

FOR THE PAST 120 YEARS: THE BROTHERS IN MONACO

To better understand the following text, particularly the initials and names used, some preliminary explanations are necessary.

In the French school system, at the secondary level of instruction of the first and second cycle, classes and sections of study are provided with the view of accepting students having scholastic difficulties. The school in the Principality of Monaco functions along the same model.

We find, therefore, in these establishments:

The "College" level for students between 11 and 15 years old.

- S.E.S.: Section for Specialized Education.
- CPPN: Classes at the Pre-professional level.
- C.P.A.: Classes preparatory to Apprenticeship.

At the "Lyceum" level for students between 15 and 18 years old, there exist a number of possibilities of professional training, with various type of specializations, among which are:

- C.A.P.: Certificate of Professional Aptitude.
- B.E.P.: Brevet (Diploma) of Professional Studies.
- G1, G2, G3 leading to the Baccalaureate in Management, Accounting, or Secretariate.

After a rather long time, the Brothers of the Region of France have decided to develop these types of study because they see them as a means of taking care of "the poor" within the school system.

Speaking about Monaco-Monte Carlo today is often equated with speaking about the richness of the gambling Casino, the gold of the great hotels or the celebrations of such or such an international festival. However, the Principality of Monaco, today as in recent years, and despite a rather recent demographic and architectural explosion, is inhabited to a large extent, by people somewhere between the rich and the poor, and where the permanent element is not so prosperous as the tourists who pass through.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools were invited to Monaco by the Sovereign Prince in 1868, during the generalate of the Most Honored Brother Philippe. There, they were to open a primary school, which was popular from the very outset and whose school population increased very rapidly, going from 3 Brothers teaching 110 pupils in 1868 to 13 Brothers and 322 pupils in 1899. Then there was the establishment of three schools, primary, complementary, and commercial, so that it was true that wherever they were established, the sons of Saint John Baptist De La Salle adapted themselves to the needs of the young, moving by instinct toward the type of instruction most helpful to the least favoured and the most abandoned children.

A decisive change: 1969

One hundred years after their arrival in the Principality, the Brothers were invited by the government to fuse their work with that of the Sisters of Saint-Maur in order to work with them in a co-ed institution capable of educating both boys and girls together who were not studying towards getting their classical baccalaureate from the Albert I Lyceum.

Thus, it was up to the Brothers and the Sisters, who established their respective communities in the two wings of the new building to receive, instruct, and educate all those who had no attraction for philosophy or for pure mathematics.

Within the same building, with the same happy atmosphere, under the same direction, with the same teachers, 1,200 students from 11 to 21 years of age attend 17 classes in the College, 15

technical classes (G1 and G2), 3 classes of S.E.S., one class of CPPN, 2 classes of C.P.A., 26 classes preparatory for the C.A.P. and B.E.P. of the industrial, commercial and hotelery sections.

What is most significant among the 64 classes of the establishment, is that 47 are classes of youth who either abandoned, or who were rejected by the "classical" type of education. And so, it was with great reason that a lay teacher declared to the Brother Director upon his arrival in 1976: "In this school we accept for admission to the second cycle or for the end of the first part of the first secondary cycle, the students who failed elsewhere, and we make them succeed". Yes, they do succeed. In great numbers they qualify for entrance into professional life with a CAP or a BEP or a Technician's certificate. But they succeed above all in blossoming within a homogeneous student population, with all its diversity, by pursuing studies at the level and according to the system which is most suitable for them.

For many students, life is not all "roses"! Daily, or almost daily, we entertain the questions of distressed young people who come to the Director or to another Brother seeking advice which will be instantaneous solutions to their problems. A young lad from the "4th Preparatory" comes and says, "In the last two months, I have changed "fathers" four times and I really do not know where I live, so how do you expect me to do any serious work?" There is another student who can no longer bear the humiliation of being compared to another boy his age whose parents vaunt his scholastic success in a neighboring Lyceum: "Tell them that I am not a mere nothing and that here I am perfectly happy to be preparing myself for a trade". Then there is the student of the 1st G who by his manual work at night supports his unemployed mother who stays at home with a handicapped young child. Then we have one in the third year of CAP who by the third month before the examination is completely lost and we are the only ones who can restore his self-confidence.

But the students' confidence is restored once they have discovered the spirit of the true Lasallian teacher in their teacher-pupil relationship. Then they feel that being better understood and counselled, they can begin to live better lives. Each student is conscious of the confidence which is placed in him as well as being aware of the spirit of companionship which binds the students one to another within a given section. Above all, no one is isolated and it is one of the characteristics of the school that it creates opportunities and occasions for the students of the SES, CPPN, CPA, CAP, and BEP to meet one another. They mix together in the same corridors and in the recreational activities, as well as in the documentation and information center. The social-educational facilities are open to all. This recreational hall, in particular, which is open to 26 different Clubs, multiplies the possibilities of meeting together and having friendship and cooperation flourish.

For everyone the instruction is entirely gratuitous because all the services, facilities, and equipment are paid for by the Government of Monaco.

Not only is the teaching gratuitous, but it is also Christian teaching: the time of religious instruction forms a part of the regular schedule and the periods of catechesis are taken care of by the Brothers, Sisters, some lay people and two chaplains.

An ideal situation without problems?

Certainly, the working conditions are very favourable.

Still, for this abundant harvest, the workers are becoming too few in number and are getting old. Such a propitious field of endeavour and the young people themselves need a rejuvenated Lasallian community.

Collège de Monte-Carlo
Rue des Orchidées
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