

**ST. LA SALLE'S**  
**RETREAT RESOLUTIONS**  
**or «Rules which I have imposed**  
**upon myself»**

(3/3)

**DAY 3 RESOLUTIONS**

**Consideration: the first action of the day, rising; then, meditation and the Consideration.**

La Salle attaches most importance to point 11 of the Consideration, which reads as follows:

11. It is good advice to add to this review (which follows meditation) some thought about the various parts of the day, about some pressing and difficult piece of business, about a meeting at which nature will seek the upper hand if not warned, about the good works one can perform, about the wrong things one must avoid, about the intentions one should form for all one's actions, about the virtues which should characterise actions, about the fulfilment of one's duties, about one's family, and about similar subjects.

La Salle deals now with his own moment of reflection at the beginning of the day, and formulates **resolution 15**:

15. *«Every morning I shall set aside a quarter of an hour to foresee what business I will have to do so that I can act properly, the times when I may fall so as to avoid them, and I shall take measures to guide my actions during the day.»* I think that Hayneufve's inspiration is quite transparent in La Salle's words and the nature of the resolution.

La Salle does not write any more resolutions on day 3 of the retreat. Meditation already plays an important part in his life and La Salle does not need any change of direction.

**DAY 4 CONSIDERATION**

**This is on vocal prayers whether compulsory or devotional.**

La Salle reads the first 9 points of the Consideration without making any resolutions. The concrete nature of point 10 catches his eye:

10. There are many short prayers that you say every day without devotion, like the Hail Mary (20) at the sound of the bell at three o'clock in the afternoon, and grace before and after meals. Think of all the others and find a remedy.

As La Salle includes the Our Father among these prayers, he makes a resolution, but puts it at the end. He puts another resolution first, one that was inspired by Hayneufve's point 11: «... if you can say the rosary every day, why do you not want to?»

La Salle's resolution N° 16 reads:

16. *«In the past (21) I have often failed to say the rosary although it is a prayer of rule in our community. From now onwards, I must not go to bed till I have said it» (22).*

At this point the dependence of the *Rules that I have imposed upon myself* on Hayneufve's Considerations becomes clearer than ever before: Rule 16 is based on point 11, as we have seen; 17 is based on point 12; 18 and 19 are based on point 13; and 20 is connected to Hayneufve's first 10 points. Let us look at this in more detail.

Hayneufve challenges:

«But above all devotions give special importance to visits to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, which must be frequent, fervent, respectful and unaffected» (23).

La Salle's resolution 17 reads:

*«Also I must not let a single day go by, except when I am in the country, without visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament. And even then, if I pass near some village church, I shall kneel down and adore the Most Blessed Sacrament, and I shall do this as many times as the opportunity occurs».*

Hayneufve recommends: «Never undertake anything, never change what you are doing... do not let an hour go by without saying a prayer. Can you not do this?» (24).

In response, La Salle makes **resolution 18**:

*«I shall make sure I raise my heart to God each time I begin some action; and whatever I undertake I shall do so only after prayer»*

In same point 13 Hayneufve adds: «Do not leave the house nor even your room without saying some prayer».

La Salle includes in his Rules:

*«The Rule of the community is not to enter the house or one's room without praying to God and renewing one's attention to him. I shall be careful not to fail to do this».* (R. 19).

La Salle's resolutions or the Rules which I have imposed upon myself end with point 20, which refers to daily prayers which are said without attention. Hayneufve concentrated on the Our Father in ten of the points, and so La Salle makes a special resolution about this prayer:

*«Every day I shall recite the Our Father with the greatest possible devotion, attention and faith, through submission to Our Lord who has taught and ordered us to recite it».* (R. 20).

La Salle may have had his reasons for ending his collection of resolutions by returning to the **Our Father**. By doing so, he balances the mention in resolution 2 and so frames his whole series of resolutions, putting them under the complete protection of the Father to whom he has vowed his whole life.

I should like to point out also that, in conscious or unconscious imitation of Hayneufve, who follows each Consideration with 20 points, La Salle also sets out his own life programme in 20 points. This is possibly a further indication of the causal link between Hayneufve's text and that of La Salle.

Under the same heading of imitation, it is interesting to note the similarity between a well known work of La Salle on retreats and the title of Hayneufve's book:

## HAYNEUFVE

MEDITATIONS  
FOR THE TIME  
OF THE EXERCISES

## WHICH ARE MADE

IN THE 8 DAY  
RETREAT

Can we draw any conclusions from the considerable similarity of these titles? I imagine that books dealing with retreats tend to have titles of this kind, but I still suggest it is a point worth considering. And if such similarity proves to be less common than I imagine, then there could be some conclusions to be drawn.

## IS IT POSSIBLE TO DATE THESE RULES?

It is not possible to date them with as much certainty as a properly authenticated document would provide. What one can do, however, is to read between the lines of La Salle's text and formulate a few hypotheses that will bear examination.

