (DC), he speaks of the ceremonies accompanying sacraments, he reminds his readers that there is a more detailed description in *Duties*, vol. II (DB). When he speaks of the ceremonies of the Mass (CL 20,477 = DA 405,2,5), he refers the reader to the *Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass* (CL 17 = I). We see, therefore, that Christian life is an organic whole in which worship plays an essential role. It would be very unfortunate indeed to relegate it to the side-lines.

### 1.2. A word about vocabulary

If, in De La Salle's day, there were people<sup>3</sup> who did not understand even some very common concepts, it was even more likely they would not understand such words as "ceremony" and "worship" when they were used in a religious context. The catechism books of the day did not fail to explain their meaning.<sup>4</sup> "Ceremonies are religious and mysterious acts which serve to make the worship of God more majestic and venerable".<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that ceremonies were a part also of secular life and had to do with politeness and etiquette. As far as the word worship is concerned, De La Salle presumed that his readers understood it: he gives no explanation. La Chétardye, however, thought it necessary to explain its meaning: "The word worship means the interior and exterior respect owed to the Creator".<sup>6</sup>

## 2. CEREMONIES AND SACRAMENTS

The life of a Christian begins with a sacrament and normally ends with one too. This life develops through the reception of such sacraments as Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance or Reconciliation, Marriage and Holy Orders. It is important for a Christian to understand the liturgical significance of these high points of his spiritual life.

Why is the administration of the sacraments accompanied by ceremonies? De La Salle gives three reasons: "1. To induce us to have more respect for the

sacraments. 2. To stimulate and increase the devotion of the priests that administer them, of the faithful who receive them, and of those who are present when they are administered. 3. To help us to understand better the purpose for which these sacraments are given and the effect they produce. We understand better, for example, that the devil, who possessed those who are baptised because of the original sin that was in them, is chased out. This is because, when they are baptised they are also exorcised, just like persons possessed by the devil" (CL 21,156 = DB 3,2,16).

The significance of the ceremonies of **Baptism** can be found in CL 20,222f = DA 302,3. We should note the symbolism involved in the anointing with holy chrism. It calls to mind athletes who put oil on their bodies before fighting. The Christian likewise is anointed in view of the combats he will have to have with the enemies of his salvation. The other ceremonies are justified by a series of explanations which explain the effects of the sacrament. In the course of these explanations, De La Salle makes a remark that is quite extraordinary, given the very restrictive context of the reign of Louis XIV : one can be a Christian only by free choice; God does not force anyone to be so (CL 20,229 = DA 302, 3,15). The ceremonies of **Confirmation** also are explained in detail (CL 20,231f = DA 303).

Regarding the **Eucharist**, as has already been said, explanations of a liturgical nature are given in the Instructions. De La Salle makes a clear distinction between the liturgy of the Word, which in those days was called the Mass of the catechumens, and the Eucharistic liturgy, which was called the Mass of the faithful (CL 17,17 = I 1,6,3). One can say that his explanations cover all the liturgical aspects of the Mass. Where necessary, he points out that such or such rubric was different formerly (CL 17,38f = I 1,6,48f). Often his approach is patristic, and his overriding concern is to make his reader enter into the spirit of the Church, by making him know the prayers said by the priest during Mass and by explaining the reasons why he says them (CL 17,16 = I 1,5,5).

There are abundant explanations also regarding the sacrament of **Penance**, to help the Christian understand the meaning and the purpose of his various gestures. Making the sign of the cross, for example, recalls that "it was through the Cross that our reconciliation with God was brought about". The penitent

strikes his breast "to express the horror and confusion he has because of his sins" (CL 20,324 = DA 307,5,23).

Regarding the ceremonies of **Extreme Unction** (or the sacrament of the sick), De La Salle points out that the candle placed in the hands of the sick person signifies that the latter wishes to remain attached to Jesus Christ till death, as well as to his doctrine, which is the true light, and to be himself a burning and shining light before God, consuming himself for love of him, by consecrating to him the last moments of his life with all the affection of his heart (CL 20,365 = DA 308,2,15).

