

77. GOD

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As De La Salle lay on his death-bed, rapidly growing weaker, Brother Barthélemy, who was looking after him, “asked him if he accepted his sufferings with joy. ‘Yes’, he answered, ‘I adore in all things the conduct of God in my regard’. These were his last words” (CL 8,174).

The biographer John Baptist Blain, who gives us this account, was fully aware of the place God occupied in the writings of his hero and, even more so, in his life : God was always at the root of all the choices he made and of the risks he took. This is what the present article will try to explore. Its approach will be a general one, not including the Holy Trinity, however, which can be the topic for another article. This one will concentrate on the only, living, transcendent and acting God.

1. THE CONTEXT : GOD IN 17th CENTURY FRANCE

During the age of Louis XIV,¹ God was an omnipresent reality reflected in the way institutions functioned, in daily life, in the architecture of towns and villages, in the Fine Arts. The writings of the time are filled with such expressions as : “With the help of God” or “If God wills” or “Please God”.²

This is reflected also in the dictionaries of the period. They affirm that it is not possible to give a true

definition of God because he is an infinite being and beyond understanding. They add, however, that piety requires that he should be presented, all the same, but in the most perfect way possible. God is seen as the supreme being, unique, infinitely perfect, first cause, first mover, subsisting by himself without beginning or end. “I am who am” (Ex 3,14). He is the living God, who created everything and through whom all

things exist and subsist. He is infinitely powerful, good and merciful. He is sovereign wisdom.³

Contemporary catechisms contain the same notions. They speak of God's being and of his action among men, gathering together his dispersed children into a single people, freeing them from the slavery of sin.⁴ By deduction, these notions lead them to draw up "the duties of a Christian" towards God: knowledge, adoration, respect, obedience, love, gratuitous service ...⁵

Some writers of the time defined God in philosophical terms, speaking of the divine essence and of its absolute perfection. Others treated God from a theological point of view and described him as the acting and anthropomorphic God of Revelation. To these two ways of approaching God, that is, through reason and through faith, certain writers chose a third way, through the heart. Even before Blaise Pascal, there was the Capuchin Yves de Paris, who affirmed we knew God as if by "natural instinct"; and that we go to him by the same way we came from him, by love.⁶

For Pierre de Bérulle, God acts on us "through grace and love and not justice and punishment". He

works "on our mind and helps it to bear and feel the power and sovereignty of his being over all created beings, by making us experience the closeness of his greatness side-by-side with our insignificance, and our insignificance which cannot encompass his greatness. [...] This divine being, adorable in all his qualities, has qualities which are apparently contradictory. He is infinitely present and infinitely distant. He is infinitely distant and infinitely high and infinitely close to created beings".⁷

Such a view of God, with its corollary, the awareness of the insignificance of human beings and their state as creatures, explains the fundamental role that followers of Bérulle attribute in their spirituality to the virtue of religion. As opposed to the "pious humanists" who, by stressing the goodness of God, behave in his regard with great freedom and familiarity, the disciples of Bérulle strive to promote the "decorum of the house of God"⁸ expressed through the magnificence of churches and the solemnity of religious ceremonies. They call for respect, reverence and adoration to be a permanent state of soul rather than something expressed through rites or the acts of mental prayer.

2. THE CALL OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF J. B. DE LA SALLE

2.1. His witness and that of his biographers

The life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle can be seen as a rare illustration of God's action in a person and the response of the person to God's action.

We know what a traumatic experience it was for De La Salle to lodge the first schoolmasters in his own house. They are described as being "for the most part unrefined, simple-minded and with little education" (CL 11,352 = MH 0,0,36). This major step was followed by a second and more definitive break: he gave up his family fortune and went to live as a poor person in a poor community. He speaks of these events in a memoir (according to Blain and Bernard) or in a letter to a pious person (according to Maillefer): "God, who conducts all things with wisdom and gentleness, and who is not accustomed to impose his will on people, wishing to make me take complete charge of the schools, did so in an imperceptible manner and over a long period of time, in such a way that one commitment led me to another, without my having foreseen

any of this initially" (CL 10,107). In this text, the Founder says how he sees his life, and recognises the outstanding part played in it by God. He is a God who intervenes in history without, however, diminishing at all the freedom and responsibility of man.

