

7. CHURCH

Summary:

Église in the Writings of John Baptist De La Salle.

This essay develops John Baptist De La Salle's (here after DLS) uses of the word *église* according to the following schema:

1. Introduction: Frequency and classification of references to *église* in DLS's writings. – 2. DLS and the church of 7th Century France. 2.1. pervasive presence in French society. 2.2. reforming church. 2.3. Gallicanism and Jansenism. – 3. *Église* as building for worship. – 4. *Église* as society of the faithful. 4.1. institutional aspects of the society. 4.2. communal aspects of the society. – 5. *Église* in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*. – 6. DLS on *Église*. Some contemporary Connections.

1. INTRODUCTION: FREQUENCY AND CLASSIFICATION OF REFERENCES TO CHURCH IN DLS'S WRITINGS

The multi-volume reference work *Vocabulaire lasallien* lists 1,707 references to the word *église* in DLS's writings, the great majority of which are in *Les "Devoirs d'un Chrétien"*, volumes I and II *Du Culte extérieur et public* (actually a third volume of *Les Devoirs*).¹

Vocabulaire lasallien classifies those references in two major categories: *église* as a building dedicated to worship (349 references) and *église* as a society of the faithful (1333 references). In addition, a small group of fifteen references is identified as referring to either *église* as building or *église* as a society of persons. This essay utilizes the two chief classifications from *Vocabulaire lasallien* – *église* as a building and as society of the faithful – and will explore sample texts which particularly exemplify the references in each group.

2. ECCLESIAL CONTEXT: DLS AND THE CHURCH OF 17th CENTURY FRANCE

The characteristics of the Catholic Church in 17th century France of which mention will be made are the following: pervasiveness of its presence in French society; reforming spirit and practice; principal theological controversies — Gallicanism and Jansenism. This brief discussion of ecclesial context only mentions salient characteristics of the church in France in the seventeenth century which are particularly relevant to DLS's use of *église*. Much research is available on this topic itself: some useful general sources are indicated in the bibliography.

While awareness of these ecclesial characteristics clearly can contribute to the contemporary readers' accurate appreciation of DLS's understanding of church, rarely if ever does DLS mention any of these characteristics explicitly or at length. The institutions and personnel of the

French church dominated the society of his time, yet DLS's references to *église* contain relatively few specific references to the context. Nor did DLS engage in explicit discussion of either Jansenism or Gallicanism, two major theological controversies with profound impact on the French church. There are references in his writings which indicate that DLS was aware of and held orthodox positions on these matters, but he did not engage either controversy polemically. DLS's relative silence about these aspects of the church of his time may seem unusual, especially in light of post-Vatican II interest in the history and self-understanding of the church. However, DLS wrote as an educator, as founder of an order, and as a trainer of teachers, not as a theologian developing a systematic theology of church.

2.1. Pervasive presence in French society.

Even in a period of growing royal absolutism like the reign of Louis XIV, the church's social presence dominated French society. *La Dictionnaire Du Grand Siècle* describes that dominance thus: "the church was present almost everywhere, almost all the time... its spirit, its rules, and its practices dominated the life of society".² The church was present from birth to death: it marked major events of life by its sacraments, the passage of every day by the tolling of church bells signalling times of prayer, work and rest, and announced major public events or threatening dangers by ringing those same bells. The church's influence pervaded society through visible signs such as persons in religious dress and buildings, by providing administrative services such as registering births, deaths, and marriages, and frequent public displays of popular religious devotion as in processions.³

The contrast between DLS's 17th century France and the modern democracies, particularly those in the west is striking. In modern democracies, other social institutions, especially those of government or the state, have assumed responsibilities once exercised by the church. Government, for example, registers births, deaths and marriages. Mass communications media report events of major and minor public significance. Time clocks and factory whistles establish the rhythms

of the modern work day. Church activities and the expression of devotion in DLS's time were thus much more exteriorized and public than is common today in industrialized democracies.

