

N° 45 special

INTRODUCTION

This is the special issue of LASALLIANA for 1998 and 1999. It contains the List of the Circulars of the Superiors General as far as it was possible to compile from the Institute Archives.

Evidently it is not a work to be read through, but one for help with study, and as a reference for students and specialists in Lasallian questions. It is published with this in mind.

We have received several requests on this matter and many Brothers have asked if such lists existed and how they could be accessed. Evidently this would not be easy unless you lived in Rome.

This is what persuaded us to offer such a rich tool for those who feel the need for it, or will do so. It will undoubtedly be useful to other Brothers in the future, or to those researching Lasallian topics.

To compile the list we made use of three sources:

- Firstly, the bound collection of circulars in the Institute Archives.
- Secondly, a ready-made list used in CIL, in which no author's name appears. It is found in two sets of note-books. When reading them it is plain that there are different authors because the criteria used for making the résumés are different, as is the vocabulary used to summarise the topics.
- Thirdly, an incomplete list from 1875 to 1912, which used to be in the Procure General of the Institute, and including the Generalates of Brothers Irlide, Joseph and Gabriel-Marie. It is a 106-page manuscript note-book, drawn up in an excellent handwriting and with admirable conciseness. On the cover someone has written in pencil: «Sent by Br. Victorin, Archivist in the Mother House in about 1910».

Whoever uses this work of reference will see that the Circulars of the Institute cover four periods.

- The first goes from the origins of the Institute to 1805, to the time of Br. Frumence. The Circulars and communications which appear are rarely numbered. In many instances they are handwritten. Certain ones are known through the biographers and historians of the Founder or the Superiors. Many others are unknown, certainly, but those which are known, are listed in chronological order.
- The second period runs from 1805 with Br. Frumence until 1822, the end of Br. Gerbaud's mandate.
- The third begins with the Generalate of Br. Guillaume de Jésus. At this point they began to number the circulars, starting at n° 1. This period lasts until the end of Br. Jean-Olympe's Generalate in 1875.
- The fourth period begins with Br. Irlide in 1875. It starts again at number 1 under the generic title of instructive and administrative Circulars, and has continued to the present day.

It will be noticed that between one number and another of successive circulars, there is sometimes a series of circulars, letters or communications which are given the number of the preceding circular followed by a letter. They are not numbered as circulars, properly so-called, although some could be the appendices of certain circulars. Some of them were merely handwritten documents. They are not normally bound with the collection of circulars, but are to be found in the files of the corresponding Generalate. To have them listed here may be of great use for students.

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