The first biographer, Brother Bernard, gave the following title to his work which has come down to us in an incomplete form: "The admirable conduct of divine Providence in the person of the venerable servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle...". On several occasions, he repeats his conviction that De La Salle led a life "in which divine Providence revealed itself in a special way" (CL 4,4).

Sharing in the mentality of our times, and unlike De La Salle, we like to know secondary causes and to analyse how they are linked. This should not hinder us in examining the mentality of the contemporaries of the Founder of the Christian Schools. In their eyes, De La Salle is part of a great plan inspired by God. God raised him up when his "time" had come. From

his mother's womb, God chose him to render the Church a great service, by establishing the Society of the Christian Schools for the instruction of young people (CL 4,3; CL 6,257). Intervening in his life, God "attracts him to himself. [...] To his joy, he finds himself caught in God's net, like a fish" (CL 4,31).

The grace of God proved to be highly efficacious in him, changing the course of his life and profoundly transforming his person. From one commitment to another, forever on the move, God led him, and not only at the beginning. He makes him undertake what initially he had refused to consider. As Bernard writes: "God draws him to himself without his noticing it. [...] God disposes him, without his realising, to do what is so repugnant to him" (CL 4,31).

God allows various combinations of circumstances to prepare De La Salle to experience situations and exercise functions on which his future reputation will be based: "God, no doubt, allowed this in order to dispose his servant little by little for evangelical perfection" (CL 4,47). God strengthens him so that he can face the attacks which all kinds of enemies will make on him (CL 4,38); God puts him to the test by affliction which accustoms him to bear with patience the sufferings which will subsequently become his daily bread (CL 4, 38f), and which will lead him through the dark nights of the soul which accompanied him throughout his life.

Without ending his work of moulding him according to his preference and taste, the Lord sends him to fulfil the mission he has entrusted to him among the schoolmaster Brothers, to care for children far from salvation and for many other souls who will benefit from his work.

In order that he can accomplish this mission properly, God fills him with "wisdom and prudence", as Nyel recognises (CL 4,67), gives him "the graces and talents necessary", as the Brothers affirm in their letter of 1714 (CL 6,227). God associates him with other people, the Brothers who, together with him, will accomplish the mission. God watches over him, enlightens and inspires him, protects him, blesses his zeal and takes pleasure in seeing his disinterestedness (CL 4,70; CL 6,123).

The biographers are all in agreement regarding the method God used to lead De La Salle forward. They stress two points in particular. First, the fact that God led him on gradually, step by step, without allowing

him to suspect, at least initially, where what he was doing could lead him, or imagine the work and sufferings that would be involved. Secondly, the instruments used by God to involve him in his plans and to urge him on to fulfil them, were his encounters with the men and women God put in his path (CL 4,30 & 69). Seen in the light of faith and discerned through reflection and counsel, these encounters were decisive by giving a concrete form to the "work of God" entrusted to his servant De La Salle, and by consolidating it.

2.2. Man of God and for God

Bernard frequently refers to De La Salle as "the man of God". He could have called him also a man "for God", since he often experienced God's presence in his life, although, at other times, he experienced also his apparent absence (CL 8,96).

His life was a continuous dialogue, with God urging and inspiring, and he responding. If the Lord chooses him and draws him close to himself, it is because he allowed himself to be caught in his net without any resistance, and because, as Bernard says, he took pleasure in this happy necessity (CL 4,31). When God called him, saying: "Leave your country", he responded by leaving his socio-cultural background, giving up his preferences and plans, and becoming a part of the world of the poor. As a part of this world he began working for its salvation. When God sent him, saying: "Go and teach", he accepted being sent and, with discernment and creativity, became a willing instrument in the hands of the Worker (EP 3,0,9). All this was part of an overall and gradual process, marked by a growing awareness and commitment, and the increasingly responsible attitude of one who fears to lose a single soul confided to him by God (CL 6,193), or waste the time God has allotted him (EP 3,0,13).