2.2. Reforming Church.

The French church of the 17th century was caught up in the general spirit of Catholicism after the Council of Trent (1536-1554) which had called for a reform in the "head and members" of the church. Political factors unique to the French experience — and connected to Gallicanism, a controversy about the respective rights of the king of France and the Pope — prevented the full public proclamation of Trent's decrees. But, in practice, reform was evident in at least three major and sometimes overlapping aspects of church life: 1) in the vigorous action of bishops and the corresponding strengthening of local or diocesan churches; 2) in improved training of candidates for priestly ordination and improved exercise of priestly ministries, 3) in efforts better to educate the "laity", through preaching and catechesis, so as to prevent the kind of distorted or superstitious religious behavior which Luther had attacked.⁴ All three aspects of this practical reform were animated and influenced by the spirituality and pastoral action deriving from Pierre de Berulle, Jean Jacques Olier, Jean Eudes and others and which has been known ever since as the "French School".

As both founder of a society of lay teaching brothers and educator, DLS was shaped by and contributed to this church-wide renewal. Brothers Michel Sauvage and Alphonse Hermans, in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, remark that neither the life nor the spirituality of DLS can be separated from the spirit of reform in the French church.⁵ His family background, his theological studies — especially his year at Saint Sulpice in Paris, and his ongoing study and reading certainly exposed DLS to the concerns and practices of the French School. Sauvage and Hermans identify concretely some traits characteristic of 17th century French spirituality which figure prominently in DLS's life and writing centrality of Scripture, centrality of the Incarnation and the "mysteries" (i.e. key events) of the life of Jesus, uniting oneself to Christ by following the action of the Holy Spirit,

efforts at self-abnegation and detachment, conforming oneself to the will of God.⁶ To this list should be added DLS's recognition of and respect for the authority and power of the church, as exercised by its hierarchy, as emphasized by the Council of Trent in response to Luther's theology of the church. In the arena of pastoral practice, DLS's efforts to educate poor boys in the cities of France did for common people what the establishment of seminaries would do for the education of priests: helped to raise their level of religious knowledge and practice. From this pastoral perspective, DLS is part of a larger group of reformers, which includes Charles Demia, among others, and the foundresses of the societies of women committed to the education of young girls.

There is also a harsher aspect to the reforming climate after Trent: attitudes of defensiveness and hostility toward Protestants. In this regard, DLS is both characteristic and uncharacteristic of his time. In explaining, in *Les Devoirs I*, who are members of the church, DLS calls Protestants members of societies which "take and usurp the name church" (Da: 66, author's translation of: *celles des Herétiques, prennent et usurpent le nom d'Eglise*). Yet his writings are devoid of intemperate attacks on Protestants. In fact, he committed brothers to opening "schools" in strongly Protestant areas in the south of France. DLS may have sent his brothers with the thought of their participating in the conversion of Protestant children, and perhaps their parents, to the truth of the Catholic religion. But the brothers also provided those children with the same kind of basic education that their "society" was providing elsewhere in France.

2.3. Gallicanism and Jansenism.

DLS had to be aware of these controversies. He had studied briefly in Paris in a theological faculty well aware of both Gallicanism and Jansenism. His brother, Jean-Louis, was known to have Jansenist sympathies.⁷ As strong as these controversies were and as probable as his exposure to them, DLS does not debate these controversies explicitly *qua* controversies in his writings. Even when the bull *Unigenitus*, which condemned Gallicanism, was issued in 1713, DLS seems not to

have taken a public position. However, he did establish clearly orthodox positions on the key points at issue in both Gallicanism and Jansenism, though in the context of meditative, rather than controversial, writings.