He does not spend time on explanations of the ceremonies of the sacrament of **Holy Orders**, but he goes into a fair amount of detail regarding that of **Marriage** (CL 20,397f = DA 310,5). Certain rites whose symbolism was rather beautiful have disappeared. After the blessing of the rings and their exchange as a sign of union, the husband offered some coins, as a sign of his commitment to feed his wife, and as a sign that they would share their property. The husband placed his hand on that of his wife to show that "he must be the first to remain faithful". At this point, De La Salle recalls that in the past there was yet another symbol : the husband puts his cloak around his wife, "as we read in the book of Ruth", he adds. The spouses will hold in their hand "a white lighted candle to show that they should have preserved their chastity from the day of their Baptism, and that they must stand ready with their lamps lit, as the Gospel says, to go and meet the real Spouse who is Jesus Christ" (CL 20,401 = DA 310,5,12).

These few examples are enough to show that De La Salle wanted the faithful to have a clear understanding of the ceremonies accompanying worship or the administration of sacraments.

### 3. MASS AND THE DIVINE OFFICE

#### 3.1. The Mass

De La Salle summarises his thinking about the Mass, the act of worship at the very centre of Christian life, in the following words : "Of all the actions that are normally performed every day, the principal and the most excellent is that of attending Holy Mass. It is also the most important for a Christian who wishes

to draw down upon himself and upon all the actions he has to perform during the day, the grace and blessings of God" (CL 17,3 = I 1,1,1). Jean-Baptiste Blain, the principal Lasallian biographer of the origins of the Institute, has left us many descriptions of the man of God's profound devotion to the Eucharist (CL 7,131f; 8,234f; 8,485f).

### 3.2. Celebrating the Eucharist

In his *Instructions and Prayers*, De La Salle's main concern is to make the reader understand the reality behind the various rites and ceremonies. Following the practice of his day, he suggests ways of praying during the Mass: he draws on prayers from the Latin ordinary of the Mass translated into French, or uses prayers he has composed himself to fit in with the actions and prayers of the priest.

In the same way, he explains all the various blessing ceremonies that can take place during liturgical ceremonies. In this way he offers Christians a means of taking part in the celebration of the Mysteries on a deep personal level.

### 3.3 The Divine Office

In importance, the Divine Office comes immediately after the parish Mass. The Church has established it for a number of reasons: 1. To praise God, to adore him;<sup>7</sup> 2. To be instructed by his Word; 3. To ask for his help.

J. B. de La Salle, who was a canon of the metropolitan church of Rheims and who, as a priest, recited the Divine Office daily, had no difficulty in explaining the composition of the various "hours" of this universal prayer of the Church. It was usual for monks to recite the whole office. Christian lay people, however, were encouraged in particular to attend vespers on Sundays and feasts<sup>8</sup> in ordinary time. At certain times of the year, on certain "more solemn feasts", the whole office was sung "in nearly all the churches" (CL 20,479 = DA 405,2,9).

### 3.4. The Rules of the Brothers and the liturgy

As a priest, De La Salle devoted all his energy to educating the faithful<sup>9</sup> in the faith. As the Founder of the Brothers, his scope for pastoral care was more restricted, but his influence was at a much deeper level. The Brothers were not obliged to recite the Divine Office (i.e. the breviary), but De La Salle required the novices to recite the office of Our Lady every day. Brothers who did not attend vespers with their pupils on Sunday were likewise required to recite this office<sup>10</sup>. He asks them to recite it as if they were reciting the breviary, with the same frame of mind, and insists on the fact that it is the prayer of the Church: When you recite it, he says, "your role is that of a public penitent, praying, praising and thanking God in the name of the whole Church and, in particular, of the whole Community" (CL 15,131 = R 14,4,2).

He tailors his teachings on the Mass and the Eucharist to the needs of the Brothers. The Rule, in particular, defines how the Brothers should go about the liturgical education of young people.<sup>11</sup> During the week, they have to take their pupils to Mass, unless they have a legitimate reason not to do so. On Sundays, the Brothers go to the church where their pupils are assembled<sup>12</sup> to attend the parish Mass. In the afternoon, after a catechism lesson lasting an hour and a half, the Brothers accompany their pupils to vespers. The explanation of the *External and Public Worship* was certainly used during these Sunday catechism lessons which dealt with "the principal mysteries" and therefore also with the big feasts in honour of God, Jesus Christ and the Most Blessed Virgin.

## 4. THE LITURGY AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

### 4.1. A "school liturgy"

The various liturgical seasons are well explained in the catechism lessons for pupils and adults.<sup>13</sup> Numerous practices are suggested to prolong the effects of religious celebrations throughout the day.