De La Salle led a life that was radically open to God. God's plan and his commands were his centre of attraction and the ideal he sought to attain. His sole desire was God (CL 7,181); the accomplishment of God's will was the motive for all his actions (CL 6,21).

His own life reflected what he taught his disciples: "To have God as the goal of all that one does, is to do all that one does for the glory of God and solely to please him" (CL 15,81 = R 11,2,14). Blain writes: "God alone was the object of his desires. [...] To please

him, to do his holy will in all things, to procure his glory, to love him and make him loved, this was all that he sought" (CL 8,294).

The same biographer, speaking of De La Salle's relations with God, stresses the following points :

1. His **spirit of religion** which leads him to have a great respect for places and times dedicated to God, to ensure that these holy places were always clean and decorated, and the sacred vestments were rich and beautiful (CL 8,233f). His reverent attitude towards God, the fruit of his spirit of religion, makes it repugnant for him to write of God or the saints in over familiar terms.⁹

2. His **trust in God and his abandonment to divine providence** (CL 8,264f). He waits calmly for the moment chosen by providence (CL 6,129). Maillefer praises "his total submission to the orders of providence", which he has taken as "his rule of conduct" (CL 6,49).

3. His **attraction to God and the things of God**, shown, for example, by his love for mental prayer, his care to maintain himself in the presence of God, his zeal for the glory of the Lord and the acceptance of the sufferings he endures for him (CL 8,270f).

De La Salle's profound prayer expresses the various aspects of this attraction to God and is nourished by them; not that we know much of his personal experience of God in his prayer (CL 7,112). His intimate encounters with the Lord remain a well-guarded secret. The only explicit allusions, which are rare and discreet, that we have from him occur in the *Rules I have imposed upon myself* (CL 10,114 = EP 3) and in the fragments of the *Memoir on the beginnings* (CL 10,105f), which the first biographers have saved for us. Also, we are given an insight into De La Salle's very personal way of speaking to his Lord in the fervent outpourings of his heart in the *Instructions and Prayers* and in the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer*.

The thought of God appears to be a fundamental factor in the formation and guidance of his disciples. Having become the confessor of the first teachers (CL 7,178), he seeks to lead them to God. He carefully avoids the trap of concentrating his disciples' attention on himself. "He does not overwhelm them with his own feelings but tries to make them concentrate on God and their mission" (AEP 421).

Although centred on God and uncompromisingly committed to the coming of his kingdom, De La Salle is nonetheless in touch with reality, and it is through this reality that he expresses his attitudes. He sees God's calls in the shortcomings of his teachers, in the needs of his pupils, in the words of the people he meets. It is in concrete reality — the government of the Society, the struggle for power, the administration of schools, the direction of souls — that De La Salle discerns the calls of God. He is a man of God and for God, to the same degree that he is a human being among human beings and for human beings.

This awareness of the world around him makes him discover, in addition to his own vocation, "the mission of his Institute as a practical response to his prayerful consideration of this [...] in relation to God's plan of salvation".¹⁰ This awareness also gives new dynamism to his life which gives it vitality and transforms it into "a spiritual journey of ever increasing faith",¹¹ making it at the same time an undertaking that is permanent yet constantly renewed. It is a permanent undertaking because of its basic options (the absoluteness of God, consecration to God), its ultimate purpose (the furtherance of the glory of God, the accomplishment of his will, and the completion of his work), and its guiding principles and orientations (unity of life, the mission of being a representative and instrument of God). Also it is an undertaking that it constantly renewed, so that it can respond with discernment and creativity to the successive calls of the world (from God in the world), with fidelity to the basic options and ultimate purpose.¹²

3. FOR DE LA SALLE, WHO IS GOD?

3.1. Preliminary remark

De La Salle wrote much about God. Occurring 6,477 times, "God" is the most frequently used word in his writings.¹³ What he communicates to us on this

topic is the fruit of his theological studies, his reading of the sacred authors and spiritual writers, and his familiarity with the lives of the saints. It is a reflection also of his own experience, of his experience of God

shared with his Brother-teachers, and of the action of God that he perceived in the souls which were entrusted to his spiritual direction.