In the meditation for the Chair of Peter, entitled "On the Submission We Owe to the Church", DLS counsels the Brothers to be loyal, humble and submissive to the Pope, the visible chief of the church on earth and Vicar of Christ (MF 24-26). In other meditations for feasts of sainted bishops and popes, he exhorts the brothers to have the same attitudes of loyalty and active care for the church which motivated those great figures of the tradition.⁸ Also Blain attributes to DLS, as part of his last will and testament, a clear statement urging the brothers to be loyal and obedient to the papacy especially in those "troubled times" (BLAIN, 2: 173).⁹ In defining the hierarchy of the church, the authority of all other pastors and the inferior "ministers" is subordinated to the Pope's primatial authority (Da: 73-82). Contemporaries of DLS certainly would have known the contrasting Gallican positions: that the king's authority over the church in France was superior to that of the Pope and that the French episcopacy enjoyed a certain independence from the papacy.

On the relationship of God's grace and human freedom — the neuralgic theological issue for Jansenism, DLS maintains, notably in Meditations 193 (MR 7-11) and 195 (MR 15-18), the universality of God's will to save and the sufficiency of the means which God provides to effect that salvation. But he also maintains that the efficacy of God's saving purpose awaits human responses which cooperate with and accept the means provided.¹⁰ In the context of the meditations cited, the school and the ministry of the brothers are among the chief means which God has provided. As a result the brothers bear a great responsibility for the salvation of the students entrusted to their care. But for God's saving grace to be effective in their regards, the students themselves must respond to God's grace. DLS's contemporaries would have known the contrasting Jansenist position that God's grace was sufficient and efficacious in itself, without human response, but that such grace was given only selectively.

3. CHURCH AS BUILDING: THE PARISH CHURCH

A first reading of these uses of *église*, which comprise roughly 16% of DLS's use of the word, could suggest that these are merely descriptions of behaviors or actions that should take place within a church when Mass, Office or the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament are conducted. The references in chapter 8, part one of *La Conduite des Écoles* are good examples (CE 84-97). There all references are to deportment of the students — on their way to the church, upon entering the church, during the services, and upon leaving the church; of the teachers, that is the Brothers, during the Mass of Brothers and students, if the class enters when a Mass is already in progress.

However, to appreciate fully DLS's references to *église* as a building, the reader needs to read those citations in context of DLS's objective to form *le véritable Chrétien* (Db: 7, among many possible sources). All of the educational writings of DLS, which include *La Conduite des Écoles*, the two volumes of *Les Devoirs*, the two shortened "catechisms" and the treatise on "Christian" politeness, are oriented toward forming *le véritable Chrétien* who faithfully fulfills the twofold duties of a Christian "to know and to love God" and who, in so doing, is distinguished from the Christian in name alone. *Le véritable Chrétien*, interiorly and exteriorly, followed Christ by: making the explicit profession of the faith that was understood in the 17th century to be pre-requisite of salvation, by faithfully participating in the church — locus of the sacraments and the Mass, by practicing the Gospel maxims in daily life.

So situated, these references to *église* become more than disciplinary prescriptions about the behavior of students and teachers by revealing a quality of integration that is evident in many aspects of DLS's writings. Depending upon the context — either educational or spiritual, this quality of integration unifies: action with belief; school with church; secular instruction and catechism class within the one Christian school; ultimately the minds and hearts of students and Brothers in a commitment to the God who wills their salvation. Thus, this integration joins elements — public deportment and the visible, decorous expression of

faith — that would make the students both respectable citizens and true Christians.

The Meditation for the Dedication of a Church exemplifies this integrated vision quite well, almost poetically (MF, 266-268). In this first point, DLS directs the Brothers to consider their own behavior in church in light of the presence of Jesus Christ, which surpasses his presence within the old law. Then in the second point DLS elaborates the gracious, healing and reconciling aspects of Christ's presence in the church. Finally in the third point he counsels the brothers to consecrate themselves completely to Christ — that is in a way that integrates body and soul, heart and will — and to express that consecration in their participation in the Eucharist.

4. CHURCH AS SOCIETY OF FAITHFUL

This group of references is by far the larger of the two classifications in the *Vocabulaire lasallien*: 84% of DLS's uses of the word *église*. When DLS refers to *église* as a society of persons, he can be referring to either, and occasionally to both, of two aspects of that society — its institutional aspects or its communal aspects.¹¹ Under either aspect, the communal or the institutional, the term *église* denotes the church militant on earth, itself in communion with the church suffering in purgatory and the church triumphant in the glory of heaven. The institutional aspect refers to the church as a society possessing the objective means to salvation: sacraments, legitimate ministers, the ultimate authority of the Pope. The communal aspect indicates relationships, principally of the individual members to Jesus Christ and the Spirit and secondarily to one another.