There are certain indications that this text belongs to the period of the Practice of the Daily Regulation (PR). Thus the daily recitation of the rosary is in the PR: «The Brothers who go out to teach in school leave the oratory and then the house without stopping anywhere and reciting the rosary» (CL 25, p. 98, N° 16). The resolution which refers to the accusation makes an implicit reference to the PR also: «Grace before the meal is said (at midday) after which the Brothers who are in the middle of the refectory accuse themselves of their faults to the superior, something that all the Brothers must do before dinner and supper» (CL 25, p. 99; art. 19). On the other hand, the PR does not specify any prayer to be said on entering the exercise room. However, this practice was already established and this was confirmed subsequently in the rule: «All will kneel down to adore God whenever they enter or leave any room in the house» (CL 25, p. 25, N° 13). The Brothers were already in the habit of making this adoration on entering their classroom (cf. Conduct 1706). We know also that they did not have rooms of their own but slept in dormitories. One could adore God on entering the dormitory but not "one's" room.

It is good to note also that it was a period of beginnings. La Salle admits that he has never been able to make himself follow a daily timetable. He still has to acquire this habit of organising his time. He has in view his journeys and visits. It is also possible that at this time there was only one house in Rheims, the one in Rue Neuve. If this is the case, then the group of first Brothers lives with the Founder and he can say: "when MY Brothers come and say to me..."

## LA SALLE

MEDITATIONS  
FOR THE TIME  
OF THE RETREAT

(for the use of all the persons who are involved in the education of youth and in particular)

WHICH ARE MADE  
BY THE BROTHERS  
OF THE CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOLSDURING  
THE HOLIDAYS

For these various reasons, I am inclined to date these resolutions as belonging to a period that goes from 1683 to 1693, more or less. A period of 10 years. Can we be more accurate? If we take into account the reference La Salle makes to his consecration, it is possible he is referring to a consecration made in 1691, without ruling out the possibility that there may have been an earlier consecration. Blain (II, 301) refers to another resolution which was possibly a part of La Salle's general regulation: «*Something I must take very seriously is the renunciation of my own judgment and ideas, never following them in anything that concerns me*». This text, however, seems to be less closely connected with the succession of Hayneufve's text we have been referring to. It is difficult to see why Blain did not include it with the series of 20 resolutions that La Salle imposed upon himself.

We know that the Considerations were adapted by La Salle and included in his Collection. While Hayneufve gives 20 points per Consideration, La Salle is more restrained with regard to the number of these and more practical in his ideas: he abridges and leaves out where it is sensible and appropriate.

I thought it would be useful to connect the *Rules I have imposed upon myself* to a particular period of the Founder's life, so as not to run the risk of presenting them as something absolute and without a temporal context, and also to provide other points of reference which would help the reader to appreciate them more. My hypothesis is not based only on intuition and guesswork. I have tried to show the close link that exists, and which careful reading makes quite clear, between a pre-1686 edition of Hayneufve's Considerations and the text of the resolution made by La Salle as he read it. Finally, basing myself on internal criticism of La Salle's text, I have ventured to suggest a date for it which is justified by reference to texts which reputable Lasallian researchers have already dated with a fair measure of confidence. (25)

As far as I am concerned, whenever I have occasion to speak of the *Rules that I have imposed upon myself*, I shall not hesitate to place them in an historical context in which this piece of research has shown them to belong.

Bro. Gilles Beaudet

(19) Littré remarks that the best writers would say "en campagne" where we say "à la campagne".

(20) In the Collection, the Founder will put the Our Father first. Hayneufve wrote several articles about the Our Father. De La Salle also resolved to pay great attention to the recitation of the Our Father.

(21) These words clearly express the result of an examination of conscience, and confirm that the Rules that I have imposed upon myself are the result of an examination of Hayneufve's Considerations.

(22) At this point, Cahier Lasallien N° 16, p. 102 adds the word "pas" at the end of the sentence. It is both suppletive and a mistranslation. Moreover, the text given by Blain (II.319), and Cahier Lasallien 10, p. 116, do not have this anomaly.

(23) Hayneufve, op. cit. p. 135, art. 12.

(24) Hayneufve, op. cit. p. 136, art. 13.

(25) We are forced, however, to revise and correct a certain assertion in Cahier Lasallien N° 16, p. 100, where we read: «The comparisons we have made preclude any possibility of supposing that any editions of Hayneufve prior to 1663 were used as a basis for the Collection». This assertion, we have noticed, is based on a reading of a 1643 edition (cf. CL 16, p. 98 & 95), but is proved wrong by the 1645 edition which contains the passages which Brother Maurice Auguste thought existed only from 1663 onwards. We pointed out this detail to him in a letter dated December 31st 1976. Perhaps he was waiting for a new edition before bringing the note concerned up to date.