His most systematic — and somewhat schoolmasterish — view of God can be found in his catechetical works, intended for either pupils or adults, published under the general title of *Duties of a Christian* (DA, DB, DC, GA, PA). In these texts, intended to nourish and produce spiritual growth in pupils and teachers, he speaks in particular of the God-man relationship in a life according to the Spirit (R, L, MD, MF, MR), and teaches how to speak to God in vocal (E, I) and mental (EM) prayer.

And since he teaches that God is present everywhere (CL 14,6 = EM 2,16,1), we find explicit references to God even in writings that are “purely” educational and pedagogical (RB, CE).

3.2. “O great God, little child”¹⁴

As a disciple of Bérulle and St Sulpice, De La Salle sees God as the “great God”, unique and self-sufficient (CL 14,81 = EM 9,225,2; CL 17,248 & 196 = I 6,3,1 & 3,21,1), eternal and infinitely perfect (CL 20,15-16 = DA 102,0,1-3), true, omniscient and omnipresent (CL 19,57 = RB 202,1,155; CL 18,7 = E 2,2; CL 14,43 = EM 4,138,1), infinitely holy and very just (MD 77,1; CL 20,117 = DA 204,0,6). In a word, God is he who is all, who has all and who can do all (CL 17,72 = I 1,8,2).

The first cause of all things, God created everything and sustains it (CL 20,15 = DA 102,0,2); on him, the one and sovereign Lord, we depend in all things (MF 90,2; CL 15,66 = R 14,2,2; CL 20,108 = DA 203,0,6). As our focus and our true end, our supreme being and our sole reward (CL 20,91 & 459 = DA 201,1,5 & 404,1,4), already here below, he must be the goal and purpose of all our actions as he will be in the next life (MD 75,3,2).

But this God is also the “little Child”, the God who made himself close to us, even familiar, in the Word incarnate, and who revealed himself to us by innumerable ways of being present. The all good and merciful God (MF 123,1), God who is Father, our Father (CL 20,458 = DA 404,1,1), who loves us infinitely, as if through an excess of love (MF 112,1; 123,1; CL 22,155 = DC 42,6,4).

3.3. Similar in everything, completely different

In the best biblical tradition, De La Salle’s God has anthropomorphic characteristics which can be perceived and understood by material and sentient man (CL 20,109-110 = DA 203,0,10-11). Very often the actual words of the Bible are used.

Like human beings, he finds some things pleasant others disagreeable (CL 20,x = DA 0,0,18; LI 121,8), things which fill his heart with joy (CL 17,189 = I 35,15,1; CL 22,214 = DC 44,1,1) or which make him sad (CL 15,57 = R 13,6,3); which please or horrify him (CL 14,18 & 22 = EM 2,62,2 & 2,73,3; MD 38,1; LA 33,5), things which irritate him (MD 4,2; CL 15,172 = R 15,8,1; CL 20,258 = DA 304,4,8; LI 122,6) which provoke his indignation, his horror and malediction (CL 20,127, 143,293 & 448 = DA 206,0,7; 210,0,7; 307,2,12 & 403,1,13; CL 14,57 & 77 = EM 6,170 & 8,218,2; CL 17,191 = I 3,17,1) or which cry out for vengeance before God (CL 20,128 & 181 = DA 206,0,13 & 215,0,1).