The two aspects are not separated expressly by DLS, but rather integrated into a whole, which Michel Sauvage has described as being free of the one-sidedness characteristic of most Roman Catholic ecclesiology after Trent.¹² Catholic theology after Trent, in reaction to Protestant thought and practice, gradually had so exaggerated the distinction and separation between institutional and communal aspects that its ecclesiology often amounted to little more than a "hierarchology". The presence of both the institutional and com-

munal aspects of the church in DLS's writings is indisputable, but DLS's style — more that of the catechist and teacher than theologian — may make the balance of these elements somewhat less evident.

The exemplary texts for this section (see below 4.1 and 4.2) will be Da, 1st treatise, chapter 5, sections 1 through 6 on the church — definition and characteristic marks; members; authority and power; government; Pope and other pastors — jurisdiction and hierarchy; the lower ministers (Da: 62-82). What follows about the uses of *église* in this selection from *Les Devoirs*, I applies to all the citations to *église* as a society listed in the *Vocabulaire lasallien*.

4.1. Church as Society: Institutional Aspects

The first thing that the reader might notice is the titles of the sections of this chapter, which indicate in a summary way their content:

- What is the church and what are the marks by which it is known (Da: 62-67),
- Of the members of the church (Da: 67-69),
- Of the authority and the power of the church (Da: 69-72),
- Of the government of the church (Da: 73-75),
- Of the chief and the pastors of the church, of their jurisdiction and their subordination (Da: 75-79),
- Of the lesser ministers of the church (Da: 79-82).

All of these things are properly institutional matters, questions of definition and structure. Moreover, this institutional emphasis is consistent with the character of the Catholic theology after Luther's reform and the Council of Trent. Catholicism had tended to counter the Lutheran valuation of the invisible church over the visible church by reaffirming the visible elements of the church — that is its institutional, ultimately hierarchical, elements.

However even in treating of these institutional elements, DLS did not hold to an unvarying or rigid institutional viewpoint. Instead he incorporated elements of a communal perspective into elements which could have a completely institutional perspective. The unity of the church, for example, is grounded in several things: faith in Jesus Christ, the sacraments, the Spirit, charity, a common end or goal (salvation), and finally the

pastors.¹³ The bonds of unity in the Spirit, in charity and in the end or “mission” are communal elements, while the unity expressed in sharing the same sacraments and obeying common authorities (i.e. pastors) is more institutional.

4.2. Church as Society: Communal Aspects

The communal “aspects” of the church as society of the faithful may not be quite as discrete as are the institutional elements of office, jurisdiction, and rank. As a result, it is possible to lose sight of them, especially in the midst of a chapter which signals primarily institutional concerns — as does the section of *Les Devoirs I* being considered here. However, neglecting these communal aspects can cause one to lose sight of the personal relationships between Jesus Christ and each baptized person which are the ultimate foundation of the community of the church.

There is a very succinct statement of this relational character in the first section of chapter five of Da: “The church in general is the society of all the faithful, living and dead, who are united in Jesus Christ” (Da. 64).¹⁴ Although DLS concerns himself primarily with the faithful on earth, the church militant, he specifies that the communion among all the faithful, living and dead, is a complete and continual communion of spiritual goods (Da: 65). When he focuses specifically upon the faithful on earth, he juxtaposes institutional and communal elements.

The church is the assembly or the society of those who believe in God and in Jesus Christ and in the doctrine which he has taught, and who are united together in one body, who are under the Pope who is the visible head of the church and their pastors (Ds: 65).

