

## LENTEN ANIMATION IN A HIGH SCHOOL (2)

### Some comments on the results of the inquiry

The inquiry presented above gave precise results. These results, of great interest to the college itself, would with difficulty be fitted into a Lasallian leaflet. However, some general remarks will indicate general tendencies.

— The inquiry shows clearly that we were right to choose assistance at Sunday Mass as the starting point for our Lenten instructions and of our efforts at Christian animation. In effect, from sixth class, that is, the first year of College, a considerable number of our students cease going to church. Those who did not go to Church, either Catholic or Protestant on the three Sundays mentioned were:

- \* 22% of Catholics: 36 out of 162
- \* 28% of Protestants: 26 out of 90

These figures were almost the same for the following three years of the first cycle.

— There is also a group of irregular attenders who practice from time to time and who went to their respective churches on one Sunday out of three. Among Catholics the percentages vary from 19 to 10 according to age group, and among Protestants from 35 to 14. It is to these students that our Lenten instructions and animation should be addressed to encourage them to a better celebration of the Lord's Day.

The actual numbers are: 83 Catholics and 68 Protestants.

— Then there is a group more regular in their practice and who went to their respective churches on Sunday, 4th March and on two or three Sundays in February. They, doubtless, need instruction to get beyond the notion of obligatory Sunday observance and to enter into the true spirit of the Lord's Day. In general this is a pretty large group. The percentage figures show from 48% to 66% among Catholics according to age group, and from 42% to 62% among Protestants.

— The results in figures show a decrease from the third class, that is, the last class of the First Cycle. We must study the causes of this decrease. We could think, for example, of worry about examinations at the end of third year, of private courses followed by some on Sundays or simply the need for rest... The aim of religious instruction with regard to this group should be to get their priorities right.

— A quick comparison between Catholic and Protestant groups seems to point to two conclusions:

- \* the overall participation of Catholics is slightly higher
- \* the participation of young Protestants increases from the sixth to the third year.<sup>1</sup>

— It should further be noted that 90% of the college students come from Catholic primary schools. It appears, therefore, that formation in the Christian observance of Sunday should begin in the primary schools.

— Lastly, the importance of careful preparation of the Sunday liturgy in the College should be noted. It is in the careful preparation of the liturgy and the dignified celebration of the Eucharist that the students are gradually initiated into Sunday celebrations. They enter into the spirit of the Eucharistic celebration and go beyond the mere notion of obligation.

### **A catechetical programme on Sunday assembly**

Has our Sunday lost its impact? Because of its ancient origins? They go back twenty centuries, in fact, since they go back to Christ. It is He who began the tradition at His resurrection. It is the meaning of the word "Dimanche", the Lord's Day, the Day of the Risen Lord. Since Easter Day and the following Sunday when Christ appeared to the Apostles, Christians met on Sunday to celebrate Jesus Risen. The day was called the first day of the week. (Acts 20, 7 ss).

Are the Christians of today, who are still faithful to this assembly, consciously aware of this? Are those who are still described as "practising" doing so from habit, from family tradition or from respect for the law of the Church which binds their conscience? But are these motives sufficient to resist the current which for decades past has reduced the number of practising Christians?

This leaflet and those to follow will shed some light on this gesture of faith whose roots we all need to rediscover and which gives meaning and richness to our working week.

Here is a list of the leaflets which will reinforce our catechesis on the observance of Sunday:

Leaflet 1: Christians assemble on Sunday. Why?

Leaflet 2: They recall the memory of Whom?

Leaflet 3: They hear the Word of God.

Leaflet 4: They thank God. For What?

Leaflet 5: They share a meal. What Meal?

Leaflet 6: They give witness. Of What? Of Whom?

Leaflet 7: All Christians do not share in the celebration. Why?

Leaflet 8: In what spirit should we live Sunday?

(1) Following French custom, classes are numbered from six to one, six being the first year of secondary school.

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