Like human beings, God is jealous but with a jealousy that is pure love (CL 20,124 = DA 2,2,3) as, for example, of a soul of which he takes possession (CL 17,196 = I 3,21,1; MD 62,3).

There are things such as our defects and imperfections which he suffers with difficulty (CL 17,258 = I 6,13,1). God has desires, plans and intentions (CL 14,117 = EM 17,316; CL 20,377-382 = DA 310,1). Like human beings, he has affection and makes his will known (CL 17,201 = I 3,26,2; CL 20,99 = DA 201,3,3; CL 14,120 = EM 18,320,4; CL 19,43 = RB 113,1,122; MD 75,3,1).

God is like man, but, at the same time, he is so different! God has his specificity. He has his secrets, his mysteries, his hidden plans (MR 199,3). There is a specific way in which God knows things (CL 15,41 = R 11,2,4) and the discernment that God himself makes of things (CL 20,185 = DA 216,1,4). The wisdom of God, which is the interior spirit, remains hidden from men (CL 15,61 = R 13,14,3). It is opposed to the wisdom of the world (MR 194,2). God’s wisdom has its own criteria by which to judge and appreciate events, giving more importance to some than to others (CL 15,61 = R 13,16,1), apportioning value to actions according to his own criteria (MD 11,3,1). Opposed to the things of God (CL 20,2 = DA 101,1,1; MR 197,1) there is human behaviour which, in varying degrees,

is conformable to the Spirit of God (LI 70,4) because human beings remain free to respond or not to the call to live according to God (CL 15,66 = R 14,2,1).

Our view of things and our discernment of reality are more or less similar to those of God. To see them as he sees them is the characteristic of an attitude of faith (CL 15,77 = R 11,2,4). To discern them as he discerns them is the sign of Christian prudence (CL 20,185 = DA 216,1,5).

3.4. The living God

3.4.1. "THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD..."

God is more than the sum total of his attributes. He is a living God who reveals himself as such by his actions (CL 19,57 = RB 202,1,155; MR 201,2,1).

He continues to be the creator he has been since the beginning. "His omnipotence [...] reveals itself every day in prodigies of nature and grace" (CL 17,254 = I 6,8,1).

Jesus, who knows the Father (Jn 10,5), bears witness to the fact that the Father still acts (Jn 5,17). In imitation of Jesus, De La Salle contemplates him, and calls upon others to do so, as a farmer who cultivates his field, as an architect who builds his house and as the owner of the vineyard who sends out his workers to work in it (MR 193,3; 205,1; 201,1).

He is the lord of history. He "directs all things with wisdom and gentleness" (CL 10,106) and provides for the needs of his creatures. In Lasallian language, God's benevolent direction of history and his loving care for people is called Providence. De La Salle has experienced this in his own life, and he speaks (CL 6,69) and writes of it to his disciples (MD 59,3; 67,3; MF 137,2; 153,3).

While God's action is first of all creative, it is also salvific. His plan from all eternity is that all men should know the truth and be saved (MR 193). When sin threatened the accomplishment of this plan, God revealed that he had not only a heart which wanted to save, but also "a strong hand and an outstretched arm" (Ps 136,12), capable of setting in motion a history of salvation. This history has a high point, which was when the ingenious love of God enabled him to discover an infallible remedy for the ills of humanity, and he sent his Son, delivered him up to death and made him remain among human beings in the Eucharist (CL 21,35f = DB 1,8; MR 201,3; CL 17,246 = I 6,1,1). Even today,

God's will to save is still alive, as is his active ingenuity to ensure that this will finds a response in every human being: "It seems clear, O my God, that you wish to save me, since by the attraction of your grace and the remorse of my conscience, you urge me without ceasing to give myself entirely to you" (CL 17,196 = I 3,21,1).