First there is the relational or communal element of belief in God and in Jesus Christ and then the institutional elements of doctrine and union under legitimate pastors. Then DLS returns to a communal note, the role of the Holy Spirit, grace and charity and concludes on an institutional note, the sacrament of Baptism as rite of entrance into the church.

This church is not an inanimate body, it is the Holy Spirit who gives it life by grace and by charity and

who fills up the hearts of the faithful, who have received Holy Baptism by which they have entered the church (Da: 65-66).

Perhaps the weight of this chapter of Da favors the institutional elements the listing of headings would seem to suggest so. However in the texts quoted immediately above, the principle of life in the church clearly is the Holy Spirit, who gives that life by grace and charity. The fundamental relationship of the institutional and communal elements in DLS's texts on church is thus defined so that the institutional depends upon the communal for its very life, its vitality. Relationship to Christ precedes and grounds all else in the life of the community of the faithful, and in the life of the individual members of that community.

Finally, the attention which DLS gives to this relational character of the church places him amidst a minority of the writers of catechisms of his time and for years after. Most of the catechisms of France between 1650 and 1914, took their inspiration, if not their exact wording, on this point from the catechism of Robert Bellarmine — rather than directly from the text of Trent's own catechism. Bellarmine locates the source of unity in the connection of the faithful to their legitimate pastors, rather than to Christ directly. Many of the catechisms in this line stemming from Bellarmine do not even mention Christ in their definition of the church. The way in which DLS expressed himself on this point puts him in the smaller group of catechisms which followed the influence of the text of the council itself.¹⁵

5. CHURCH IN THE MEDITATIONS FOR THE TIME OF RETREAT

The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* reveal DLS's mature thinking about the Brothers within the *église*. Therein DLS addresses the Brothers in their roles as catechists and evangelizers of the poor youth of France. In this context, DLS makes some statements about the Brothers and their ministry as catechists and teachers that sound a somewhat "contemporary" note to readers cognizant of developments in the theology and practice of ministry in the years since Vatican II.

The references to *église* in the MR display both

aspects of the church as a society, the institutional and the communal. The Brothers are called by church to a most lofty work:

How you ought to consider yourselves honored by the Church, to be called by her to a work so holy and so lofty and for which she has chosen you to procure for children a knowledge of our religion and of the spirit of Christianity (199.1, MR: 34).

Called to this lofty work, the Brothers are sent by the church as its ministers (199.2, MR: 35-6). In this capacity they are responsible to the authority of the church in its institutional dimensions, as embodied in its hierarchy, for their doctrinal competence and orthodoxy. In the very exercise of that ministry for the church as institution of salvation, the Brothers build up the church as a society by the simple fact that their ministry increases the numbers of truly faithful members (*les véritables Chrétiens*) among the baptized.

At the same time, the Brothers cooperate with Christ and the apostles as "builders of the church": a title that begins with but goes beyond both their being agents of the institution and their augmenting the number of truly faithful believers. DLS calls the Brothers "ministers of God and dispensers of his mysteries".¹⁶ This reference to a group of non-ordained teachers as "ministers" of the church and of its Gospel is not common to his time and suggests that DLS's intuitive appreciation of the church transcended the doctrinal and theological formulae available to him.¹⁷ He applies that very Pauline title to the Brothers because he sees them really participating in the saving work of Father, Son and Spirit in their teaching of the children confided to their care. Sauvage's reading of the retreat meditations in *CAL* carefully delineates the way that the meditations reflect on the theocentric, the christocentric and the pneumatological (and ecclesiological) aspects of the Brothers' vocation. DLS invites the Brothers to consider how they have experienced the saving work of God — Father, Son and Spirit — in their own lives and how they extend that saving work to their students in the ordinary activities of the Christian school. The parallel is clear: what God has done for the world in Christ and in his Spirit, so God has done in your life, and so are you doing for your students. Thus it is no exaggeration for

DLS to compare the Brothers to the first builders of the church: for the Brothers are building the church in their own day by doing the saving work of God in their time.