If we look at the *Exercises of Piety which are performed during the day in the Christian schools* (CL 20 = E), we find described there a sort of « school liturgy » adapted to the capabilities of the children: morning and evening prayers with time for a short

reflection; prayers at the hours and half-hours; prayers before and after meals or snacks, prayers before catechism. There were prayers also special to the liturgical seasons: for Ember Days, Rogation Days, and feasts of Our Lady and Our Lord.<sup>14</sup>

### 4.2. The liturgical calendar

Society in the days of Louis XIV was a society that could be called "sacralised" as opposed to our 20th century which, in many places, is "desacralised"

and secularised". Sacralised society is permeated by the relationship of man and God, in its actions, in its daily life, in its Christian mysteries and in the homage paid to the great servants of God. The 17th century religious calendar is full of holidays with a compulsory Mass, even if not all the daily feasts in each month are mentioned.<sup>15</sup>

The responsibility for allocating days of obligation lay with each individual diocese, and this is why De La Salle does not give an exhaustive list.<sup>16</sup> The archbishop of Rouen, for example, reduced the number of days of obligation in his diocese in 1705, the year in which the Brothers arrived in his diocese.<sup>17</sup>

### 4.3. A hierarchical order of feasts

Some writers list the feasts of the liturgical calendar chronologically. De La Salle, on the other hand, with his usual fondness for logical order, lists them according to the importance of the person being honoured.

As O. Windels points out,<sup>18</sup> De La Salle leaves no one in doubt about his wish to establish a proper hierarchical order of feasts: "Although they are all days of obligation, some are more solemn than others, because they were established for the sole purpose of honouring God or the Most Blessed Virgin, and are celebrated with much more solemnity than those of other saints" (CL 22,126 = DC 40,0,3).

## 5. CELEBRATIONS AND SOCIETY : GUILDS AND THEIR PATRON SAINTS

It was a current practice in towns, dating back to the Middle Ages, to form associations, confraternities or craft guilds under the patronage of a saint. For example, the patron saint of cobblers was St Crispin, and that of goldsmiths and blacksmiths was St Eloi. Crafts, like parishes, had their patronal feastdays.

De La Salle, respecting the pastoral customs of his days, takes patron saints into account in his school regulations and catechisms: "Who are the saints called patron saints? — There are three kinds: 1. Those who first announced the Gospel in the place or province where one lives. 2. Those in whose honour the parish (or the church) where one lives was dedicated and consecrated to God. 3. The saint whose name one received at baptism or confirmation" (CL 22,295 = DC 44,23,3).

It goes without saying that De La Salle encourages respect for these liturgical feasts, especially the parish ones. He does not fail to mention the feast of St Nicholas, the patron of schoolchildren. "A holiday will

be given on the feast of the patron saint of the parishes in which there are schools, as also on certain feastdays which [...] are kept in the town or in the parish in this town in which the Institute has a school" (CL 24,200 = CE 17,2,10).

However, in order "not to cut down the number of school days", feastdays will be limited: only one feast of St Nicholas will be celebrated, and nowhere will a holiday be given on the feasts of craft patron saints, nor on the patronal feastdays of the pupils (CL 24,201 = CE 17,2,15).

De La Salle wishes to ensure there is no confusion between secular feasts and folklore, and genuine Christian worship. The great respect he has for St John the Baptist leads him to add a note of warning when speaking of the bonfires of St John's night (Midsummer night). The Church may allow this way of expressing joy at the birth of this saint, but one should abstain from "superstitions unworthy of a Christian" (CL 22,118 = DC 44,5,10).

## 6. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASPECT

### 6.1 Celebrating as the people, in assembly

Speaking about the Christian religion,<sup>19</sup> De La Salle describes it as “a society made up of a very great number of different nations” (this is its catholicity and universality), adding that these persons “have committed themselves to fulfil their duties to God”.<sup>20</sup> He goes on to say that they pay their homage “in public or in private, in the way Jesus Christ taught them” (CL 20,iiij = DA 0,0,3).

A Christian must not limit his religion to something strictly private. To belong to the true religion, he must also be a Catholic and profess publicly what he believes. He must, moreover, lead a life modelled on that of Jesus and his teachings. We call “Christian Catholics those who perform the external exercises which are most commonly practised in our religion” (CL 20,iiij = DA 0,0,6-7).

Given the fact that Christians belong to a society, this attitude would seem to be only logical. As a society, they assemble and, by the very fact of doing so, they maintain the existence of this society: bonds are weakened in a society that does not assemble. By meeting, members demonstrate that they belong to this society. Finally, a society that has one heart and one soul celebrates the greatness of the God it serves.