The origin of the Brothers' Institute is to be found in the context of this history of salvation. As the present *Rule* says in article 1, "As he became aware, by God's grace", De La Salle saw that the will of God, that is, that all men should know him and be saved, could not be fulfilled in many children in his days, because many parents "cannot themselves give the instruction necessary for their salvation" (RC 1,4). To remedy such a great misfortune, Providence acted by establishing the Christian Schools so that children could learn in them "to lead good lives, by being instructed in the mysteries of our holy religion and by receiving the education that was appropriate for them" (RC 1,3).

3.4.2. "...WHO ACTS IN YOU..."

In the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* we find a model act of union with Our Lord newly-born in which De La Salle suggests to the person praying to ask God for the following: "Grant, I beg you Lord, that I may participate fully in your holy affections [...] through the movement and effects of your holy grace acting and operating in me [...] that I may be in you and you may be in me truly and efficaciously [...] in such a way that it may be you who live and act in me" (CL 14,84-85 = EM 10,232,4-6).

A prayer like that presupposes faith and the Lasallian experience of the presence of God acting in every human being. De La Salle speaks of this presence in his *Meditations*, especially in those for the feasts of saints. The topic comes up also in the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer, Instructions and prayers* and his letters.

God "does not win over all souls to himself by the same means" (MD 64,2,2). From the outset, he predisposes certain people to follow him. Imperceptibly and as from afar, he prepares others for conversion, whereas others, such as Saul, are transformed "in an instant" (MF 99,1).

God makes his call to conversion heard in everyone's conscience (MD 62,3; CL 17,196 = I 3,21,1).

He comes to people in a variety of ways (MF 141) and resides in those who live in charity (MF 113,2). He makes his home in them so that he can converse with them (CL 14,16 & 41 = EM 2,52 & 4,134,1). He takes particular pleasure in those who are pure, who flee from the spirit of the world and even the appearance of sin, and who wish to live detached from all created things (CL 14,22; 30-31; 35; 41 = EM 2,73,2; 3,99f; 3,119; 4,134,1; MD 18,2; MF 111,1; 171,1). He takes possession of a heart empty of creatures and allows himself to be possessed fully by whoever strips himself of all that is terrestrial (MF 179,1; 173,2).

With his own, God “has his own language, which he communicates only to his friends and his confidants” (MD 64,2,1). When he acts in them, God uses his own methods. He does not force wills, but exhorts and urges them (MD 71,3; cf. CL 10,107). It is also his normal practice “to upset the plans of people [...] to make them learn to put their trust in God” (MD 23,3). Sometimes he leaves a soul in a state of spiritual paralysis to test it, to let it feel that it has no power to do good, and to make it understand it can do nothing without him (MD 71,1). On the other hand, in other circumstances, he uses consolations to strengthen the soul in its struggle to do good (MD 18,2).

God’s thoughts and actions often seem strange to human beings. He allows his friends to be tempted (MD 17,3). He has a strange way of honouring them by sending them a cross to bear (MF 121,3). And yet, that is the reward he promises them in this life: “Do you not look upon it [the cross] as a source of mortification and annoyance, instead of receiving it with love and respect as a gift from God and a mark of his favour?” (MF 121,3).

3.4.3. “... AND THROUGH YOU” (MR 195,2)

When God reveals himself, he could communicate directly with his own, but usually he does so through

intermediaries, that is, through the events and persons, which normally serve this purpose, to make visible the salvation of God in everyday life. The Christian educator is one of the persons chosen by God to be his usual instrument of salvation, “his mediator [...] to teach them [the pupils] the means to be saved” (MD 56,3).

MD 37 shows us God bringing to the Christian educator children who have no instruction and are, as it were, abandoned to their devices regarding the salvation of their soul. God is wounded by their urgent need: he entrusts these children to the care of a teacher so that he can give them the spirit of Christianity, teach them to be pious, and bring them up according to the maxims of the Gospel. For this purpose, he wants the teacher to pray for them, asking God to give them all they need to save their souls.