Perhaps this reading of the MR may sound too contemporary for DLS's seventeenth century writings. But there is at least one substantive parallel between DLS's writing to the Brothers and post-Vatican II theology of ministry: both identify a lay vocation as ministry for inner theological reasons, not because of institutional designation. Vatican II's documents on the church and the laity transformed the understanding of the lay person's membership in the church. No longer is it understood that lay people participate in the church because of some kind of share in the real apostolate, that of the bishops. After Vatican II it is understood that lay persons are ministers in their own right because of baptism. There is a suggestive parallel in DLS: the Brothers' ministry is apostolic and evangelical, not primarily because of their being commissioned by the church, but because the very nature of that ministry resembles what Jesus himself did first and what the apostles did after Jesus.

6. DLS ON CHURCH: SOME CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

When DLS uses the word *église*, he does so as a French Catholic of the 17th century: he can do no other. Thus all his writings mirrored and to some degree shaped the broad current of reform, particularly of popular education, flowing through the Roman Catholic church after Trent. Such post-Tridentine concerns are particularly evident in his respect for the visible and institutional elements of the church. However, like the Council of Trent itself and in contrast to many theologians after Trent (yet prior to Vatican II), DLS also writes with proper attention to the bond of unity in Jesus Christ and in his Spirit.

Nevertheless, as the preceding section on the MR indicates, there is a surprising sense of connection between certain of DLS's emphases about church and those which are current in pastoral life and theology twenty-five years after Vatican II.

To what might present-day readers attribute this striking sense of resonance with today's veritable explosion of new ministries and new ministers within Roman Catholicism. Obviously, DLS could not have foreseen such a development in the tasks and agents of the church's ministries. Two factors suggest themselves by way of explanation: the Pauline sources of much of DLS's writings and his existential ecclesiology.

Sauvage attributes this resonance, in part, to the Pauline inspiration of DLS's writings, especially the retreat meditations.¹⁸ This is an inspiration shared by much of the biblically based theology produced immediately before and ever since Vatican II. This Pauline character can be seen, first and most obviously, in the frequency with which DLS cites Pauline texts. Though DLS's tendency to incorporate scriptural quotations directly into his writings makes it difficult to establish an exact count of such dependence on Pauline theology. However, there is more to this Pauline inspiration than the sheer amount of quoting, explicit or implicit, in which DLS engages. This further dimension is perhaps evident in the way DLS envisions the Brother's life and ministry as "life in Christ" in the MR. As the previous section of this essay has indicated, it is in these meditations that DLS calls the Brothers ministers of the church. But there is more to their ministry than mere institutional designation, important as that may have been. The ministry which the Brothers exercise on behalf of poor children is actually a participation in the saving work of God, whose will to save all humankind became incarnated in the life and ministry of Jesus. Just as Jesus revealed the way to God, so too the Brothers reveal the way to union with God through their instruction of their students, as "ministers of God and dispensers of his mysteries". This participation in the saving work of God and Christ is accomplished in and through the education, both expressly religious and secular, of the children, not in some separate religious dimension of life. Furthermore, as DLS reminds them in the retreat meditations, the Brothers themselves work out their own salvation in their ordinary activities of teaching class. The quality of "integration" in DLS's writings, of which mention has been made previously, is here evident in the most profound aspects of his writing

and of his vision of the Brothers' life and vocation as literally being life "in Christ" as a teacher.

A second dimension of the explanation for this surprising sense of contemporaneity lies in what DLS's actions revealed about his true or operative theology, in what might be called an "existential ecclesiology".¹⁹ DLS founded a "community" of lay men associated together for the establishment of Christian schools open to all without charge. Once the society was launched, DLS defended its lay character against clerical initiatives that might have converted the Brothers into priests or subordinated the society to the control of individual pastors or bishops. Such commitment to the then novel idea of a lay society clearly has appeal for a period like the present in which the whole church is witnessing and supporting a tremendous expansion of lay ministers and ministries.