What De La Salle says about parish Masses can be applied to other kinds of celebrations also, since the intention of the Church is that the faithful, during parish Masses, “join their voices to those of the clergy to form one choir and one voice of all the voices rising to heaven, in order to draw down the grace and mercy of God on all the assembly of the faithful”<sup>21</sup> (CL 20,477 = DA 405,2,4).

De La Salle devotes an entire book (CL 22 = DC) to explain, using the catechetical method, what the external and public worship the faithful have to offer

to God consists in, and how to offer it to him.<sup>22</sup> He considers it an obligation for Christians to offer God external, visible and effective worship. He says that the Church provides four major ways of giving God external praise:<sup>23</sup>

I. Public religious exercises, i.e.: (a) ordinary : parish Masses, Divine Office; (b) less ordinary : processions, confraternities, pilgrimages; (c) extraordinary : public prayers for various needs: 1. Serious problems in the Church; 2. Social evils; 3. Plague of war; 4. Deliverance from epidemics...<sup>24</sup>

II. Worship includes also well regulated ceremonies (See 2 above) (CL 22,4f = DC 0,1,3 and 10,1).

### 6.2. Celebrating openly and visibly : processions

For De La Salle, it is essential for the Church to proclaim its faith openly and to celebrate it. We have indicated above the reasons on which he bases this judgment.

In his days, processions were considered to be a very valuable way of demonstrating one’s faith. There were three sorts of procession: (a) prayer, to ask help for some urgent need; (b) thanksgiving; (c) penance, to ask forgiveness or humiliate oneself by considering one’s sins.

Three reasons were given to justify processions: (a) to honour the journeys Our Lord made on earth for our salvation; (b) to remind us of the obligation we have to follow Jesus and walk in his footsteps; (c) to show that ecclesiastics have to follow Jesus closely, show the faithful the way to virtue by walking before them, and to serve as a model for them (CL 22,12-13 = DC 10,4,2 & 4).

De La Salle describes the seven kinds of procession held in those days, each with its own justification and symbolism.

## 7. THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL ASPECTS

### 7.1 Celebrating knowing why

The liturgy of the High Mass as a whole seems to be the affirmation of a people on the march — active, organised and united behind its leader. It is a people set aside for God, assembled for praise (symbolised by the incense), summoned to receive the Word of God (homily) and strengthened by its union and charity (symbolised by the blessed bread and the kiss of peace).

All these rites which are part of the parish High Mass and which one might consider as being somewhat peripheral, help to express the profound reality of the Mass, as celebrated in the 17th century.

The people at Mass are the whole Christ. The *Instructions* highlight the unique position of Christ's priesthood in the Church.

The various sacraments with their specific ceremonies are a form of celebration too. De La Salle describes the significance of the ceremonies in detail so as "to inspire the faithful with a very special esteem and veneration for holy Baptism", Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Marriage.<sup>25</sup> Regarding the sacrament of Holy Orders, he puts most emphasis on the dispositions necessary for entering the priesthood. As for the Eucharist, he had already explained its ceremonies elsewhere (CL 17 = I).

It is clear that De La Salle is as far from the utilitarian and rationalising explanation of Claude de Vert as he is from the artificial and complicated allegorical approach which was the standard fare in the Middle Ages. As a rule, his commentary either contains a dogmatic content or tries to indicate the theological foundation for a prayer or a rite in terms that are both sober and vigorous (Br Louis, *Catéchistes*, 1955, p. 305f).

### 7.2. Celebrating worthily

In addition to understanding the significance of ceremonies, the Christian needs also to learn the dignified external attitude he must adopt when offering public worship to God. When a Brother accompanies his pupils to church, it is his duty to accustom them to have a respectful attitude. The *Conduct of Schools*

provides a ritual intended to make pupils aware of the dignity of the church as soon as they enter it. During Mass, the pupils have to hold up their prayer book "in both hands before their face and look at it". If the meaning of the ceremonies is explained, such an attitude has to be more than simply mechanical and, as we have said before, De La Salle took care to provide these explanations: the faithful knew why they stood up, genuflected or sat down at different times during the celebration.

