

**FEMALE PRESENCE
IN THE LIFE OF
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
IV
Relationships with benefactors
of the ministries of John Baptist de La Salle
(1/2)**

Brother Carlos José Láinez Paz

JANE DUBOIS DE MAILLEFER

The first school was probably opened on April 15, 1679.

The founder of the school at St. Maurice in Rheims was Ms. Maillefer.

Ms. Maillefer gave 300 livres annually for the teachers (Gallego, S., I p. 136). On October 12, 1693 she died in Rouen at the age of 65. She was known for virtue and merit. She founded and supported the St. Maurice school in Rheims from its very beginning.

Ms. Maillefer left 400 livres to the Brothers in her will...her son and daughter-in-law were patrons for the Brothers in Rheims. (Gallego, S., I pp. 114, 115, 136-138, 260).

JANE CHARLOTTE ROLAND DE MAILLEFER

The daughter-in-law of Jane Dubois de Maillefer, she continued the splendid charitable tradition of her mother-in-law (Gallego, S., p. 114, note 24).

In her will she left the Brothers in Rheims "two-hundred livres per year until my son comes of age". This is dated November 11, 1706; she died on November 6, 1708 (Gallego, S. I; p. 250, note 43; 387, note 18).

CATHERINE LELEU

She was the widow of Antoine Lévesque, a man from Croyères.

She was 60 years of age and had no children; she aged considerably after six years of being a widow.

Nyel visited her looking for support for the schools. He mentioned De La Salle's name as a type of back-up support. She then preferred dealing directly with De La Salle. Nyel arranged the meeting after he managed to quell De La Salle's objections.

Catherine Leleu offered 500 livres to support two or three teachers in a parish school.

During Easter time in 1680, Catherine Leleu offered De La Salle three plans for the future support of the schools: a fund of 500 livres, 10,000 livres in assets which would produce the same amount or some farms that would produce the same yield. She first gave De La Salle the first 500 livres and then took steps to assure that the rest would happen.

Six weeks later she died without having had the opportunity to realize her dream. Fortunately, the executors of her will carried out her wishes, and 500 livres were given annually to the school (Gallego, S., I, pp. 139-141).

MARY LORENA, DUCHESS OF GUISE

In her will the Duchess left each Brother 200 livres or 400 livres all told.

When the Duchess died on March 3, 1688 the Brothers' situation was embarrassing and it was necessary to turn to the Mayor of Soissons (Gallego, S., I, p.205).

ANN OF BONVARLET

She was called Ana Paton or Patou and was the wife and widow of Jean Bonvarlet des Orgiers.

She was always willing to help the Brothers.

On September 1, 1693 John Baptist received a bequest from Ms. Bonvarlet: interest from a small house on Montboyel street that produced 27 livres annually by means of rent, and this was to go towards supporting the needs of the Brothers in Rehel and so that they could better fulfill their duties. (Gallego, S., I, p. 248).

CHARLOTTE TRUDAINE

Wife of Daniel-François Voysin or Voisin; a knight commander, a counsel in Parliament, a master of requests and an administrator at the Saint-Cyr school.

Ms. Voisin was a benefactor of schools, including those of the Brothers (Gallego, S., I, p. 235, note 38).

La Chétardie appointed a Brother to visit her and solicit funds from her for furnishing the house at

Vaugirard. She donated 400 livres and promised to give more on an annual basis. But it seems that La Chétardie did not understand the issue very well and so he went to visit her; he stated his case of the poverty of the Brothers and the need to equip the house adequately. And so she donated 7,000 livres (about \$112,000.00 Gallego, S., I p. 304, note 11. See note 45 in chapter 13; and note 86 in chapter 14).

Before the closing of the St. Placide school it was probably Ms. Voisin who obtained a letter from Ms. Maintenon - the wife of Louis XIV - directed to the president of Parliament, Aquiles de Harley, recommending the “St. Sulpice schools to him; they were very useful and disinterested; but the school masters were offering them much resistance. . .” (Letter dated June 3, 1698 at Saint-Cyr).

Ms. Voisin brought a priest from St. Sulpice in her carriage to visit the charity works of the parish. One day it happened that De La Salle was also in the St. Placide school.

The same Ms. Voisin also paid for blessed bread (50 livres each) on the first Saturday of the month. The 1,000 students from all the schools gathered at the parish to attend Mass in honor of the Most Blessed Virgin. In lean years Ms. Voisin gave each student a half a kilo of bread each day. (Gallego, S., I, pp. 308-311).

It was probably due to the efforts of Ms. Voisin, a friend of Ms. Maintenon, that brought about the interest of the celebrated Dutch doctor Adrian Helvetius, so that he took care of De La Salle when he was suffering from a dangerous retention of urine which put his very life in danger (Gallego, p. 235).

FRANCES AUBRY

De La Salle bought a house from Frances Aubry in Rethel for 350 livres.

Two years later, the seller donated 300 livres back,

resulting in a virtual donation of the house (Gallego, I, p. 266).

MARY ANN DE SIFFREDY

The wife of the treasurer of the Pope, Jean Peter Madón de Chateau-BI anc. He was the promoter and founder of the school in Avignon, founded in 1703.

In her will of August 1, 1704 she gave 240 livres annually from a capital sum of 6,000 livres, resulting in a 4% interest.

She died on September 20, 1704.

(Felix-Paul, Letters of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, p. 124).

MARY BOURGOGNE

On September 10, 1704 she bequeathed 100 livres to the house in Rheims (CL 35, doc. 1).

JANE LEFEVRE

The wife of Jean Baptist Brodard, a man from Brazancourt. He left his estate to his wife, Jane Lefevre, and his sister-in-law, Nicole Lefevre, in 1693. Included in the estate was an 8,000 livres donation for the Lazarist foundation in Rethel, but there was a clause in the will stating that if the sum was declined, it would revert back to Jane Lefevre for other good works (Felix-Paul, letter 14, 16).

De La Salle expresses concerning this donation in letter 14: “M. Brodard of Rethel has left me a bequest of 2,000 livres. I do not benefit from this yet because it will come to me only on the death of his sister, who is 85 or 86 years old. Apparently there will not be long to wait”.

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