On the other hand, the same DLS who so vigorously and consistently defended the lay character of the Brothers was not an ecclesial radical. He was ever respectful of diocesan bishops and tried to respond to their increasing requests for the presence of Brothers in their dioceses. In the prolonged conflict with the pastor of St. Sulpice, M. de la Chétardie, DLS apparently comported himself with great respect for the pastor even in the face of serious and undeserved provocations. Thus it would seem that DLS's determined insistence on the lay character of the society did not emerge from an *a priori* position about the relationships of clergy and laity (such as one could develop in contemporary theology and practice) but rather from pursuing particular commitments to which the events of his life had directed him. Those commitments included: educating the poor in their own French language; preserving the independence of the society of brothers from local ecclesial control — whether embodied in a local pastor or a diocesan bishop; following the will of God as he believed it to be revealed in the events of his life. DLS's actions and writings do not contain the kind of explicit theological affirmation of a common baptismal vocation such as is prevalent today. But the "existential ecclesiology" of his life, combined with his writings about the ministry of the religious teacher within the *église*, conceived

and sustained a religious order that incarnated an alternative to clerical-lay relationships of the 17th century.

¹ "Église" in *Vocabulaire Lasallien* tome 2, Frères des Ecoles Chrétienues, Région France 1984, 90-127.

² Author's translation of: "qui est présente presque partout, presque toujours. Son esprit, ses règles et ses usages président à la vie des hommes" in François Bluche, "Église", *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, Fayard, Paris, 1990, 525.

³ *Ibid*, 525-6.

⁴ Paul BROUTIN, S.J. delineates these aspects of the reform in France in *La Réforme Pastorale en France au XVIIe Siècle*, I. Desclée & Cie, Paris, 1956, 1-33.

⁵ Michel SAUVAGE and Alphonse HERMANS, "Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (saint)", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 8 (1974), 819.

⁶ *Ibid*. The authors here refer to the article on the French School in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 5, 926.

⁷ For a discussion of DLS's exposure to these controversies, particularly during his training in theology, see: Luke SALM, *John Baptist De La Salle: The Formative Years*, Romeoville, IL, Lasallian Publications, 1989, 39-70 (esp. 61-65).

⁸ Among the many meditations that could be cited are those for: St. Gregory, pope, (MF: 30-32); St. Leo, pope (MF: 42-44); St. Basil, bishop (MF: 85-87, esp. point 3).

⁹ DLS's expression about troubled times ("*et surtout dans ces temps fâcheux*") may have been an oblique reference to the aftermath of *Unigenitus*.

¹⁰ Michel SAUVAGE, *Catechesis and the Laity*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 152. Note A: *God's will that all men be saved. The position of St. John Baptist de La Salle regarding this doctrine.*

¹¹ The category of church as society of the faithful is considered under the two aspects which inform Michel Sauvage's discussion of the apostolic finality of the Brothers' vocation: the institutional and the communal aspects of the church (*CAL*, 114-152, esp. 127-129). Admittedly, this distinction reflects a contemporary theological sensibility, but Sauvage demonstrates quite clearly that it is also faithful to the writings of DLS.

¹² *CAL*, 152-153, where Sauvage elaborates on a well-known observation by Yves Congar about the decline in Catholic ecclesiology after Trent.

¹³ *Ibid*, 153-154.

¹⁴ Author's translation of: *L'Église en général est la Société de tous les fidèles tant vivants que morts, qui sont tous unis en Jésus-Christ.*

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 153-154, where SAUVAGE himself is referring to research by Yves CONGAR and R. BRUNET.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 195-196. SAUVAGE points out that DLS uses this Pauline phrase in reference to the Brothers in both the meditations for Sundays, 3.3 (MD: 13-14) and for feasts, 166.3 (MF: 156) as well as in the retreat meditations, 193.1, 201.2 and 205.2 (MR: 8, 44, 64).

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 195.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 129.

¹⁹ The author is indebted to Michel SAUVAGE for this felicitous phrase, in conversations during the 1990-91 International Lasallian Study Session (SIEL).

Complementary Themes:

Catechism; Christian; Community; Duties of a Christian; School; Ministry; Mission; Mystery.

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