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, De La Salle speaks even more explicitly of God’s efforts to bring salvation to all. God enlightens the heart of those he has chosen to carry his salvation to those who are far from it. He accomplishes his “work” through the intermediary of his “ministers”. The love of God urges his ministers to work zealously to make the young people entrusted to their care enter into the Covenant God has made with human beings. God, then, inspires and accompanies the Christian teacher who commits himself to carry out his plan of salvation for poor children.

One cannot reflect on the MR, nor on the spiritual and apostolic life journey of De La Salle, without seeing a parallel between the work of the Christian teacher and “the conduct of divine Providence”. In his plan of salvation, God chooses the Christian educator to accomplish his work by exercising his ministry, which is holy. He entrusts him with the care of his children (MR 193,3; 201,1; MD 2,1; MF 133,2). He accompanies him in his mission and enlightens him, showering him with gifts and blessing him with talents and graces for his service (MR 193,1; 205,1-2).

4. CONCLUSION: WITNESSING TO GOD TODAY

For all those, and especially teachers, who find inspiration in the search for God undertaken by John Baptist de La Salle, we offer a few suggestions:

1. Dare to speak of God. In a world which has mistaken ideas about him or denies his existence, be a witness to the faith in word and action: “The first

truth we must believe is that there is a God and that there is only one God" (CL 20,15 = DA 102,0,1).

2. In a world in love with action, relate everything to God. Believe that there exists a first cause of our actions (MF 90,3) and a Lord of history who makes us creators with him, entrusting the accomplishment of his work to us.

3. Pray to God. In a world in which people, taught by their failures, seek, even to the point of anguish, to find meaning in their lives, discover the One who speaks in the depths of our being and experience the joy which "consists in being attached only to him" (MF 90,2,1).

4. Root yourself in God. In a world in which people easily fall prey to "entertainment", enjoy the interior presence of a God that is near (MF 175,1) and who takes pleasure in speaking to each one alone (MF 171,1).

5. Embody God. In a world in which often people hate one another, let it be seen that God inspires believers "to love the poor" (CL 20,172 = DA 214,2,3).

In this way, those who fight for justice will know that the God of the Covenant goes before them and accompanies them (MR 199,3) and that he is the protector of the weak (MD 37,3).

¹ BLUCHE, F., *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1990, p. 475f.

² *Idem*, p. 479.

³ FURETIÈRE, A., *Dictionnaire Universel*.

⁴ *Catéchisme du Concile de Trente*, Paris, E. Savoy, 1736, p. 411.

⁵ *Catéchisme du Diocèse de Troyes*, Troyes, P. Michelin, 1733, p. 58 & 182. BUS, C. de, *Instructions familières sur les quatre parties du catéchisme romain*, Paris, Naufest, 1867, II, 29. MESNARD, *Catéchisme du Diocèse de Nantes*, Nantes, M. Mareschal, 1689, p. 199, p. 341., p. 348, p. 352. FLEURY, Cl., *Catéchisme historique*, Paris, P. Auboin & P. Emery, 1686, p. 104. *Catéchisme du Concile de Trente*, p. 412f.

⁶ BREMOND, H., *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*, Paris, Bloud et Gay, 1923, vol. I, p. 487-496.

⁷ BÉRULLE, P. de, *Letter 120*, 1644 edition.

⁸ AMELOTE, quoted by BREMOND, vol. III, p. 36.

⁹ Cf. RODRIGUE, J.G., *Contribution à l'étude des sources des MF*, Rome, 1988, (CL 47), p. 247. De La Salle, referring to the life of St Bernadine of Siena, writes more formally than the author from whom he is borrowing.

¹⁰ *FSC Rule*, Rome, 1987, art. 11.

¹¹ *Idem*, art. 81.

¹² Cf. CL 10,114f = EP 3, 0,2f.

¹³ Cf. *Vocabulaire lasallien*, vol. II, p. 205-339.

¹⁴ CL 14,74 = EM 8,214,3.

Complementary themes

Abandonment
Conduct
Duty - Obligation

God's role
God's work
Imitation of Christ

Incarnation
Ministry
Prayer

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