### 7.3. Canticles

Contrary to what one may think, canticles were not part of celebrations as they are today. Most of the sung material used in liturgies in France in the time of De La Salle was in Latin and consisted of hymns, Psalms, "Old and New Testament canticles"<sup>26</sup> and Latin hymns taken from the proper or ordinary of the Mass. Canticles could be sung at missions, retreats and catechism lessons, but they were not recognised as belonging to celebrations properly so called. They could be used during para-liturgical ceremonies such as those commemorating jubilees or during processions. There is no doubt, however, that canticles were incorporated in church liturgies during devotional exercises, communion outside of Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>27</sup>

Certain writers like Pacory, who had Jansenist sympathies, speak very harshly against the use of canticles in church: "If you want to relax with some edifying and spiritual canticles, do so at home or somewhere else, but not in the house of God which is not meant to be used as a place for recreation. Let those who sing in church realise that their songs contain great truths which will perhaps condemn them on the Day of Judgment, and that they sing the praises of God in the presence of God".<sup>28</sup>

It should perhaps be pointed out that De La Salle's liturgical spirit of celebration was not restricted to his writings, but that it permeated his life as a priest. Blain, in language which can be tediously wordy, as it is in this case, highlights De La Salle's zeal for liturgical celebrations and settings for liturgy which are worthy of the God they are intended to honour (CL 8,233).

*De La Salle insists that corporate homage offered to God in the community of believers should be visible. He tries to give motives for it and justification; he tries explain its significance more fully so that external worship can become the expression of interior participation which gives it greater value and enables it to be adoration "in spirit and truth". Blain liked to say that the piety shown by the Brothers' pupils in parish churches edified the faithful (CL 8,235).*

*We can imagine the kind of teaching difficulties that could arise when the faithful knew no Latin and the children even less. Nowadays, given the the profound ignorance of religion among our contemporaries, there are other difficulties which are even more daunting. How can liturgy be made part of the process of educating young people in the faith, when they seem hardly to understand what celebration means, and when the liturgy of the Church is so far removed from "their" idea of celebrating. And yet, big gatherings, such as pilgrimages, meetings at Taizé, gatherings in sports stadia with the Pope, seem to inspire them and make them experience a feeling of being Christians together. The catechesis of handicapped persons also shows the power of evangelisation contained in well prepared celebrations. How do we carry over the impact of the special occasion into everyday life ?*

*The insistence of the Founder on Christ as the mediator of all prayer brings to mind a factor that is essential. His "Second way of placing oneself in the holy presence of God [...] by considering Our Lord present in the midst of those who gather in his name", although written for the teachers and not for the pupils, is a powerful reminder of the significance of the assembled community: "Is it not a great joy, when we are gathered with our Brothers, to be assured that we are in the company of Our Lord, and that he is in the midst of the Brothers. He is in their midst to give them his Holy Spirit [...], to unite them [...], to teach them his truths and the maxims of the Gospel [...], and so that all their actions may be directed towards Jesus Christ as to their centre [...], and that they may be one in him" (CL 14,9f = EM 2,25 to 31).*

<sup>1</sup> Paul Broutin shows extensively the multiplicity and diversity of the efforts made to renovate Christian worship (Cf. *La Réforme pastorale en France au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, Desclée, 1956, vol. I, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> There is a good list of these in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie* in the article on the Mass. Mgr de Tassy, the bishop of Châlon-sur-Saône (1677-1710) invented a new method. His catechism explains first doctrine and then Christian life. Then the catechism of the mysteries explains dogma and the liturgy within the context of the feast days that occur. Bossuet published a catechism of feast days in 1687. There are also Gambart, Démià, the Langres Catechism...

<sup>3</sup> A composer of canticles wrote the following in 1685: "The best minds of those who learn catechism do not understand, for example, the meaning of: human body, food, bloody, invisible and other words people think everybody knows" (Preface, *Catéchisme en cantiques* [Abbé d'Heauville], Châlons, 1681, 16mo (Arsenal, BL 10769).

<sup>4</sup> O. Windels noted a certain fluctuation in vocabulary regarding this in the catechisms he studied. See bibliography, WINDELS, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> LA CHÉTARDYE, *Catéchisme de Bourges*, II, p. 12. This definition is similar to Beuvelet's: "In general, ceremonies are nothing more than an external act of religion by which we offer God some worship and reverence, and which signifies something interior beneath visible things" (*Instructions sur le manuel*, Antoine Laurens, 1677, p. 51).

<sup>6</sup> LA CHÉTARDYE, IV, p. 223f.

<sup>7</sup> The *Duties* in continuous prose (DA) adds the word "adore", which is absent from DC. With the exception of this detail (CL 20,477f = DA 405,2,5f) DA has the same contents as DC regarding the Divine Office.

<sup>8</sup> De La Salle makes the point that the Church has abandoned some practices in order to help Christians to perform their exercises of piety. He says it in a way that shocks

us a little, but which reveals his religious spirit and his determination to serve the Lord: "The Church has become so lenient in order to make allowance for their weakness and lack of piety, and to give them a reason for not dispensing themselves from performing them" (CL 20,479 = DA 405,2,9). De La Salle has high expectations of the fervour of Christians... even in the 17th century !

<sup>9</sup> This concern is evident in the *Instructions and Prayers*, the *External and Public Worship* and in the *Duties of a Christian* in continuous prose. These books which were used by the pupils found their way also into the hands of parents who could learn from them also.

<sup>10</sup> *Practice of the Daily Regulation* (CL 25,106,14).

<sup>11</sup> The *Conduct of Schools* describes the duties of the Brothers in this connection: explanation of the parish Mass and of the way to attend it well; the communication of a great esteem for the offices of the Church, especially for those held in the parishes (CL 24,95 = CE 8,7).

<sup>12</sup> "The pupils will assemble in the church on Sundays and feast days and they will all be obliged to be there before the beginning of the blessing with holy water" (CL 24,95 = CE 8,7,3).

<sup>13</sup> According to the *Conduct of Schools* (1706 ms) "outsiders" attend catechism lessons on Sundays and feast days. Outsiders are "those who do not attend the Christian Schools on the days when they function" (CL 24,232 = CE 9,6,1).

<sup>14</sup> It is sufficient to consult CL 18 = E to notice on every page one element or other of this liturgy which has been adapted to the school and which remains faithful to the spirit of the Church.

<sup>15</sup> When we read the *Meditations* of St John Baptist de La Salle for the principal feasts, we notice that these feasts are not very numerous. In the same way, his meditations devoted to the lives and virtues of saints cover only a fraction of the saints in the liturgical calendar. For example, there are only 6 meditations for the 30 days of April.

<sup>16</sup> See CL 20,155 = DA 212,0,10: "It is for the bishops to whom the Church has entrusted its authority within the confines of their diocese [...] to establish feasts [...] and to suppress them".

<sup>17</sup> The feasts proper to the diocese of Rouen — those of St Romain, St Sever and St Yon — are not included in the

regular series of *Meditations for the principal feasts of the year*. And yet, the Rules — *Practice of the Daily Regulation* — included the celebration of the patron saint of parishes "in which the house [...] was located" (CL 25,135). They were not included in the main body of meditations, but in a supplement at the end.

This explains why it is supposed that the work was written before 1705, the date of the Brothers' arrival in Rouen, and after 1698, the year in which the chapel in the Grand'Maison in Paris was dedicated to St Cassian, whose meditation is in the many body of the work (CL 12,155).

<sup>18</sup> See the bibliography (WINDELS, p. 103). Bossuet and Montpellier had a similar concern with some variation.

<sup>19</sup> In the Catholic language of 17th century France, the expression "Christian religion" refers to the Roman Catholic Church as opposed to the "Supposedly reformed religion".

<sup>20</sup> Fulfil one's duties = honour, celebrate.

<sup>21</sup> This statement shows that Windels' (p. 53) is too absolute. He says that the catechism of the three Henry's is the only one to consider worship in a corporate and ecclesial context.

<sup>22</sup> See bibliography: DE LA SALLE, *Du culte...* (CL 22).

<sup>23</sup> According to Olivier Windels, De La Salle is in agreement with the other authors of his times, regarding this.

<sup>24</sup> In the *Collection*, De La Salle indicates that "the prayers prescribed by the Church for this purpose are always the best" (CL 15,200 = R 16,4,10).

<sup>25</sup> CL 20,222; 236; 322; 361; 397 = DA 302,3; 303,2; 307,5; 309,1; 310,5.

<sup>26</sup> It is important not to be mistaken about the word *cantique*, even, and especially, in translations of Lasallian texts. It does not have the meaning of spiritual song, but refers to the canticles of the sacred books.

<sup>27</sup> How else can we explain the fact that the canticles have the following titles: "Canticle [...] containing the acts to be made when one wishes to communicate", "Canticle for the day on which one has communicated and which can serve as thanksgiving after holy Communion" ? (Cf. CL 22,63f at the end of the work = CA 2,25f).

<sup>28</sup> PACORY, *Règles chrétiennes*, see bibliography.

**Complementary themes**

Church  
Devotion

Instruction  
Mass

Piety  
Sacraments

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